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Punishment as Pedagogy: An Exploration of the Disciplinary Alternative School

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PUNISHMENT AS PEDAGOGY: AN EXPLORATION OF THE

DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

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As school districts across the US attempt to reduce their reliance on exclusionary punishment—and declining suspension and expulsion rates are heralded as signs of success—understanding the complexities of education and carcerality remains an urgent matter. Through a critical content analysis of a number of sources, including existing historical and ethnographic research, code of conduct handbooks, school websites, news articles, and data reports, this dissertation foregrounds an institution that is framed as an "alternative" to exclusionary punishment, yet is motivated by the same carceral logics that have long-haunted the school's practice of managing students.

Chapter I introduces relevant literature on disciplinary alternative education, fleshes out major theoretical concepts, and locates the critique of the disciplinary alternative school within the broader projects of reform and carceral state expansion. Chapter II traces the history of the alternative school, situating it as a legacy of the state's disparate treatment of "problematic" youth during the Progressive era of the late 1800's and early 1900's. This chapter concludes that the alternative school has firm roots in the racialized notions of pathology and rehabilitation that motivated the child-saving and progressive alternative education movements. Chapter III demonstrates how the alternative school carries on the state's tradition of pathologizing predominantly poor families of color but through distinctly neoliberal channels, as Progressive era assumptions take new forms under the influence of responsibilization and a "new

paternalism." Chapter IV undertakes a specific case study of Texas Disciplinary Alternative Education programs, illustrating how these schools prepare their students for futures of continued social and economic marginality within a neoliberal carceral state. Chapter V discusses how we can dismantle the carceral state and its adaptations, like the disciplinary alternative school, through the utopian imagination and abolition democracy. In its entirety, the dissertation uses the disciplinary alternative school as a heuristic model for recognizing and understanding the carceral state's ability to evolve and thrive through progressive reform efforts. Foregrounding the experiences of exclusion, surveillance, and structural disadvantage that are often obscured by reformist language is necessary if we wish to raze a carceral state that continues to persist in important ways.

For Donna, Joanne, and Ed Selman.

Thank you for sharing your name with me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCING THE DISCIPLINARY (UN)ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

...we can't just throw discipline problems out on the streets, so that is why I want a new kind of school, tough-love academies, and boot camps and, as the last stop, more beds in our juvenile justice system.
                                        —George W. Bush

Here Today, Here Tomorrow: School Punishment Lives On

Across the United States, school districts are attempting to reduce the reliance on exclusionary punishment, and out-of-school suspension and expulsion rates are declining as a result (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). As of 2017, California has passed a law eliminating "willful defiance" as an expellable offense for all K-12 students[1] (Resmovits, 2017), suspensions in New York City must now be approved by the mayor's administration (Harris, 2015), and Mississippi schools are encouraged to "start handling discipline in-house" (Hager, 2015)[2]. An influx of academic literature has helped to propel these efforts to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline (see Kamenetz, 2017)—the process by which exclusionary reactions to school misbehavior "push" students out of schools and into the criminal justice system (Hirschfield, 2012; Kupchik, 2014).

Despite these outwardly positive efforts, we must look more closely at "progressive alternatives" to exclusionary school discipline. Schools are still tasked with removing disruptive students from classrooms, however, they appear less willing to "send them to the streets" (Dycus, 2009: 16) given the attention garnered by the devastation of earlier punishment policies.

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[1] Willful defiance has also been banned as criteria for suspension for K-3rd grade students.

[2] As a result, New York City public schools experienced a drastic decline in total suspensions, decreasing from 69,643 in the 2011-12 school year to 37,647 in 2015-16 (Eden, 2017), while California saw a similar drop from 539,134 out of school suspensions in 2012 to 334,649 in 2015 (Loveless, 2017).

While schools designed these new initiatives in response to the infamously harsh period of

school discipline starting in the 1990s, these reforms do not necessarily mean that schools are

reducing their measures of control (see U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights,

2016).

Where the mandated response to misbehavior may once have included sending students

to the streets, schools can instead rely on transfers to disciplinary alternative schools[3] to handle

problematic students "in-house," in that the students stay in the district[4] (Carver and Lewis,

2010; Dycus, 2009). This form of banishment satisfies both concerns: students are removed from

the traditional classroom, while maintaining the technical status of an enrolled student. Thus,

while states may witness a decrease in school push-out by reducing out-of-school suspensions

and expulsions, in many of those instances, exclusionary punishment simply expands to include

a sentence to the disciplinary alternative school.

In this dissertation, I explore the insidious operation of carceral state power through the

disciplinary alternative school. An examination of the creation, operation, and impact of this

institution uncovers how it is that the carceral state continues to grow *through* reform efforts and

the creation of "alternatives." As will be shown, the modern disciplinary alternative school has

its roots in logics that have historically informed the control of youth, dating back at least to the

Progressive era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Here, we witness the connections

between the past and present: constructed as "troublesome" or "risky," poor youth, youth of

color, and their supposedly dysfunctional families become targets for punitive interventionist

strategies that are ensconced in benevolent intent. However, there is also something decidedly

new and different about the disciplinary alternative school. The philosophies, policies, and

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[3] Unless otherwise noted, "disciplinary alternative school" and "alternative school" are used interchangeably.

[4] There are alternative programs that take place within the mainstream school, however this research focuses on those that exist outside of the mainstream school.

practices imposed on both the alternative school students and their families, while finding root in Progressive era principles, have been shaped by neoliberal logics—valuing personal responsibility and a seemingly uninvolved state. Under the influence of neoliberal carcerality these Progressive principles manifest in ways that are unique to the current moment: working through seemingly benevolent policies and practices, alternative schools exert carceral state power over the students' families, and prepare the students themselves for lives of continued economic and social marginality.

In revealing the past and present of the disciplinary alternative school and its logics, we are then able to understand this institution as an (un)alternative, one based in the benevolent yet segregative and oppressive logics of the Progressive era that have been refashioned by neoliberal carcerality, thus locating the disciplinary alternative school within the carceral state. I trace the "roots and routes of carceral logics—their origins and their circulations" (Schept, 2015: 9) by illustrating the connections between the historical institutional control of youth and today's alternative school; explicating how the alternative school increases carceral state power through the family; and demonstrating how it feeds racial capitalism (Robinson, 2000) by preparing marginalized youth for lives of imprisonment. As a whole, this project delivers a nuanced understanding of the tangled logics at play in the disciplinary alternative school, its role in furtively enhancing carceral state power, and its function as a mechanism of racial capitalist-order reproduction. In exposing the ability of the carceral state to absorb challenges to its power by working through seemingly non-punitive reforms, this dissertation seeks to aid in the dismantlement of the carceral state and the advancement of abolition democracy.

Liminal Spaces, Hidden Faces

Defining Alternative Education

"Alternative schools" generally constitute those that "are designed to address the needs of students that typically cannot be met in regular schools" (Carver and Lewis, 2010: 1). The recognition that a mismatch can occur between student and school can be traced to the Progressive era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Reese, 2001). To remedy this misalignment, Progressive educators sought alternatives to mainstream educational institutions and strategies, creating schools that emphasized small student-to-teacher ratios, student-centered pedagogy, and hands-on activity. These ideas have since informed many modern alternative schools of various stripes. The leading typology of alternative schools developed by MaryAnn Raywid (1994) includes three distinct types of schools: progressive innovation schools are designed to provide a more challenging environment and students attend by choice in response to an inadequate education system; remedial intervention schools offer a rehabilitative approach to youth with social or emotional issues, focusing on individualized "treatment"; and, finally, the focus of this work, a type of "last chance school"[5]—the disciplinary alternative school.

Disciplinary alternative schools tend to serve students who are considered "at-risk" of educational failure as the result of disciplinary violations (Carver and Lewis, 2010). In a review of state legislation, 34 states indicate alternative school enrollment as the result of suspension and expulsion (Lehr, Lanners, and Lange, 2003). Some states require that students be placed in an alternative school to avoid permanent expulsion, while others present it as a choice for students to make after being suspended or expelled[6] (Lehr et al., 2003). This punitive placement distinguishes the disciplinary alternative school from other forms of alternative education, as the

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[5] The label "last chance school" can also refer to a number of institutions. Some focus on credit recovery, teen parents, students struggling with substance abuse, etc., though this research focuses on those that operate for suspended and expelled students.

[6] Other "options" may include an out of school suspension in which the student is not able to make up assignments or earn credits, or home-schooling (Guidry, 2015).

students here have, in some way, shown that they cannot behave in their mainstream school, resulting in their banishment. As such, the Mississippi ACLU describes disciplinary alternative schools as those that are created to temporarily house misbehaving students (Dycus, 2009). Sending students here, then, is not only intended to provide an alternative learning environment, but one that also serves a corrective function for those who find themselves sentenced there. At the disciplinary alternative school, education meshes with punishment, as the logics of "education" and "corrections" intertwine in its hallways and classrooms.

The Rise of the Modern Disciplinary Alternative School

The 1980s and 1990s saw a shift toward political and social conservatism, particularly regarding youth, violence, and education (Glassett, 2012). The school emerged as the prime location for dealing with risky, code of conduct violators, and in turn, preventing the projected explosion in juvenile "superpredators" (Bennett, DiIulio, and Walters, 1996). In claiming that by 2000, "[e]very school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning" (Gronlund, 1993), George H.W. Bush linked together, in one single statement, the supposed problems facing youth and the nation: drugs, violence, and educational under-achievement, with the best and only solution: carceral control through enhanced discipline and security in schools.

This outward commitment to efficient safety management through carceral logics manifested in multiple policy changes, most notably the landmark legislation of the Safe Schools and the Gun Free Schools Acts of 1994. The Safe Schools Act nationalized the issue of school safety, allocating money to schools that agreed to delegate significant resources towards responding to misbehavior swiftly and severely (Simon, 2007). The Gun Free Schools Act continued the trend of blurring the line between the school and the justice systems, as it

mandated that any child who brought a gun to school or on school grounds was to be reported to the police and expelled for a period of no less than one year (Heitzeg, 2012). One of the most controversial consequences of the push to increase school safety is the widespread adoption of zero-tolerance policies (Heitzeg 2012; Reynolds et al., 2008). Originally aimed at decreasing the presence of guns, drugs, and gang related violence, zero-tolerance policies expanded significantly to include a variety of other non-violent, often highly subjective offenses. As a result, students were increasingly "pushed-out" of school through suspensions and expulsions (Kleiner, Porch, and Farris, 2002), causing the number of excluded students to skyrocket from 3.7% of the total population (1.7 million) in 1974 to 7% of the total population (3.5 million) in 2012 (Losen and Edley, 2001; Losen et al., 2015).

Prevalence of, Pathways to, and Populations in Disciplinary Alternative Schools

The disciplinary alternative school was created through the contradiction of policies that require exclusion from school and policies that also require education for all youth. The concern surrounding violence, weapons, drugs, and underachievement "balanced with concern about sending disruptive and potentially dangerous students 'out on the streets,'" (Kleiner, Porch, and Farris 2002: iii) spurred the interest in and need for a space that would address both anxieties. The disciplinary alternative school emerged to do just that—to provide a structured space in which students could learn to behave correctly while still receiving an education.

Definitions of what constitutes alternative education vary across the nation, making a definitive count of these schools impossible (Weissman, 2014). However, as districts around the country were encouraged to consider alternative schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1996), their number increased from 3,850 in 1998 to over 10,000 in 2002 (Lange and Sletten, 2002). We have continued to see a slight yet important increase in these alternative schools, as

approximately 10,300 district-run alternative schools and programs operated in the 2007-2008 school year (Carver and Lewis, 2010). Many states do provide suspended or expelled students with some form of alternative education (Wraight, 2010; Garson, 2010; Boylan, 2012), though identifying alternative schools with a disciplinary focus is a complex task (Glassett, 2012).

In states that provide continuing education services, school administrators can refer students to the alternative school in lieu of permanent expulsion, though the offenses for which students can be placed there vary across the country. For example, public school administrators in Calvert County, Maryland can send a student to an alternative school for committing "crimes in the community (reportable offenses)" (Calvert County Public Schools, 2016: 2), but also for violating the school's code of conduct by exhibiting "very disruptive and noncompliant behavior" (Calvert County Public Schools, 2016: 42). Pennsylvania students need only meet one of seven criteria to receive a referral to an Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth program, including insubordination, persistent school policy violations, recurring truancy, possession of weapons or drugs, exhibiting violent or threatening behavior, and engaging in crime (Education Law Center, n.d.).

One may assume that violating the code of conduct by displaying criminal-type behavior would serve as the leading cause for referrals, as the alternative school grew out of a concern about dangerous youth. However, mandatory referrals (for dangerous and/or criminal violations) have been declining, while discretionary referrals (for minor code of conduct violations) have been on the rise (Dignity in Schools Campaign, n.d) For example, in their sample of 207 Texas disciplinary alternative schools, Hassan Tajalli and Houmma Garba (2014) found that more than 71% of referrals were for discretionary offenses.

Alternative schools "aim to segregate, contain, and reform disruptive students" (Appalachia Educational Laboratory, 1998), and the population of those segregated, contained,

and "reformed," comprises a varying, yet not-insignificant number of students. An estimated 646,500 students attended alternative schools for the 2007-2008 school year (Carver and Lewis, 2010). 2% of Texas students were enrolled in alternative schools in 2007 (Fowler, 2007), and some districts in California, whose alternative schools serve a broader purpose and population, contained up to 15% of students (Hill, 2007). But it is *who* these schools confine that reveals perhaps the most troubling characteristics of the alternative school. In a study led by the Department of Education, districts identified as "urban"—primarily serving a city center—were found to be more likely than suburban and rural districts to have alternative schools. Researchers also concluded that as percent minority enrollment and poverty concentration increased, the likelihood of a district having an alternative school also increased (Kleiner et al., 2002). Regardless of the location or demographic makeup of the school, poor and minority youth are the most likely to be sentenced to the alternative school (Brown, 2007; Foley and Pang, 2006; Weissmann, 2014). In Mississippi, for example, the rate of alternative school referrals for black students is twice that of white students, and in some counties, over four times (Dycus, 2009). Of those minority students, young men and those who receive free/reduced cost lunch are the most likely to receive an alternative school sentence (Reyes 2006; Vanderhaar et al., 2015).

When examining the history, purpose, and population of the disciplinary alternative school, the connection between school and carcerality comes into focus. It is from these characteristics, and others that I will discuss, that scholars have come to describe the disciplinary alternative school as a "dumping ground" (Hadderman, 2002: 8), "warehouse" (Geronimo, 2011: 430) and "prelude to prison," (Weissman, 2014). These terms capture both the similarities shared by these schools and formal carceral institutions, as well as the connections between the two. But the ACLU refers to disciplinary alternative education, perhaps most powerfully, as a "shadow system," and identifies it as an important, yet relatively overlooked contributor to the push-out

and subsequent marginalization that students face after a sentence there. The term "shadow system" evokes the feeling that there is a more hidden connection between the alternative school and carcerality. Important to this dissertation are not only the most obvious ways in which the alternative school mirrors jail or prison, but also how the alternative school reproduces inequality in ways that often escape our direct line of vision.

Challenging the "School-to-Prison Pipeline"

While issues with disciplinary alternative schools have since come to light, it is crucial to understand that disciplinary alternative education was not initially, nor is it today, "sold" through its failings. Proponents do not present disciplinary alternative schools as dumping grounds, warehouses, or miniature prisons, but rather as benevolent institutions aimed at helping at-risk youth and their communities. Recall that disciplinary alternative education was promoted in the 1990s as a *solution* to the push-out problem created by harsh, zero-tolerance punishment policies. For example, according to the 1995 Texas Senate Bill 1, which proposed the formal creation of Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs), alternative schools will "help make schools safer…and ensure that students with discipline problems receive the attention they need rather than being turned out on to the streets" (Texas Senate, 1995: 34). The bill continues to summarize the position of supporters, claiming that, "disruptive students would remain in school or in an alternative education program for their own and the community's good. Such students are not likely to improve their behavior if they are kicked out of school" (Texas Senate, 1995: 34). These statements suggest that the major threat students pose when they are kicked out of school is that of future criminality, of failing to improve their behavior in such a monumental way that they end up behind bars—essentially getting caught up in what we now call the school-to-prison pipeline. When framed this way, alternative schools appear to have the potential to *plug*

today's school-to-prison pipeline, thus serving a very well intended and progressive function.

Such benevolent narratives continue to pervade the discourse surrounding alternative schools. As John Eby, spokesman for the School District of Pickens County in South Carolina explains, "We have an obligation to our community to serve these students, who may become an issue for law enforcement as adults" (Eads, 2017). As such, these alternative schools serve the larger community by stopping these (pre)criminals before they become a real danger. Continuing to proclaim the benevolence of alternative schools, Eby states, "We are also obliged to parents and students to eliminate disruption from our schools" (Eads, 2017) by removing these students from mainstream campuses. Thus, alternative schools serve another function for the community: ensuring a disruption-free, educational environment for rule-abiding students by placing the disruptive students elsewhere.

Yet, what remains most crucial to the promotion of alternative schools is what they supposedly offer the students sent there. As both the Texas Senate Bill and Eby imply, by serving "these students," we, importantly, keep them off the streets and out of prison. Such a narrative not only gains political traction within these school districts, but also resonates with the parents of students who attend. As Lizbet Simmons (2016) discovered in her research of the "Prison School"—a public disciplinary alternative school located on the grounds of the Orleans Parish Prison—some parents fervently defend the importance of such a place for protecting their children from real danger. As one mother in Simmons' (2016) study stated, "At least that mother doesn't have to worry about their child, her child going to jail, or even being killed in the streets" (p. 135).

These schools work to not only keep students out of prison, but also supposedly transform them into well-behaved and successful citizens. As I will discuss at-length in chapters II and III, the schools themselves heavily promote this goal. For example, the mission of the

Elmore County Alternative Program in Alabama is to "redirect unacceptable academic and behavior patterns by encouraging academic success and establishing positive behavioral patterns in such a way that the student can gain self-worth and function successfully in a normal school environment" (Elmore County Alternative Program (ECAP), 2013: 1). We see similar hopes of improvement expressed through the words of parents, as the mother of another Prison School student stated, "I feel that it's a chance for a student to get a second lease, not only on an education, but on life itself" (Simmons, 2016: 135).

Considering how alternative schools are packaged, one might begin to wonder, "what is *so wrong* about the alternative school?" Indeed, it is an institution with progressive intentions. Through the words of Senate bills, school district spokespeople, the schools themselves, and parents, the alternative school appears as a legitimate alternative to the harsh disciplinary practices that have contributed to the school-to-prison pipeline. At its simplest, this pipeline metaphor contends that suspensions and expulsions push students into the criminal justice system. Following this logic, one of the best ways to plug the pipeline is to decrease the reliance on suspensions and expulsions. By encapsulating the problematic nature of the connection between schools and carcerality in a "school-to-prison pipeline", the alternative school becomes a viable option as a plug, as a reform.

Importantly however, the alternative school makes possible the exclusion of students *without* using permanent suspensions or expulsions, as students are often sent there *in lieu of* permanent banishment from the district. As I will show throughout this dissertation, the alternative school itself utilizes mechanisms of exclusion, oppression, and surveillance, much like the punishment policies and resultant push-out to which it is supposedly an alternative. Thus, the portrayal of the alternative school as a reform of school punishment draws upon an incredibly limited and problematic understanding of what a reform should look like, and what it should do.

As Marie Gottschalk (2015) argues, reform efforts tend to focus around the "Three-R's," "reentry, justice reinvestment, and reducing the recidivism rate" (p. 15). This approach relies on a dangerous cost-benefit analysis in which policies that reduce crime rates while saving public funds become the only feasible reforms. This limited conception of reform masks how those that promise short term budget reductions are often costlier to pockets *and* people in the long run, while simultaneously promoting a false belief about the relationship between punishment and crime—mainly that more punishment equates to less crime. The Three-R's also take the responsibility away from the state, promoting "DIY social policies" based in personal responsibility and individual actions. In pursuing such reform schemes, politicians and policy makers "have left off the table any serious discussion of ameliorating the structural causes of high concentrations of crime and poverty in certain communities" (Gottschalk, 2015: 15). This serves to further entrench logics of exclusion, surveillance, and control in how we understand and respond to particular people, actions, and conditions.

Similar logics inform school punishment reform, and ultimately yield the same results. In 2014, the US Department of Education released the "Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline," aimed at decreasing the reliance on exclusionary punishment. The authors bring attention to the overuse of suspensions and expulsions, referencing the "high costs" of such practices, especially the school-to-prison pipeline. Some of the suggestions for schools include the following: taking "deliberate steps to create the positive school climates that can help prevent and change inappropriate behaviors" (US Department of Education, 2014: ii); establishing "clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations...to prevent and address misbehavior"; and "continuously evaluating the impact of their discipline policies and practices on all students using data and analysis" (US Department of Education, 2014: iii). Such strategies echo Gottschalk's critique of penal reform, in which the two-pronged approach of decreasing

"costs" and implementing "evidence-based" practices (see Goddard and Myers, 2016) dominate the possible strategies of reform. Similarly, efforts to reform school discipline by altering zero-tolerance policies, increasing local discretion, and developing alternatives to exclusionary punishment through practices like restorative justice, are heralded as progressive (US Department of Education, 2014). In fact, in 2016 Hillsborough County Schools in Florida "declare[d] discipline victory" as suspension rates declined (Sokol, 2016). However, focusing on changing individual behaviors, clarifying rules, and relying on evidence-based practices places the focus on *individuals,* while ignoring the structural conditions in which students operate.

This is the vision of reform that this work contests. Such a limited understanding of the connection between schools and carcerality, and the consequences of this relationship, blinds us to the danger of allowing carceral logics to motor educational reforms. If we continue to use this inadequate framework, we fail to see that the issue goes far beyond having a large population of school push-outs in prison—thus the response must also go far beyond limiting suspensions and expulsions. As Simmons (2016) argues,

> If school disciplinary practices are reformed such that black youths continue to be harshly treated and even harshly disciplined—but no longer punished with the threat or deployment of suspension, expulsion, and arrest—the problem (as framed by the school-to-prison pipeline) is resolved, and yet racialized educational inequality remains and is sponsored by reformed disciplinary practices (p. 29).

In moving past such progressive and short-sighted responses to these issues, efforts must be committed to non-reformist reforms, those that untangle and disengage education from prison without widening the net of social control and criminalization (Gilmore, 2007). With this goal in mind, I offer a more nuanced analysis of the alternative school, its function both for the school and the racial capitalist order it reinforces, and its impact on the lives of its students and their families. Situating the alternative school as *part* of the carceral state—as an institution that relies on the logics and practices of carcerality—rather than as an alternative to it, allows for a deeper

and more expansive recognition of the harm it causes and perpetuates.

Understanding an Alternative, Alternatively

The Carceral State

While there is an expansive body of literature that theorizes the carceral state, it is primarily conceptualized in terms of overtly carceral institutions like the criminal justice system, and obvious mechanisms of punishment such as arrest and incarceration. This is problematic because the carceral state "has become not only larger, but also more legally hybrid and institutionally variegated" (Beckett and Murakawa, 2012: 222*)* than is identifiable through such a definition. As Naomi Murakawa argues, the carceral state must be understood as "sprawling and adaptive, woven into the fabric of American political life" (Gottschalk, Lerman, Weaver, and Murakawa, 2015: 805). Thus, rather than limiting the carceral to experiences of incarceration or interaction with the criminal justice system, I employ a more capacious definition of the carceral state. I define the carceral state as a vast apparatus of punishment and control consisting of a variety of institutions and mechanisms that work, both overtly and covertly, through exclusion and oppression to produce and maintain a steady stream of marginalized bodies necessary for the racial capitalist order.[7] It is through this expanded conceptualization that we are able to identify the disciplinary alternative school as a tool of the carceral state, which helps us better understand the reasons for its existence, how it operates, who it impacts, and, ultimately, how it reproduces carceral state power.

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[7] Jodi Melamed (2015) explains that "We often associate racial capitalism with the central features of white supremacist capitalist development, including slavery, colonialism, genocide, incarceration regimes, migrant exploitation, and contemporary racial warfare. Yet we also increasingly recognize that contemporary racial capitalism deploys liberal and multicultural terms of inclusion to value and devalue forms of humanity differentially to fit the needs of reigning state-capital orders" (p. 77). Racial capitalism demands racialized bodies that fall outside of the ideal neoliberal subject, and it obtains those bodies through seemingly anti-racist, liberal, and progressive channels. Many mechanisms of the carceral state, including the disciplinary alternative school, are undergirded by these liberal principles.

Carceral Logics

While the criminal justice system may be the "head of the octopus of the carceral state" (Hinton, 2016), we must pay close attention to the less obvious ways in which its tentacles wrap around our social imaginary and squeeze us, often unknowingly, into submission. In identifying the logics that animate the carceral state, we can then recognize the presence of carceral state power in even seemingly progressive institutions, policies, and practices. The carceral state is built on, reproduced through, and strengthened by a mindset that calls on exclusion, surveillance, and control as the necessary response to particular people, actions, and conditions. Such carceral logics "structure American subjectivities regarding crime and punishment" (Schept, 2015: 11), effectively framing and restricting how we understand, interact with, and ultimately respond to people, actions, and conditions considered unsafe or disruptive.

Using the presence of carceral logics to identify mechanisms of the carceral state reveals that some of the most obscure forms through which the carceral state operates come as "alternatives" to or reforms of overtly carceral institutions and practices—what I will refer to as (un)alternatives. A growing body of literature interrogates such (un)alternatives, locating them within the "shadow carceral state." Katherine Beckett and Naomi Murakawa (2012) define the shadow carceral state as, "government policies, legal doctrine, and institutions with the power to impose sanctions that either mimic the coercive practices widely considered to be of punishment…or impose significant hardship and carry with them social and political opprobrium" (p. 239). Here, the authors turn our attention away from the most "visible tentacles of penal power" (Beckett and Murakawa, 2012: 222) and toward the more subterranean adaptations of such practices. Most useful with the shadow carceral state concept is the recognition that practices like incarcerating civil debtors (Beckett and Murakawa, 2012),

diverting offenders to drug courts (Lynch, 2012), doling out "alternative" treatment to offenders through "problem-solving courts" (Hannah-Moffat and Maurutto, 2012), proposing carceral expansion through a progressive "justice campus" (Schept, 2013, 2015), and most important here, sentencing youth to disciplinary alternative schools, lurk in the shadows of overt carcerality. While these actions at first glance appear to exist outside of what we typically associate with punitive criminal justice practices, a closer look reveals that they are indeed "heavily inscribed with the logics and practices of mass incarceration" (Schept, 2013: 15).

Progressive Carceral Benevolence

It is in supposed "alternatives" to carcerality that carceral logics go most unnoticed and their influence unchecked, thus working covertly to increase the power of the carceral state. As such, much of what grounds this dissertation is a critique on notions of progress, and the implications of uncritically accepting policies based in good intentions. Historically, the benevolent intentions of "Progressives" have resulted in some of the most drastic and often punitive institutional reforms—most notably the creation of the modern juvenile justice system. As scholars like Tony Platt (2009), David Rothman (1971, 1980), Geoff Ward (2012) and Miroslava Chávez-García (2007, 2012) illustrate, the juvenile justice system was a product of attempts by largely white, middle class philanthropists to "save" poor and immigrant children. Their crusade on social problems however relied on increasing the state's power over "deficient" children and their "dysfunctional" families, particularly by invoking *parens patriae* and creating a formalized institution for confining youth.

The presence of benevolent, Progressive principles within modern institutions should, at the very least, prompt a degree of suspicion. As Rothman (2002) warns, "Progressive reforms did not significantly improve inherited practices," rather, "innovations that appeared to be

substitutes for incarceration became supplements to incarceration" (p. 9). As a result,

"Progressive innovations may well have done less to upgrade dismal conditions than they did to

create nightmares of their own" (Rothman, 2002: 9). Similarly, extrapolating on the harm caused

by the child saving movement despite (or perhaps because of) its good intentions, Platt (2009)

argues,

> The fact that "troublesome" adolescents were depicted as "sick" or "pathological," were
> imprisoned "for their own good" and were addressed in a paternalistic vocabulary, and
> exempted from criminal law processes, did not alter the subjective experiences of control,
> restraint, and punishment (p. 177).

More recent scholars have similarly noted that despite these perhaps well-meaning efforts

at reform, the very system that is being critiqued often becomes reproduced and even

strengthened. Murakawa (2014) contends that the efforts of post-war racial liberals provided the

scaffolding from which the prison nation was built, and then continued to exacerbate the impact

of conservative politics that gripped the late 1960s and early 70s. In attempting to eliminate

discretionary bias, liberals simply institutionalized the mechanisms of racism—maintaining

racism, but within a "colorblind" system. As such, Murakawa (2014) argues that reforms

proposed by liberals with good intentions "are likely to reproduce the same monstrous outcomes

in the twenty-first century" (p. 153). James Kilgore (2014) levels a related critique at reforms

that embody "carceral humanism" rather than true social change. He argues that by repackaging

the tools of mass incarceration as caring social services and alternatives—such as drug courts,

mental health courts, and day reporting centers—the culture of punishment becomes unwittingly

reproduced. Judah Schept's work (2013, 2015) similarly suggests that when carcerality becomes

ensconced in progressive rhetoric, reforms merely continue to do what they claim to fight

against, and sometimes even expand their influence. He shows how even "progressive" people

and communities who critique the justice system can struggle to visualize a response to crime

and disorder that lies outside of it, often suggesting alternatives or reforms that only intensify carceral state power. These scholars compel us to confront the danger of benevolence, particularly when it operates within a carceral state, because the resultant "progressive" policies are often more indicative of bifurcated progress—progress for some on the backs, bodies, and minds, of others.

Whether in the creation of the juvenile justice system, the rise of mass incarceration, or the dispersal of carceral logics into the community, the notions of welfarism, rehabilitation, and benevolence remain fundamental. At the same time, there exists a mindset that insists on responding to people, actions, and conditions through surveillance, exclusion, and carceral control. These ideas of welfare and exclusion, rehabilitation and surveillance, benevolence and carceral control, are not in opposition—in fact they work in tandem, forming the foundation of the carceral state. It is the progressive principles that animate this system that blind us to the fluidity and wide-reaching effects of carceral logics. If we implement "reforms" under notions of care and concern, then we are able to believe that they do not constitute punishment and, in fact, lie in stark contrast to it. This benevolent carcerality naturalizes carceral logics and protects the practice, policy, or ideology from attacks and claims of punitiveness. It is hard to argue with logic that strips progressivism of its major opponent—punitiveness. For example, we do not want to deprive misbehaving students of an education, and we do not want to send them out onto the streets or to unsupervised homes. However, we also want to make sure they learn that there are consequences for their actions, so we turn to the disciplinary alternative school. And when we see that fewer students are being expelled from school, or on a larger scale, fewer people are sitting in prison, the power of the reform or the alternative stabilizes. Still, carceral logics remain very much at the center of these reactionary responses.

Recognizing the ability of the carceral state to work *through* reformist institutions and practices undergirded by benevolent, yet fundamentally carceral logics, makes possible a more complete understanding of the harm caused by the carceral state and its mechanisms. As Kelly Lytle Hernández and colleagues (2015) describe, the carceral state "booms along the blurred line between policing and militarism, is embedded within social welfare and educational institutions, saturates media and cultural productions, and functions as an expanding realm of both lawful and unlawful economies" (p. 20). Confronting the expansiveness of the carceral state then allows us to recognize the disciplinary alternative school as both a product and a mechanism of it, rather than an institution that sits in opposition to it, as the school-to-prison pipeline metaphor and proponents of alternative schools would suggest. In no longer blindly accepting the disciplinary alternative school solely because of the benevolent intentions from which it emerged, its more insidious function becomes clear. As will be shown, the disciplinary alternative school enhances carceral state power and functions to maintain the social and economic marginality of already marginalized students and their families. That is, as part and parcel of the carceral state, the alternative school contributes to the perpetuation of the oppressive conditions of racial capitalism.

Tracing Roots and Routes: Chapter Summaries

The following chapters detail an investigation of the covert function of the disciplinary alternative school as it operates within a neoliberal carceral state tasked with (re)producing racial capitalism. Chapter II historicizes this inquiry, excavating the long-established connection between carcerality and benevolently motivated institutions of youth control in the Progressive era. Chapter III carries this connection through to the modern disciplinary alternative school, illustrating how the assumptions of the Progressive era have been infused with the logics of neoliberal carcerality, translating into policies and practices that target the presumably

"dysfunctional" families of alternative school students. Chapter IV shows how neoliberal logics construct the environment in which the students themselves operate, preparing them for and pushing them towards life at or beyond the margins. This exposé on the evolutionary power of the carceral state, accomplished through an interrogation of the disciplinary alternative school, concludes with a discussion of how we can dismantle the carceral state and its adaptations through the utopian imagination and abolition democracy.

Chapter II—Caring by Containing: The Legacy of Carceral Benevolence

Chapter II departs from the large body of literature that locates the beginning of exclusionary school punishment in the 1990s. Instead, the chapter argues that we must look to an earlier time to better understand why the disciplinary alternative school exists and who it targets. This chapter traces the history of institutional youth control and its manifestations in educational and punitive spaces to the Progressive era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Relying on the historical works of scholars such as Tony Platt, Geoff Ward, Miroslava Chávez-García, and David Rothman, I investigate the Progressive alternative education and juvenile justice movements in tandem, tracing the logics that have historically motored the state control of youth.

In both movements, recapitulation, urban/environmental positivism, and rehabilitation informed understandings of *who* needs institutional intervention, *why* they need it, and *how* it should be delivered. A lack of assimilation to white, middle class, Protestant social norms was understood as the result of cultural and social deficiency prevalent among non-white and foreign born families, and compounded by life in the city (Fallace, 2012; Platt, 2009). However, these deficits were also thought to be fixable, depending on who experienced them (Ward, 2012). The level of fixability was determined by social and intellectual recapitulation, a theory that understands the development of individuals as mirroring the cultural history of the human race.

Recapitulation locates groups of people on a spectrum, ranging from an earlier state of savagery to a state of civilization. On this spectrum, non-whiteness aligns with savagery, while whiteness aligns with civilization (Fallace, 2012, 2015). Where an individual stood on this spectrum determined the type of intervention delivered—those considered least fixable were those situated the farthest from "civilized" whiteness, and as a result they were "dealt with" through confinement in second class schools, juvenile reformatories, and adult jails/prisons. Poor and/or foreign-born whites had access to some form of rehabilitation through progressive schools and welfare services because of their proximity to whiteness (Chávez-García, 2007, 2012; Ward, 2012). In contrast, white, native born, Protestant, middle class youth rarely encountered the juvenile justice system and attended schools that reinforced their superiority.

Rehabilitation and reform motivated both the Progressive alternative education and juvenile justice movements. Progressive educators criticized the traditional public-school system for focusing solely on creating laborers to bolster industrialized capitalism, and then found reform in alternative education. The child savers took issue with the deviance of youth and the ways in which the criminal justice system was ill equipped to handle it, and instead, they pushed for the formalized creation of the juvenile justice system. These "good" intentions resulted in increased state control, exclusion, and segregation—embodying a sort of benevolent carcerality in which the motivation to take care of these youth was legitimate, but such care was understood as needing to be delivered through containment and oppression.

Thus, it is in the Progressive era that we begin to see the more overt connections between alternative education and carceral control, and their shared embeddedness in ideas of race and class—connections that similarly ground the modern disciplinary alternative school. As such, this chapter details the logics that have historically informed institutional youth control, providing insight into why the modern disciplinary alternative school functions in the way it

does. In tracing these historical logics, this chapter also offers the first of many critiques of the progressive rationality that manifests in the school-to-prison pipeline metaphor. The relationship between schools and carcerality did not just appear in the 1990s with the "punitive turn"; rather these ideas have undergirded youth-focused institutions for quite some time. This recognition allows us to critique and resist the dominant understanding of the link between schools and carcerality as embodied by the school-to-prison pipeline metaphor, and to reimagine both education and punishment as existing within the carceral state.

Chapter III—Assumptions of Dysfunction: Pathologizing "At-Risk" Families

While historicizing the alternative school is Chapter II's focus, it is in Chapter III the focus shifts to those most affected by this form of benevolent carcerality. Chapter III demonstrates how the disciplinary alternative school and the logics that animate it invade the families of the students sent there. This chapter explores how Progressive era assumptions regarding the connection between predominantly poor families of color and their "at-risk" deviant children, converge with neoliberal carceral logics to manifest in alternative school policies that exert carceral control over these families.

This chapter relies on content from a variety of sources freely accessible through school websites across the country. Using the Department of Education's "school and district" search tool, I located alternative schools in each state as of 2013.[8] I attempted to locate disciplinary alternative schools from each of the US five regions in order to ensure a geographically diverse

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[8] The tool enables a researcher to select "alternative school" as a condition of the search. It also discerns between alternative school, charter school, magnet school, and juvenile justice facility. It does not, however, provide information regarding the type of alternative school.

sample. After identifying the four states[9] in each region with the most alternative schools (see Table 1), I downloaded the lists of the alternative schools in these states and began searching for their websites through Google search.

From the information I gathered on schools from these twenty states, I attempted to identify them as either disciplinary or non-disciplinary in nature. To do so, I sought to learn how students were admitted to the school. To qualify as a disciplinary alternative school for this research, students needed to be sentenced there by their mainstream school administration as the result of disciplinary infractions, zero-tolerance policy violations, or in lieu of permanent suspension or expulsion, rather than through a choice-enrollment process.

From the twenty states with the most alternative schools, I was able to confidently classify schools as disciplinary in California, Florida, Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan, Texas[10], and Pennsylvania. For the other major states, I struggled both to identify schools as disciplinary, and find relevant information as it pertained to the parents or families of the students.[11] As such, I was unable to include schools from these states in the sample.

In order to increase my sample, I then shifted my inquiry to the remaining states in these regions. After analyzing websites and accessible materials, I was able to identify disciplinary schools with relevant information in five more states: Alabama, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, and

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[9] Locating schools in four states for each region was the goal because one region (the Southwest) only comprises four states. Finding those with the most alternative schools was done in order to increase my likelihood of finding those with a disciplinary focus.

[10] Texas was a particularly rich state for data, as each district in the state is mandated to provide an alternative learning setting for suspended or expelled students.

[11] Many schools in these states lacked websites, did not provide pertinent information on their websites, or served a wide-ranging population of students.

Maryland.[12] In total, my sample comprises data from twenty disciplinary alternative schools in

thirteen states, representing all five regions[13] (see Table 2).

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[12] In three of my total fourteen states (Texas, Kentucky, and Florida) I was able to locate multiple disciplinary alternative schools whose materials included information addressing the parents and families of the students.

[13] It is important to note that my sample includes more schools from southern states than any other region—a finding that could speak to the openness with which the South embraces punitive institutions, or that could simply illustrate the varying levels to which schools make their information and materials available.

...ools Included in Chapter III's Sample

Southeast							Midwest			Northeast	
	KY (3)	FL (2)	NC	GA	AL	VA	MI	IN	OH	MD	PA
Fruitvale DAEP	Brown Street Education Center	Citrus County Renaissance Center	Bragg Street Academy	Alpha Academy	Elmore County Alternative Program	Pittsylvania County/Danville City Regional Alternative School	Wolverine Alternative Education	McKinley Alternative School	Greene County Learning Center	Calvert County Alternative Program	Plains Alternative Learning Center
	The Academy at Eleventh Street	Alternative Center for Education									
	College Street Campus										

From the websites of eighteen alternative schools, one district school website (Calvert County Public Schools) and one state department of education website (Virginia) that discuss alternative schools, I gathered materials that spoke to or about parents and guardians. These materials include the webpages themselves, downloadable student code of conduct handbooks, and parent resources available through the websites. Through these documents, the alternative school communicates specific messages about norms, values, and expectations to the parents/families of the students, as well as to the wider public. As this research seeks to understand the ways of thinking, acting, and being that are privileged in and communicated by the alternative school, a critical analysis of such content was appropriate. Content analysis "operates on the view that verbal behaviour is a form of human behaviour, that the flow of symbols is part of the flow of events, and that the communication process is an aspect of the historical process…" (Lasswell, Lerner, and Pool, 1952: 34). A critical approach to content analysis assumes that words and images reflect and communicate certain values and norms. Thus, it is through a critical analysis of such content that we can identify the presence of power and inequality by exposing the ideas that are privileged or marginalized (Crawford Barniskis, 2016; Deetz, 2004).

To employ a critical content analysis, I first familiarized myself with the materials by reading them all the way through at least one time (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, and Redwood, 2003). Once I had a sense of the information in the materials, I went through them line-by-line (Bogazianos, 2012), and highlighted passages that spoke directly to or about the parents/families. Once I identified the passages as "family-focused," I reread them and made shorts notes—sometimes referred to as initial memos (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995)—next to each about the values, norms, and expectations that particular policy, practice, or suggestion communicated to or about the parents/families. I then created a new document with only my

notes, from which I developed codes that provided a shorthand description of what I had interpreted in the passages (Gale et al., 2003). As this is an inductive project, I used open-coding—assigning codes to any passages that might, directly or indirectly, relate to my research questions, and paying particular attention to the latent content of the communication (Babbie, 2002). As Dimitri Bogazianos (2012) argues, this process "transforms a large amount of material into a much smaller form, and—by reading, rereading, and rewriting material—one actively engages with the sources, making them ones own" (p. 152). After coding the passages, I separated them from their original sources and organized them by code type. Each code type signified an emergent theme—in this case, the themes represent the different ways in which the alternative school exerts carceral power over the parents and families of its students. Each theme and its accompanying passages were separated from the other themes into their own document, and then analyzed through the research questions guiding this specific chapter. Once the connections between each theme were established, the themes were then connected to the overarching questions of the dissertation.

The policies and practices detailed in these materials invoke a Progressive era "assumption of dysfunction." During this time, delinquent youth (largely poor youth and youth of color) were constructed and understood as the result of a learned degeneracy, the product of deficient social and cultural values that were passed down to them by their families. According to Progressive reformers, then, removing a child from their home in the city slums, away from their dysfunctional families, and placing them in a more "wholesome" environment was the right and responsibility of the state. Importantly, this new environment often came in the form of an institution. Thus, state intervention and institutional youth control was largely legitimated on the grounds of supposed familial dysfunction. Similarly, the alternative school materials rely on the rhetoric of carceral benevolence, citing the mission of correction, training, and "helping"

families through an institution. However, the delivery of this intervention has been shaped by neoliberal carceral logics. Through myriad regulations and requirements, these schools place a significant burden on parents and guardians, attempting to responsibilize them and force compliance with the hegemonic definition of a "functional family." By punishing parents, both directly and indirectly; coercing a certain level of involvement; and imposing parental training, alternative schools can compound the hardship that many of these families may be facing.

Since the children most likely to attend alternative schools are poor children and children of color, it is then the families of these marginalized youth that experience this institutional control, surveillance, and punishment. Thus, *certain* parents of *certain* misbehaving youth experience responsibilization techniques through punitive interventionist policies. Here, it is through the at-risk child that the state is able to identify, pathologize, and ultimately criminalize at-risk families—a type of reverse enclosure of the processes of criminalization. In this way, the chapter continues to critique the logics that have propelled the school-to-prison pipeline metaphor—namely that it is not just students who are impacted by the relationship between education and punishment, but also their families and the communities from which they come. It also continues to expose the presence of carcerality in the operation of the alternative school, once again moving beyond the narrow progressive conceptualization of schools and carcerality, and instead locating the alternative school within the carceral state.

Chapter IV—Imprisoning "Those" Kids: Neoliberal Logics

Chapter IV undertakes a specific case study of Texas Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs to illustrate how these neoliberal logics then take form in specific policies and practices directed at the students. In this chapter, I uncover the values and norms that organize

the alternative school, how those values and norms are imposed on the students sent there, and the potential impact that this exposure may have on the futures of these students.

This chapter similarly relies on a critical content analysis, but here I draw on the code of conduct handbooks of Texas DAEPs. In much of my initial research regarding alternative education, the relevant literature discussed Texas DAEPs extensively, signifying Texas as an important state for disciplinary alternative education (Dunning-Lozano, 2015; Geronimo, 2011; Reyes, 2006). Indeed, every school district in Texas is required to have a DAEP for suspended and expelled students.[14] As disciplinary alternative education is codified into Texas law, looking specifically at Texas illuminates the ways in which disciplinary alternative education operates in a formalized system. Student code of conduct handbooks detail the rules and procedures of schools which represent codified norms and values, as well as the punishments for violating them, and as I was interested in understanding the norms and values that undergird these schools, I searched for such handbooks.[15] After analyzing fifteen handbooks, I reached theoretical saturation (Bryman, 2001). While every district in Texas has a DAEP, not all of them publish their school-specific handbooks online.[16] Thus, these handbooks represent those considered to be the most "relevant" to the search (Langville and Meyer, 2011) and are arguably the most likely online materials that spread information about DAEPs and their guidelines.[17]

I sought to identify the presence of power and inequality though an interrogation of the ideas that are privileged or marginalized in these handbooks, once again using a critical content

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[14] Disciplinary alternative schools are present around the US, thus the choice to focus on Texas reflects the availability of accessible data—an important fact in and of itself.

[15] Upon finding code of conduct handbooks through Google Search, I downloaded those that were specific to the DAEP, rather than those of the district in general to gain a better sense of what these schools specifically promote.

[16] Because this sample is non-random, as evidenced by the lack of representation of the Southern region in the first fifteen search results, I specifically searched for materials from the Southern region. This information was significantly harder to locate, but importantly, did reflect the same themes as the others, suggesting a fairly uniform message across DAEPs.

[17] This is a similar strategy to, for example, analyzing front pages of newspapers for important content based on the front page's ability to reach the largest audience (e.g. Brenna and Vandenberg, 2009).

analysis (Crawford Barniskis, 2016; Lasswell, Lerner, and Pool, 1952). To critically analyze the handbook content, I familiarized myself with the handbooks by reading them in their full form multiple times. Once I was familiar with the content, I then reread the handbooks, line-by-line, and highlighted the passages that communicated ideas about the values and norms that are privileged in the alternative school. With each passage, I made a short note reflecting on what that passage said about the alternative school's values and norms, and how those values and norms are imposed on the students through specific policies and practices. From these notes, I developed codes and then grouped the passages by code type. Once I established these themes—identified here as four neoliberal processes—I then theorized the potential consequences of the students' exposure to these processes.

Through specific policies and practices, alternative school students undergo the neoliberal processes of docilization, responsibilization, atomization, and normalization of criminal justice practices. Exposure to these processes reaffirms their social and economic positions under neoliberalism, as they are prepared for and tracked into futures that include criminal justice involvement, but also precarious (un)employment. Youth in these schools are at risk of heightened interaction with criminal justice agents and often have restrictions placed on them that increase their likelihood of encountering the justice system. Alternative schools have also been found to lack essential resources and tend towards a vocational curriculum, making it difficult for students to move on to higher education or professional training. Combined, the processes students undergo and the environment in which they operate act as barriers to social and economic security. As such, this chapter illustrates how carceral logics both motivate the disciplinary alternative school, and work to reproduce systems of inequality through a curriculum of control that prepares marginalized youth for lives of continued marginality.

The necessity for a reconceptualization of "imprisonment" becomes most clear here, as experiences of surveillance, exclusion, and oppression are evident in the alternative school, but are not typically understood as "imprisonment" within our broader sociological/criminological language. This type of "imprisonment"—the experience of being locked behind the bars of social and economic precarity—is also neglected by the liberal/progressive way of thinking. In this way, exposing the disciplinary alternative school as an "alternative" motivated by carcerality and complicit in reproducing inequality provides evidence of the adaptive capabilities of the carceral state to persist *through* reform efforts, and demands a rethinking of the connection between education, punishment, and imprisonment.

Chapter V—Beyond Cages: Abolition and the Carceral State

After establishing the disciplinary alternative school's function as a tool of the carceral state and accomplice in the perpetuation of racial capitalism, the final chapter grapples with an important question: where do we go from here? If reform efforts have historically served to further instantiate and embed oppressive conditions within our social landscape, then we must utilize a more radical approach to facilitating social change. In this chapter, I argue that such an approach can be found in the principles of abolition democracy. By developing an awareness of the institutions and practices that reproduce oppression, diverting resources away from them, and *simultaneously* creating new institutions and responses based in transformative justice, we can crowd out the carceral state. Instead of tinkering with a supposedly "broken" system, abolition democracy requires that we tackle the roots of social inequality, and that ultimately means confronting the institutions, ideologies, and conditions of racial capitalism.

The utopian quality of abolition democracy makes it a powerfully transformative project, and one that many grassroots organizations are avidly involved in. To show how abolition

democracy can serve as a legitimate strategy for social change, the final chapter details the work of six organizations—two that deal with broad social issues, and four whose efforts focus specifically on youth. The efforts of these organizations are motivated by the principles of transformative, rather than restorative justice, bringing attention and developing responses to the carceral state and racial capitalism. I propose that those interested in achieving a more just society should look to groups like these—those that confront the fact that the system is not "broken," but rather running as it was intended to—because there are countless lives at stake if we continue down our current path.

A Lethal Alternative: Confronting Carceral State Power

Shifting our gaze towards the shadows and interrogating the covert operation of carcerality is crucial at the current political and social moment. The collateral consequences of overt punitiveness have entered the national conversation, as former President Obama stated simply, "Mass incarceration makes our country worse off, and we need to do something about it" (Obama, 2015). While it is unclear whether the desire to "do something" about mass incarceration will remain under the current administration, and if it does, what that "something" might look like, we have witnessed concerted efforts in our recent past to alleviate some of the harm caused by punishment policies that emerged during the "punitive shift." From these efforts we have arguably seen signs of "progress"—the declining prison population is most often identified as one such sign. In much the same way, school punishment is in the process of reform. Reeling from the backlash of the punishment policies implemented in the 1990s, there have been efforts to tackle the school-to-prison pipeline. We see school districts limiting the offenses for which students can be suspended or expelled, implementing increased administrative oversight, and even repealing zero-tolerance policies. And as a result, suspension and expulsion

rates have been declining across the nation. Many would argue that this signifies the beginning of the end for exclusionary school punishment.

However, as this dissertation illustrates, the carceral state is incredibly adaptive—it absorbs and responds to any challenges in ways that only serve to enhance its power. Indeed, "the carceral state is no longer just a problem largely confined to the prison cell and prison yard…if it ever was" (Gottschalk, 2016: 2). Instead, we must understand the carceral state as more than just the criminal justice system and the policies and practices that lock people behind bars. The carceral state is, as I define it, a well-oiled machine of punishment and control, one that is undergirded by and works through logics of exclusion and surveillance to reproduce an unequal social order. And while the experience of prison or jail should not be ignored, the state of imprisonment that it creates extends far beyond prison walls. To fully grasp the carceral state, our understanding of punishment or imprisonment must also shift, becoming more attuned to experiences of surveillance and exclusion, and less tied to formally punitive institutions. This conceptualization of "imprisonment" occurs, indeed *flourishes*, within a supposed retrenchment of the penal state.

As such, this dissertation seeks to "destabilize[e] criminological common sense" (Brown and Schept, 2016: 2) by questioning what we "know" about punishment[18], and how we conceive the connection between education and carcerality. In recognizing that the carceral "extends far beyond the question of crime and punishment" (Meranze, 2015), we are then able to identify the ways in which carceral state power is secured through more than just overtly carceral practices and institutions. One such way is through the disciplinary alternative school. Despite its benevolent intentions, the alternative school itself is a space of exclusion and carceral control,

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[18] As Brown and Schept (2016) argue, "Punishment, in other words, is both a reliable racial logic for the sustainability of the carceral state and located as but one, alongside treatment, rehabilitation, saving, and others, on which the state relies to secure its social order" (p. 9).

one that works through neoliberal processes to ensnare families and youth in the web of social and economic marginality. Confrontation with the logics that undergird the alternative school, the extension of its power into the family, and the effects it has on its students, exposes the alternative school as an (un)alternative. In its entirety then, this dissertation attempts to show how a well-intended alternative like the disciplinary alternative school can actually ossify systems of carceral control and secure social inequality. Such an approach reveals the extent to which carceral practices are naturalized and entrenched in the ways we think about and deal with youth—particularly marginalized youth—and moves us beyond the limited conception of carceral state power that has tended to dominate sociology and criminology.

As Gottschalk (2016) contends, "For those seeking to dismantle the carceral state, the key challenge is not trying to determine what specific sentencing and other reforms would slash the number of people in jail and prison" (p. 2). Instead, a concerted effort must be made to identify and understand *all* the channels through which the carceral state works—especially those that often escape our direct line of vision. If we remain focused on only the most visible, we run the risk of merely reproducing and bolstering the same system. This is why we still have more people under correctional supervision despite having fewer people in prison, and why we still see youth confined to carceral spaces despite the introduction of restorative justice practices, reformed discipline policies, and fewer suspensions and expulsions. This moment is important, and without recognizing the ability of the carceral state to "envelope whole communities in Kafkaesque webs of surveillance and legal oversight" (Meranze, 2015), we risk "simply inserting old carceral ideologies into new punitive apparatuses" (Meiners, 2017: 124). This is what reforms have typically done, and what we should consciously avoid today.

The ultimate goal of this dissertation, then, is to add to the conversation taking place amongst those advocating for a democracy built on principles of abolition, transformative justice,

and non-reformist reforms. Such abolitionist initiatives will play a pivotal role in transforming

our society to one of true justice, just as "reforms" have served to reinforce an unjust one for so

long. Achieving abolition democracy requires that we recognize the carceral state's impressive

ability to maintain its power through a variety of channels, those both subtly coercive and

patently oppressive. By identifying the mechanisms through which the carceral state works, we

can finally begin to destroy it, while simultaneously building something liberatory in its place.

Within this abolition democracy, safety and freedom, rather than prisons and alternative schools,

will construct our social landscape.

CHAPTER II

CARING BY CONTAINING: THE LEGACY OF CARCERAL

BENEVOLENCE

Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself. Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.
        —John Dewey

Benevolent Bars, Yesterday and Today

When child saver Louise DeKoven Bowen visited the John Worthy School in 1935—a Progressive era juvenile reformatory for boys—she remarked that the home had "every appearance of being a jail, with its barred windows and locked doors" (DeKoven Bowen, 1927: 309). Similarly, as parents of modern disciplinary alternative school students reflect, "I felt like he was in prison" and the school "is like a baby jail" (Dodd, 2015). In the same way that the John Worthy School operated as "a glorified warehouse for school troublemakers" (Platt, 2009: 128), disciplinary alternative schools serve as places of containment and subjugation for school code violators, who happen to most often be children of color. But despite a growing body of research dedicated to studying the transformation of US schools into sites of policing, the disciplinary alternative school is often overlooked. We have specifically failed to develop a critical history of institutional youth control that looks at the juvenile justice system *and* the education system in tandem—an endeavor that would allow us to better understand why it is that the disciplinary alternative school exists, and why it functions the way it does. This chapter undertakes such a project.

Beginning with the Progressive era, a time in which concern over the contested status of youth was most apparent, I explore the historical progression of two institutions of youth control:

alternative education and juvenile justice. This analysis exposes the shared Progressive logics that have historically informed how such institutions operate, and for whom—logics that, while appearing in new forms, still very much undergird how we deal with young people today. That is, while it seems that we have entered into a distinctly punitive period, I argue instead that the core assumptions that ground the disciplinary alternative school are artifacts of the Progressive era. How this benevolent carcerality—caring *by* containing—animates alternative school policy and practice is unique to the current neoliberal moment and will be explored in Chapters III and IV, but the underlying assumptions, and ultimately the outcomes, remain the same.

Using the past to understand the present, we are better able to make sense of the perceived need for the disciplinary alternative school as well as who is understood as needing its "care" the most. Notions of social recapitulation, positive environmentalism, and rehabilitation have historically been used to justify a system of differential "treatment" of deviant youth by the state, and these ideas continue to permeate institutions of youth control today—especially the disciplinary alternative school. Students deemed "at-risk," who are largely poor youth and youth of color, are sentenced to "schools" that often lack the necessary resources for students seeking professional employment or post-high school education and are riddled with isolationist and prison-like technologies, while their families are similarly subjected to punitive interventionist control strategies. As a modern manifestation of the historic ideology and practice of controlling poor and urban youth through the politics of care, the alternative school works covertly to "extend disadvantage across a host of social domains and ossify the precarious positions of racialized groups within the social hierarchy" (Miller, 2013: 583).

The Progressive Project

While leading academic research on the relationship between schools, marginalized youth, and the carceral apparatus often identifies the early 1990s as the critical moment (Hirschfield and Celinska, 2011; Kupchik, 2014), "the core relationship between schools and law enforcement, and the efforts of schools to construct and control delinquency as an exercise in crime control, are very old" (Burton, 2016: 1). This belief that schools have only just become places of carceral social control is a dangerous fallacy; therefore, in order to better understand why carceral logics so fundamentally shape schools today, and most importantly, why we have the disciplinary alternative school, we must interrogate our past—a past that does not begin in the 1990s.

In the late 19th century, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and immigration subjected the nation to dramatic political, economic, and social transformation. The response, for many, was concern. White, Protestant, middle and upper-class men and women became nervous about the impact of growing numbers of people unlike themselves, "whom they believed to be overcrowding cities, work sites, and neighborhoods" (Chávez-García, 2007: 199). In an effort to regain stability, reformers promoted a reform agenda with the goal of making all Americans the same, "to bridge the gap between the upper and lower classes, native-born and immigrant" (Rothman, 1978: 75) through education, crime prevention, and rehabilitative assimilation (Rothman, 1980; Platt, 2009). As David Rothman (1978) argues, "no group more energetically or consistently attempted to translate the biological model of the caring parent into a program for social action than the Progressives" (p. 69). Progressives advocated for reform efforts to occur within institutions, but under strict enforcement by the state. Youth, particularly poor and foreign-born whites, and those of color, were the targets for such parental state care. Guided by a

doctrine of *parens patriae,* the state assumed "wardship over a minor child and, in effect, play[ed] the role of parent if the child had no parents or if the existing parents were declared unfit" (Shelden, 2008: 198).

With "reforming" and "saving" youth as their mission, many Progressives played substantial roles in both educational and juvenile justice reform, as both institutions were tasked with mitigating risk and managing risky populations. It is because of this shared objective that the practices and philosophies of Progressive educators and juvenile justice child savers mirrored one another, and often worked in tandem. However, the benevolent intentions of Progressive reformers and their desire for a specific "oneness" of American youth most often translated into dramatic differential treatment and oppression of those considered "Others."

Progressive Principles

Recapitulation theory distinctly shaped Progressive era reforms and influenced the lives of youth whom reformers identified as their targets. It originated in the belief that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, or that the "biological development of the individual retraced the evolutionary history of the human race" (Fallace, 2015: 1). As the author of recapitulation theory, German biologist Ernst Haeckle (1904) explains,

> [Reason] is for the most part only the property of the higher races of men; among the lower races it is only imperfectly developed…Natural men (e.g., Indian Vedas or Australian negroes) are closer in respect of psychology to the higher vertebrates (e.g., apes and dogs) than to higher civilized Europeans (p. 450).

This interpretation suggests that people of color are less biologically evolved, as they exist in savage or barbarous states, while those who are white have achieved a state of civilization (Fallace, 2015).

Reformers did not accept such a strictly biological approach to understanding the human condition as it was deterministic and did not leave room for improvement (Fallace, 2015; Platt, 2009). Instead they drew on social Darwinism, trading biological recapitulation for social and intellectual recapitulation (Fallace, 2012, 2015). Proponents believed that the social and psychological development "of the individual retraced the cultural history of the human race and that non-White cultural groups represented an earlier, inferior, and childlike status" (Fallace, 2015: 511). For example, sociologist WI Thomas (1912) argued that African Americans and immigrants have not been properly socialized nor prepared for the expectations of a civilized society, so they struggle to adhere to prevailing standards of behavior. This struggle then manifests in the violation of white, middle-class, Protestant norms. From this social recapitulationist perspective, the Progressives confirmed whiteness as civilization *par excellence,* and derived their views on the innate moral deficiencies of the lower classes (Platt, 2009) and people of color (Chávez-García, 2007; Ward, 2012), but situated these defects in culture and socialization. Despite calling on sociological rather than biological perspectives, Thomas and other Progressives still based their ideas in the inferiority of poor, non-white populations, and continued to trace social and psychological development through linear historicist theories (Fallace, 2015).

To locate these defects spatially, Progressives looked to urban/positive environmentalism (Boyer, 1978), a perspective that roots deviance in the environment. Progressives understood the industrialized city as an undisciplined place of evil and corruption, where traditional values were rejected and the uninhibited pursuit of deviant desires reigned supreme. It was in the city, reformers contended, that the cultural and social deficiencies inherent in being poor, non-white, and/or foreign-born were further developed, resulting in unassimilable deviants (Platt, 2009).

Such anti-urban sentiments aligned well with the ideas of recapitulation and rehabilitation: those who were socially and intellectually inferior were believed to come from urban and foreign spaces, justifying the belief that to save these children, they must be removed from these corrupt environments, their defective friends, and their dysfunctional families, and placed in clean, wholesome institutions in rural areas (Lasch, 1965).

Recapitulation and anti-urban sentiment shaped the most fundamental of Progressive principles: rehabilitation. Having identified cultural deficiency, social pathology, and the advancement of inferiority provoked by life in the city as the problems facing youth (and the nation), Progressive reformers sought solutions that would cure the nation and its people.

Progressivism in Action

Inspired by the medical profession, Progressives understood the human social condition through a lens of "pathology, infection, immunization, and [especially] treatment" (Platt, 2009: 18). In general, lack of assimilation to white, middle-class, Protestant social norms (including overt forms of law breaking), was thought to be correctable through rehabilitative techniques. The "damage" done by a deficient cultural background, pathological family, and corruption of the city could, to some extent, be undone by proper treatment, particularly the nurturance established in the school and even in the juvenile reformatory. However, also informed by social and intellectual recapitulation, some youth were deemed more fixable than others, therefore more deserving of a specific type of rehabilitative treatment.

Progressive educators and child savers alike used this idea to justify differential handling of youth, as, according to this social recapitulation, white, native-born youth were socially and intellectually superior to foreign-born, poor whites, and children of color. Whiteness became a

social action, an intellectual determination, and ultimately a social fact of power determined, rather than dichotomized (e.g. white and black), by a spectrum of color—their positions based on their relation to the norm: native-born whites. As such, Progressive reformers held largely optimistic ideas about the reformability of white immigrant youth because of their position within this continuum. Irish and Italian immigrants were still offered a modicum of fixability because despite their perceived inferiority to the truly civilized whiteness of the native-born middle and upper-class whites (Muhammad, 2010), they could be assimilated into the body politic based on their (almost) whiteness. Children of color found themselves excluded from this continuum, as they were considered too socially and intellectually underdeveloped for consideration amongst the body politic (Ward, 2012).

This translated into a bifurcated system of treatment for youth in the schools and in the juvenile justice system: active efforts of rehabilitation were for those with the most potential for assimilation, while those too socially deficient and corrupted received a form of passive neglect and containment. Youth of color were typically "dealt with" through quarantine in subpar schools, juvenile reformatories, and adult jails/prisons, while poor and/or foreign-born white children received some form of rehabilitation in Progressive schools and welfare services (Ward, 2012; Chávez-García, 2007). Native-born white, middle-class, Protestant children rarely encountered the justice system and attended schools that reinforced their superiority. While rehabilitation and care was expressed differently depending on the level of fixability the child was believed to exhibit (i.e. their race and class), this system of differential treatment was in line with and firmly supported by Progressive rationales because the children were, by Progressive definitions, being "cared for."

Saving the Children through Progressive Education

Reflecting the overarching Progressive desire to save the nation, immigrants, and the poor through assimilation, educators and activists took issue with traditional public schools, instead pushing for schools that no longer sought to reproduce menial cogs in the machine of industrialized capitalism (Platt, 2009). These *alternative* schools existed outside of the mainstream public-school system, and in them philosophical notions of recapitulation and urban environmentalism informed the ways progressive educators treated and rehabilitated youth. Reformers advocated for a type of curriculum that would suit those culturally and socially deficient youth, while also ensuring the proper nurturance and skill building needed for the success of upper and middle-class whites.

John Dewey was at the forefront of Progressive education. He contended that a school's curriculum should align with the community of its students rather than the existing industrial regime—schools should "prepare students to act as knowledgeable citizens in a democracy" (Margonis, 2009: 17). Dewey's ideas and those of other Progressive thinkers brought about many positive innovations in schooling, including hands-on, child-centered pedagogy, an emphasis on activity, and sociologically informed teaching, thus Progressive educators like Dewey provided a humanized approach to education and expanded a strictly industry-driven curriculum at a time when the US was in desperate need of innovation. However, Dewey had a very specific student and community in mind when he developed his ideas—white people (Margonis, 2009). This meant a very different type of education and training for different children, forming the foundation for racialized tracking.

Inspired by recapitulation theory, Progressive educators including Dewey "approached non-white cultures and individuals through a deficit model that considered non-whites as

backward, disadvantaged, and in need of development by Westerners" (Fallace, 2012: 511). In fact, Dewey (1983) openly argued that, "any people held in subjection and at great disadvantage economically and politically [are] bound to show the consequences. [They are] kept back while the other people goes ahead" (p. 248). The people to whom Dewey referred, those "kept back," are people of color and the poor—those unable to progress to the stage of civilization, the consequences being social and intellectual underdevelopment. Conversely, the group of people who "goes ahead," according to recapitulation, refers to civilized white and economically privileged people. Applying recapitulation to the understanding of children, Progressive reformers concluded that some children were more likely to become academics and doctors, while the less developed others were more suited to menial, industrial labor (Chávez-García, 2012). Thus, children of color were constructed as "subpersons," and "regarded as less deserving of access and influence in education" (Ward, 2012: 86). These children were thought to be so fundamentally underdeveloped that no such form of innovative education, or any other type of social service could close the gap, thus their rehabilitation did not come in the form of innovative alternative education. Rather, passive neglect, lack of care, and inferior schools that focused on manual labor and service defined the "rehabilitative" experiences of youth of color (Margonis, 2009; Fallace, 2015). Because of these perceived deficiencies, such education was deemed reasonable for the types of jobs they could succeed at and the general roles they could be expected to fill for the body politic.

In researching for their book *Schools of To-morrow,* Dewey and his daughter Evelyn visited numerous Progressive schools, one being P.S. 26 in Indianapolis, Indiana. P.S. 26 served black students and employed a Progressive, child-centered approach that aimed to prepare these children for their futures. The Deweys (1915) noted that at P.S. 26 "[t]he boys have learned

carpentry work...The girls have learned to sew... They have learned to cook...These two classes are conducted from the commercial point of view, to teach the girls to do something that will enable them to earn some money" (p. 212). In conjunction with these tangible skills, students were taught to function in a society that demands from people of color deference, docility, labor, and service. As Frank Margonis (2009) concludes, "At P.S. 26, African American students were trained only for those jobs that whites in the society wanted them to do" (p. 212), thus this vocational training worked to reinforce the existing racial hierarchy. Essentially, these children were contained in oppressive institutions parading as schools that reproduced their social positions as members of a disposable, undesirable, subhuman population—an experience very similar to that of today's disciplinary alternative school students.

Students determined as socially closer to native-born, middle-class whites (poor native-born and immigrant Anglo Americans) often attended the same Progressive schools as their middle/upper-class American counterparts, or received similar innovative curriculums. The minimal (but still relevant) social distance between these children, Progressives believed, could be overcome through "treatment," i.e. Progressive education. The Marietta Johnson School for Organic Education in Fairhope, Alabama, was another experimental school based on Progressive curriculum. But the curriculum here emphasized creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking at every stage, and largely served middle-class, native-born white students (Margonis, 2009). As Lawrence Cremin (1964) describes, "In the kindergarten there were daily singing and dancing...trips over the surrounding countryside with subsequent conversations about the flora and fauna, creative handwork, and spontaneous, imaginative dramatization" (p. 150). This environment of exploration continued through to the high school, in which the students" (Cremin, 1964: 150). This was an environment guided by a curriculum that did not promote

unquestioning deference, but instead constructed the child as the expert, empowering them to experience the world as theirs for the taking.

The students of Marietta Johnson's school differed from those at P.S. 26 in terms of cultural background, therefore supposedly in intellectual and social development, justifying the divergence in curriculum. Significantly, the Deweys applauded *both* schools for their Progressive qualities (Fallace and Fantozzi, 2015). In attempting to understand the support for such vastly different products of Progressive education, we must consider that under Progressive pedagogy, the creative, independent white student is symbolically paired with the servile domestic, industrial, and/or agricultural worker of color (see Young, 1990). As Margonis (2009) explains, "the luxuries of creativity experienced by the white students were possible because the society was simultaneously preparing domestic workers" (p. 29). Such preparation took place specifically in schools like P.S. 26, and in juvenile reformatories.

While it may seem that such stark differentiation in education conflicts with the underlying philosophies of Progressivism, it actually aligns quite well. Progressive alternative schools such as P.S. 26 and Marietta Johnson's school were predominantly implemented in racially homogenous areas, thus typically only serving one type of student. This was justified under the contention that a school should serve its corresponding community, those people occupying the same space who presumably have the same basic interests (Margonis, 2009). When we establish that Progressive education, in its most democratic form, was created for an ideal "student" (white), corresponding with an ideal "community" (white), the segregated nature of Progressive education makes sense. Progressive education was fundamentally about *actively* progressing education for white native-born youth and encouraging the assimilation of poor white and foreign-born white youth, while simultaneously neglecting youth of color. This neglect

was expressed through docilization and industrial training, resulting in the *passive* oppression of youth of color. Thus, Progressive education "was not necessarily or primarily about the [active] oppression and marginalization of non-white populations, but it was linked to the very same theories that endorsed the systemic subordination of these groups" (Fallace, 2012: 515). We see a similar and related attempt at containing and subjugating youth of color in the establishment of the American juvenile justice system, particularly in the juvenile reformatory.

Saving the Children through Juvenile Justice

While outwardly separate initiatives, the alternative education and juvenile justice reform movements acted together to reform the poor, immigrants, and youth of color through increased state and social control. As Progressive education reformers were challenging the school system, the child savers launched an attack on delinquency, earning themselves a place in history as the foremothers and fathers of the modern juvenile justice system (Platt, 2009). Similarly propelled by the goal of helping youth and informed by notions of recapitulation and urban environmentalism, the juvenile justice movement, like Progressive education, resulted in the pathologization of deviant youth (and their families). What emerged was a formalized system tasked with the "correction" of poor and immigrant white youth (Platt, 2009), and the containment of youth of color (Ward, 2012). Determined by their potential for rehabilitation (assimilation), the "sickness" of these youth, their families, and their environments was "treated" through separate and unequal methods.

Concerned with youthful deviance, child savers worked to identify and eradicate conditions that bred and encouraged delinquent behavior. The rejection of white, middle/upper class, American-born, Protestant norms, as manifested in states of orphanhood, vagrancy, street

selling, and truancy, were labeled deviant, as these acts threatened the Progressive mission of bridging the gap between differentiated groups (Rothman, 1978). The child savers brought these issues and the poor, immigrant, and children of color associated with them under the purview of a formalized institution: the juvenile court. Most important to this story is the manifestation of Progressive ideals in the creation of the juvenile reformatory. Arguing that such "sickness" (expressed through deviance), threatened the health of the nation, and that youth were fundamentally different from adults (see Reese, 2001), the child savers advocated for a distinct space in which to dispense treatment. Hence, the birth of the juvenile reformatory—a warehouse of containment and oppression for marginalized youth.

Child savers understood adolescence as a time of malleability, during which wayward youth could be "corrected" and shaped into productive adults (Rothman, 1980). It was in the juvenile reformatory, not the adult jail or prison, that such correction could take place—but the reformatory needed certain characteristics in order to help youth overcome their deficient backgrounds. Inspired by a broader critique of the industrialized city—one also adopted by the education reformers—child savers asserted that reformatories needed to be located in the rural countryside (Platt, 2009). It was in the countryside, the reformers argued, that the evils of nature could be undone through nurture (Jones, 1898). This nurturance was to come through the infamous "cottage plan" where youth were to be housed in small cottages supervised by a father and mother figure who imposed discipline, but not through physical coercion (Howe, 1880). The importance of placing reformatories in rural areas and providing youth with functional-family elements reflected the recapitulationist and urban environmentalist belief that delinquent youth come from deficient backgrounds, are raised in deficient families, and reside in deficient cities.

As a place specifically for youth, advocates for juvenile reformatories boasted an educational focus, alongside a strict disciplinary regimen. It was an expressed goal of the reformatory system that its inmates receive an education so that they may "gain an honest livelihood and... become of use to society instead of an injury to it" (Wines, 1879: 278). Importantly, John Dewey was a friend of prominent child saver Jane Addams (Margonis, 2009), and his ideas influenced the educational work of the child savers (Platt, 2009). From Progressive education, Tony Platt (2009) argues, "penal reformers took the assumption that the essential purpose of education is to indoctrinate children with the values of the middle class, adult world" (p. 60), while also "reconcil[ing] the poor and deviant to their lot in life" (p. 57). Thus, the curriculum in the juvenile reformatories echoed that of the Progressive schools that served youth of color, such as P.S. 26. This should not come as a surprise, as both P.S. 26 and the reformatories often served similar populations. Within the juvenile reformatory, boys developed agricultural and industrial skills, while the girls learned domestic skills and servantry. Such vocational training "was justified as an educational enterprise because it was consistent with the rhetoric and aims of the child savers" (Platt, 2009: 60). Just like the Progressive schools, these reformatories worked to manage and contain wayward youth by reconciling them to their inferior status.

These parallels continue when we consider how, like Progressive schools for youth of color, these reformatories functioned as warehouses of containment and oppression. Based in notions of recapitulation, deviant youth of color could justifiably receive differential treatment in reformatories—their status as "subpersons" (Ward, 2012: 86) necessitating a different approach. As unassimilable, youth of color were far more likely to be institutionalized by the juvenile court, as they were understood as needing to be removed from mainstream society, while white

children had greater access to welfare services and were often sent home to their state-identified "functional" families (Trost, 2005; Ward, 2012; Wolcott and Schlossmann, 2004). Even marginal white youth had access, if limited, to rehabilitative programs offered by the community as their "common European ancestry and white skin rendered them less threatening, distinctly 'salvageable,' and ultimately more assimilable—culturally, economically, and politically—than black and other nonwhite youth" (Ward, 2009: 228). When they avoided sentencing to adult prisons, youth of color were sent to warehouse-style juvenile reformatories that were under-staffed and under-resourced, without even a hint of the "cottage plan" the Progressives promoted so fervently. These young people were indoctrinated with middle-class values, while performing the tasks that, as inferior beings, the Progressives felt would prepare them for their futures of inferiority.

The Whittier State School in California, a reform school for boys during the Progressive era, illustrates what juvenile "justice" for youth of color looked like. Calling on the Progressive education movement's emphasis on intelligence and recapitulation, the schools' administrators utilized intelligence testing—a well-documented form of racial discrimination—to better explain delinquency (Chávez-García, 2007). Male youth of color, particularly Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and African Americans, often scored low on the tests—likely because English-speaking instructors administered them to youth with limited English skills and formal schooling. Despite the flaws of the test and its interpretation, officials believed that low scores indicated an inability of these young people "to reform and become productive citizens" (Chávez-García, 2007: 197). As a result, they were understood as unredeemable and often sent to other state institutions (Chávez-García, 2007). The Whittier State School is only one example, but when we confront the recapitulationist and urban environmentalist assumptions that underlie

the creation of the juvenile reformatory, as well as the unequal access to resources outside of the juvenile justice system, it becomes clear that, as many scholars suggest, not all children were *meant* to be "saved" (Chávez-García, 2007; Shelden and Osborne, 1989; Ward, 2012). Rather, just as the Progressive education movement aimed to promote stability for white America by improving education for white children and containing non-white children in subpar, vocationally oriented schools, the child saving movement ossified the racial hierarchy by containing non-white children in prison-like, warehouse reformatories.

"Post"-Progressive Institutional Youth Control

Progressive educators and child savers worked together to help "underdeveloped" and "troublesome" youth, creating spaces in which they received discriminatory and often punitive "treatment" based on their perceived subhuman status. These ideals continued to lurk beneath the surface through the Great Depression and World War II, but appeared with renewed vigor through the reformist, youth-focused projects of the 1960s and 1970s. As neoliberalism tightened its grip through the 1990s, these Progressive principles remained present, but took a very specific form in the modern disciplinary alternative school.

An outwardly stable and prosperous social and economic order characterized the 1950s, but as the sheen from this superficially contented period melted away, an ardent white ethnocentrism from both the right and left looked to reshape the Progressive ideals of the 1900s for a new generation of defiant youth (Collier and Horowitz, 1989). The "upheaval" of American society in the 1960s and 1970s permeated ideas about education, as anxiety over the public-school system, bussing integrations, and desegregated schooling revived the interest in the school as a site of social change (Korn, 1991). In this ever-expanding drive to "progress," a revamped

push for Progressive alternative schooling developed: the Free School movement. Free School

movement leaders concluded that the public-school system could not be saved, and between

1968 and 1972 they established small learning communities with the goal of challenging the

oppressive social order (Emery, 2000). By 1971, 39 states had at least one Free School, though

of the 346, the largest concentration were located in California, New York, Massachusetts, and

Illinois (Graubard, 1972). As the movement gained speed in the 1970s, factions developed

between those who understood education as a public good with the potential to change society as

a whole (urban Free Schools), and those who understood it as a private good aimed at addressing

the individual (rural Free Schools). Rural Free Schools were meant as an escape from the city in

turmoil, as a place to nurture the organic intellect of the child (Biancolli, 2015). As such, rural

Free School curriculum emphasized education based on the specific skills and interests of the

individual child, and a learning process that rejected rote memorization and promoted creativity,

much like the Marietta Johnson School for Organic Learning. But despite claims of resistance to

the racialist capitalist order, Free Schools were largely inaccessible to those most oppressed by it

(Kozol, 1972; Weissman, 2014), ultimately solidifying the unequal relationship between white

and black bodies. As leading Free School thinker, and also one of its greatest critics, Jonathan

Kozol (1972) powerfully describes,

> The passive, tranquil and protected lives white people lead depend on strongly armed
> police, well-demarcated ghettos. While children starve and others walk the city streets in
> fear on Monday afternoon, the privileged young people in the Free Schools of Vermont
> shuttle their handlooms back and forth and speak of love and of "organic" processes (p.
> 11).

Rural Free Schools embraced the revived ideals of Progressivism, situating education as a private

good and using it as a vehicle for individual social mobility and success rather than social change

(Biancolli, 2015).[1] While the movement tapered off in the early 1970s, advocates of today's

charter schools often call on the ideas of Free School movement thinkers (Miller, 2002).

The juvenile justice system underwent a similar period of reform provoked by

progressive critiques. Professionals and activists alike challenged the *parens patriae* of the state,

lodging complaints of unconstitutionality, and landmark cases like *Kent v. the United States*

(1966) and *In re Gault* (1967) worked to establish and protect the rights of juveniles. While such

efforts would ideally protect youth from indiscretions by the state, they largely served to further

formalize and legitimize the juvenile justice system's control over youth, as reform came through

an explosion in diversion programs. In 1972 the Youth Development and Delinquency

Prevention Administration suggested the establishment of youth service bureaus tasked with

preventing youth involvement with the system. However, as the number of these bureaus

increased, so too did the number of young people brought under the purview of the juvenile

justice system, yielding little to no effect on the reform school or detention populations (Miller,

1991).

In addition to their lack of diversionary power, these programs fell short in a number of

other ways: they mostly supplemented, rather than replaced, the power of the juvenile court; they

tended to shuffle youth from one institution of confinement to another; and in the rare instance

that they did divert youth away from the juvenile justice system, it was typically white youth

who were diverted (Miller, 1991; Nejelski, 1972). As Jerome Miller (1991) explains, to qualify

for the more informal, program-oriented treatment, youth needed to "show some promise" (p.

10). Those who did not show promise were abandoned to mental hospitals, prisons, and reform

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[1] In contrast, urban Free Schools rejected the recapitulation and anti-urban sentiments put forth by the "progressive" rural Free School leaders. These schools focused on providing equal access to liberatory education, and were more concerned with upending a capitalist education system than succeeding within it (Graubard, 1972). As such, they offered a site of resistance both to the mainstream public-school system and the rural Free Schools, aligning them more with the Freedom Schools of Mississippi (see Logue, 2008).

schools. Echoing Progressive recapitulationist sentiments, black youth were (and still are) more likely to be categorized as "serious" delinquents, as less promising, and therefore in need of formal carceral intervention (Rodriguez, Smith, and Zatz, 2009; Ward 2012). Thus, these reforms continued the capturing of marginalized youth under the watchful eye of a formalized carceral institution, while also bringing authenticity to this panoptic control (Miller, 1991; Nejelski, 1972).

As the fear of instability once again gripped the US social imaginary in the 1980s, and political and social conservatism emerged as the response to this fear (Glassett, 2012), the need to "control" defiant youth pervaded youth-focused institutions. Schools more visibly embraced criminal justice strategies and technologies, while the juvenile justice system began to openly reject the welfarist rhetoric it had embraced merely a decade before. But the ideals of the Progressive era did not vanish—strong threads continue to tie one modern site of youth control to the former versions of these sites, the alternative education and juvenile justice systems of the "post"-Progressive period providing powerful frames through which to understand the institutional management of youth today, particularly in the disciplinary alternative school.

Rural Free Schools embraced the Progressive tradition of segregated alternative education aimed at cultivating the superiority of the white and economically privileged student, a project made possible only because there existed a population of poor youth and youth of color trapped by the conditions of racial capitalism. In the disciplinary alternative school, we see evidence of the same segregative logic being deployed to maintain the marginalized population that is necessary for the existence of the privileged. Juvenile justice reform efforts further instantiated the juvenile justice system as *the* institution for handling problem youth, widened the net used to capture marginalized youth, and reinforced the legitimacy of caring *by* containing

that motored the Progressive era. These same carceral logics animate and validate the modern

disciplinary alternative school as a legitimate institution of youth social control.

Thus, what connects the disciplinary alternative school of the present with the alternative

education and juvenile justice institutions of the past is the tradition of segregative and carceral

management of youth. The disciplinary alternative school is a dramatic legacy of these spaces

and their underlying ideals. Here, the two institutions most pointedly tasked with managing

youth—education and juvenile justice—physically and ideologically converge, and the

benevolent carcerality established long ago once again serves as an animating force of exclusion

and control.

Modern Carceral Benevolence: The Disciplinary Alternative School

Reflecting on the state of alternative education today, Marsha Weissman (2014) laments

that, "despite the progressive antecedents of alternative schools, these schools have come to

serve as warehouses for students considered to be disciplinary problems" (p. 51). Weissman's

surprise may be misplaced, however, because upon interrogation of it Progressive roots, it should

not come as a shock that the disciplinary alternative school functions as a warehouse for

disposable youth: it is precisely *because* of these roots that it operates in such a way. Most

concretely, the Progressive project gave rise to a system of segregated, racialized social control

that quarantined youth of color in oppressive institutions while simultaneously protecting white

youth from their sullying influence. The ideas that justified the need for Progressive era

alternative education and a formalized juvenile justice system have similarly informed the

perceived need for the disciplinary alternative school: certain young people (and their families)

have demonstrated an inability to conform to normative standards of behavior, thus they need to

be "fixed" through specific techniques of "care" that only an institution can provide. The population determined as needing this care is also the same—whether they are cast as "under-developed," "troublesome," or most common today, as "at-risk," poor youth and youth of color are the most likely targets of carceral benevolence exerted through institutional intervention.

Grounded in recapitulation and anti-urban sentiment, Progressive alternative schools and juvenile reformatories sought, through rehabilitative care, to correct youth who could be corrected, while containing those thought to be uncorrectable. Redeemability, measured by social and intellectual development, determined whether one received rehabilitation in the form of support, or "rehabilitation" in the form of neglect and containment. Similarly, modern disciplinary alternative schools boast the goal of teaching misbehaved youth how to behave properly so that they may be released to their home schools, while containing those who remain unrehabilitated. Students who are understood as displaying a certain level of under-development, of "risk," may end up at the alternative school, while the behaviors of others do not activate warnings of risk and thus they are able to continue on in their mainstream schools. In both instances, youth are measured, either by social and intellectual development or by risk—and in both instances, the measures are racialized (Goddard and Myers, 2016). And despite the disciplinary alternative school's advanced technology, with its surveillance cameras and metal detectors, the effect is ultimately the same. As with the Progressive juvenile reformatories, these schools physically contain and subject predominantly marginalized students to constant surveillance, and as in the early Progressive alternative schools, the students receive subpar education and vocational training, preparing them for and reconciling them to lives of imprisonment. Continuing the Progressive legacy, this is done in the name of benevolent correction, of "helping," of "saving" youth. As such, "rather than a collapse of the Progressive

project…we are seeing its logical extension" (Burton, 2016: 15) in the disciplinary alternative school.

While the existence of the alternative school, the population it "serves," and its function for reproducing racial capitalism, are explainable through Progressive era principles and assumptions, *how* these Progressive principles translate into disciplinary alternative school policy and practice today is distinct to the current moment. Under the influence of neoliberal logics, Progressive era assumptions manifest in unique iterations within the modern disciplinary alternative school. As will be shown in the following chapters, the disciplinary alternative school works, like the Progressive institutions before it, to reproduce the oppressive conditions of racial capitalism through the continued marginalization of its students and their families, but through markedly neoliberal policies and practices.

CHAPTER III

ASSUMPTIONS OF DYSFUNCTION: PATHOLOGIZING "AT-RISK"

FAMILIES

America's future will be determined by the home and the school. The child becomes largely what he is taught; hence we must watch what we teach, and how we live.
        —Jane Addams

Go Directly to Jail. Do Not Pass Go. Do Not Collect $200.

On June 8, 2014 Eileen DiNino was found unresponsive in her jail cell and died in the hospital of heart failure shortly after.[1] Eileen was serving 48 hours in jail for her inability to pay her children's truancy fines. Between 1999 and 2014, Eileen accumulated over $2,000 in fines from truancy violations, for which her family members state that she simply could not afford to pay (Zoukis, 2016). While the immediate fault with whom her death lies is not the point here, what is relevant is the rhetoric and policy that can land Eileen, and other parents like her, in jail in the first place. Eileen was in jail because she could not pay the fines from violating truancy law, one of many "parental responsibility laws" that exist throughout the US and variations abroad. Despite lamenting his decision to sentence her, Judge Dean Patton justified truancy arrests, arguing that they can often work to "break the habit" (Crimesider Staff, 2014) of parents who fail to ensure that their children attend school. Similarly, Greg Marshall with the State's Attorney in Jacksonville, Florida asserted that, "This whole process is to get the attention of the parents so they can work harder to keep those kids in school regularly" (Norris, 2016). Both Patton and Marshall's statements speak to the larger practice of responsibilizing parents of

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[1] According to the lawsuit by her children, Eileen suffered from high blood pressure and medical staff at the jail were told to check her blood pressure repeatedly throughout the day. But despite repeated complaints of being unable to breathe, the staff did not administer medical treatment. She was told to go back to sleep, and was found unresponsive in her cell. She died of heart failure at the hospital.

misbehaving youth through punitive interventionist policies, with the intent to "correct" them as parents.

Such "assumptions of familial dysfunction" animated similar initiatives during the Progressive era. As a key site of learning, the Progressives understood the family as having the power to push youth towards conformity or deviance. To these reformers, the behavior of a child was indicative of the abilities (or inabilities) of their parents—if a child was delinquent, the Progressives asserted that it was primarily because their family was incapable of teaching them any better (Rothman, 1980). This belief had powerful implications for the state's relationship with families, as being deemed "dysfunctional" by the state justified intervention and control. Similarly, the presence of a young person in a disciplinary alternative school can trigger assumptions about their parents or families. These kids have, in some way, demonstrated to authorities that they are unable to function properly in the mainstream school environment— earning them the title of "at-risk youth" (Carver and Lewis, 2010). Their riskiness, embodied by their presence in the alternative school, then provides the justification for institutional intervention into the lives of their families.

Through a critical content analysis of publically available materials from twenty disciplinary alternative schools around the US, this chapter argues that such schools continue the Progressive tradition of pathologizing the families of deviant youth through policies and practices grounded in an assumption of familial dysfunction. However, this assumption informs a particular kind of intervention shaped by the logics of neoliberal carcerality. In the alternative school, we see a "stepping back" of the maternal state as deemed necessary by neoliberalism (Wacquant, 2010)—the state does not take responsibility for the protection of these children; instead it becomes parent *to the parents*. Through the alternative school, the state attempts to

teach these families how to be "functional." Myriad regulations and requirements inflict punishment, force involvement, and impose counseling/training on parents and family members, with the potential to exacerbate social and economic precarity. Thus, in the modern disciplinary alternative school Progressive era assumptions about dysfunctional families overlap with neoliberal carceral logics that guide the handling of this dysfunction. Here the exertion of institutional control, surveillance, and punishment *of families* become justified by the "riskiness" of their children. Through policies that, for example, financially penalize parents when their children bring prohibited items to school; require them to escort their children to and from school each day; and mandate participation in parental training classes, the carceral state wields its power in order to ensure a continuously marginalized population required for racial capitalism. Policies such as these can exacerbate the social and economic precarity experienced by poor families and families of color, creating an environment in which these families are, in essence, set up to fail. Their "failure" to meet these standards is then used to justify further punishment, which can come directly through financial penalty or state intervention, or indirectly through the strain on their ability to tend to other responsibilities like employment. As such, in this chapter I explore the historical connection between delinquent youth and their families, this connection's role in modern juvenile justice, and how it operates today in the disciplinary alternative school to exert carceral state power over marginalized families.

The Progressive Roots of Risky Families

To the Progressives, "those in need of help were more or less like children. The disadvantaged were the objects of care, they were to be done for" (Rothman, 1978: 70). Progressives understood "those in need" as the products of social creation—specifically their

culture, raising, and environment—and they were to be "cared for" by the state. As such three assumptions motivated the Progressive project: 1) the human condition is best understood through recapitulation, 2) the urban city is overcome with disease that spreads within and through its inhabitants, and 3) reform is possible (though sometimes only to an extent) with the help of the state (Platt, 2009; Rothman 1978, 1980).

Finding inspiration from the biological model of Haeckle's recapitulation theory, which contended that deficiencies are passed down through cultural groups biologically, Progressives argued that degeneracy is passed down from parents and family members through socialization (Margonis, 2009). This also had racialized and classed implications, as it was assumed that non-white and foreign-born white people were socially and intellectually inferior, and thus so were their children. But importantly, what both versions have in common is the *family*. Whether passed on through blood or behavior, the family sits at the root of the problem.

Following this logic, Progressive era ideas about socially deficient youth, including why they exist and what to do about them, were based firmly in ideas about the family. Progressives constructed delinquents as socially and culturally deficient, improperly socialized and neglected, and the victims of a learned degeneracy (Platt, 2009). Of "degraded" homes and delinquent youth, Progressive reformers Sophonsiba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott (1912) wrote, "while the facts given as to the home cannot be regarded as immediately responsible for any act, they may be looked upon distinctly as obstacles to the child's well-being, making delinquency almost inevitable" (p. 114). Reformers also understood state intervention as the best way to deal with social problems like deviant youth, as they staunchly believed that "the state, not the individual would define the social good and take final responsibility for its fulfillment...only the state could make the individual free" (Rothman 2002: 50). This understanding of families as the problem

and the state as the savior undergirded the legal doctrine of *parens patriae* and the interventions that it has since justified. *Parens patriae* continues to give the state the right to assume wardship over a child who lacks parents or whose parents have been deemed unfit—the state then, becomes parent (Shelden, 2008).

Consequently, as child savers widened and formalized the definition of delinquency, youth who engaged in behaviors that had previously been ignored were brought under the control of the juvenile justice system (Platt, 2009). Because the definition of "delinquent" included acts that violated white middle-class norms such as vagrancy, street selling, and truancy, the young people most likely to become captured in this web were those from poor families and families of color (Ward 2012, Chávez-García, 2007). At the same time, their families were understood as a primary cause for their behavior, thus these children were thought to need "rescuing *from their own* families" (DiFonzo, 1995: 867, emphasis in original). As such, Progressive reformers worked to have children separated from their incapable families and placed under the control of the state, comforted by their "unquenchable confidence that this major extension of state and societal control over the lives of these children constituted a social duty whose effects were entirely beneficial" (DiFonzo, 1995: 859). The notion of the state as parent was particularly important in the commission of at-risk youth to "houses of refuge," and when combined with the assumptions of family-based deficiency, anti-urban sentiment, and the child saver doctrine of rehabilitation, the creation of the first juvenile reformatories followed.

The belief that proper training in a wholesome environment could overcome the deficiencies of "poor family life, a corrupt environment, and poverty" (Platt 2009: 53) motivated the establishment of juvenile reformatories in the early 20th century. According to reformers,

removing a child from their home in the city slums and placing them in a better one was wholly

the right and responsibility of the state. As G.E. Howe (1880) described,

> In removing a boy from an inadequate or bad home into a better or good one, we are not
> acting in violation, but in harmony with natural law…So that if we remove a child from
> parents who have virtually orphaned him by their inadequacy, neglect, or cruel usage, and
> from a home unnatural and hateful, and bring him into the adoption of a wiser and better
> parentage, and into the more natural home of comfort and benevolence, then, again, we
> are not contrary to, but in unison with, natural principles (p. 209-210).

Thus, youth were to be placed in cottage-style reformatories with "all the necessaries and

comforts of a well-ordered home," supervised by a "Christian gentleman and lady" (Howe, 1880:

210), who acted as father and mother. Reformatories, ideally, attempted to replicate the

characteristics of the state-defined functional family, predicated on the notion that through

exposure to such relationships, youth could overcome the deviant lessons that their families and

environment instilled in them.

However, as scholars note, juvenile reformatories rarely operated under the cottage plan;

instead youth were often housed in overcrowded warehouse-style buildings (Ward, 2012;

Wolcott and Schlossman, 2004). The young people who were warehoused in these reformatories,

though, were predominantly poor youth of color—their families deemed the most dysfunctional.

Tony Platt (2009) explains, "Most penologists agreed that children living under 'normal parental

conditions' should not be committed to reformatories" (p. 61). These "normal" conditions were

more often associated with middle-class whiteness—marginal white youth had access to

rehabilitative programs in the community, and white delinquents were typically sent home to

their functional families (Trost, 2005; Ward, 2012). As Alexandra Cox (2015) contends, "in its

early years, the juvenile justice system disproportionately affected urban youth whose riskiness

was constructed via their positions as the urban precariat" and their inclusion in families that

were all "constructed as dysfunctional" (p. 557). This connection between delinquent, at-risk youth and their dysfunctional families still pervades the juvenile justice system today.

Modern Manifestations of Risky Family Management

The Progressive reformers were adamant that the state *should* be involved in and responsible for the lives of its citizens, acting as protector and caretaker. This position justified the Progressives' initiatives to remove youth from families deemed unfit. In those instances, the state "took responsibility" for the care of the child—though the way that "care" was delivered was, of course, problematic (see Chávez-García, 2012; Platt, 2009; Ward, 2012). The point, however, is that the state was cast as a protective parent, directly responsible for the "care" of its citizens. Today, interpreting youthful deviance, delinquency, and risk as rooted in the family continues to legitimize the increased presence of the state and its many actors into "family life." However, this involvement occurs alongside a neoliberal retreat of the maternal welfare state. Under neoliberalism citizens are "liberated from an over-protective state" (Muncie, 2006: 773), and the rhetoric and practice of responsibilization pervades the neoliberal landscape. The emphasis shifts from considerations of social context, rehabilitation, and state protection towards "prescriptions of individual responsibility, an active citizenry and governing at a distance" (Muncie, 2006: 771) or as Nikolas Rose (1996) describes it, the "death of the social." However, according to Joe Soss and colleagues (2011), neoliberalism has converged with paternalism—an inherently involved and restrictive ideology. Under this form of "new paternalism,"

> The child...lacks the capacity to know what is in her or his best interest and has yet to develop the self-discipline needed to act effectively on such knowledge. As an adult, the father is in a better position to know what is in the child's best interest. As a parent, the father has a moral obligation to act on this knowledge. He must use his legitimate authority to direct and supervise the child in ways that help her or him to flourish (Soss et al., 2011: 23-24).

Thus, neoliberal paternalism aims to teach marginalized populations what to do in order to function as prudent subjects—to "choose to act in ways that comply with market imperatives and political authorities" (Soss et al., 2011: 28).

Applying this logic to the case of "at-risk" youth and their families, the state no longer adopts the role of protective parent (mother) by circumventing the natural parents and taking responsibility for these youth (though instances of this do still occur). Instead, the state operates as the authoritarian parent (father) *to the parents* of these youth. As Val Gillies (2005b) explains, childrearing has become increasingly understood as "a public rather than a private concern" and thus "the state must take responsibility for inculcating the practice of good parenting" (p. 839). This assumption of agency decontextualizes families by ignoring the social and economic forces that shape parenting practices, thus "bad parenting" is constructed as a choice and "good parenting" as something that simply needs to be taught to those who have failed to reach particular standards. Gillies (2005b) describes this agentic, neoliberal model as one in which "appropriately raised citizens [are] assumed to be able to negotiate and transcend obstacles in their path by exploiting opportunities, developing skills and managing risk" (p. 840). As such, the goal is no longer to be the parent to the children, but rather to act as a stern yet helpful father who teaches these parents how to better negotiate and transcend parenting obstacles, thus placing the responsibility onto the parents themselves.

In moving towards "fixing" these parents, the state resists the maternal-welfarist orientation that neoliberal paternalism condemns. Where it was once an object *on* which the maternal state could exert its power and control in the name of protection, the family now functions as a primary medium *through* which the state exerts its power and control, in the name of personal responsibility. It is not that the state is no longer deeply involved in the lives of its

citizens, but rather that it expresses this involvement through the family unit—transforming families into sites of neoliberal education.

Responsibilizing Risk

In understanding how this interventionist expansion occurs for deviant youth and their families today, we must look at a concept that saturates youth justice literature: risk. While definitions abound, at-risk youth are commonly defined as those who "engage in high risk behaviors" and/or "adopt 'risk lifestyles,' those marked by drug use, unprotected sexual behavior, dropping out of school, delinquency and violence" (National Research Council, 1993: 1). These youth, it is proclaimed, are "at-risk" of a number of near and distant ills, including educational failure and criminal offending in particular. But as Peter Kelly (2000) argues, it is more than merely a life of low education and prison or jail that can follow: what is most at risk is a preferred future—a normative future that can only be achieved through responsibilizing strategies. Risk rhetoric responsibilizes youth, working to ensure that they take it upon themselves to secure a socially desirable future. But it does not only responsibilize the young person—part of the responsibility falls to the family as well. Youth are responsible for their futures, but their families are responsible for instilling in them the neoliberal values that will secure such a future. The responsibilized family is tasked with making the right choices for their children (Kelly, 2000), and those who do not, as evidenced by their behaviors and those of their children, are similarly considered at-risk. Thus "these preferred futures, whatever they might be, are placed at-risk through the present behaviors and dispositions of certain populations of youth and, importantly, their families" (Kelly, 2000: 468).

The role of the family in estimations of risk appears vividly in the risk assessment tools used by the juvenile justice system. When a young person enters the system, the type of intervention they receive depends on the level of risk of reoffending they present. Common risk factors for juvenile offenders include: prior arrests, conflicts with teachers, truancy, failing grades, single parent-households, parents with criminal records, unemployed parents, homelessness, and family poverty (Baird et al., 2013; Shader, 2004). While only comprising a piece of the risk assessment, "family circumstances and parenting" are important components in predicting the likelihood of re-offending, and thus the intervention provided. As Goshe (2015) argues, "kids from 'good' families are more likely to be referred to diversion programs or receive no intervention whatsoever," while those from "bad" families "may receive more sanctions-based interventions…and more monitoring because of the perception they lack them at home" (p. 50). Here we see a connection between delinquent youth and their families that echoes the Progressive era—at-risk youth are at-risk based partially on the characteristics of their families. As such, the family becomes key to understanding the future behavior of youth, particularly their potential for redemption and rehabilitation. And importantly, certain types of families are more likely to face structural disadvantage in the form of poverty, unemployment, and family disruption, thus marginalized youth are then interpreted as more at-risk than privileged ones (Goddard and Myers, 2017). What has culminated is a new way of legitimizing intervention into *certain* families enacted through multiple institutions, of which the juvenile justice system is only one.

In her analysis of juvenile justice in New York, Cox (2015) explores how Progressive era principles emerge in modern juvenile justice rhetoric and practice. The construction of delinquency as a product of deficient environments and deficient families remains, however, it

informs an intervention that differs from the Progressive practice of removing youth to rural

reformatories. Critiques waged against the historical practice of removing youth from the "sinful

city" and placing them in rural institutions, spurred legislation in New York aimed at keeping

delinquent youth "Close to Home"—i.e. closer to the city (Cox, 2015). However, by keeping

youth in their urban environments, the focus shifted towards fixing their families. Parents of

system-involved youth can now be required to take part in Functional Family Therapy,

Multisystemic Family Therapy, and other family-based intervention programs. Similar initiatives

are taking place across the United States—for example, the Dougherty County juvenile court in

Georgia is working to continue its use of Functional Family Therapy, originally implemented in

2013. As Judge Herbie Solomon describes,

> The whole idea is to strengthen families and to ensure that we are able to work with children and families to implement policies that the children will learn how to adhere to parental rules, and parents will learn how to address certain issues that they have in parenting their children (Green, 2017).

Similarly, Kansas recently adopted a state-wide option in which adjudicated youth can be

ordered to participate in Functional Family Therapy, or eligible youth can opt to enroll as a

condition of their probation. Karen Pollet, the executive director of the Finney County

Department of Corrections, explains that this initiative is motivated by the realization that "we

need to work with the family as a whole" (Minton, 2017).

These ideas also motor policies that infiltrate the lives of all families, not just those

involved with the criminal justice system. Each state in the US has some degree of a parental

responsibility law that makes it possible to hold a parent or guardian legally responsible for the

misbehavior of their children (Brank and Scott, 2014). Instead of removing these children from

their homes as the child savers may once have suggested, these laws attempt to "persuade"

parents—by threatening confinement or financial penalty—to be "better," to demonstrate the

characteristics of a "good" parent. Parental responsibility laws are based in the assumption that if a child commits an offense (criminal or status), it is because the parent has failed to "exercise reasonable care, supervision, protection, and control" (Cal. Penal Code § 272, n.d.) over them. Truancy laws, for instance, link multiple institutions: the family, the school, and in some cases, the criminal justice system. In forty US states and the District of Columbia, parents of repeatedly truant students can face fines of up to $2,000 and/or terms of imprisonment (Popovich, 2014; Chasan, 2015).

We see similar initiatives at parental responsibilization and training outside of the US, particularly in the Parenting Order of England and Wales. When children are convicted of an offense; subjected to anti-social behavior, sex offender, or child safety orders; or the parent is convicted of failing to ensure their child attends school (Evans, 2012), the Order mandates "training": the court requires parents to attend counseling and parenting sessions for varying lengths of time. However, this training is not optional, and violating the order can result in financial penalties or imprisonment. The Order was expanded in 2003, granting power to schools and local authorities, and giving rise to various functional-family projects. The government claims that the Parenting Order and its expansions work to prevent offending and promote the welfare of families, by "reinforcing parental responsibility" (Ministry of Justice, 2010).

The at-risk rhetoric that courses through mandated parental training, parental responsibility laws, and parenting orders, reaffirms Progressive era notions of deficient youth and deficient families. But it also informs interventions that differ from those of the Progressive era. The state no longer acts as the protector of its citizens, as the child savers once insisted. Instead, the state's role is to teach citizens how to be responsible for themselves, and in the case of deviant youth, for teaching parents how to be responsible for their children. This neoliberal

approach "promise[s] potentially endless justification for the surveillance of populations of youth" (Kelly, 2000: 133), and it seems, their families as well. What binds these functional family projects together is their shared function as channels for decentralized state power, as the state deploys its power *through* the family. As Erica Meiners (2011) explains, "the decentralization key to neoliberal policies does not mean that the state withdraws," instead, "the state's relationships and abilities to negotiate power, to 'govern' from a distance, shift and potentially expand" (p. 557). The state governs those families identified as risky through interventions that fundamentally rely on the strategies of the carceral state that I have discussed—surveillance, responsibilization, exclusion, and punishment. This exertion of carceral state power over presumably dysfunctional families appears once again, albeit covertly, in the disciplinary alternative school.

From "Dysfunctional" to "Dignified" in the Alternative School

The alternative school has particular expectations for the parents of its students and it voices these expectations quite plainly. As expressed throughout the materials, a good parent teaches their child proper behavioral norms, ensures that they attend school, expresses involvement in their child's learning and stays always aware of their progress, participates in the school community, and recognizes the school's role as a primary institution in their child's life, thus supporting the school in its endeavors. While characteristics like these are generally promoted as "being relevant to all parents regardless of their circumstances" (Gillies, 2005b: 839), they largely reflect the values associated with middle-class whiteness and often inform policies that target non-middle class, non-white populations. As the parents of children who have violated social standards, the alternative school understands these parents as deficient in some

way and thus deserving of intervention—a form of intervention that ultimately attempts to teach

"bad" parents to adopt and express the expectations of "good" (white, middle-class) parents. In

doing so, the disciplinary alternative school takes on the authoritarian role over the parents of the

students sentenced there.

A parent's primary responsibility, according to the alternative school materials, is to

teach their child to abide by behavioral norms. This is particularly important in the context of

disciplinary alternative education because most of the students find themselves there because

they have violated behavioral standards (Dignity in Schools Campaign, n.d.; Tajalli and Garba,

2014). The Greene County Learning Center (2014) exemplifies this point in its Student-Parent

handbook, in which an extensive list is provided for how parents can best "help" with their

children's educational experience. The list includes: "Teach the child to respect the property and

rights of others; help the child to meet and get along with other children; [t]ake an interest in

his/her friends; [e]ncourage each child to follow simple rules, be courteous, and demonstrate

good manners" (Greene County Learning Center (GCLC), 2014: 4-5). While the placement of

responsibility on parents to properly socialize their children is not new, nor is it only present in

the alternative school, this responsibilization does take a unique form here. These students have

already behaved badly, which can signal a failure by the parents to teach them otherwise. Thus,

the need to correct is perhaps understood as even more crucial because of the level of risk that

these students, and by extension their families, embody. This is similar to the position taken by

many child savers and Progressive era reformers. In discussing the role of the juvenile

reformatory, Howe (1880) explains that the heads of the cottage family—the father and mother

figures—should be well qualified to "lay the foundation for moral character, and the efficient

architects of its further developments" (p. 218). While Howe (1880) linked this ability with being

a Christian, what remains the same both then and now is the assumption that these families have failed in properly laying the foundation for good citizenship.

Fundamental to the success of these students, and thus expected of parents, is school attendance. Reflective of statements made by multiple schools, "Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school" (McKinley Alternative School, 2016: 8). This expectation can be met in multiple ways—Wolverine Alternative Center (n.d.) implores parents to "encourage [their] child to attend school regularly and to be punctual" (p. 1), whereas the Pittsylvania County/Danville City Regional Alternative School (Virginia Department of Education, 2017) specifies that parents must "provide transportation on a daily basis." The Greene County Learning Center (2014) encourages parents to "plan[] a wake-up, homework, and bedtime routine" (p. 4) to ensure that their child has good attendance. Like mainstream school students, alternative school students must abide by compulsory attendance laws, though the length of time and conditions under which someone is deemed truant varies. If they are found truant, their parents can also be subjected to charges of aiding and abetting violations of compulsory attendance, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, failing to reasonably supervise or encourage school attendance, and so on. Compulsory school attendance is not new—in the Progressive era, parents were similarly expected to ensure that their children went to school. Then, as now, parents could be held accountable for their child's truancy. As stated in 1832 by the Trustees of the Public School Society of New York,

> If then persons are found so reckless of the best interests of their children, and so indifferent to the public good, as to withhold from them that instruction, without which they cannot beneficially discharge those civil and political duties which devolve on them in after-life, it becomes a serious and important question, whether so much of the natural right of controlling their children may not be alienated as is necessary to qualify them for usefulness, and render them safe and consistent members of the political body (Trustees of the Public School Society of New York 1932, cited in Bremmer 1970: 260).

While the language of the Public School Society and the alternative school may differ slightly, the message is clear—a good parent gets their child to school.

It is also imperative that parents stay involved in the educational experiences of their children. Oftentimes this means keeping their kids on track and staying up to date on their progress. For example, the Alternative Center for Education (2017) suggests that parents "ensure that [their] student makes up all missed assignments…review their child's report cards and meet with their teachers on a consistent basis" (p. 1). More specifically, the Greene County Learning Center (2014) specifies that "parents can help with their child's education" by "[d]iscuss[ing] the child's daily contract in terms of areas of improvement and ways to progress toward developing more self-management skills; then sign the contract" (p. 5). In this way, the alternative school places a level of responsibility on parents to remain fervently aware of how their children are doing in school, if they wish to meet the standard of "good" parents.

Part of being involved in their children's education is the expectation that parents also maintain a presence in the school community by attending school events. For instance, McKinley Alternative School (2016) parents are "expected to participate in Open Houses, Student-led Conferences, and other programs that benefit their child" (p. 8). The Alternative Center for Education extends this request to include not only attendance, but also assistance at such events. Part of the "parental responsibilities" section of the handbook states that parents should "[a]ttend School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings, requested conferences, and volunteer [their] time at school events" (Alternative Center for Education, 2017: 1).

Parental involvement in the school community speaks to a broader level of support for the school and its role in their children's lives. Expressed throughout the materials is the request that parents work with the school to create better futures for the students. But this "partnership"

can only be demonstrated through the parents' strengthening of the school's power, rather than a

mutual recognition of both parties' expertise and ability. Parents of one school are asked to

"encourage and positively reinforce individual behavior goals and the Levels for Change

Program" (Alternative Center for Education, 2017: 1)—the Levels for Change program is the

reward/punishment system used by the school to promote good behavior. Support for the school,

then, comes through a parent's reinforcement of the school's control strategies at home. This

support is also expressed through parental involvement in school functions, as Greene County

Learning Center (2014) encourages parents to "show your child that you and the staff are

working together in their best interest by attending all meetings" (p. 4). The school exerts its

position of power over the parents in its request that parents work *with them* to reinforce the

school's message. Despite Bragg Street Academy's (2016) request to "work together to help

your child be one of **TODAY'S LEARNERS, TOMORROW'S LEADERS**!!" (p. 4, emphasis

in original), this is ultimately a unidirectional partnership in which the parents provide legitimacy

to the school, but do not receive the same in return.

      The alternative school position on what a "good" parent should do is most succinctly

expressed in the Citrus County Renaissance Center's (n.d.) "Pledge for Parental Involvement"

displayed on their homepage:

> As a parent, guardian, or caring adult, I hereby give my pledge to support a high-quality
> education for all of Florida's students to the best of my ability. I have high expectations
> for my child and all of Florida's children to succeed in school and in life. I pledge to stay
> involved, serve as a positive role model, and maintain open communication with my
> child's teacher and school to ensure education remains a top priority in my household. I
> understand that it is my responsibility to stay informed and involved in all aspects of my
> child's education. Education is the key to success, and I will do everything I can to
> nurture my child's ability to learn.

The Citrus County Renaissance Center emphasizes the importance of parents being aware,

involved, supportive of the school, and responsible in a number of ways; however, this "pledge"

speaks even more directly to the need to elicit *agreement* from parents to uphold these standards—perhaps because of the assumption that prior to their children being sentenced to the alternative school, these parents have failed to do so.

The image of the "good parent" put forth by the disciplinary alternative school reflects larger scale, hegemonic standards to which parents are held. Good parents, in general, are "constructed as resourceful, agentic, and ethically responsible" individuals who "foster[] and transmit[] crucial values to their children which protect and reproduce the common good" (Gillies, 2005: 76). This model of success, while seemingly neutral, "resonates most closely with the values and ambitions of white, middle class parents, suggesting that working class (and/or ethnic minority) families are the real target" (Gillies, 2005: 80) of corrective interventions like those in the disciplinary alternative school. It is in this construction of what parents should be that we see similarities between the Progressive era and the current moment. The alternative school's "good" parent provides a productive foil to the child savers' "bad" parent. The families of delinquent children were understood as "training school[s] of vice" (State v. Brown, 50 Minn., 1892: 353), in which youth were exposed "from their earliest infancy to drunkenness, immorality, obscene and vulgar language, filthy and degraded conditions of living" (Breckinridge and Abbott, 1912: 105). While notions of family pathology permeate both eras, in the modern case, schools seem less eager to save youth from their parents—and more eager to extend coercive practices into families. Today, because these parents are presumed to be "bad" or lacking in some way, the alternative school then tries to enforce its expectation of quality parenting through several policies. By applying punitive practices to parents, forcing or coercing their involvement, and trying to shape them through training and counseling, the alternative

school attempts to teach these parents how to better care for their children, ultimately upholding the ideals of neoliberal paternalism.

Parental Punishments

Alternative school students are required to follow the code of conduct; however, if they violate it, their parents can very easily feel the punitive power of the alternative school (Dunning-Lozano, 2015). Invoking logics similar to US parental responsibility laws, Plains Alternative Learning Center (2015) makes clear that children are extensions of their parents— "Parents are legally and financially responsible for their children's actions" (p. 26). As a result, parents can be punished for the behavior of their children, and these punishments can compound the hardship that many of these likely marginalized families may be facing. For example, parents of students who attend Fruitvale Independent School District's (ISD) DAEP may be required to supervise their child throughout the school day if the student fails to comply with the rules (Fruitvale Independent School District (Fruitvale ISD), 2016). While this option is presented as an alternative to suspension or expulsion from the alternative school, it is important to consider how this type of "alternative" can function as a punishment for a parent, especially one who, for example, may be unable to take a day off from work. The other option is for the child to accept the suspension or expulsion, increasing the amount of time spent away from their home school.

Parents of Fabens ISD DAEP students also experience indirect punitiveness. The student code of conduct states specifically that for male students, facial hair including beards, goatees, and mustaches will not be allowed. In addition to the problematic gendering of facial hair, parents are very clearly implicated in the enforcement process, as "**Noncomplying students will be escorted to the restroom by parents/guardian to shave. Parents will be required to**

purchase razors" (Fabens Independent School District (Fabens ISD), 2016: 14, bold in original). Female students are not allowed to wear makeup, and similarly, "**Non-complying students will be escorted to the restroom by their parents/guardian to wash off make-up**" (Fabens ISD, 2016: 14, emphasis in original). There is an added component to this type of punishment because if a student is not in compliance, the day may not count as time served towards their sentence, extending the length of the time that the student, and the parents, must operate under these rules.

Much like other alternative schools, Brown Street Education Center (2014) students must accumulate a number of points in order to return to their home campus (see also McKinley Alternative School, 2016; Tyler County ISD, 2015). These points are earned through good behavior and academic achievement. For these students, violating the dress code can result in a number of disciplinary actions including suspension, loss of points earned towards advancement to a higher level or demotion to a lower level—all of which can increase the time to be served. However, violating dress code can trigger a more immediate punishment for parents, as many of these schools require that parents bring their children appropriate clothing (Alpha Academy, 2016; Brown Street, 2014; Prospect Community Day School, 2016). The Academy at Eleventh Street (2015) similarly extends its punitive power to the parents, but invokes an isolationist strategy towards the students as well: "Students who do not comply with dress code may be sent to isolation" (p. 2) while waiting for a parent to bring a change of clothes. Importantly, if the student continues to violate the dress code after the parent has been made aware of the infraction, "he or she may spend extended time in isolation or be sent home after three consecutive occurrences" (The Academy at Eleventh Street, 2015: 2). Sending students home for minor code of conduct violations assumes that a parent or guardian will be home to supervise the student, or

fails to even take home-supervision into consideration—either way, this practice contradicts the logic that made the alternative school popular in the first place.

Taylor ISD's DAEP enters the realm of direct financial punishment when students bring items that are not allowed, such as cell phones: "Students who attempt to bring these items onto the campus will have them confiscated and will be required to pay a $15 dollar handling fee to regain possession of the item" (Taylor Independent School District (Taylor ISD), 2016: p. 11). If students continue bringing prohibited items, their parent(s) will be required to pick the item up *and* pay a fine. While not expressly directed at the parents until the student has repeatedly violated this rule, mandating the student to pay a fine can easily become the parent's responsibility.

While these policies may not initially seem punitive for parents because they are more directed at the students, a closer look reveals the indirect costs that parents may have to pay. The mandate that parents return to their child's school to watch them shave or wash off their makeup, pick up their cellphone, drop off a change of clothes, and so on, assumes that parents are able to put other responsibilities on hold, like work or other family obligations, and have access to transportation. Policies related to dress code are particularly problematic as they fail to consider the possibility that a student is out of dress code because they simply cannot afford the proper attire. And as many scholars have noted, imposing fines on people for failing to follow the rules often only compounds experiences of disadvantage (Beckett and Herbert 2009; Miller and Alexander, 2016). Ines, the mother of an alternative school student, Araceli, in Jessica Dunning-Lozano's (2015) work, experienced these challenges. As Dunning-Lozano (2015) explains, "When Araceli breaks the rules, Ines is subjected to the consequences as well" (p. 88). Ines would lose hours at her hourly wage-earning job, while her husband and family members would

also have to leave work to deliver clothing or meet with the school staff. As a whole, these policies caused Ines "a tremendous amount of frustration and compromised her employment" (Dunning-Lozano, 2015: 88). This experience, termed "secondary discipline", operates as "a way of imposing social control and disadvantage on already disadvantaged communities" (Dunning-Lozano, 2015: p. 121).

These parental punishments echo the logics of US parental responsibility laws, and importantly, often target the same populations. In reference to the fining or jailing of parents of truant students, Joanna Heilbrunn, director of the National Center for School Engagement, argues that such practices "do[] nothing to remove any of the barriers you can possibly think of that might be preventing a family from getting a kid to school" (Popovich, 2014). Importantly, the truant population is comprised largely of children of color and those from low-income families (Ahmad and Miller, 2015). This argument can be extended to the difficulties faced by alternative school parents. Through both direct expressions of punishment like levying fines/confinement for truancy, and indirect punitiveness like those in the alternative school, the state attempts to parent these parents, to force their compliance with the hegemonic definition of "good parenting" so that it can remain seemingly uninvolved in the lives of its citizens.

But within such initiatives, a set of problematic assumptions lurk. These assumptions rest on a "fallacy of autonomy" (Currie, 1985), the belief that families are somehow unaffected by larger social and structural forces. Through this agentic frame, any parenting successes (or failures) are constructed as choices knowingly made by "good" or "bad" parents. In the same way, policies that target families, like those in the alternative school but also parental responsibility laws and Parenting Orders, are constructed as ideologically neutral. But, families *do* operate within a structure shaped by race, class, gender, sexuality, etc., and policies reflect

those imbedded values. As a result, both compliance to and violation of such policies can have significant consequences for kids and families who find themselves at or beyond the margins of social and economic privilege.

Encouraged Involvement

In an attempt to include parents in their children's educational experience, many of the alternative schools have policies aimed at *"encouraging"* involvement. The students of McKinley Alternative School have a point system through which they work their way towards release, earning points through a variety of actions. One such action however relies on the parents—students can earn points if their parent "attends [an] open house or student led conference" (McKinley Alternative School, 2016: 9). This is arguably a form of positive reinforcement for the parents, as involvement in the school community can directly benefit their child. But while research confirms that parental involvement is fundamental to a student's success (Ma et al., 2016), the alternative school tries to facilitate through coercive means, even when accomplished through seemingly positive channels.

This "encouragement" also comes through several coercive, and at times forceful, policies in which parents are not only expected but often *required* to do things that are understood as exhibiting involvement in their children's educational processes. Despite being part of the public-school system, many DAEPs in Texas do not provide transportation for the students—parents of Tyler County ISD and Fabens ISD DAEP students must escort their children to school in the morning and pick them up at the end of the day. As stated in Tyler County's DAEP code of conduct handbook, parents who take their students to school before 7:30am must supervise them until the doors open. Once the doors open, "the parent/guardian is

to escort the student to the door and wait for the staff to receive/check-in the student and take charge of them" (Tyler County Independent School District (Tyler County ISD), 2015: 4). Parents must also wait until the staff dismisses the student into their supervision at the end of the day.

Importantly, this method of encouraging involvement links with punishment for both the student and the parent, as "students who are not picked up by 3:00pm will have 3 days added to their time at TCDAEP. Three days will be added for each day the student is picked up late." (Tyler County ISD, 2015: 4). This sentence extension once again can place a serious burden on the students and their parents. However, the unwillingness, or perhaps the inability, to show involvement in this way can also initiate a more direct form of punishment by state agencies, as the school will report the parent/guardian to Child Protective Services after two late pickups (Tyler County ISD, 2015). By mandating that parents transport their children to and from school each day, and linking that mandate with some form of punishment, alternative schools attempt to teach parents how to play an active role in their children's school day, though this is accomplished through coercive channels.

Alternative schools also attempt to include parents through daily or weekly progress reports. These reports, however, are not just sent home to make parents aware of their child's progress, they often must be signed by the parent, signaling that they are now cognizant of their child's status (Calvert County Public Schools, 2016; Prospect Community Day School, 2016). The Citrus County Renaissance Center (n.d.) expresses this process most clearly:

> Communication between the parent/guardian and school provides an avenue to promote success for the student; therefore, students will bring the weekly behavior sheet home each Friday to share with parent/guardian and return to school on Monday with a parent/guardian signature (p. 10).

As stated here, this can serve as a way for the school and parent to communicate, with the school informing the parent of how the child is doing through the report and the parent acknowledging their awareness through the signature. Drawing again on an earlier statement from the Greene County Learning Center (2014), students must return a signed contract daily and parents are encouraged to "[d]iscuss the child's daily contract in terms of areas of improvement and ways to progress toward developing more self-management skills" (p. 5). Here, the contract can function to prompt parental intervention into their child's behavior—signaling to parents that they need to "do something" if their child is not succeeding. Importantly, at Deer Park ISD DAEP, "[t]he student must return the SDF [Success Documentation Form] the following day in order to earn credit for that day" (Deer Park Independent School District (Deer Park ISD), 2015: 10). Consequently, if a student fails to obtain a signature from their parent, they have one more day added on to their sentence.

The mechanisms through which alternative schools try to bring parents into the educational process are not blatantly problematic or necessarily punitive, in fact they often appear quite well intended. Requiring that parents transport their children to school and back home can be understood as a way to encourage parents to get their children to school, but also to get them involved with their educational experiences, from start to finish. Through this policy, parents become active in their student's day. Success reports can also be constructed as a useful communication tool—keeping parents up to date on how their child is doing and alerting them to any potential issues. However, potentially problematic assumptions propel these interventionist initiatives. As one handbook benignly states, "When the child comes home from school, be interested in what has happened during the day" (Greene County Learning Center, 2014: 5). Requiring parents to provide transportation and mandating signatures for daily or weekly reports

encourages this involvement, to get parents to "be interested" in what happened that day, or week. In these policies, we can identify the assumption that parents, prior to their children entering alternative school, have *not* expressed interest or involvement, and thus they need to be taught how to do so, and then made to apply their newly acquired knowledge. These policies, however, can actually create conditions in which these parents may be unable to "prove" their involvement according to the alternative school's expectations. For example, parents may be unable to take their children to school each day or pick them up because of work or family obligations, or a lack of access to transportation. And some parents may be operating within such precarious and frazzled schedules that they may forget or be unable to sign the progress reports. In either instance, both the students and the parents can be punished for something that is largely out of their control. With the goal of parenting these parents, the alternative school imposes hard to reach standards, particularly on marginalized parents and families, and then punishes them for failing to adequately absorb the lesson.

Imposed Training

While the strategies of punishment and involvement speak to indirect attempts at shaping these presumably deficient parents into "good" ones, this goal takes a more overt form in the training programs present in many of these schools. Through "parent meetings," "family therapy," and "parent education counseling," alternative schools aim to coerce predominantly marginalized families into accepting and applying the techniques associated with white, middle class parenting styles—and the resistance to such initiatives activates its own form of punishment.

This attempted training can come in a variety of forms, both subtly coercive and bluntly forceful. Fabens ISD DAEP parents are "invited to attend a series of meetings in which parenting classes will be provided" (Fabens ISD, 2016: 12). This is an invitation, meaning parents are not required to attend. However, participation in these meetings directly impacts the student, as "[a]ttendance and participation of parents in these meetings will earn their child days off from their initially assigned days to DAEP" (Fabens ISD, 2016: 12). In fact, parent attendance at two consecutive "counseling meetings" can result in a reduction of the student's sentence by ten days. As such, while parents can choose not to attend, that decision means passing up the opportunity to shorten their (and their child's) involvement with the alternative school. This "choice", it seems, is not a free one.

More forceful techniques of training come through required family therapy and parent education counseling. Greene County Learning Center (2016) constructs the families of the students sent there as needing to experience change, stating that "[s]uccessful changes occur when families grow together in a mutually beneficial way" (p. 4). GCLC attempts to prompt such a change by requiring that parents take part in family therapy while their child attends the school, arguing that "the key factor for students, who are successful, in both the short term and the long term, is the active involvement and participation of their parents in family therapy" (Greene County Learning Center, 2016: 4).

Similarly, Elmore County Alternative Program (ECAP) mandates that parents of students who are assigned for 30 days or more at the program "participate in three hours of parent education" (Elmore County Alternative Program (ECAP), 2017: 5). The parent education program is delivered through a video series, worksheets, and counseling sessions. While the video series was not publicly available, the accompanying worksheets were. There are eight

worksheets in total and each provides definitions and examples of that section's lesson. The lessons teach parents to impose discipline at home; instill in their children proactivity, the desire for success, and responsibility; provide tools for resolving conflict; develop their child's self-discipline and respect for authority; and finally, to teach parents to remain in control at all times. At the end of each worksheet, there is also an activity for parents and children to complete together.

Lesson 1 is entitled "The ABC's of Discipline at Home." According to this worksheet, discipline means: "Teaching children self-control and responsible behavior by *consistently* modeling the desired behavior…setting *consistent* limits and expectations…instilling *consistent* rewards and consequences…loving unconditionally and *consistently…acknowledging and nurturing* your child's need for independence." (ECAP Lesson 1, 2017: 1, emphasis in original). Importantly, the characterization of discipline ends with what discipline is not: "discipline does *not* mean punishing or controlling others" (ECAP Lesson 1, 2017: 1, emphasis in original). Here, we see that the program constructs consistency and responsibility on behalf of the parents as fundamental to teaching discipline to children. It is critical to remember that most students in the alternative school have found themselves there because they were caught breaking the rules, signaling a presumed lack of discipline and respect for authority. Thus, arming parents with the tools to instill discipline in their children may be understood by the alternative school as a particularly crucial goal.

This construct of a "good" parent becomes even clearer in Lesson 3: "Instilling the Desire for Success in Your Child."

> Teaching your child to *develop clear goals* and plans for the future… Teaching your
> child to be *self-motivated*… Helping your child *overcome barriers, pit-falls, and
> roadblocks*… Setting your child up for success by *building self-confidence*…
> Encouraging and Praising your child's big and small successes… Nurturing the *goodness*

and talents that are in your child… Realizing your child is special…*one of a kind* (ECAP Lesson 3, 2017: 1, emphasis in original).

Alternative schools are filled with "at-risk" youth, those who have demonstrated a lack of success in their mainstream school. Thus, these students may be understood as lacking in the will to succeed, suggesting an urgent need to train parents on how to instill such a desire.

Mere placement at the alternative school raises questions about a student's level of discipline and desire for success, but also their understanding of what it means to be responsible—assumptions that can also be carried over to the parent. Lesson 4 focuses on teaching children how to be responsible, primarily by teaching the parents. The lesson presents parental responsibility as demonstrating trustworthiness and reliability, being willing to admit fault, having integrity, and responding correctly to situations. In this lesson though, parents are told that "[r]esponsibility is the hardest thing to teach a child, even harder than Potty Training" (ECAP Lesson 4, 2017: 1) and they are provided with some tips on how best to undertake such a task. These tips include, "Make a family daily, weekly, and monthly to-do list…Stick to it!!! And be consistent…Cut out things that 'waste time': too much T.V., computer, phone/texting, video games, etc." (ECAP Lesson 4, 2017: 1). Interestingly, the last tip for parents is to "Learn to say 'NO' to your friends more and 'YES' to your family more…Less Friend-time…More Family-time" (ECAP Lesson 4, 2017: 1, emphasis in original). Apparent in this lesson is the attempt to instill in presumably irresponsible parents a sense of responsibility so that they can pass that down to their presumably irresponsible kids. However, the suggestion to say "NO" to their friends and "YES" to their kids more often assumes that these parents do the opposite, and thus are in need of correction.

This idea that these children and their parents are lacking in some way continues through to Lesson 7 in which the goal is to build respect for rules and authority. The lesson instructs

parents that "[r]espect is usually a parent's #1 issue when it comes to discipline at home and at school" (ECAP Lesson 7, 2017: 1). It then encourages parents to "[c]ommunicate expectations, rules, and consequences…Involve your child in the process of discipline…Be fair and consistent—follow through…Award good behavior…Always acknowledge/correct disrespectful behavior" (ECAP Lesson 7, 2017: 1). As expressed here, teaching respect for authority is understood as a particularly important, and difficult, task for a parent. However, such a lesson can only be properly taught by someone who also demonstrates obedience. These suggestions, while aimed at helping parents to teach their children, can also be understood as teaching the parents themselves. Together, the parents and children are to then develop a family code of conduct contract including five to ten rules and their consequences, and then sign the contract. Much like the contracts used by many disciplinary alternative schools, this practice works to promote deference to authority—both by the students and the parents.

By coercing and at times forcing parents to take part in counseling, therapy, and training, disciplinary alternative schools attempt to shape parents into the state-constructed mold of what it means to be a "good parent." What propels this initiative is the assumption that these parents are deficient or dysfunctional in some way, having failed to produce disciplined, responsible, and determined children, as evidenced by their presence at the alternative school. However, a "fallacy of autonomy" (Currie, 1985) continues to undergird this characterization, in which families are presumed to operate unaffected by larger social and economic forces. For example, through this framework, parents who are unable to closely monitor the amount of television their kids watch because they must work inflexible, marginal jobs become deficient, rather than resourceful, in their navigation of a precarious labor market. As such, these policies reflect the

assumption that "bad" parenting styles are merely reflective of parents' "bad" choices rather than an unsupportive society, ultimately legitimizing inherently punitive interventions[2].

In essence, these are projects of re-socialization in which predominantly marginalized families are inculcated with middle-class values. Gillies (2005) reasons that such projects "neglect[] the primary origin of class differences between parents, disregarding the crucial impact of poverty, insecurity and poor living conditions," and as a result, "the moral choices of the privileged group are normalized to warrant the regulation of the disadvantaged" (p. 81). This construction of deficient parenting mirrors the UK's Parenting Order and New York's "Close to Home" initiative. Goldson and Jamieson (2002) argue that the Parenting Order effectively "provided for the extension of state intervention (primarily through youth justice agencies) into 'family life'" (p. 82). Similarly, of "Close to Home," Cox (2015) explains that even for youth who are not institutionalized but allowed to remain at home, "the net of control arguably extended more broadly over them and their families" (p. 561). Based in the assumption of a parenting deficit, these programs inadvertently target working class families, families of color, and single-parent households (Cox, 2015; Evans, 2012; Goldson and Jamieson, 2002). In each of these cases, then, the riskiness of certain children is used to justify state intervention into certain families—intervention that is aimed at "helping" youth and their families, but ultimately relies on mechanisms of control. Significantly, this attempt to "help" by "changing" parents comes through cognitive/behavioral oriented strategies, ignoring and failing to address or alleviate the material economic and social conditions in which these families operate.

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[2] This is similar to the findings reported in Gillies' (2005b) qualitative study of class and parenting styles, in which working-class parents had to utilize different parenting techniques in order to negotiate social and economic obstacles that middle-class parents did not. Gillies' describes that the reality of poverty, social exclusion, and risk of emotional and physical violence "were rarely compatible with middle-class ideals of parental investment in education and democratic childrearing styles," thus "working-class parents were more concerned to ensure that their children have the skills and the strength to be able to cope with the instability, injustice and hardship that will most likely characterize their lives" (p. 842).

Carceral Expansion in the Name of Benevolence

As shown here, the infiltration of carceral logics into institutional youth control does not only impact students—the carceral apparatus also engulfs their families. Carceral state expansion through policies that directly or indirectly target families is left relatively untouched in discussions of the connection between schools and carcerality more broadly, and specifically in reference to the school-to-prison pipeline. Fundamental to understanding how these policies operate as covert, largely unchecked, mechanisms of carceral state expansion is the realization that the school materials present them as benevolent techniques—not punitive ones. These interventions are designed and sold as intending to help these families and their children. A principal goal of the Tyler County ISD DAEP (2016) is to prompt understanding within parents that "they are partners in education and a vital component in their child's school experience" (p. 7). Similarly, the College Street Campus in Kentucky (2016) asserts that "[t]he primary purpose of our program is to support each youth and their family in the identification and understanding of their strengths and the ways in which they respond to issues at school, in the home and in the community" (p. 3). In the Elmore County Alternative Program's "Counseling Plan," the school counselor (Harrison, n.d.) expresses the hope that "parents/guardians will join us in our efforts to strengthen their child's educational, career, social, and personal goals through working together, **school and parents**, to ensure success" (p. 4-5, emphasis in original).

Helping parents become active in their children's education, and teaching them how to support their children and identify issues that they may be experiencing are indisputably important initiatives, and the schools present their programs as working towards those goals. However, this benevolence is reminiscent of the mission and rhetoric promoted by the reformist

child savers. The child savers claimed to be working in the best interest of all, especially of children, and as Platt (2009) argues, many of these reformers "were principled and genuinely concerned about alleviating human misery" (p. li). Specifically, they contended that the removal of deviant youth from their families into reformatories was necessary and righteous and widely beneficial. According to prominent Progressive reformers Peter Caldwell and Enoch Wines, these were institutions designed to "remedy the neglect and vice of parents, the failure of public schools, of mission and Sunday schools, and other moral agencies in the outside world" (Caldwell, 1886: 71), and thus "[t]he spirit of our reformatories is that of hope and effort" (Wines, 1880: 80-81):

Then, as now, the mission to save the children has resulted in the state intervening in the lives of these children and their families. Today however, this benevolent intent operates within a neoliberal carceral state. What this means is that the benevolence and the interventions it informs, remain, but notions of individualism, responsibilization, and a retreat of the welfare state have shaped how it manifests. It accomplishes this indirect involvement most powerfully through the family, particularly in attempts at "fixing" families thought to be deficient. In parental responsibility laws, parenting orders, juvenile justice family training initiatives, and the disciplinary alternative school, we can identify efforts, both subtle and forceful, by the state to teach these families how to be "good," to "direct and supervise the child in ways that help her or him to flourish" (Soss et al., 2011: 24). In the alternative school, we see the manifestation of neoliberal paternalism, as the state's role has shifted from maternal caretaker to paternalist authoritarian. In this shift, the goal too has transformed from protecting the citizens it considers dysfunctional through overt state intervention and control, to arming its citizens with the tools

deemed necessary for survival in a neoliberal carceral state—the responsibility of using these tools, then, falls to the citizens themselves.

These initiatives mirror what Marie Gottschalk refers to as "DIY social policies." These are policies "that stress individual solutions and personal responsibilities" (Gottschalk, 2016: 79) while decreasing the role of the state in welfare provision. As such, DIY social policies are aimed at "remaking individuals, not remaking social, political and economic structures" (Gottschalk, 2016: 78), which as she argues, will only serve to further reproduce and strengthen the carceral state. Much like the reformist reforms that Gottschalk discusses, the policies and practices employed in the disciplinary alternative school are openly directed at remaking individuals—both the students and their families—and they too function to stabilize the carceral state. These policies rely fundamentally on mechanisms of surveillance, punishment, and carceral social control, in order to bring these presumably problematic families in line with hegemonic definitions of functional ones. And importantly, socially and economically marginalized families are the most likely to comprise those characterized as problematic, as poor youth and youth of color disproportionately represent the alternative school population. But because these policies are framed as well intended and non-punitive in nature, they remain within the liberal agenda of "reform" and continue without much critique. As such, the disciplinary alternative school and its functional family initiatives provide evidence of the carceral state's ability to expand, and stabilize the racial capitalist order, through seemingly non-carceral channels—a project also accomplished through the students themselves.

CHAPTER IV

IMPRISONING "THOSE" KIDS: NEOLIBERAL LOGICS

In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a prerequisite.
        —Barack Obama

A Hidden World

In March of 2015, Ashton Bodiford, an 11-year-old from Alexandria, Louisiana, violated his school code of conduct by wearing his hair "too long" and refusing to cut it. As his punishment, school officials suspended Ashton for the remainder of the year (Guidry, 2015). While stories like Ashton's—those documenting the over-reliance on exclusionary punishment in US schools—abound, the telling of these stories typically stops here, at the sentencing stage. But for students like Ashton who are forced to vacate their mainstream school, yet required by law to participate in some type of education, their journey often continues to the disciplinary alternative school.

In the disciplinary alternative school, students are more likely to encounter a space enveloped by the logics of the neoliberal carceral state than one of support and liberating education. This chapter explores the alternative school and the experiences it constructs by excavating (1) the values and norms that undergird it, (2) how these values and norms may be impressed upon the students sent there, and (3) the potential impact that exposure to this environment may have on those students. To accomplish such a task, this chapter draws on the code of conduct handbooks of fifteen Texas Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs), located with Google search and analyzed through a critical approach to content analysis. Using these handbooks, I illustrate how this space works, through a curriculum of

control, to shape marginalized youth identities in ways that reaffirm their social and economic

positions under neoliberalism. This curriculum includes docilization, responsibilization,

atomization, and the normalization of criminal justice rhetoric and practice, and prepares these

students for lives of imprisonment.

Here, I conceptualize the link between school punishment and imprisonment in a way

that destabilizes the construct of the school-to-prison pipeline. As some have argued, the pipeline

analogy assumes a linear and unidirectional relationship between the school and the criminal

justice system (Meiners, 2007; Nolan, 2011; Sojoyner, 2016). Instead, as Simmons (2016) states,

"[s]chools and prisons do not sit on opposite sides of a metaphorical path, and the criminal

justice system is not at the end of the pipeline—it is implicated along the way" (p. 4). Thus,

"imprisonment" should not be restricted to only the prison sentence (Lynch, 2012) as such a

definition "neglect[s] the myriad ways in which institutions restrict the lives and liberty of

millions, and, in the process, reproduce and exacerbate social inequality" (Beckett and

Murakawa, 2012: 238). Instead, our understanding of imprisonment must expand to include the

experiences of surveillance, control, and diminished life chances felt by the unprivileged

neoliberal citizen—a life characterized by enmeshment in the criminal justice system, but also by

marginal (un)employment.

Employing this conceptualization, then, exposes the disciplinary alternative school as an

"alternative" that mimics the traditional push-out mechanisms it was intended to react against:

reinforcing racial capitalism by promoting the control, exclusion, and imprisonment of

marginalized youth. Recognizing the same logics that motivated earlier school push-out policies

in the alternative school illuminates the complexities of the carceral state. In this analysis, the

disciplinary alternative school emerges as an expression of the ability of the carceral state to

evolve and persist *through* recent reform efforts (see Gottschalk, 2016). As will be discussed in the conclusion to this dissertation, understanding the adaptive capabilities of the carceral state is necessary for progressing beyond a carceral society in general and educational inequality in particular. Thus, this chapter continues the dissertation's overarching goal of situating the disciplinary alternative school as one of many "alternatives" to carcerality through which the carceral state maintains its power.

Disciplinary Alternative Education in Texas

Due to the increase in the number of students pushed out of schools, many states now provide alternative education programs for suspended and expelled students (Wraight, 2010)—Texas is one such state. In 1995, alongside the national push to securitize schools, Texas put into action a statewide zero-tolerance commitment, providing schools with greater authority to remove disruptive students (Cortez and Cortez, 2009). But to avoid halting an excluded student's education, the legislature also established a system of alternative education. Under Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code (TEC, 1995, Ch. 37), each district in the state is mandated to provide an alternative learning setting to which students who violate the code of conduct can be removed.[1]

Assignments to a DAEP come through mandatory or discretionary referrals. The offenses that result in a mandatory assignment are specified in the Texas Education Code and apply to all school districts uniformly. For example, engaging in "conduct punishable as a felony," or "possess[ing] a weapon," "controlled substance," or "dangerous drug" (TEC, 1995, Ch. 37) will result in a sentence at DAEP. Discretionary referrals come from violating locally adopted student

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[1] Despite being mandated by state policy, funding for DAEPs is often disjointed, as districts must piece together support from local, state, and federal funding streams (Freeman, 2012).

codes of conduct, consequently varying across districts. Being out of dress code, displaying "insubordinate" behavior, and running down the hallway, can, in some schools, result in a discretionary referral to DAEP (Levin, 2006). Research has consistently shown that most DAEP referrals are discretionary (Cortez and Cortez, 2009; Tajalli and Garba, 2014). Of the 93,798 referrals in the 2014–2015 school year, 58.8 percent were discretionary while 41.2 percent were mandatory (Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2016).

Consistent with trends outside of Texas (Foley and Pang, 2006; Vanderhaar et al., 2015), marginalized students disproportionately fill DAEPs. In the 2015–2016 school year, Black students only comprised 12.7 percent of the population but represented 29.6 percent of the discretionary referrals and 18.8 percent of the mandatory referrals. Hispanic students comprised 52.1 percent of the population and 47.2 percent of the discretionary referrals but 58 percent of the mandatory referrals. Contrastingly, White students made up 28.4 percent of the population, and only 20.3 percent of the discretionary referrals and 20 percent of the mandatory referrals (TEA, 2017). Furthermore, low-income students and those with intellectual or emotional disabilities are also more likely to receive a DAEP sentence (Cortez and Cortez, 2009). These disparities lend support to the claim that these institutions act as "warehouses" for disadvantaged youth (Geronimo, 2011).

The bourgeoning ethnographic research on disciplinary alternative schools strengthens such a characterization. Dunning-Lozano's (2015) extensive research on Texas DAEPs offers an in-depth look at disciplinary alternative education in practice, particularly how marginalized students and their families attempt to navigate an "educational" institution that is built on carceral logics. Dunning-Lozano (2015) concludes that the DAEP has emerged as "one manifestation of the punitive state's disciplining and criminalization of low-income populations"

(p. 14). Beyond Texas, Weissman's (2014) ethnographic study of alternative school students in Syracuse, New York, amplifies the voices of marginalized youth as they are exposed to heightened surveillance, substandard education, and the stigma that comes with an alternative school sentence. The similarities between school and prison become more obvious in Simmons' (2010, 2016) research on the "Prison School"—a public alternative school in Louisiana located on the grounds of the Orleans Parish Prison. Simmons' work makes clear the experience of alternative school students *as prisoners*, untrustworthy and flawed, and needing to learn obedience.

Together, these researchers uncover the influence of carcerality on the operation of disciplinary alternative schools, both in Texas and beyond, and show how these sites work to shape individual subjectivities in ways that are harmful to youth. This body of literature reveals attempts within alternative schools to create obedient, individualistic, and responsibilized citizens out of a decidedly threatening group of youth, using techniques that often mirror those of the criminal justice system. The current chapter adds to this conversation by locating the disciplinary alternative school within the neoliberal carceral state, making visible the processes through which these schools lock students into lives of imprisonment.

Neoliberalizing Youth

While lacking a single definition, scholars largely agree on the primacy of unregulated market economies, the reconfiguration of the state's role and responsibilities through dismantlement of welfare institutions, and the emphasis on personal responsibility and individual agency, as characterizing neoliberalism (Ossei-Owusu, 2012). These logics now permeate every aspect of daily life, and particularly understandings of crime and crime control. Current crime

control strategies shift responsibility away from the criminal justice system and onto other institutions, agencies, and individuals (Hannah-Moffat, 2005; Miller, 2014), absolving the state from blame, despite remaining the authority to which local agencies must answer (Lynch, 2000; Phoenix and Kelly, 2013).

Under neoliberalism, youth, and particularly poor youth of color, emerge as risky, liminally located pseudo-citizens in need of transformation. They "become a lightning rod for all the various perceived threats to society" (Giroux, 2013a: 111), and risk management policies work through processes of inclusion and exclusion to deal with these perceived threats. As a result, youth "experience a kind of social death as they are pushed out of schools, denied job training opportunities, subjected to rigorous modes of surveillance and criminal sanctions, and viewed less as chronically disadvantaged than as flawed consumers and civic felons" (Giroux, 2013a: 111). This experience instills in youth an individualized sense of failure or success, freeing the state from responsibility and critique.

Such management techniques attempt to transform deviant youth into rational, risk calculating citizens striving for full social participation through law-abidance (Rose, 2000). Responsibilization, however, does not guide self-transformation, but rather alienates and isolates youth (Cox, 2015; Phoenix and Kelly, 2013). These excluded and disposable youth are then "forced to inhabit 'zones of social abandonment,' extending from bad schools to bulging detention centers and prisons" (Giroux, 2013a: 109).

Youth experience the dispersal of neoliberal security and crime control logics most intensely in US schools (Devine, 1996; Hirschfield, 2008; Kupchik, 2010). As the sites of these logics, schools morph into miniature prisons, defined not through educational standards but rather standards of security and control (Casella, 2003). Such logics turn youth into

(pre)criminals and the techniques become a means of preparing some mentally, physically, and emotionally for a life of imprisonment (Crichlow, 2014; Goshe, 2015).

This preparation of students for imprisonment extends beyond prison walls and into the world of precarious, low-wage work. Most explicitly, the presence of a "hidden curriculum" and use of tracking in public schools prepares certain young people for college and others for marginal work (Anyon, 1980; Oakes, 2005). In this way, education is a key site for the reproduction of social inequalities (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; MacLeod, 2008). The alternative school plays a particular role in this social reproduction by preparing youth for marginal employment—and does so while maintaining an outwardly non-punitive means of control.

These two seemingly separate institutions—the criminal justice system and labor market—both function to uphold the neoliberal racial capitalist order, an unequal social system that rests on the bodies of those filling our prisons and working drive-thru windows. Functioning in either of the two realms requires similar ways of thinking and acting, and the school serves as a primary location for such socialization. But as mainstream schools in the United States work to decrease out-of-school suspensions and permanent expulsions, disciplinary alternative schools become important sites for enforcing upon students the ideals of the neoliberal subject. Here, marginalized youth are trained to function in a world that larger structural forces create for them, a world shaped by an ever-expanding carceral landscape and reliant on the precarity of employment. And the result of such training is imprisonment.

Instilling Neoliberal Discipline at the Alternative School

Docilization

An abundance of rules form the basis of this training and shape the daily experiences of alternative school students, controlling and limiting their behavior. While such rules are commonplace in most schools, the rules, regulations, and subsequent punishments commonly found in the alternative school are attempting to "correct" behaviors associated with "failure" in the mainstream school. The philosophy, then, of these schools is that they must be more corrective, more punishing. Essentially, the alternative school restricts and closely monitors the student's every move with the goal of instilling discipline and deference to authority. Through the enforcement of these logics, the alternative school attempts to teach students the importance of doing what they are told, and the consequences of insubordinate behavior. This transformation of bodies and minds, the docilization of students, is fundamental to their survival.

This emphasis on discipline appears not only in the name of the institution but also throughout the handbooks with opening statements such as, "[a]s a disciplinary alternative campus, DAEP adheres to a stricter code of conduct than a traditional campus" (Hereford Independent School District (Hereford ISD), 2014: 5). As part of this code of conduct, students must yield unquestioningly to directives. Any request of a staff member "will be followed without question or argument" (Tyler County Independent School District (Tyler County ISD), 2015: 3) and "in a positive manner" (DeSoto Independent School District (DeSoto ISD), 2016: 1). Many of these schools also require students to remain quiet unless given permission to speak (Fabens Independent School District (Fabens ISD), 2016).

In addition to restricting how students verbally interact with staff, schools similarly control and restrict the physical body. Students must, "[r]emain seated at all times unless given

permission to leave [their] seat. Remain facing forward and sit upright at all times" (Manor Independent School District (Manor ISD), 2016: 8). And students must time their bodily functions perfectly, aligning them with pre-established and regimented bathroom breaks (Fabens ISD, 2016; Hughes Spring ISD, 2015). For Fabens ISD students, following the rules (unquestioningly) literally equates with being a good citizen: "[The student] will be a good citizen by following school rules regarding [their] behavior and expectations" (Fabens ISD, 2016: 17). This likening of good citizenship with docility transforms young offenders into young citizens (Phoenix and Kelly, 2013), prepared to accept responsibility for their actions and, perhaps more importantly, their positions in life.

However, docilization cannot rely solely on the strict control of the voices, minds, and bodies of the alternative school student; it also requires punishment for challenging these methods of control. A variety of minor code of conduct violations such as tardiness and improper dress can result in "time added," "luxuries lost," or sometimes a combination of the two. School begins at 7:30am for Tyler County ISD (2015) students and those who arrive after 7:35am "will be counted tardy and the time will have to be made up at the end of the DAEP time assigned" (p. 4). For Culberson ISD students, repeatedly violating dress code is "considered persistent misconduct and may add placement days" (Culberson County-Allamoore Independent School District (Culberson ISD), 2014: 5) to the original sentence. In addition, while the alternative school hardly abounds with luxuries, privileges such as supervised socializing and facing outside of a study carrel can be quickly revoked (Red Oak Independent School District (Red Oak ISD), 2016). What is more, while overt criminal conduct elicits a call to law enforcement, less obviously criminal acts like disruption can also trigger an interaction between a student and the police (Princeton Independent School District (Princeton ISD), 2013).

The vigor with which schools express these rules—the student will do this and in this specific way—demonstrates the power inherent in these restrictions. As Turner (2015) argues, "[a]s a main site of socialization, the school helps youth internalize the insecurity and precariousness prevalent throughout the neoliberal social landscape as 'natural'" (p. 13), instead of encouraging them to understand these policies as oppressive. Having proven that they cannot make the right decisions—simply by being there—the student sits powerless under the gaze of the alternative school. Echoing Crichlow's (2014) conclusion in his study of young Black males in a Toronto housing project,

> Power is no longer on the body but on the minds of all [housing project] residents and inmates, to look out for themselves and to be self-policed at all times. In essence they both experience being continually under suspicion by authorities, while state social violence instills internalized fear that keeps them "in their place" (p. 119).

Alternative school students are left with only the option to obey. Environments encouraging creativity and critical thinking are replaced with docilization strategies and restrictions. In line with Cox's (2015) analysis of marginalized youth in behavior modification juvenile justice programs, students in the alternative school learn that submission to authority is the only way to survive.

Responsibilization

Responsibilization techniques impress upon us that our lives are the result of our own actions, and as such, crime and disorder are emblematic of personal failure rather than legitimate social issues (Harvey, 2005). This is particularly pertinent for youth who, because they straddle the age/maturation divide, represent risk (Kelly, 2003). Framing youth as risky authorizes the sorting, containment, and management of those who have been deemed problematic, especially, "brown and black bodies read as always on the verge of being out of control" (Nguyen, 2013:

294). To achieve this control and management, responsibilization discourse and performance reviews saturate the lives of youth in general (Franzén, 2015), and alternative school students in particular.

The handbooks constantly characterize bad behavior as a student's "choice"—and the consequences that follow as reflective of that choice. For example, "[a] student entering alternative school should understand that by their choices and actions, many of the privileges previously enjoyed at their home campus have been lost for the duration of the DAEP assignment and must be earned back" (Tyler County ISD, 2015: 2). Such policies make it clear that "the student's success is up to them," as "they are expected to cooperate with the DAEP staff, to improve their behavioral and decision making skills as they continue their educational program toward a successful graduation" (Tyler County ISD, 2015: 2).

The language of taking responsibility for one's actions and "proving" success continues throughout the handbooks. Students must "demonstrate a sense of responsibility for [their] behavior" (Fruitvale Independent School District (Fruitvale ISD), 2015: 3), by becoming familiar with the rules of the school (DeSoto ISD, 2016), while "exercis[ing] self-control, and com[ing] to school prepared to participate and learn" (Fruitvale ISD, 2015: 3). The emphasis on the students needing to take ownership of their actions forecloses institutional critique by forcing students to see their lives as the product of those actions and not of factors outside their control.

The importance of performance outcomes to neoliberal responsibilization in school manifests through frequent evaluations (Ossei-Owusu, 2012). While all schools place youth under scrutiny by measuring success/failure through grades and high-stakes testing, alternative schools require even more. On the first day of their sentence, students walk through the doors with sullied reputations since "their behavior record does not start over at DAEP" (Tyler County

ISD, 2015: 2). Like those behind bars, these students carry the baggage that comes with being labeled "trouble." Because they have already "failed" at their home campus, alternative school students must work even harder to prove themselves.

To determine a student's standing, many alternative schools have "point systems"—levels of achievement (or failure) based on the student's behavior. Students start out at the bottom of the point system, having to work their way up and toward release by earning points through good behavior and academic performance. They must "demonstrate daily that academic progress is being made" (Tyler County ISD, 2015: 3). At the end of every day, the staff informs the student of what level they occupy and sends daily or weekly reports of success/failure in regards to attendance, behavior, and academic work to parents and the home campus. Students must earn (or maintain) a minimum number of points before the school will consider their release (Fabens ISD, 2016; Hereford ISD, 2014; Red Oak ISD, 2016). As Ossei-Owusu (2012) argues, the lives of youth in general have become "under-girded by business logics" like "incentivized performance benchmarks" (p. 299). We see this clearly with the constant evaluation of alternative school students: labeled problematic, they are the ones who most need to demonstrate their potential as worthy neoliberal citizens.

Wrought with responsibilization discourse and assessments, disciplinary logics frame the alternative school as a place where youth have the opportunity and the tools to help themselves, to correct their behavior, and to lead successful lives as productive citizens, if they put in the effort. Similar to the role of the court discussed by Phoenix and Kelly (2013), alternative school policies train students to internalize an enmity directed at themselves, rather than toward the social and economic structures that have made possible this cultural embracement of control and punishment.

Atomization

Atomization interweaves with docilization and responsibilization to reinforce the acceptability, normality, and inevitably of exclusionary practices, subjugated social positions, and feelings of individual failure (Ossei-Owusu, 2012). Youth justice under neoliberalism "looks to further isolate and atomize the individual while instilling a defeating sense of self-guilt" (Turner, 2015: 1). While youth in the disciplinary alternative school have already undergone some type of exclusion (being sent "away"), the school furthers this atomization through its own techniques.

The exclusion of the alternative school student from the mainstream school student represents the most fundamental isolation technique. In accordance with the Texas Education Code, one handbook states that, "[s]tudents are not to enter any public-school campus during their enrollment at DAEP. Students are restricted from attending any school event, activity, or program, on or off campus, in or out of town" (Tyler County ISD, 2015: 3). If a student violates this rule, the infraction enters the purview of the justice system, as setting foot on the public-school campus is considered criminal trespassing (Fruitvale ISD, 2015; Midland Independent School District (Midland ISD), 2016).

Not only are alternative school students isolated from the "good" students, but also from each other, as policy mandates physical and verbal separation. Prevalent throughout the handbooks are statements such as "[s]tudents may not talk or make any unnecessary noises" (Midland ISD, 2016: 11) and "interaction with other students is not allowed" (Sealy Independent School District (Sealy ISD), 2013: 6). Restrictions on interaction also extend to physical space, as many alternative school students spend their days in study carrels, surrounded by three walls and a guard (Fabens ISD, 2016; Red Oak ISD, 2016; Sealy ISD, 2013).

This constant isolation from the "outside" world and from each other reinforces the individualization and responsibilization that characterizes the lives of marginalized youth. Combining policies of responsibilization and techniques of atomization to create docile young people, practices at the alternative school attempt to instill in these students a sense that no one else can help them. By socializing students to accept carceral logics as enacted through exclusion, and internalize its justifications, alternative schools encourage youth to become complacent in their situations.

Normalization

While the disciplinary alternative school attempts to docilize, responsibilize, and atomize its students, it is also a space of normalization, in which the ideologies and practices of the criminal justice system become commonplace. Most youth in mainstream US schools are exposed to techniques of surveillance and control (Kupchik, 2010; U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). But for youth locked inside the disciplinary alternative school, it is not merely exposure to these practices, but rather the constant experiencing of them that defines their days (Dunning-Lozano, 2015; Weissman, 2014). As such, we see how the philosophies, practices, and policies of the disciplinary alternative school continue to replicate and normalize the everyday experiences of suspicion, criminalization, and incarceration.

The goals of state departments of corrections in the United States include "safely and securely supervising adult and juvenile offenders" (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2015) and "providing continuity of appropriate treatment services in safe and secure facilities where offenders' needs are addressed and they are prepared for release" (New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, 2015). If we replace the

word "offenders" with "students," we come close to quoting the mission statements of many

disciplinary alternative schools, albeit with softer language: "to provide students with a well-

disciplined environment that provides consistency [and] structure" (Anna Independent School

District (Anna ISD), n.d.: 1), the goal being to "guide them toward choosing to make better

decisions for themselves so that they can return to their home campus" (Tyler County ISD, 2015:

2). The overarching philosophy of the disciplinary alternative school consistently aligns with that

of the neoliberal crime control paradigm—particularly that of individualization and segregation,

and for some rehabilitation, while for others, continuous incapacitation (Phoenix and Kelly,

2013; Wacquant, 2005).

Upon entry, many alternative school students are immediately searched, often walking

through a metal detector or being scanned with a hand wand, emptying pockets/bags, shaking out

bras, and removing socks (Deer Park Independent School District (Deer Park ISD), 2015).[2] For

some, "[r]efusal to allow a visual inspection may result in the local police and/or ROISD Police

Department being called immediately" (Red Oak ISD, 2016: 1). Other schools require students

to wear name badges, deposit their personal belongings in envelopes that are returned at the end

of the day, and undergo pat downs (Hereford ISD, 2014)—procedures that resemble those for jail

or prison entry. Even physically navigating the halls is policed, as students at both El Paso

Independent School District (El Paso ISD, 2014) and Culberson ISD (2014) must walk with their

hands behind their backs at all times.

To maintain control over behavior once inside, alternative schools utilize monitoring and

security techniques that mirror those of the criminal justice system and strengthen partnerships

with law enforcement (Carver and Lewis, 2010). In addition to metal detectors, some alternative

schools subject students to random searches throughout the day (Anna ISD, n.d.; Midland, ISD,

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[2] Procedures such as these appear in each of the handbooks.

2016) while surveillance cameras monitor student behavior and drug-sniffing dogs patrol the halls (Hughes Spring ISD, 2015). As one handbook states, "[e]very time contraband dogs are in the district, they are brought to DAEP first" (Deer Park ISD, 2015: 11). While we lack comprehensive data on police presence in alternative schools, a report published by the Department of Education (Carver and Lewis, 2010) states that the most widely reported partnerships between alternative schools are with the criminal justice system (80%) and the police or sheriff's department (69%), thus we can reasonably conclude that police presence is not uncommon.

Carceral logics also manifest in the point or incentive systems previously mentioned. As students prove themselves through good, docile behavior, they can earn privileges. Red Oak ISD students spend the first few days "facing the wall" (Red Oak ISD, 2016: 4) of their study carrel, but after a number of successful days, they can earn the opportunity to enjoy supervised breaks outside. Remaining at this level for two consecutive days eliminates one day of the time to be served (Red Oak ISD, 2016). Similarly, many departments of corrections incentivize good behavior for inmates—allowing them to "trade up through good behavior into better living conditions" (Mitchell, 2010) such as padded chairs, longer breaks outside, and shorter sentences.

Just as the incentive system closely mirrors those operating in jails and prisons, so too does the time-added/luxuries-lost system of consequences. Often called "write ups," consequences for bad behavior while behind bars can include loss of luxuries like recreational time, or having time added to one's sentence (Worrall and Morris, 2011). In alternative schools, if a student arrives late to school, they may lose driving privileges (Deer Park ISD, 2015), and if they violate the dress code, they may have additional days added to their time (Culberson ISD,

2014). This generalized approach to dealing with rule breaking, an approach that carries on the tradition of "zero-tolerance," fails to consider transgressions as symptomatic of larger issues.

The identification and understanding of these four processes allows us to cast a more critical gaze on an institution that we rely on to "handle" "at-risk" youth. However, we must also consider what these processes might mean for the futures of alternative school students because "the space and where we are in it, determines a large portion of our status as subjects, and obversely, the kinds of subjects we are largely dictates our degree of mobility and our possible future locations" (Kirby, 1996: 11). Occupying the space of the alternative school and undergoing the processes that operate within it can prove devastating for the futures of the students who are imprisoned there.

Imprisoning Youthful Futures

Of "at-risk" youth, Kelly (2003) contends "there is a strong sense here that there are 'preferred' futures waiting these populations in transition" (p. 171-172), and in the same vein, a parent in Kozol's (2012) *Savage Inequalities* reflects on dilapidated urban school conditions, saying that it is "as if the duty of the school were to prepare a child for the life he's born into" (p. 193). While such work speaks to the experiences of marginalized youth and the under-resourced, often urban schools they typically attend, these related insights—that youth are destined for certain futures, and that the school works to secure those futures—are particularly salient for alternative school students. To be sure, "at-risk" youth often experience the techniques and processes I describe here, especially if they attend low-income, urban schools and thus can similarly experience preparation for lives of imprisonment. However, alternative school students are actively removed to the alternative school, and in this removal, the bars of imprisonment inch

closer around them. Here, the students represent hyper- irresponsible, dangerous, and risky youth, while the schools represent the "last chance" at proving themselves to be worthy neoliberal subjects. Such an understanding then justifies ramping up the docilization, responsibilization, atomization, and criminal justice techniques in ways that are unique to the alternative school. What results are subjects taught to interpret the world as one in which literal and figurative bars surround them—keeping them locked in the criminal justice system and locked out of the labor force.

Criminal Justice Enmeshment

By normalizing the logics and technologies of the criminal justice system, the alternative school cultivates an understanding of life as one of suspicion and criminality. In considering the more literal aspect of "imprisonment," the close partnerships with local law enforcement, intense surveillance and security, and high dropout rates that epitomize many alternative schools greatly increase the chance that a student encounters the criminal justice system (Carmichael et al., 2005; Reyes, 2006). We see this most poignantly in Vanderhaar et al.'s (2015) finding that students in Kentucky disciplinary alternative schools are at a significantly higher risk of later juvenile and criminal justice system involvement, with poor and minority youth being particularly at risk. The collateral consequences of such frequent and normalized interaction are well documented (see Travis and Western, 2014).

We also see the more subterranean and adaptive influence of neoliberal penality in the prohibition of students from any public-school campus, particularly in Texas, under threat of criminal trespassing charges. Similar to using civil admonishments to exclude the homeless from public spaces (Beckett and Herbert, 2009), students who violate the school-mandated trespass

order can then be found as criminally trespassing, placing them under the purview of the justice system for what began as a district (civil) mandate, not a criminal one. Confronting the very real consequences of serving time in the disciplinary alternative school suggests that it may push youth toward the very place it was created to avoid.

Low-Wage (Un)Employment

We must also consider the less literal aspects of imprisonment, as a life of low-wage (un)employment can be as devastating as that of jail or prison. Existing in the shadows of the public-school system, disciplinary alternative schools often lack the rigorous standards and resources needed to help young people thrive in today's economy (American Civil Liberties Union, n.d.). As Foley and Pang (2006) argue, these "hand-me-down schools" (p. 18) have limited access to essential resources such as physical education facilities, science laboratories, and even libraries.[3] Alternative school students not only lack access to resources but also receive a curriculum that focuses largely on vocational training rather than higher education or professional training (Foley and Pang, 2006; Kim and Taylor, 2008; Simmons, 2010). Of Texas DAEPs in particular, Cortez and Cortez (2009) find that the curriculum often fails to keep the student working at the same grade level as the school from which they came, and the few certified teachers are often required to instruct students at varying grade levels. Importantly, Texas alternative school students typically score well below state averages in math and reading (Cortez and Cortez, 2009).

This substandard education is combined with blocked access to resources that could make professional training or higher education a real possibility. Access to college preparatory classes

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[3] Overall, 58 percent of the principals surveyed indicated limited or no access to physical education buildings, 70 percent lack access to science labs, and 40 percent reported no access to a library.

is limited for alternative school students, as many schools do not or cannot include such classes in their curriculum (Foley and Pang, 2006; Weissman, 2014). Extra-curricular activities such as athletics, debate, and drama club are similarly off-limits for alternative school students, especially if they take place at a mainstream campus (TEC, 1995, Ch. 37; Weissman, 2014).

For those students who escape the alternative school and return to their home campus, the remedial education they received places them at a distinct disadvantage. Upon their return, students often struggle to meet the academic requirements and curriculum of the mainstream schools, while others dropout before graduating (Kim and Taylor, 2008; Weissman, 2014). Thus, the alternative school serves to "deprive students of the opportunity to realize the dream of a college education" (Glassett, 2012: 28). In post-industrial capitalism, blocked access to higher education can immediately relegate one to a life of precarious, low-wage (un)employment, and it is for this kind of life that the disciplinary alternative school prepares its students.

Walled Off and Walled Out

Preparing these already marginalized youth to exist within the confines of a structure that sentences them to a life of blocked opportunities and dreams that are caged is evidence of the disposability of the students and the populations discussed here. The students in the disciplinary alternative school are the "undesirables" (Giroux, 2013b) and by shaping them into docile, responsibilized, isolated, and criminalized subjects with limited life chances, they are imprisoned in a way that does not initially arouse suspicion or concern. But a closer look at the logics and practices of the disciplinary alternative school reveals the insidious forms of persecution that ensure that marginalized people are continuously walled off and walled out. We see this in the docilizing, responsibilizing, and atomizing practices that over time push this predominantly poor,

male, and racial/ethnic minority population toward an imprisonment characterized by heightened surveillance, control, and exclusion.

While the disciplinary alternative school is framed as a departure from the zero-tolerance and expulsion-heavy policies that ground the school-to-prison pipeline, an interrogation of this institution exposes continual efforts toward controlling disposable populations, and confirms that mechanisms of exclusion, punishment, and containment still fervently remain within school walls. By sending students here, we have merely created new, "more low-profile, pedestrian ways" (Beckett and Murakawa, 2012: 224) to leave marginalized students behind. It is neither an alternative to push-out nor does it diminish the disproportional rate at which marginalized youth experience such oppression. Instead, the alternative school is motivated by the same carceral logics that have long haunted the school's practices of managing students and, as a result, does many of the same things that it was created to alleviate—casting it as a decidedly "un-alternative" alternative. But what makes this form of carcerality so unique is that it is exerted through covert, seemingly non-punitive, and even progressive channels.

Attempts to reform school discipline have often only served to further enclose and exclude marginalized youth. As such, this chapter identifies one of the less obvious manifestations of carcerality to then work toward creating true alternatives—ones that are not informed by the punitive and oppressive logics of the carceral state, and that do not reproduce social and economic inequality. Situating the disciplinary alternative school as an "un-alternative" allows us to more fully understand the dynamism of the carceral state. In recognizing that the carceral state can operate through both obviously carceral practices and their "alternatives," we can begin to "move through critique to the rigorous, promising work of

envisioning and practicing a world otherwise" (Brown and Schept, 2016: 17)—a world marked

by the principles of abolition democracy rather than the cages of the carceral state.

CHAPTER V

BEYOND CAGES: ABOLITION AND THE CARCERAL STATE

There's a lot of conversation about abolition of police and abolition of prisons and abolition of surveillance. And people can either try to think that through or can think it's completely looney tunes, and that it never will happen.
                    —Mariame Kaba

The Disciplinary (Un)Alternative School

From a social justice perspective, the disciplinary alternative school emerges as another well-intended, yet fundamentally reactionary reform gone awry. It has not alleviated the experience of school exclusion and push-out and it has not offered students a "second chance" at mainstream success. In tracing its roots, we see that like the juvenile justice and Progressive education movements, the alternative school is based in segregative and oppressive logics that have historically marginalized poor youth, youth of color, and their families. Within the Progressive movement, a genuine interest in the safety and futures of young people fueled the demand for innovative schools located outside of industrialized capitalism's newly mechanized form, and a justice system that recognized the distinct state of youth. What resulted, however, was a bifurcated process of care and protection, with marginalized youth receiving this care and protection through institutional confinement and neglect. The assumptions that determined the targets of institutional youth control have since converged with neoliberal carceral logics, manifesting in the modern disciplinary alternative school. Seen in the concern for "dysfunctional" families, the logics of neoliberal carcerality animate increased surveillance, punitive responsibilization, and coercive control, of both the students sent there and their families. Incentivized to attend school functions, required to escort their children to the bathroom to shave, and required to participate in parental training, the disciplinary alternative school

intervenes into the lives of marginalized families in often-disruptive and punitive ways. Through lessons in docility and responsibility, and the normalized experiences of carceral habitation—isolation and criminal justice involvement—the students themselves also experience the forces of neoliberal coercion. Such tactics solidify the social and economic marginality of these typically poor youth and youth of color, thus causing the disciplinary alternative school to "fail" in its purported intention: to function as a supportive space of educational and social advancement for students pushed to the margins.

Situated within racial capitalism, however, the disciplinary alternative school extends its ideological dominance quite successfully. To make this point clear, it is necessary to recall my definition of the carceral state as "a vast apparatus of punishment and control consisting of a variety of institutions and mechanisms that work, both overtly and covertly, through exclusion and oppression to produce and maintain a steady stream of marginalized bodies necessary for racial capitalism." Conceptualized in this manner, the disciplinary alternative school can only ever be an expression of the carceral state: surveillance and punishment operate in their various forms to instantiate neoliberal processes of subjectification; physical and verbal exclusion function as the primary forms of control for students, both inside and outside these walls; and carceral control permeates the lives of families, oftentimes exacerbating states of precarity. From this angle, the alternative school has performed extraordinarily well by working to keep these students and their families in disadvantaged social and economic positions.

This interpretation does not seek to justify the role the alternative school plays in reproducing inequality. Instead, I wish to offer an understanding of how the institution's core function—its purported intent aside—has been dangerously negated. New policies and practices addressing the minutiae of discipline in the school do nothing other than to reaffirm notions of

who needs to be disciplined, and how that discipline can be delivered. Instead of problematizing the logics that justify and animate the alternative school, we merely tinker with how these logics can be best applied through alternative policies and practices that simply reproduce existing conditions.

But where do we go from here? After reading this dissertation one might posit that we should implement alternative discipline practices in mainstream schools to decrease the number of students suspended, expelled, and/or sent to disciplinary alternative schools. Indeed, many school districts have already committed to such an approach by adopting restorative justice practices. Schools across the nation are increasingly turning to peacemaking circles, peer mediation, and peer juries when responding to student misbehavior (Fronius, Persson, Guckenburg, Hurley, and Petrosino, 2016). Research does suggest that these practices are at least partly responsible for declining suspension and expulsion rates (Owen, Wettach, and Hoffamn, 2015; Schiff, 2013), however the principles that animate them are still fundamentally neoliberal and carceral in nature (Meiners, 2011, 2017). While these practices differ from more overtly retributive responses by bringing community members, like other students, into the discipline/punishment process, the focus is still on encouraging the offender to recognize and take responsibility for the harm they caused, and eliciting forgiveness from the victim. The goal is to restore the relationship between the involved parties to its previous condition, thus "play[ing] into the logic of neoliberalism by failing to acknowledge the vast socio-political problems that undergird behavioral differences" (Miguel and Gargano, 2017: 6). Reactionary responses like restorative justice do not challenge a social and economic system that creates the conditions to which violence is often responding. Instead, they serve as a tool for those who wish to try their hand at surviving within the system. Restorative justice, then, is a response to micro

manifestations of macro conditions. "Alternatives" such as these extend the reach of the carceral state and reify racial capitalism, rather than upend such logics.

Upon considering both the social justice perspective and that of racial capitalist reproduction, it would seem that the disciplinary alternative school is a success *because* it is a failure. In this way, it is an example of pyrrhic defeat theory (Reiman, 2004) in that its failure to yield social justice and equality benefits the existing social and economic order, and those who occupy positions of power within it. The recognition of this complexity, of the ability of the alternative school to be "bad" in one way because it is "good" in another, is the foundation for moving forward. In understanding this, we are better equipped to identify and then address the intertwined causes and consequences of racial capitalism, and the carceral state's role in upholding it. If social justice is our goal, then reformist reforms that perpetuate racial capitalism cannot be the tools we use to achieve it. Strategies that incite structural and ideological changes are the only tools that will bring us to what abolitionist Patrisse Cullors (2016) describes as "a society that has no borders…that's based on interdependence and the connection of all living beings" (p. 40) or simply, an abolition democracy.

Where Do We Go from Here? Abolition Democracy

Achieving a society built on liberation and community necessitates that we disentangle our ideas of democracy from the hegemony of racial capitalism. As Angela Davis (2005) contends, we must "insist on different criteria for democracy" (p. 99). Currently, prisons, punishment, violence, and oppression construct our ideological and social landscape. They protrude from the earth, serving as obstacles for some and stepping-stones for others, but ultimately shaping the lives of us all. While these carceral mechanisms of racial capitalism are so

ideologically embedded that it is often difficult for us to think outside of them, the way to a world without cages can be found in abolition democracy.

Abolition is, by its very nature, an act of thinking through the past and present in order to create a better future. As Eduardo Mendieta (2005) describes it, abolition democracy is "the abolition of institutions that advance the dominance of any one group over any other" (p. 14). While much of the work regarding contemporary abolition names it "prison abolition" or "prison industrial complex abolition," it is not just about abolishing prisons or the police (see Brown and Schept, 2016). The abolitionist project demands "the abolition of the instruments of war, the abolition of racism, and, of course, the abolition of the social circumstances" (Davis, 2005: 70) always already entangling marginalized populations within institutions of surveillance and control. This means taking steps to reduce the reliance on carceral institutions and their tools through a number of initiatives: shifting the authority for keeping us safe away from the state (Law, 2014; Spade, 2015); freeing people who occupy spaces of confinement and surveillance like prisons and jails (Kaba, 2017), but also immigration detention centers (Beckett and Murakawa, 2012), justice campuses (Schept, 2015), and disciplinary alternative schools (Selman, 2017); and it means ending practices that send people to and lock them in those spaces in the first place (Thuma, 2014, 2015). As Mendieta (2005) continues, "Abolition democracy, then, is the democracy that is to come, the democracy that is possible" (p. 14) when such oppressive institutions and the logics that undergird them are destroyed.

Importantly though, abolition democracy cannot be achieved solely through destruction—it is at once both a project of destroying institutions and conditions of oppression, and one of building liberatory institutions that (re)produce liberatory conditions (Meiners and Winn, 2010). In explaining the need for abolition to be a productive movement, Davis (2005)

calls on W.E.B DuBois's analysis of the abolition of slavery. DuBois (2014 [1935]) noted that the comprehensive abolition of slavery was not achieved because new, truly democratic institutions aimed at incorporating black people into the social order were not created to occupy the space it left. As a result, new forms of slavery emerged to fill the void—most notably the prison system. Yet, the physical cages of the criminal justice system have not been the only cages trapping and housing marginalized populations, as widespread poverty, low-wage, precarious (un)employment, unequal access to adequate healthcare, and under-resourced schools also constrict, manage, and enclose these very same populations—perhaps even more effectively than the physical bars of a prison cell could ever do. In short, these are the conditions created by racial capitalism that make the carceral state possible. As such, the goal of abolition must be to "change how we interact with each other and the planet by putting people before profits, welfare before warfare, and life over death" (Gilmore, 2014: vii).

This requires more than reforming or tinkering with a system thought to be broken—it demands that we first face the reality that the system was *built* to operate this way, that it is, in fact, working properly. In moving forward, we must address much more than the issues with police accountability, sentence lengths, or the disparities in exclusionary school punishment. We must tackle the *roots* of these macro social problems that manifest in these micro issues. This ultimately means addressing sources of inequality—inadequate healthcare, underfunded schools, the scarcity of meaningful work, and the racist, classist, heterosexist, ableist, patriarchal and capitalist ideologies that fuel it, and the institutions that reinforce it. This will require building and investing in new institutions that will lay claim to the space the carceral state once inhabited (see McDowell, 2017).

But How? Transformative Justice

While abolition democracy is where we want to go, transformative justice is part of how we get there. Transformative justice offers an approach to building new structures, ideologies, and ways of dealing with people, conditions, and actions. It can guide how we interact with each other and the planet, forming the base of a new social order—one in which, as abolitionist scholar Meghan McDowell (2017) describes, "no one is disposable and all systems of oppression have been dismantled" (p. 14).

Transformative justice is often used interchangeably with restorative justice as an alternative (i.e. less punitive/retributive) approach to conflict in varying forms. However, the two differ in significant ways, and these distinctions should be made clear because they illustrate the difference between an approach that has been co-opted by the liberal state, and one that has truly liberatory potential. Restorative justice is an individual level approach, often used by state institutions, that aims to restore the conditions and relationships that existed before the conflict occurred by emphasizing personal accountability and responsibility. For example, Ypsilanti High School in Michigan uses restorative justice techniques for conflict resolution (Guerra, 2013). If a student starts a fight—an infraction that could result in suspension—all individuals who were harmed or involved in the fight gather into a restorative circle. In this circle, the student who caused the harm must listen to those who were affected by the action. Mara Schiff, a professor at Florida Atlantic University, explains the effectiveness of this approach using the language of neoliberal responsibilization—"It works because youth are empowered to take responsibility for their own behavior, to be held accountable for their own behavior and to make it right" (Guerra, 2013).

Transformative justice recognizes the ways in which the state has co-opted restorative justice, infused it with neoliberal logics, and used it to maintain rather than challenge oppression (Generation Five, 2007). Whereas restorative justice tends to ignore the context in which people operate, transformative justice is based in the recognition that "individual relationships occur within larger constructs" and that these forces "structure our relationships and our institutions" (Kaba in Sloan, 2016). These larger constructs are understood as the deeply oppressive conditions of racial capitalism—racism, patriarchy, heterosexism, and ableism—that the state perpetuates. Thus, transformative justice does not rely on state systems to address injustice but rather promotes a liberatory approach to violence—both interpersonal and state imposed/sanctioned—by seeking safety and accountability through individuals, collectives, and community institutions. Liberation from violence demands a multifaceted approach, including efforts to address the roots of inequality, as well as safety and healing for survivors of violence, the redefinition of community and social norms, transformation for those who harm, and accountability. Accountability, as a form of transformative justice "engage[s] bystanders and build[s] community responsibility for creating conditions that provide opportunities for accountability and change" (Generation Five, 2007: 29).

Because of its foundation in principles of liberation, transformative justice is as much about resolving concrete conflicts as it is a practice for grassroots social change. It is a dedication to large-scale social transformation within which individual level change can and will necessarily occur. As artists and anti-prison activists Lewis Wallace and Micah Bazant (2011) describe,

> Our challenges to scapegoating, isolation and retribution will be more effective when they go hand-in-hand with political struggles against the root causes of oppression and violence (patriarchy, capitalism, racism, etc.), and against concepts of penitence and sin that freeze our identities as forever either "innocent" or "guilty." The healing of transformative justice is intertwined with the collective empowerment of groups of people to change the conditions they/we live in (p. 3-4).

As such, while restorative justice is a reformist response to harm and violence, the transformative justice framework works to build a better world, making it a fundamentally abolitionist practice.

The Vision in Practice

In *The Feminist Utopia Project: Fifty-Seven Visions of a Wildly Better Future,* abolitionist Mariame Kaba (2015) tells a fictional story of an encounter between two people, one a resident of Earth and one of Small Place. The person from Earth is shocked and dismayed by the way Small Place operates, particularly in how it deals with people who cause harm. The ideas from which Small Place was built and continues to operate are vastly different from Earth as the visitor (and we) know it. Small Place is not based in racial capitalism and steered by the logics of the carceral state, but rather by the desire for safety, community health, social accountability, and freedom. In Small Place, individual relationships and actions are understood as occurring within, and thus impacted by, larger constructs. As such, instances of harm are addressed through processes of healing, such as community circles, in which the goal is not to heal only the individuals affected, but also the conditions that made the harm possible in the first place.

The existence of such a place, or even its underlying principles, may be thought of as outlandish by some, but it might not be as inconceivable as one may initially assume. There are grassroots organizations that are actively working to bring the vision of Small Place to life—not by moving to a different planet, but by confronting and challenging the power of the carceral state and the conditions and logics of racial capitalism that feed it. While there are many

organizations doing this sort of work[25], I will focus here on six. Two of the groups (Critical Resistance and INCITE!) promote and practice abolition more broadly, while the others (Project NIA, Chicago Freedom School, Black Youth Project 100, and Youth Justice Coalition) focus explicitly on young people. These groups further the abolitionist agenda by engaging in on-the-ground activist work and developing community-based, transformative alternatives to carcerality. It is to these groups and others like them that those interested in destroying the carceral state and creating a more just world should look (see Goddard, Myers, and Robison, 2015).

Critical Resistance

Critical Resistance is a national grassroots abolitionist organization that seeks to aid in the abolition of the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC). Importantly, Critical Resistance (n.d.) understands the PIC as "the system of surveillance, policing, and imprisonment that government, industry and their interests use as solutions to economic, social, and political problems." As such, Critical Resistance's work does not focus solely on prisons and police, but instead addresses a larger carceral state that functions through seemingly non-carceral institutions. Thus, the goal is not merely to rid our world of prisons, but rather to eradicate the conditions that have created and sustained the PIC. This commitment to abolition is expressed through initiatives that inhibit carceral state growth, as well as the creation of new institutions and responses that do not rely on carceral sites or actors. For example, CR Oakland works with Stop Urban Shield, a coalition of organizations working to end a SWAT training and weapons expo that brings together police

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[25] Those interested in groups engaging in this work can start by looking to: Philly Stands Up!, Black & Pink, We Charge Genocide, Black Lives Matter, Assata's Daughters, the Audre Lorde Project, the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective, Creative Interventions, Safe OUTside the System, Common Justice, No Exceptions Prison Collective, the Ella Baker Center for Civil Rights, and Sistas and Brothas United.

units of all levels to share, strategize, and develop new technologies of surveillance, repression, and state violence. Critical Resistance also developed a report that highlighted the devastating consequences of jail expansion, and their efforts helped with the successful defeat of a new jail proposal in San Francisco—since then, Critical Resistance has remained dedicated to ensuring that any replacement for that jail is also defeated. Through the "Oakland Power Projects," community members learn about and utilize strategies that "make our families and neighborhoods safe and healthy without relying on the cops" (Critical Resistance, n.d.). Through such work, Critical Resistance contributes to the creation of new institutions and responses that will eventually crowd out the carceral state.

INCITE! Women, Gender Non-Conforming, and Trans People of Color Against Violence

INCITE! seeks to address and prevent violence enacted upon women, gender non-conforming, and trans people of color and their communities through direct action, critical dialogue, and grassroots organizing. Invoking the principles of abolition and transformative justice, INCITE! conceptualizes violence as both "violence directed at communities," such as state violence, as well as "violence within communities" like interpersonal violence (INCITE!, n.d.). Focusing on an array of social issues like police violence, reproductive justice, medical justice, and media justice, INCITE! engages in a number of initiatives, such as producing a women of color radio show, organizing rallies, running a grassroots clinic, developing community accountability strategies, and most recently, lending support and resources to the #FreeBresha campaign. All of their work is informed by the "dangerous intersections" framework, which highlights the intersecting systems of sexism and racism within which women, gender non-conforming, and trans people of color exist. As such, INCITE! recognizes

that violence functions on a personal level and impacts individuals, but it situates this violence within our social structure. Here, the focus is on deconstructing the system that enacts violence upon communities of color, rather than reforming or fixing individual level behavior. Part of this work involves a confrontation with the state as the "central organizer of violence" (INCITE!, n.d.). Much like other abolitionist and transformative justice groups, INCITE! takes issue with relying on the state to provide support or services, or to end violence in these communities. This point is emphasized by the fact that one of INCITE!'s guiding principles is to "discourage any solicitation of federal or state funding" for their initiatives (INCITE!, n.d.). As a whole, INCITE! facilitates critical dialogue about current conditions, provides services to the oppressed, and develops non-state-based responses to harm.

Both Critical Resistance and INCITE! challenge racial capitalism and the carceral state on a number of different fronts. They address social problems that impact a vast range of people and develop strategies for promoting safety for/amongst these marginalized populations, and their work deserves attention from those pushing for the realization of abolition democracy. But because this dissertation focuses primarily on young people, it is important to bring attention to those grassroots organizations that recognize the unique position that youth occupy within the current social and economic order. Project NIA, Chicago Freedom School (CFS), Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100), and Youth Justice Coalition (YJC) are but a few organizations dedicated to addressing and ameliorating the conditions in which young people operate, with the ultimate goal of creating a future built on safety, justice, and freedom.

Project NIA

Founded in 2009 by abolitionist Mariame Kaba, Project NIA works to free youth from the grasp of the carceral state by promoting multi-faceted community-based actions of support for victimized youth, and transformative responses to those youth in trouble with the law (Project NIA, n.d.). In 2015, Project NIA joined with Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, We Charge Genocide, and Amnesty International in organizing the campaign #RahmRepNow to successfully pass an ordinance granting reparations of victims of police violence. This initiative furthers an important part of abolitionism: demanding community accountability and supporting those most impacted by the carceral state. Part of their work also focuses on blocking people and policies that may contribute to the continued oppression of young people. This includes providing educational materials and mobilization strategies against the former Cook County State's Attorney, Anita Alvarez, in the democratic primary. Project NIA members and other activists pushed for Alvarez's defeat, arguing that her re-election would further bolster state violence. With the Chicago Teachers' Union, Project NIA also participated in a campaign against proposed cuts to social services like education, emphasizing that such cuts would be harmful to youth whereas defunding youth prisons would free up resources that could in turn be invested in supportive services. In this way, Project NIA and its contributors shed light on the interconnectedness of the prison industrial complex, illustrating that it is not just prisons or police that should be the focus of social justice work.

Chicago Freedom School

Inspired by the Freedom Schools of the 1960s, which aimed to provide schooling opportunities for youth of color pushed out of mainstream schools, Chicago Freedom School

(CFS) was established in 2007 to provide Chicago's youth with a space in which to explore, grow, and work for social change (Chicago Freedom School, n.d.). CFS looks to empower youth by training them in strategies to resist racial capitalism and create something better in its place, rather than merely how to survive within it. CFS demonstrates its mission through a number of projects: the Freedom Fellowship provides education in anti-oppression and leadership building, as well as continued community and financial support as the graduates engage in social change campaigns; Young Leaders for Justice trains youth ages 17-24 in combatting the criminalization of young people of color; and adult allies have access to training in how to best support youth organizing opportunities. Through activist education, resources, and support, Chicago Freedom School engages in the transformative justice practice of creating "spaces that support liberation while building the capacity and self-determination of individuals to fully participate in collective liberation" (Generation Five, 2007: 30), ultimately helping young people in their efforts to dismantle the carceral state.

Black Youth Project 100

Black Youth Project 100 is an organization of young Black people, ages 18-35, who work for social justice through leadership development and education, direct action campaigns, and advocacy work. BYP100's work is rooted in the desire for "a world where all Black people have economic, social, political, and educational freedom" (Black Youth Project 100, n.d.). This world, as envisioned by BYP100, is only possible through both divestment from oppressive systems and investment in transformative ones. As such, BYP100 members engage in work that addresses the structural violence enacted upon Black youth using strategies that center the experiences and expertise of Black youth, creating supportive spaces for Black activists, and

building a collective that is inclusive of all young Black people. These guiding principles are

evident throughout BYP100's initiatives. In 2016, BYP100 NYC and Million Hoodies NYC

locked down the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association office, demanding the termination of

Officer Wayne Isaacs, the NYPD officer who fatally shot Delrawn Small. In addition, the groups

demanded that attention be paid to institutional structures that allow for the lack of police

accountability in New York City and beyond. Furthermore, BYP100 Chicago, along with

Assata's Daughters and Fearless Leading the Youth, disrupted and shut down the Police Task

Force meeting on police misconduct, highlighting the lack of care that the Chicago Police Board

has expressed over ending police violence. Through both its concrete organizing efforts and its

underlying values, Black Youth Project 100 advocates for the divestment from carceral

institutions and practices, instead putting their faith and energy into community organizing as the

mechanism of social transformation.

Youth Justice Coalition

  In much the same way, the Los Angeles based Youth Justice Coalition (YJC) works to

expose and dismantle the institutions, policies, and practices that oppress youth of color. YJC

was founded in 2003 through a series of three meetings attended by people who had been

arrested, detained, incarcerated, deported, and/or leaders of organizations working inside juvenile

justice institutions (Youth Justice Coalition, n.d.). YJC is a youth-led organization[26], but its

membership also includes the families of youth and formerly and currently incarcerated people.

The group promotes freedom and violence reduction by refusing to rely on carceral institutions

like the police, preventing system contact, and working to get people out of the system. To aid in

crowding out the carceral state with true alternatives, YJC created FREE LA High School, a

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[26] At least 61% of the member-elected Board of Directors must be system-involved youth.

school for young people that trains youth to think outside of and actively resist racial capitalism by developing alternative strategies to exclusionary practices. YJC also coordinates community workshops that promote systemic accountability rather than victim blaming in instances of harm infliction, by bringing together youth, families, schools, and neighborhoods to prevent and address violence. It has also led fundamental campaigns against carceral state expansion: in 2008, YJC won a moratorium on LA county probation's practice of charging families up to $25 a day while their children are in juvenile hall; members worked with the Dignity in Schools campaign to challenge student criminalization policies in schools; and they championed the state's first gang injunction exit process. Through these initiatives, the organization provides a supportive space in which youth can learn about and actively address notions of power.

Imagining Utopia(s) to Fight the Beast

Informed by principles of transformative justice, liberation, and structural critique, the continual efforts of organizations like those just described make the realization of abolition democracy a real possibility. As Stephano Harney and Fred Moten (2013) write, the object of abolition is,

> Not so much the abolition of prisons but the abolition of a society that could have prisons, that could have slavery, that could have the wage, and therefore not abolition as the elimination of anything but abolition as the founding of a new society (p. 42).

In order to build a society without the carceral state, we must first learn to identify the "tools" that build its cages. These tools come in varying forms—at times they appear as prisons and police, and at others, as sentencing reforms and alternative schools. But they are all motored by logics of punishment, surveillance, exclusion, and control that ultimately make them carceral mechanisms. As such, this dissertation seeks to spur consciousness by exposing an institution

that works for/within the carceral state and reproduces the oppressive conditions of racial capitalism. On a larger scale, the goal of this project is to contribute to the identification and eradication of the dominant institutions, ideologies, and practices that make such conditions possible.

Education is the site in which abolition must be first imagined, and as the institution from which education is passed, the school is particularly important for developing this abolitionist future. Despite its perception as a space of equalization, the school feeds the roots of oppression and violence and thus it cannot serve as a vehicle for transformation—in its current conceptualization. The school, understood here as but one component of education, employs the mechanisms of discipline and control designed to uphold the conditions of racial capitalism. The disciplinary alternative school is one such component. If we were to reform school discipline by simply inserting responses infused with the spirit of transformative justice into punishment policies, like implementing healing circles, we might keep more kids in school. And if we were to change how we identify student misbehavior by simply eliminating "willful defiance" as a punishable offense, making dress codes less restrictive, or sending students to in-school suspension rooms rather than alternative schools, we might shrink the *overt* carceral power of the school. But, such reforms would only streamline the discipline and control of large groups of youth and motivate this carceral power to shift into a less obvious formal—they would not stop schools from reproducing inequality and violence. The question we must ask ourselves then, is, as Erica Meiners (2011) proposes, "if we are keeping our eyes on the prize, what is the prize?" (p. 55). That is, is it our goal to simply correct "bad" kids, or should we look toward liberation from the inherently repressive nature of sites of racial capitalism?

As opposed to tinkering with the conceptualization of and response to deviance, a complete restructuring of how we understand the role of education could move us closer to an abolition democracy. A core purpose of education should not be to perpetuate existing social, economic, and political realities, but rather to provide a site in which we can create and explore new possibilities. Education should free us from oppressive realities, which means that, as Nadim Bakhshov (2015) puts it, the aim must be "to change the world" (p. 79). In order to function as a vehicle for social change, education must be rebuilt, from the ground up. At the center of this rebuilding must be a confrontation with education's role in the reproduction of racial capitalism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, and all other violent and oppressive systems. This would require that we use every aspect of education to present the conditions of inequality as worthy of interrogation and critique, and equip students with the necessary tools for such a confrontation. Education, then, should be understood as a key site from which we can challenge these ideas. It must also strengthen the abolitionist imagination by encouraging students, families, teachers, and administrators to explore new ideas with "justice at their heart, not money, or power or ego" (Bakhshov, 2015: 31). Bakhshov (2015) describes this as a process of utopian imagining in which we teach children to "create their own [utopias], and then compare them to what we actually have. To put imagination into education" (p. 56). Stated simply, only when education becomes "a practice towards, and of, freedom" (Anderson-Zavala, 2017), can it make the seemingly impossible—a world beyond cages—possible.

We must work for this kind of world because *there are lives at stake*. So far in 2017, 648 people (and counting) have been shot and killed by police (The Washington Post, 2017), and more than 2.3 million people are locked behind the literal bars of our jails and prisons (Wagner and Rabuy, 2017). While current reports identify 6.9 million people as unemployed, another 1.5

million are described as "marginally attached to the labor force" (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). The latest available data reports anywhere between 43.1 million (Proctor, Semega, and Kollar, 2016) and 45.7 million (Renwick and Fox, 2016) people living in poverty in 2015, while an estimated 29 million people went without health insurance coverage in the same year (Barnett and Vornovitsky, 2016). As for young people, in 2015 there were 30.6 million children under the age of eighteen living in low-income families, and another 14.8 million living in poor families (Jiang, Granja, and Koball, 2017). In 2012, 3.5 million students received in-school suspensions, 3.45 million were suspended out of school, and 130,000 were expelled (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014), while in 2015, law enforcement made an estimated 921,600 juvenile arrests (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2017). Not surprisingly, members of marginalized populations are disproportionately represented in each of these categories.

The experiences of those ensnared within these tangled, oppressive institutions are complex, nuanced, and inadequately illustrated by numerical representations. But these numbers do say *something* about how our society operates. If we recognize that these numbers do not simply represent plot points on a graph, but rather *people*, then we must admit that our society operates, primarily, through violence and oppression. The problem is not that we have reached some shocking, yet arbitrary number of people living in poverty or wasting away behind bars—it is that as a society, we willingly accept these conditions as natural, regardless of how many people are affected. Abolition democracy, on the other hand, demands that we reject these conditions for *any* number of people and "fight the beast" that makes these conditions possible, because as scholar Robin D.G. Kelley (2016) urges, "it runs a military state that is not averse to

torture, locking up, beating up, killing people. It has legal sanction to take life" (p. 9). And so, we must fight the beast—whether it takes the lives of five people or five million.

As this dissertation has argued, we are more likely to turn a blind eye to this "beast", understood here as accepting the expansion of the carceral state and the conditions it (re)produces, when the institutions and mechanisms that propel it are ensconced in progressive and reformist language. The disciplinary alternative school is grounded in logics that mirror past ways of controlling marginalized populations through coercive measures that, under the influence of neoliberalism, call on the ideals of personal responsibility and risk. This culminates in a project of continued marginalization for subaltern populations that is necessary for the successful functioning of racial capitalism, as the environment constructed by the alternative school and the demands it places on its students and their families can drain the often already limited resources (and access to resources) needed for social and economic stability. Importantly, the existence of the alternative school and the oppressive conditions it reinforces are justified by the need to "save" these kids—from themselves, their dysfunctional families, and "the streets."

In using the disciplinary alternative school as a heuristic model for understanding the carceral state's ability to evolve and thrive through progressive reform efforts, this dissertation has foregrounded the experiences of exclusion, surveillance, and structural disadvantage that are often obscured by reformist language. Such a project is necessary if we wish to raze a persistent carceral state and its adaptations, like the disciplinary alternative school, and work towards creating a world grounded in the liberatory notions of community health, safety, and justice.

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PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

2017   Selman KJ. Imprisoning 'those' kids: Neoliberal logics and the disciplinary alternative school. *Youth Justice* 17(3): 213-231.

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2017   Selman KJ and Dunn M. Western feminist criminologies: Critiquing 'malestream' criminology and beyond. In Triplett R (ed.), *The Wiley Handbook of the History and Philosophy of Criminology.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.