

THE POLITICS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT:  
AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST AUDIT OF INSTITUTIONS AND  
DISCOURSES IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

By

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## ABSTRACT

### THE POLITICS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT: AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST AUDIT OF INSTITUTIONS AND DISCOURSES IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Jessica A. Whatcott

Anti-violence movements in the United States have demanded that the state, institutions, and communities take steps to respond seriously to domestic violence and sexual assault. In the past 35 years, state and federal laws have been passed mandating criminal justice departments, medical practitioners, and social service agencies to respond to domestic violence and sexual assault in particular ways. These mandates have been accompanied by the availability of state and philanthropic funding for training, policy development, and programming for legally mandated organizations and agencies that voluntarily provide services to domestic violence and sexual assault (DVSA) victims and survivors. Legally mandated responses and the availability of state and philanthropic funding have changed anti-violence movements, and the changes have been a cause for concern in radical feminist narratives. In addition, intersectional feminist narratives have been critical of mainstream anti-violence movements for failing to account for the ways that violence that occurs in the home or “private” spaces intersects with violence at the community, institutional, national and transnational levels that are also damaging to

women's health and well-being. I examine how anti-violence efforts in a rural county in northern California compare to critical narratives about anti-violence movements. Using an ethnographic approach, I interviewed professionals in the DVSA field, participated in public events and coordinating meetings, and analyzed documents/texts produced by this regional movement. By examining the institutions in Humboldt County that respond to domestic violence and sexual assault and by exploring the local discursive terrain, I illuminate the barriers to developing a broad anti-violence movement with an intersectional feminist analysis that is capable of shifting structural power. I also locate many instances when DVSA workers in this region resist being defined by any one DVSA narrative. This research examines how institutionalization and state funding provide some opportunities for social change, but ultimately constrain individuals and organizations from building and sustaining an anti-violence movement that can expose and eradicate the multiple forms of violence that target socially and economically marginalized people. I argue that state actors and institutions have a stake in focusing resources on interpersonal violence and away from macro-level systems of inequality, oppression and exploitation. This research contributes to a small but powerful body of literature that urges the anti-violence movement to be equally critical of conventionally defined domestic and sexualized violence and state and institutional forms of violence.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CalCASA	California Coalition Against Sexual Assault
CalEMA	California Emergency Management Agency
CARA	Communities Against Rape and Abuse (Seattle)
CPEDV	California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
DA	Humboldt County District Attorney
DVCC	Humboldt County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
DVRT	Domestic Violence Response Team
DVSA	Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse/Assault
FVP	Humboldt Family Service Center's Family Violence Program
FVPP	Family Violence Prevention Program
HDVS	Humboldt Domestic Violence Services
ITWAN	Inter-Tribal Women's Advocacy Network
MEND/WEND	Men/Women Experiencing Non-abusive Directions
NCRCT	North Coast Rape Crisis Team
SAPC	Humboldt State University Sexual Assault Prevention Committee
SART	Sexual Assault Response Team
SRPP	Six Rivers Planned Parenthood
TBTN	Take Back the Night
VAWA	Violence Against Women Act
WISH	Women and Children in Crisis in Southern Humboldt
WRC	Womyn's Resource Center at Humboldt State University

## CHAPTER1 INTRODUCTION

In the far north coast<sup>1</sup> corner of California, over thirty-five years ago, a group of women started meeting in living rooms to talk about domestic violence and sexual assault. It turned out that many of these women, and their mothers, aunties, grandmothers, best friends and cousins had experienced sexualized violence and domestic abuse. The women determined that experiences of rape, sexual assault, wife battering, marital rape and family violence were not unusual or isolated, and they wanted to do something to stop these acts of violence from happening again. They started taking collective action with the goal of ending violence that occurs in the home or “private” life, sexualized violence, and violence that disproportionately is perpetrated by men against women. This particular regime of violence is helpfully referred to by Julia Sudbury as domestic violence and sexual abuse or “DVSA” (2003).

The women, and soon men, in California’s far north coast began to do something about domestic violence and sexual assault, to initiate a public response, to raise consciousness, and to dream about ending violence. These activists followed in the footsteps of people who had been resisting sexualized violence and family violence across the globe for hundreds of years. Enough other people across the United States were developing similar ways of thinking about and responding to violence at around the

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<sup>1</sup> I borrowed this phrase from the regional designations used by the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence.

same time and they had enough social power that that their voices were beginning to be heard by dominant institutions that it felt like the beginning of a new movement. There were and still are opportunities to connect with people working on DVSA in other communities nation-wide, but local efforts have always looked different based on context, history, opportunities and constraints, resources, personalities, geography, and the interplay between theory, vision, and action. To say there is a unified, singular anti-violence movement nationwide is not as accurate as to say there are anti-violence *movements* embedded in local contexts between which shared and contested theories, strategies, resources and people circulate. Even within a local context, there may be groups operating from different analyses of violence and using different strategies for social change based on different access to resources, power, and privilege.

Over time these movements to end violence have experienced shifts in theory, adopted and abandoned social change strategies, and responded to attempts to ignore them, quash them, or use them for ends that don't match their ideals. Some work of these movements has been successful: the majority of people in the United States have some notion of domestic violence and sexual assault as social problems that society should respond to. Stories of intimate partner battering, rape, child sexual abuse, stalking and sexual harassment can be heard in popular media, news broadcasts, and public health campaigns, and sanctions against DVSA are codified into criminal statutes and law enforcement procedures. Other efforts of anti-violence work are still contested between movements and by forces that deny the impact of violence against women on social, political, and economic life. Ideas about what counts as domestic violence and sexual

assault, what causes DVSA, and what exactly the public should do to respond differ across movements. Despite some legal and cultural gains, the goal of ending domestic violence and sexualized violence can seem as far away as it was 35 years ago.

Crucial to any social change movement are opportunities to strategize and to reflect on where the movement is, where it has been, and where it could potentially go. But the practice of evaluation currently brings up ambivalent feelings in social change settings. Particular kinds of assessment have been, according to a professional I interviewed for this research, “crammed down the throat,” of non-profits, public agencies and academic organizations in ways that distract from doing meaningful “reflective work.” Collecting evidence of the impact of training sessions, services rendered, or treatment on individual participants is often required by grantors or state government funders. One of my informants suggests, “Everyone is being required to get more bang for the buck. Make more ‘data driven’ decisions.”

Other types of evaluation can lead to feelings that a movement is not actually achieving any goals. Measuring community awareness is one example. If more community members are aware that DVSA are crimes reportable to the police and that there are services available to victims, then a reasonable outcome is that more people will report. More reporting equals higher numbers which can make the incidence of violence look worse, even if actual levels of violence stay the same or decrease. It becomes difficult, then, to measure the positive impact your work is having toward preventing or ending violence. Similarly, non-profit organizations and public agencies do “needs assessments” to get feedback as to which services their communities think are most vital.

These evaluations can identify a set of gaps in public services that are inherently never ending. Needs assessments can also be done in a way that limits an agency's ability to think creatively and strategically about how to achieve their ultimate goals.

Local advocates may access the technical assistance tools of statewide and nationwide sexual assault and domestic violence partnerships to determine best practices for service delivery or to discover sample policies and procedures, and use these tools to measure shifts in local responses. Through collaborations or partnerships community agencies manage to shift institutional practices toward survivor-centeredness and institutional discourse toward advocacy-based frameworks such as “risk versus responsibility.” One tool that many DVSA professionals want to implement in the county where this research was conducted is called the Safety and Accountability Audit. The audit is designed to track domestic violence cases as they travel through the criminal justice system, with an eye to examining how institutional practices, policies and procedures contribute to victim safety and perpetrator accountability (Sandusky et al 2010). Through this assessment changes can be made to institutional practices that attempt to increase victim safety.

While it is important to evaluate social change work at multiple levels, one crucial type of evaluation is being neglected. Currently very little space and tools are available to reflect on regional efforts to build and sustain an anti-violence movement that can shift systems of power, privilege and oppression. A political analysis of power, privilege and oppression is crucial to the movement to end domestic violence and sexual assault for many reasons. Violence is about power and choices in a social, economic and political

context, not individual illness or deviance, and cultural norms and institutional structures play a role in perpetuating violence. It is imperative to ask questions about violence as we answer the most fundamental political question: How do we organize a good and just society? I believe social movements are necessary to achieve social justice, to shift structural power, and to challenge multiple levels of violence including those that the state and community are complicit in. Over and over again, my informants in Humboldt County expressed thanks for providing a reflective space to think about the priorities and strategies of local anti-violence work as a movement – not just the priorities of an agency or a committee or even a coordinated response. As a researcher, of course, it is perhaps my job to be one step removed from the activity on the ground, to be able to ask the questions that people involved in daily work forget to ask. But to be effective, social movements must create the space to do critical reflective work on a regular basis. It is this very lack of critical reflective space that is the subject of this research.

I am inspired by recent local efforts to be more reflective as a movement, some of which were literally being announced as I concluded this research. I am continually awed by the insight and passion of the North Coast Rape Crisis Team, particularly Paula Arrowsmith-Jones. I am encouraged by the efforts of Kim Berry and the Sexual Assault Prevention Committee at Humboldt State University; Dawn Watkins, Programs Manager at the local domestic violence shelter program; and others not focused exclusively on DVSA, but service provision in general, such as a learning group called Service Providers Against Scarcity Models (SPASM). It took investigation and networking skills to uncover these latter efforts, leading me to conclude that the political work of the local

anti-violence movement is not always visible to the general public. It is the goal of this investigation to contribute to efforts to reach out to people in Humboldt County with the message that building a world without violence will require us to dismantle systems of power, privilege, oppression, and exploitation.

This thesis is an attempt to describe a regional movement to end violence 35 years after it sparked in Humboldt County. For the past eight months, I have been learning about a group of people and a set of organizations that carry the burden of responding to domestic violence and sexualized violence every day in Humboldt. I compared this regional movement with narratives about anti-violence work, including hegemonic narratives about THE anti-violence movement, radical feminist critiques of the anti-violence movement, and intersectional feminist analyses of anti-violence movements. I made these comparisons knowing that it is the purpose of discourse to obscure the complexity of everyday life, and that it is challenging even for feminist theorists to be both critical of systems and to celebrate on-going resistance and resiliency by the people inside those systems.

In this thesis I examine whether the local movement still organizes around the conventional feminist analysis that domestic violence and sexual assault are tools of sexist oppression. If it does not, what other theories of violence have replaced that analysis or complicated it? I assess what have been the gains and losses of collaboration between advocacy-based organization and agencies that are legally mandated to respond to DVSA, including criminal justice agencies, social service agencies and medical providers. In other words, what has been accomplished through strategic engagement

with state institutions and what has been lost? Finally, I explore what opportunities exist locally to shift the anti-violence movement toward an intersectional feminist framework. I understand intersectional feminism as an analysis that explores the ways multiple categories of identity – race, class, sexuality, and ability for example – constitute an individual’s subjectivity, and the ways that systems of oppression and marginalization overlap and intersect.

I used an institutional ethnography approach (DeVault 1999) to collect information for this audit. I participated in public events, trainings and DVSA related meetings; conducted interviews with local professionals in the domestic violence and sexual assault field; and examined textual artifacts of DVSA work. Individuals have varying roles to play in institutionalizing a discourse, policy or practice, and individual workers can dramatically affect the experience of each client they work with. However, the institutional ethnography strategy allowed me to understand how institutional structures and macro-level systems constrain or provide opportunities for individuals who want to build and sustain an anti-violence movement.

I was influenced in this investigation by the intersectional feminist framework developed by Incite! Women of Color Against Violence. Within the past 15 years, a critical mass of women of color and anti-racist white women who work or have worked for anti-violence organizations have articulated critiques of current approaches to DVSA. Incite! represents a crystallization of these concerns, describing themselves as “a national activist organization of radical feminists of color advancing a movement to end violence against women of color and their communities through direct action, critical dialogue,

and grassroots organizing” (n.d.1). Incite! members analyze the multiple forms of violence that impact women of color from interpersonal violence that takes place in families, intimate partnerships, social networks and communities, to structural and institutional violence that systematically targets women of color and other marginalized women. Incite! organizers “identify ‘violence against women of color’ as a combination of ‘violence *directed at* communities,’ such as police violence, war, and colonialism, and ‘violence *within* communities,’ such as rape and domestic violence” (Incite! n.d.1). Incite! theorists explore how systems of oppression intersect in the lives of women who experience multiple forms of violence due to their multiple marginalized identities as women, people of color, colonized people, low income and poor people, immigrants, queer/LGBT people and people with disabilities (Incite! n.d.4). Incite! has pivoted their center of analysis (Collins 1990) onto women of color, but their approach is inspired by and has influenced subsequent analyses that pivot the center onto groups marginalized by parallel systems of exploitation and oppression such as capitalism and heterosexism or homophobia.

The Incite! intersectional feminist framework (and similar frameworks used by organizations like the Committee on Women, Population and the Environment<sup>2</sup> and Justice Now<sup>3</sup>) has enabled me to explore how domestic violence and sexual assault intersect and interlock with multiple forms of violence, oppression, and exploitation. I am

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<sup>2</sup> [www.cwpe.org](http://www.cwpe.org)

<sup>3</sup> [www.jnow.org](http://www.jnow.org)

particularly concerned with how specific strategies to combat domestic violence and sexual assault may eclipse forms of violence perpetrated on a macro-level, specifically by the neo-liberal welfare state. These forms of “state violence” are just as damaging to women’s health and well-being as domestic violence and sexual assault, but I argue that the state has a stake in focusing organizing efforts on interpersonal violence and away from macro-level systems of violence.

In short, I am critical of the lack of reflective space for the anti-violence movement, and especially the times when lack of reflection on strategy has led to what I see as troubling gap in analysis about state violence. At the same time, I want to honor the passion, commitment, hard work, and social justice frameworks of many individuals who work tirelessly to challenge interpersonal violence in Humboldt County and communities across the United States. Their courage and creativity has dramatically improved the lives of many survivors of violence. I believe their efforts are in spite of the institutions that they work in and not aided by those institutions. I am grateful for their many attempts to resist institutional constraints, challenge hegemonic discourses, creatively strategize around systemic barriers, and stand up for social justice. I hope to honor domestic violence and sexual assault workers in this investigation by providing critical insight about the structural barriers to their work and by supporting efforts to create more space for reflection on anti-violence work as a movement.

## CHAPTER 2 ANTI-VIOLENCE MOVEMENTS

### The Politics of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

In western liberal political theory the foundation for the good or just society is the protection of individual private lives from undue interference by other people, the government, and/or large businesses (Ball and Dagger 2005). The “private” sphere is a realm of freedom where the state and other individuals do not or should not interfere, where an individual may exercise her rights to live as she pleases. Many modern western social institutions have acted with the assumption that the home and family life exist in this realm of the private (Okin 1989, Schneider 1994). State institutions have selectively avoided interference in the home and family life by claiming that they cannot intervene unless there is some identifiable and serious impact to public life that justifies intervention (Schneider 1994).

Since the 1970’s feminist theorists in the United States and Europe have challenged the liberal assumption that a boundary exists between those aspects of life that are or should be shaped by public forces, and those aspects of life that are freely chosen and shaped by the private individual (Okin 1989, Schneider 1994). These theorists suggest instead that the state and society have a great deal of influence on the experience of home and family life. Through the regulation of marriage, for example, the state and other social institutions promote a gendered division of labor that is essential to the capitalist system (Okin 1989) and to colonization (Mies 1998). The strategy of

classifying domestic and family activity as “private,” according to Elizabeth Schneider, actually works to maintain systems of power and privilege, specifically gender inequality, and helps deny the harm of domestic and family violence against women and children (1994). The early feminist movement to combat so-called private violence – violence that took place in the home or between family members – attempted to move these forms of violence into the public arena, to articulate them as social problems that public institutions had a responsibility to respond to (Romany 1994, Schneider 1994, Bumiller 2008).

In 1969 Carol Hanisch wrote, “Personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for collective solution” (2006). In a subsequent printing of Hanisch’s essay, the editors coined the phrase: “The Personal is Political” (Hanisch 2006). This phrase has become short hand for articulating the feminist theory that what can seem to be personal conflicts in one’s life are actually attached to an entire constellation of social, economic, and political structures. Through this argument, feminist theorists have had tremendous impact on what counts as “political.” A political context can be defined as any space – from the halls of Congress to the bedroom – where people hold power over others and where people and their organizations contest power, privileges, and resources (Gordon 1988). Because social life in the United States is characterized by systems of exploitation, oppression, and inequality, sex and family life are inherently shaped by these political contexts (Gold and Villari 2000). Domestic violence and sexual assault are political issues embedded in systems of sexism, racism, heterosexism, colonization, other forms of

oppression and economic exploitation. Linda Gordon specifies, “Family violence has been historically and politically constructed . . . the very definition of what constitutes unacceptable domestic violence, and appropriate responses to it, developed and then varied according to political moods and the force of certain political movements” (Gordon 1988: 3).

Feminist theory has traced the ways that acts of violence against women are necessary to keeping in place social and political systems of patriarchy and gender oppression (Pharr 1988, Schneider 1994, Pence 1999, hooks 2000, Bumiller 2008). Historically, feminist concern with people who batter, assault, abuse, or rape has been the relationship of such violence to a culture that supports and demands domination of those perceived as inferior or weaker – including women, children and gay/lesbian/bisexual/trans/queer/intersex people (Pence 1999, hooks 2000). People ascribed as male disproportionately enact violence on women and children, because hegemonic constructions of masculinity suggest that the perpetration of violence by men is okay, desirable, erotic and even the epitome of manliness itself (Sanger 1997, Jhally 1999, hooks 2000, Gold and Villari 2000). Women dominate and control others too, as incidents of maternal child abuse and same sex domestic violence illustrate. Cultural theorist bell hooks argues that this is a result of internalizing the patriarchal belief that authority figures have the right to use force, control, and domination to get what they want (2000). Early on in the domestic violence and sexual assault movements, male perpetrated violence on females became of particular concern because it is more likely to lead to death or serious injury, because it is far more common statistically, and because it

is more likely to be ignored, denied, celebrated, or colluded with by social institutions and the state (Schneider 1994, Pence 1999). Male perpetrated violence on females also takes on significance because of the way that larger systems of male-dominated and male-led violence, such as war/military or criminalization/prisons, are glorified by American culture and institutions.

Anti-violence movements have had as a primary goal urging a public response to the social problems of domestic violence and sexual assault. The growth of the neo-liberal welfare state, bureaucratic/administrative modes of governance and the non-profit model means that public and publicly funded institutions can respond to widespread social problems while denying that they are political issues (Romany 1994, Schneider 1994, Bumiller 2008). Again, by “political” I mean containing an analysis of the maintenance and production of power and authority. It is misguided, suspicious, and ultimately dangerous to ignore, make invisible, cast aside or put on the backburner an analysis of the politics and power dynamics of domestic violence and sexual assault and society’s responses. Kristin Bumiller reminds readers that in the antebellum South, in order to justify the systematic oppression of Black people, Black men were characterized as sexual predators dangerous to white women (2008). Bumiller argues that contemporary rape cases in the United States are entangled in this historical legacy. Without attention to the political uses of rape charges and the way that such charges might help to maintain systems of power and authority, those fighting against sexual assault run the risk of creating an opportunity for the image of the racialized sexual predator to be reinforced. The challenge is to take the reality of sexual assault seriously in

a way that is simultaneously critical of oppressive and exploitative historical patterns. This is only possible by having a clearly articulated political analysis of sexual assault and domestic violence. I seek to explore in this research the contradiction between the wide public adoption of DVSA as social problems and the lack of broadly supported political analysis of domestic violence and sexual assault.

### Conventional Narrative of the Anti-Violence Movement: From Grassroots Activism to Professionalization

Some readings of history identify multiple forms of feminism and female resistance by extremely marginalized individuals and groups of people across space and time. Despite this work, the narrative about the progress of a singular, unified women's movement in the United States that has come in "waves" and revolves around the leadership of middle-class white heterosexual women remains the dominant story. Embedded in this conventional narrative is a dominant story about the anti-violence movement in the United States.

Melanie Shepard and Ellen Pence suggest that social protest against "wife beating" began as early as 1640 (1999). Linda Gordon pegs the beginnings of the modern public response to "private" violence to the late nineteenth century child cruelty protection agencies that started in major US and European cities, including Boston where Gordon did her archival research (1988). These child protection agencies were a project of the general moral reform and charity movement that was concerned with the problems brought by migration to cities and increasing immigration to the US by non-Anglo Saxons and non-Protestants (Gordon 1988). The individuals involved in these child

protection agencies were upper-class men and women from Anglo-Saxon Protestant neighborhoods, compelled by their desire to save needy children, mostly from their new immigrant fathers and mothers. Gordon discovered that although charitable agencies that began to develop in the 1870's devoted themselves to child abuse, child neglect and child sexual abuse, the case records also reveal interventions into wife-beating and what we today call spousal rape (1988). The feminist temperance movement blamed such male depravity and violence on the effects of alcohol. Suffragettes and progressive movements succeeded in procuring legislation that prohibited wife beating in every state by 1911 (Shepard and Pence 1999).

According to Gordon, new professionally trained and bureaucratically regulated social workers from the middle class began to respond to family welfare problems in the Progressive Era after the turn of the twentieth century (1988). The intervention into family life by what Celina Romany calls the "helping professions": psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers (1994: 286), grew and persisted through the first half of the twentieth century. However, Progressive Era social workers were increasingly motivated by concern about the disintegration of the family, and this concern assumed as normal the disproportionate control men had over women in the family (Gordon 1988). At the same time, new methods of psychiatry developed in the 1940's and 1950's suggested that women suffering from mental ailments such as masochism brought domestic abuse upon themselves (Walker 1979).

The range of helping professions involved in family violence broadened in the 1960's and 1970's, as medical doctors began to diagnose and treat first child abuse

(Gordon 1988) and then battered women (Durazo 2006). Michel Foucault articulated a concern about the role of these helping professions in micro-managing the very production of human life, through the manipulation of intimate relationships and human reproduction (1978). Foucault proposed that modernity could be defined as the power of the state, capitalism, and macro-social institutions to work on the micro-level – through the interpellation of individual roles such as “helping professional” – to control human life to serve institutional interests. Foucault called this process “bio-power” (1978: 140). Once I began to look for bio-power, it was not difficult to see it operating in many institutional activities. My goal is to seek to understand how bio-power works to control individual lives, but also to make visible and honor the many forms of resistance to bio-power.

In the 1960’s a “women’s movement” took shape that challenged systems of male-domination and notions of the home as haven and the family as private (Gordon 1988). A battered women’s movement, linked to the general women’s movement but not exclusively feminist, began organizing shelters and crisis centers as safe havens for women in abusive situations as early as 1964 (Bumiller 2008). Since that time, according to Elizabeth Schneider, “the battered women’s movement has been involved in efforts to provide services for battered women, to create legal remedies to end abuse, and to develop public education efforts to change consciousness about battering” (1994: 40). Similarly, radical feminists in the late 1960’s began to conceptualize rape as a political problem that required a collective solution. In the early 1970’s, feminist activists across the United States held speak-outs on rape, began to lobby for legislative reform, and

organized volunteer-run rape crisis centers where people (primarily women) could go for help after experiencing a sexual assault (Office for Victims of Crime n.d., Bumiller 2008).

According to Jodi Gold and Susan Villari, the early anti-rape movement was most visibly focused on incidents of stranger rape (2000). At the same time, however, radical feminists and feminist researchers studying rape suggested that sexual assaults were most commonly perpetrated by boyfriends, lovers, acquaintances, friends, husbands, fathers and other men that the victims knew (Gold and Villari 2000). Rape and sexual assault can thus be considered “domestic” acts that may occur in a victim’s home, school, office or other familiar place. Sexual abuse is also a common element of wife battering and domestic violence (Durazo 2007). Durazo argues that the categories of sexual assault and domestic violence are not “so neatly divisible and mutually exclusive” (2007: 117). It is in this spirit that I examine both domestic violence and sexual assault. The term “domestic violence” could conceivably be used to describe any violence that takes place in the “domestic” sphere of family and home life. By California legislation and as articulated by many anti-violence professionals locally, “domestic violence” specifically refers to a pattern of control and domination perpetrated mostly by one partner in an intimate relationship on another that includes physical injury but also emotional, verbal, financial and/or sexual abuse (Walker 1979, Shepard and Pence 1999, Curtis-Fawley 2005, Herman 2005). I discuss later why a shift to a broader conceptualization might be important. I use the term “sexual assault” to refer to “any sexual act without consent, including rape,” whether it is between people who know each other or strangers (North

Coast Rape Crisis Team n.d.1). I use the terms sexual assault and sexualized violence somewhat interchangeably, but will discuss later why a shift to sexualized violence might be preferable.

Domestic violence and sexual assault have been described in the conventional narrative as social welfare problems that require the building of social services to meet the needs of victims or survivors of violence; crime problems requiring the accountability of a perpetrator (Coker 2004); and as public health epidemics necessitating the mobilization of medical institutions and personnel (Durazo 2006). The framing of DVSA as a social welfare problem has catalyzed the development of crisis hotlines, advocate accompaniment, confidential emergency shelters, transitional housing, temporary cash aid, case management, and entitlement programs (Koyama 2006). The framing of DVSA as a crime has invoked a constellation of federal and state laws prohibiting acts of sexualized and domestic violence, law enforcement response mandates, court processes, and punishment regimes (Coker 2004). DVSA are also framed as medical problems where public health campaigns or the training of medical personnel to investigate and report suspected violence are the appropriate responses, or as pathologies on the part of either or both the perpetrators and survivors, solved by intervention and psychological treatment (Durazo 2006).

The investment of resources by the state into modifying the criminal justice system to meet the demands of DVSA has been seen as an important advancement of the anti-violence movement. Mainstream DVSA advocates are skeptical of family's, social network's and community's ability to acknowledge violence and take action, noting

numerous experiences where individuals denied or covered up DVSA as it was happening (Curtis-Fawley and Daly 2005). Diana Coker points out that the criminal justice approach has been used because it is seen as the way for society to demonstrate that domestic violence is “morally wrong” (2004: 1349). Curtis-Fawley and Daly found that victim’s advocates in Australia believe the state needs to demonstrate the seriousness of domestic violence and sexual assault to the public by treating these cases as “high crimes” punishable as the most serious offenses (2005: 625). It is not surprising that in the dominant narrative about DVSA movements, many of the major milestones are laws that criminalized certain behavior or laws that increased the punishments for offenders (see Office of Victims of Crime n.d.)

Beginning in the early 1980’s the volunteer-based grassroots efforts of the battered women’s and the anti-rape movements were confronted with a series of choices about seeking funding and institutional support in order to secure stability for victim service programs (Bumiller 2008, Macy et al 2009). According to Kristin Bumiller, advocacy organizations built relationships with the state and the very institutions they were critical of in order to secure the resources they thought they needed to continue their work (2008). As a result, the vast majority of agencies that respond to domestic violence and sexual assault now rely on some form of government funding, and may also utilize government run training programs or other resources (Kivel 2007). Additionally, as a variety of government agencies have taken on the task of responding to DVSA in some capacity – from law enforcement to prosecution to public health – feminist founded agencies began collaborating with state actors and the medical industry to coordinate

trainings, responses, and services (Office for Victims of Crimes n.d.). In the conventional narrative, this collaboration between advocates and state institutions represents the growing legitimacy and effectiveness of the anti-violence movement. But radical feminists have worried from the very beginning of the movement that engaging with the state would diminish the feminist political analysis of violence as a tool of patriarchy, sexism and male domination of women. Even as services for survivors have increased, radical feminists have continued to lament what they identify as the “depoliticization” of the anti-violence movement (Romany 1994, Durazo 2007).

Relationships with government institutions are partially an outcome of advocates who operate under a pluralist theory of the state. Pluralism views the state as a set of institutions and actors who are charged with mediating the concerns of different interest groups representing shifting social groupings in society (Ball and Dagger 2004, Kaufman 2003). Catharine MacKinnon describes mainstream feminism as having “liberal moments” where the state is viewed as a basically neutral arbiter sorting through competing interests (1989: 159). In these moments, feminists view their objective as creating a coalition of women/victim survivors who can put forward their case to the state in order to gain rights (MacKinnon 1989). In the pluralist theory of the state, the political ground that an interest group gains or loses, or the set of rights granted or denied, is not predetermined by the nature of the state but determined by the effectiveness of the interest group’s mobilization (MacKinnon 1989). Under pluralist frameworks, the task for anti-violence advocates has been to build coalitions that call on the state to allot

resources to DVSA work and to grant additional rights to victims of violence (Roche and Sadoski 1996, Shepard and Pence 1999).

The conventional narrative describes the passage of the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994 as a culminating moment in the quest to get the state to take DVSA seriously. VAWA was the work of an alliance of state and national DVSA coalitions and the first formulation of a national policy regarding rape, domestic violence, and stalking (Roche and Sadoski 1996, Bumiller 2008). The goals of VAWA are to: improve the criminal justice system response to violence against women, expand services and support to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault through increasing funding and educational programming, and to allow for civil remedies when individuals states discriminate against women by failing to protect them (Roche and Sadoski 1996, Bumiller 2008). The civil rights provisions of the act were struck down by the Supreme Court in 2000 (Bumiller 2008), but VAWA designated significant grant funding streams for prevention/education programs, probation/parole/law enforcement officer training, implementation of pro-arrest policies, law enforcement provided victim assistance services, battered women's shelters, coordinated community response projects, and other programs. Acquiring federal funding and building collaborative relationships has transformed DVSA organizations from a grassroots mobilization to a set of professionally certified and staffed social service agencies (Durazo 2007, Kivel 2007).

The Duluth Model. As an advocacy agency that is funded by and tightly collaborative with state institutions, the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Duluth, Minnesota, is a highly influential model in the conventional narrative (Shepard

and Pence 1999). The DAIP was initiated as a demonstration project of “institutional advocacy” by a statewide Minnesota DV coalition in 1980 (Shepard and Pence 1999: 14). According to Melanie Shepard and Ellen Pence, institutional advocacy is an interagency networking approach that enables advocates to speak for the needs of women as a class. Shepard and Pence argue that this was the answer to two challenges the DV movement was facing: one, how to take a practical approach to meeting victim needs while simultaneously working for long-term social change; and two, how to build cooperative, mutually beneficial relationships between victim advocates and law enforcement/courts where often tense relationships existed (1999).

Shepard and Pence believe that together the eight elements of “the Duluth Model” make the approach successful. The eight elements are:

1. A philosophical approach that centralizes victim safety and challenges victim blaming
2. An integrated response to DV where intervening agencies agree to a set of “best practice” policies and protocols
3. Networking among service providers
4. A system that monitors and tracks how cases are handled by service providers
5. A community infrastructure that supports battered women
6. Social and legal institutions that take responsibility for DV by enforcing sanctions and rehabilitation for abusers
7. Taking into account the harm that violence against women does to children and responding to it
8. Evaluating coordinated community responses around the question: How does this provide for the safety of the victim?

In my local research, I encountered both explicit references to the Duluth Model and goals and strategies that seem to be inspired by parts of the Duluth approach. It was apparent to me that when DV workers use the term the Duluth Model, they may be referring to one of several things, including DAIP’s influential batterer’s intervention

curriculum, the “Power and Control Wheel” theory of violence, pioneering mandatory arrest policies, a system that tracks cases through the criminal justice system, or multi-agency collaborations (Shepard and Pence 1999).

### Victims’ Rights in the Criminal Justice System

Despite “persistent investment” in the criminal justice system, according to Curtis-Fawley and Daly, advocates have numerous critiques of the criminal justice systems’ failures (2005). Of major concern is that fact that the vast majority of acts of domestic violence and sexual assault are never reported to authorities (Herman 2005), and conviction rates for reported cases are among the lowest of so-called serious crimes (Curtis-Fawley and Daly 2005). The “victims’ rights” framework has been one vehicle for addressing the following critiques:

- That the criminal justice system does not validate victim experiences or absolve victims of blame. In fact, the prosecutor/defense system treats victims like witnesses and subjects them to strategies of “character assassination” where the defense tries to prove the individual is unreliable as a witness (Curtis-Fawley and Daly 2005, Herman 2005).
- That the criminal justice system systematically re-traumatizes victims by forcing them to vividly re-live the details of abuse and face their accuser in court (Curtis-Fawley and Daly 2005).
- That the criminal justice system is ineffective at dealing with violence that happens between family members or people with intimate relationships,

especially when those people will have continued relationships after the trial (Curtis-Fawley and Daly 2005, Herman 2005). The system treats people as if they are never going to interact again, and demands that defendants and witnesses to do or say anything they need to make their case, even if that behavior would negatively affect their future relationship.

- That the criminal justice system is incapable of dealing with child victims, who are seen by the court as inherently unreliable witnesses (Curtis-Fawley 2005).

Even with these concerns, victims' rights advocates believe that the criminal approach is the correct one and have done much work to increase the scope of the criminal justice system. Victims' rights advocates seek policy changes like putting closed circuit television technology in courtrooms (so victims do not have to confront their perpetrators), the implementation of additional legal sanctions such as court-mandated treatment programs for batterers, barriers to parole for convicts, and increasing the lifetime surveillance of people convicted of sex crimes (Herman 2005).

### Intersectional Feminist Narratives About Anti-Violence Movements

Critical race legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the phrase “intersectionality” to describe the ways that race and gender oppression interact with each other to produce unique experiences for women according to race, class, and other differences (Crenshaw 1994: 94). Feminist theorists have used and expanded the concept of intersectionality to challenge the idea that domestic violence and sexual assault are solely or primarily manifestations of male domination over women (Incite! n.d.2.). These

theories suggest that gender oppression must be examined as it intersects with other systems of domination and oppression, including white supremacy, colonization, orientalism, occupation, capitalist exploitation, compulsive heterosexuality, (dis)ability, and transphobia (Incite! n.d.2, Incite! n.d.3). Only in this way can feminists understand the political dynamics of sexualized violence and violence in the home/family.

Incite! Women of Color Against Violence argue, for example, that sexualized violence was used as a “weapon of conquest” by European settlers against the Native people of California (n.d.2). Sexualized violence was used not only to “crush the spirit” and deny the bodily integrity of Native people, but also to control their reproduction by denying them the choice of who they would have children with (Incite! n.d.2). Native children who were kidnapped and placed in boarding schools suffered rampant sexualized violence at the hands of the white authorities who ran the schools (Smith 2005a). Sexual assault played a role in the attempt to forcibly assimilate Native children and left a legacy that continues to affect the integrity of Native families. In this terrible example, sexual violence was used simultaneously as a tool for gender domination, racial domination, colonization and capitalist exploitation (n.d.2).

Emi Koyama provides an additional example of an intersectional approach to sexual assault and domestic violence by looking at the experiences of transwomen (2001). When trans people are revealed to be trans, they are extremely vulnerable to attack by men because of the ways that misogyny and homophobia are interlocked (Koyama 2001). Suzanne Pharr explains that false promises of survival and safety are made to women in our society, as long as they attach themselves to men and stay in the

confines of male protection (1988). Male control is threatened by women who rely on each other for support, safety and material needs, so the epitome of woman bonding – lesbianism – is demonized in order to deter women from seeking it (Pharr 1988).

Similarly, gay men are perceived as being not men and therefore subject to the same domination and violence as women. Transpeople are caught in the web of misogyny, homophobia, and the need to maintain gender boundaries to uphold those systems of oppression (Koyama 2001). Transpeople are targeted for sexualized violence and vulnerable to domestic violence because of this web.

The significance of these analyses lies in understanding how the experience of violence is not universal among women, but is unique based on women's race, nation, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, performance of gender, physical and mental ability. As a result, Incite! argues that effective responses to violence against women must simultaneously address the other forms of oppression that target women, such as genocide, colonization, racism, homophobia and transphobia. Incite! and other intersectional feminists are critical of the ways that the dominant DVSA movement has historically developed responses to violence that centered the experiences of white middle class heterosexual women (Smith et al 2006). In doing so, Incite! suggests, the movement unfairly privileged gender oppression as the primary issue of concern. This was a dangerous move, because it allowed the DVSA movement to create relationships with the state that were problematic from the point of view of those trying to challenge the state's role in reinforcing racism, homophobia, and other systems of oppression (Smith et al 2006).

Using an intersectional feminist framework, it becomes clear that there is not a singular, unified anti-violence movement that started out in some center and reached Humboldt County 35 years ago. Instead multiple anti-violence movements have been on-going for hundreds of years, gaining momentum at different times in different regions and in different communities within those regions. These movements continue to operate simultaneously within communities and regions. While Incite! presents one narrative about anti-violence work based on pivoting the center on women of color, their intersectional framework if applied by different theorists pivoting the center onto other groups with subjugated knowledges might come to different conclusions.

#### The State and Institutions as Perpetrators of Violence

In an ironic moment of pop culture, a rapper who has denigrated his ex-wife and mother in many songs and a survivor of a very public case of physical assault by her rapper husband released a Billboard Top 10 song in 2010 about the experience of domestic violence.

“I apologize  
 Even though I know it's lies  
 I'm tired of the games  
 I just want her back  
 I know I'm a liar  
 If she ever tries to fucking leave again  
 I'mma tie her to the bed  
 And set the house on fire  
 Just gonna stand there  
 And watch me burn  
 But that's alright  
 Because I like  
 The way it hurts  
 Just gonna stand there

And hear me cry  
 But that's alright  
 Because I love  
 The way you lie"

--Eminem and Rihanna, "Love The Way You Lie"

The ambiguous messages of the song – including the implication that the woman in the song may equate violence with love – illustrates the concern of many radical feminists that popular awareness of domestic violence has not been accompanied by feminist political analysis of the dynamics of violence.

Shepard and Pence argue that the battered women's movement, while influenced by feminist analysis, has never been solely or primarily made up of feminists (1999). Instead they believe that the movement has sought different goals than radical feminism. Radical feminists critiqued the family structure, capitalism, the state and heterosexism and fought for "liberation." The battered women's movement fought for "safety" and only sometimes turned to radical analysis when feminist analyses helped explain problems they had with institutional decision-making (Shepard and Pence 1999).

To understand the relationship of liberal and radical analyses it is helpful to briefly explore the political landscape in the United States, most of which can be considered to fall under the school of western political liberalism that I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. There are two somewhat contradictory threads of liberal thought. People that argue for little to no regulation of the market or "free markets" are considered economically liberal or "neo-liberal." Their main argument is that the market is the best sphere to pursue individual liberty and that private property is the space in which to exercise individual freedom. They push for policy that reduces government

interference with the market. Social or “welfare state” liberals believe that the state has a legitimate role in protecting people from harmful economic activity. They believe that the government plays an important role in regulating business when externalities (the unintended consequences of business) spill over into people’s lives in negative ways. They argue that the government should enact social programs to assist people who are affected by capitalist phenomena such as unemployment. Because both schools of thought have shaped the modern US state, I call it a “neo-liberal welfare state.”

Marxist, socialist, and intersectional feminist theorists have investigated the contradictions of the neo-liberal welfare state and the impact the state has on women’s health and well being. Marxist theory describes the state as an instrument of the capitalist class, an institution that even if not controlled directly by the bourgeoisie, is wedded to their interests (Marx 1948, MacKinnon 1989, Kaufman 2003). There is no ultimate function of the state outside of the interests of capitalism in Marxist theories, and any engagement with the state (other than a worker takeover) only serves to solidify it as a capitalist serving institution. Under a Marxist interpretation of the state, it is useless and in fact dangerous to engage the state in order to achieve social justice, because according to MacKinnon, the state is viewed as inherently a “tool of domination and repression” (1989: 160). Because in Marxist or socialist analysis the state exists to perpetuate capitalism, the state can do very little to dismantle the structural inequality that capitalism needs to function (Naples 2003). By its very nature the welfare state is extending resources to buffer its citizens against the effects of corporate capitalism rather than critique capitalism itself (Naples 2003).

Socialist and materialist feminist analyses have been complicated by postmodern critiques (Naples 2003). Newer theories of the state influenced by postmodern and post-structural theory are critical of the tendency to imagine the state as a monolithic, overarching, concrete institution with uniform goals and procedures. Understanding the role of the state in enacting domination is still a goal of postmodern research, but theorists focus on understanding the process of “making” or forming a state in order to illuminate how domination happens (Migdal 2001, Sivaramakrishna 1999). Joel Migdal conceptualizes the state as a “field of power marked by the use and threat of violence” and shaped by images and practices (2001: 15-16). The state gains legitimacy by projecting and having projected upon it the image of a centralized source of power. The practices of the state’s actors and agencies may, according to Migdal, reinforce or weaken the image of the state as a legitimate source of power. This is one reason why the actual enactment of state policy on the ground may turn out very differently from the original vision of the state (Migdal 2001).

K. Sivaramakrishna similarly describes the state as a “strategic terrain” of power that is constantly produced to “organize political subjection within a defined territory” (1999: 8). Sivaramakrishna, like Migdal, is concerned with the ways that the state and society constitute each other. He argues that state as it is formed makes people into subjects. The subjects in turn accept the legitimacy of the state to some degree. This acceptance is crucial for the state’s existence, because the state doesn’t have the capacity to rely solely on violence to exact compliance with its rules.

These conceptualizations of the state are useful for thinking about organizing against DVSA. The role of the state in producing inequality can be understood in terms of the ways that other sites of power (such as religion or the capitalist marketplace) struggle against or collude with the state, and the ways that local actors cooperate with or challenge the legitimacy of the state. Because the practices of the state are not unified, opportunities are created for the anti-violence movement to gain support from a state actor, secure a grant or other funding, or tweak an institutional policy. But anti-violence advocates must be strategic when engaging with the state, or they run the risk of projecting an image of legitimacy onto the state; and projecting an image that the state is actually capable of securing safety for victims of violence, holding perpetrators accountable or preventing future violence. Many marginalized groups in society already can articulate that this has not been the case for their interactions with the state, that in fact the state has actively undermined their safety and the potential for accountability for their perpetrators (Chandler and Kingery 2002).

I believe that specific features of the modern state make the granting of legitimacy to the state extremely dangerous for the anti-violence movement. First, modern states build legitimacy by projecting the image of supporting a strong economy and also by acting like capitalists. States lose legitimacy if they make poor business decisions; if they take on a debt load they can't sustain or offer free public services to the dismay of private or international investors, states are criticized for being inefficient or badly managed. A postmodern feminism influenced by Marxism that articulates the ways that capitalism

requires an underclass of exploited (women) workers, should also be looking at the state as a field of power that uses capitalist strategies to gain legitimacy.

Second, states construct imagined national communities or nationalism as a method of extracting loyalty from their citizens (Migdal 2001, Kaufman 2003). By nature, some individual bodies must be excluded from the rights of being part of the national body, by being born outside of the territorial borders and/or through “mythical” ideas about blood purity and racial superiority (Foucault 1978: 149). The United States national body is frequently imagined as white, heterosexual, and middle-class. This imagining of the nation requires racialized populations to be regulated so as not to taint the purity of the national body. Bodies with reproductive power – women – become contested. Thus nationalism includes a gendered logic, where reproductive bodies are targeted for regulation and the reproductive capacity of deviant bodies is attacked and demonized (Silliman 2002). Nationalism and the state’s use of it should be of concern to feminists concerned about women’s control over their own bodies.

Finally, Max Weber argued that, “the modern state is a compulsory association which organizes domination” which claims a “monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (1946). For Weber, the state is an organization that claims to have the sole authority to use violence within a territory to achieve its ends. The key to Weber’s theory is the understanding of the state as an organization that makes claims about rights to using violence. He argues that there are other arenas of power within society that compete with the state for resources and authority, and that we can see a “rich negotiation, interaction, and resistance” in human society among multiple sets of

rules (Weber 1946: 15). Viewing the state as the sole legitimate creator of rules and the sole legitimate user of coercion to enforce those rules enhances the overall perception of the state as a legitimate centralized authority. At stake here is not whether a state actually has a monopoly on the exercise of physical force, but whether it claims to have a monopoly and whether at least some citizens find that claim compelling. If a state has a monopoly on violence, then it can protect its citizens from violence from each other and violence from forces outside the nation. Citizens in the Weberian state believe they have no violence to fear even from the state as long as they are obedient to laws. Under the social contract, however, subjects who are not obedient to the law may expect legitimate reprimand that includes the use of physical force.

This analysis of the state explains why it is problematic for anti-violence advocates to ally themselves with the state; they are fighting one kind of domestic violence while projecting legitimacy onto another kind of state violence. Andrea Smith believes the state is not “simply flawed in its ability to redress violence, but [is] a primary perpetrator of violence against women in its own right” (2005b: 725-726). A Marxist, postmodern, intersectional feminist reading of the state allows me to argue that the state has a stake in shifting focus on certain levels and types of violence and away from others. State violence is enacted by the very institutions the DVSA movement has sought help from in redressing family and interpersonal violence: the criminal justice system, the social services apparatus, and the medical industry (Coker 2004, Durazo 2006, Koyama 2006, Durazo 2007, Bumiller 2008). The state receives benefits from co-opting the

struggle against interpersonal violence in order to fuel the expansion of these controlling institutions.

The Criminal Justice System and Violence Against Women. To understand the intersectional feminist critique of the contemporary criminal justice system, it is helpful to briefly explore the relationship between criminological theory and western liberal political theory. Liberal political theory argues that governments receive legitimacy through the “social contract,” a voluntary agreement of independent moral agents who exercise free will (Ball and Dagger 2005). Because people have reason and the ability to regulate and control behavior, society has the right to inflict punishment for prohibited acts, as long those prohibited acts were voluntarily determined to be prohibited by citizens who are party to the social contract (Burke 2001). This simple version of the “rational actor model” of criminal behavior has been complicated by arguments that some people don’t have the capacity to make fully informed rational choices, including juveniles and mentally insane people (Burke 2001). Crime is now conventionally explained in terms of a mix of free-will choice and factors beyond the control of the individual including: biology/genetics, psychological mal-development, environmental influences, involvement in deviant sub-cultures, being labeled as deviant, and/or lack of equal opportunity (Lab et al 2004).

Marxist (Lab et al 2004) and intersectional feminist (Ritchie 2006) theories have challenged the idea that what behavior is constituted as prohibited or criminal is determined through societal consensus. In fact, according to “conflict theories,” what is considered “crime” is socially constructed and therefore reflects and constitutes power

relations (Lab et al 2004: 41). According to these theories, the criminal justice system is not a malleable system, where feminists merely have to make the case to the state about who are the real “bad guys.” Instead, racist, patriarchal, capitalist, homophobic, transphobic, AIDS-phobic, and nationalist practices are embedded in the criminal justice system. In a binary hierarchical system, the “other” is constructed as inherently different or “deviant” from the “norm.” The scientific labeling of structurally marginalized groups as socially deviant or “criminal” and therefore disenfranchised based on their poor choices, solidifies the social benefits and economic privileges of dominant groups who are “non-criminogenic” (Knopp 1976, Aptheker 1971). When “different” people are socially constructed as criminal, whether or not they are currently engaged in criminal behavior, they are denied the rights of citizenship and targeted by the criminal justice system as a means for enacting that denial of rights.

Andrea Ritchie argues that women of color and non-gender conforming women are constructed by hegemonic discourses as criminals: threats to be met with brutal force, sexually available, vessels for drugs, or instruments of terror (2006). Visibly different women, especially dark-skinned Black women, are vastly over-represented in criminal justice systems, though individuals from other marginalized groups have also been brutalized. Ritchie details some of the multiple ways the state actually perpetrates violence against marginalized women through the criminal justice system: policing gender and policing sex; racial profiling and use of force; rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment by law enforcement and corrections officers; inappropriate responses to domestic violence and sexual assault; and gang policing (2006). Women of color,

immigrant women, poor women, and their children are also impacted by the policing and over-incarceration of marginalized men, as their families and communities suffer from the drain of social capital and the cost of supporting a loved one in the system (Silliman 2002, Coker 2004).

This critique is not meant to suggest that the criminal justice system has not at times kept individual women safe and held individual perpetrators responsible for their actions. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge those instances shared with me by family and friends of times that police officers removed a violent person in a way that demonstrated tremendous caring and respect for the victim, or those stories where prosecution and punishment matched well with the victims needs. Overall, however, the criminal justice system has not proven to increase overall safety for women, nor has it proven to deter perpetrators or to rehabilitate them. These failures combined with violence against women perpetrated by the system, leads me to believe that the time is ripe for radical reassessment of how we as a society view crime, violence, harm, punishment and justice.

The Social Service System and Violence Against Women. A report of domestic violence or sexual assault by a victim to a 911 call station or a law enforcement agency, a report made by any of a number of mandated reporters (including medical personnel or anyone who works with children), or even a call by a concerned neighbor kicks into gear what Sadusky et al call a “complex institutional apparatus” (2010: 1031). While a law enforcement agency may be the first to respond, several legal and human service agencies

may play a role in processing each case of DVSA whether or not the case is ever prosecuted or results in conviction.

Kristen Bumiller argues that feminist alliances with state-sponsored institutions enable the state to use the experience of DVSA as a tool to further its own interests including increased surveillance, scrutiny, and control of women (2008). One mechanism for this control is the social service systems that process DVSA cases or are required to investigate and report DVSA in the course of their normal operations. Social service agencies have the power, and often are required, to scrutinize women's decisions and interrogate the most intimate details of their lives in exchange for providing resources and services to their clients (Bumiller 2008). Such interrogations put women who are experiencing violence in the position of being forced to either expose the violence they are experiencing, or lie to the social service provider. Feminist theorists concerned about welfare reform have documented many facets of the social control function of welfare systems. Syd Lindsley for example describes the role of welfare in regulating motherhood (2002). By constructing certain women as "undeserving" of aid, the welfare system privileges certain kinds of (white) motherhood and makes other mothers more vulnerable to capitalist exploitation (Lindsley 2002). The social service system can be scrutinized in similar ways as the welfare system.

As women come into contact with state agencies through their own or other's reports of DVSA, they become vulnerable to further unwanted institutional intervention and control (Coker 2004). Donna Coker provides a few examples: women on probation or parole put themselves at risk of being caught violating the terms of their supervision if

they report an incident of DVSA; immigrant women who are undocumented put themselves and their family at risk for deportation if they report an incident of DVSA; and based on domestic violence incident reports, child welfare departments may be prompted to investigate neglect or child abuse claims (2004).

Even within social service agencies devoted exclusively to supporting domestic violence or sexual assault survivors, the distribution of power opens up opportunities for survivors to be victimized by direct service workers, and/or for direct service workers to be exploited by administrators (Koyama 2006). Emi Koyama describes her experiences as a client and later as a service worker in a domestic violence shelter:

“I questioned everything: the ‘clean and sober’ policy regarding substance abuse; the policy against allowing women to monitor their own medications; the use of threats and intimidations to control survivors; the labeling of ordinary disagreements or legitimate complaints as ‘disrespectful communication’; the patronizing ‘life skills’ and ‘parenting’ classes; the seemingly random enforcement of rules that somehow always push women of color out of the shelter first” (2006: 210).

Koyama documents how she felt like she was being constantly policed not only by the staff but by residents who were encouraged to tell staff when other clients had broken rules. In her experience there was no way to file grievances against staff, so there was no accountability for abuses of power. After Koyama returned to work in a domestic violence shelter, she felt she was forced into an institutional role that systematically abused women, even as she actively disregarded problematic policies and procedures (2006). Koyama concludes,

“Like every abused woman, I believed that I could make the shelter system change, that I could help make it stop being abusive and become loving and

caring. I was trapped in what Jennifer Baumgardner calls ‘Battered Women’s Movement Syndrome’” (2006: 209).

I do not believe that every woman’s experience with a domestic violence or sexual assault agency is abusive or terrible. In fact, I know of several people who have had very supportive and healing experiences because of the work of DVSA agency staff. This critique instead shows how social service organizations can reproduce patterns of control and domination if there is not a continuous commitment to fighting oppression inside the agency itself, and if there are no mechanisms to make sure the agency is accountable to the needs of survivors of violence (Koyama 2006). When social service providers lose their critical insight into how control and domination work, it is possible to neglect the constant vigilance required to avoid victim-blaming behaviors.

The Medical System and Violence Against Women. Particularly troublesome to me is the framing of domestic violence and sexual assault as medical or health problems. Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo calls this tendency “medicalization,” a process by which “institutionalized, ‘mainstream’ or western medicine” conceives of social problems as diseases or pathologies (2006: 180). At times domestic violence is seen not only as a pathology on the perpetrator of violence, but also on the part of the survivor of violence, who as a person with an “injury/medical need” is targeted for health education, intervention, and medical and psychological treatment (Durazo 2006: 188). Durazo is further critical of the medicalization of domestic violence and sexual assault because to describe such problems as “epidemics” masks the social and political causes of the

problem and subordinates grassroots organizing to the expertise of men in white coats (2006, see also Bumiller 2008).

That survivors of violence experience physical and mental trauma is unquestionable. However, the western medicine model is not the only avenue for healing. Medical and public health models may in fact limit healing opportunities if they block survivors from realizing that violence is a common political problem that requires collective political solutions. Western medicine's potential must be analyzed in the context of historical and current abuses of marginalized people by medical providers (Durazo 2006). Western medicine systems have been complicit in the intentional spread of diseases, forced sterilization, the degrading of indigenous and women's healing knowledges, and the labeling of resistance to exploitation as a disease (Durazo 2006). According to Durazo, western medicine continues to play a role in perpetuating systems of oppression including capitalism, racism, colonialism and sexism (2006). Contemporary cases of nonconsensual sterilization of women in California prisons, for example, makes medical abuse an additional "punishment" for women who are disproportionately incarcerated based on race, class, perceived sexual orientation and HIV status.

### Working Inside the System, Working Outside the System

The development of anti-violence movements coincided with the development of the neo-liberal welfare state. The neo-liberal push to privatize government functions meant that the state began in the 1980's to transfer public services to the private sector.

The state essentially contracted out portions of the social service system by awarding grant funding to non-governmental organizations, schools, and faith groups (Bumiller 2008). Social movements that had previously called the state out on its failures to protect all citizens equally, increasingly had the chance to acquire funding to provide services that would remediate for what the state had failed to offer (Durazo 2007). The contractual relationship with non-governmental organizations did not decrease the regulatory power of the state. In the anti-violence movement, for example, the state has a hand in mandating programmatic elements in order for agencies to receive funding, training and certifying domestic violence and sexual assault advocates, and monitoring state compliance with federal criminal justice mandates.

According to theorists highlighted by Incite! in a 2007 anthology, in order to access grant funding, social movement organizations had to implement certain policies and practices, including: hiring professionals with credentials and degrees over community organizers, implementing hierarchical structures that resembled corporations rather than organizing as collectives, and primarily offering therapeutic social services instead of focusing on popular education (Durazo 2007). From the beginning, radical feminists were concerned about domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers turning their backs on the non-hierarchical organizing structures and consciousness-raising strategies that had made such organizations so unique (Koyama 2006, Bumiller 2008, Macy et al 2010). Concerns have been repeatedly raised by some in the DVSA movement that these changes have transformed social movement organizations run by activists and survivors into institutions staffed by professionals (Romany 1994, Koyama 2006, Durazo

2007). Radical feminist narratives have charged institutionalization and professionalism with contributing to the “depoliticization” of the domestic violence and sexual assault movements (Romany 1994, Koyama 2006). According to Durazo and others, the non-profit system specifically works to undermine political organizing against power in favor of focusing on the needs and behavior choices of individuals (2007). As Paul Kivel argues, non-profitization has successfully diverted the energy of people and organizations committed to social change work into social services (2007). Romany suggests that this has put on the backburner the political goal of ending violence in favor of welfare state models of “helping” battered women and sexual assault survivors (1994).

Despite my deep reservations about collaborating with state institutions, I do support efforts to reform mainstream organizations for practical and strategic reasons. On a practical level, most victims of violence will seek services from mainstream agencies (Bumiller 2008) because efforts to build community-based alternative responses to DVSA are still underdeveloped (Koyama 2006). However, I also agree with Paul Kivel that the needs of victims of violence will endlessly tap the time, energy and resources of advocates unless social change is achieved (2007). But to achieve social change requires diverting time, energy and resources away from immediate need. Anti-violence activists seem to be caught in an endless cycle where they can not do long term work because the current need is so great.

This relates to a persistent debate in much activist work as to whether “reform” can truly achieve social change, or whether “revolution” is necessary. Chela Sandoval’s conceptualization of “differential consciousness” suggests that this distinction may be

misguided (1991). Oppositional consciousness describes the phenomenon whereby a person who is interpellated by dominant ideologies can come to break with that ideology. Sandoval describes different techniques of oppositional consciousness that have been deployed at different points in social movements, though not in her view in any kind of natural progression. Sandoval argues in fact that social movements have been repeatedly split by internal arguments over which technique of oppositional consciousness is the most superior. *Differential* consciousness, as embodied in the Third World Women's Movement that Sandoval describes, instead engages with/disengages with different ideological tactics based on assessments of the political terrain ahead (1991).

The willingness to consider multiple ideological tactics, including negotiation, reform efforts, direct action, and building counter-institutions as equally legitimate gives social movements a certain kind of leverage. Through direct action, social movements communicate the seriousness of complaints, become a force the state must take seriously, and create a collective body to be reckoned with. When direct action is happening, the state can see the appeal of collaborating with those who are willing to negotiate. Conversely, negotiating groups are empowered to accept important concessions from the state, even as militant groups continue their push for the bottom line of the movement's agenda.

Hegemony is never complete (Stoddard 2007, see chapter three in this paper). Hegemonic productions are a constantly negotiated "terrain of debate, work, aspiration, and control" (Chari 2006: 2). While activists argue about whether we should put our time and energy into reform or radical social change, they mask the ways that movements

already do navigate between confrontation and negotiation. If people who are doing “institutional advocacy” inside the system and people who are challenging the neo-liberal welfare state by implementing DVSA responses outside of the system could stand together in tactical solidarity employing Sandoval’s “differential consciousness,” the movement would be more likely to achieve the goal of ending violence against women.

### Tools for Ending Violence Against Women

Safety and Accountability Audit. Number eight in the Duluth model elements is on-going evaluation of coordinated community responses conducted from the perspective of victim safety (Shepard and Pence 1999). Ellen Pence, who co-founded and worked at the DAIP for many years, founded an organization called Praxis International in 1998 that built on the lessons learned in Duluth about evaluation (Sadusky et al 2010). Pence developed the “Praxis Safety and Accountability Audit,” as a tool drawing on sociologist Dorothy Smith’s practice of institutional ethnography (Sadusky et al 2010). The Safety and Accountability Audit uses a collaborative research approach to explore the extent to which victim safety – defined by victims themselves – is enhanced or diminished as cases of domestic violence are processed in the criminal justice system. The audit specifically focuses on the institutional processing of cases, and on the institutional discourses that influence how cases are processed. The goal of the audit is to develop specific changes, such as rules, policies, procedures, forms or trainings that will enhance victim safety as defined by the victims themselves (Sadusky et al 2010).

The Safety and Accountability Audit framework has been influential to me in developing my framework of analysis. The grounding question of the audit is fundamental to an anti-violence movement – “How does this action or intervention enhance or diminish safety for battered women?” The question provides a different way to measure the “success” of DV activity beyond arrest and conviction rates (Sadusky et al 2010: 1033). The method of institutional ethnography focusing on institutional practices and their relationship to discourse is the same method I have chosen to employ in my research. The collaborative research approach, where daily practitioners and victim advocates work together to assess and coordinate community responses, is a way of bringing together historically antagonistic groups for a common cause (Sadusky et al 2010).

However, the audit is limited in what it can accomplish. The audit analyzes and nudges the “discourses” of criminal justice institutions at the local level, but treats discursive practices as “misunderstandings” rather than hegemonic constructions that perpetuate power on a societal and cultural level. Theoretically, the audit’s core question could lead to the conclusion that the prison industrial complex is not capable of intervening appropriately in violence against women. But in practice the audit corrects problematic policies, but it doesn’t question the right of certain institutions to intervene in cases of domestic violence and sexual assault. The audit cannot help a community decide what overall strategy to prioritize in challenging DVSA, nor determine where a movement should put their energy or funding. However, if used as a short-term strategy for improving the experiences of victims of violence who are and for the time being will

continue to be embedded in the criminal justice system, the audit can be a very useful tool. It can be strategically deployed to expose to practitioners and the public ways that community interventions have failed victims of violence who are socially and financially marginalized in society (Sadusky et al 2010).

Restorative Justice. Restorative justice practices have emerged as a potential alternative to the failures of the criminal justice system. Sarah Curtis-Fawley and Kathleen Daly describe restorative justice as a set of non-adversarial practices that revolve around a facilitated face-to-face meeting between the victim or victim representative, supporters (which may include law enforcement or agency representatives), and the offender (2005). The goal is to develop a way for the offender to take responsibility for their actions and to take measures to restore the victim's feelings of safety (Edwards and Haslet 2003). Restorative justice has been touted as providing an opportunity for the victim to participate more in the process of accountability by giving space to communicate to the offender how they were hurt and to ask questions that might provide some kind of closure (Edwards and Haslet 2003).

The implementation of restorative justice policy has grown worldwide by leaps and bounds since the 1960's, with notable examples in all Australian states and New Zealand. As Curtis-Fawley and Daly observe, some feminists actively mobilized against the inclusion of domestic violence and sexual assault cases into the restorative justice system (2005). Their arguments were that restorative justice was backpedaling by the state on its commitment to take DVSA seriously, that restorative justice would mask

DVSA from the public eye once again, and that restorative justice relied on assumptions about caring communities that don't exist (Curtis-Fawley and Daly 2005).

Restorative justice process has been at times conflated with dispute resolution or mediation, presenting a problem if the goal of session becomes to discover and settle “facts” in an environment where very unequal power dynamics exist. This opens restorative justice practice to the critique that it doesn't adequately provide for victim safety. Restorative justice is also critiqued for being tied up in problematic beliefs that victims or communities can be “restored” or made whole through dialogue and forgiveness, when they may not have been whole in the first place (Curtis-Fawley and Daly 2005). In addition, some restorative justice advocates attempt to copy culturally specific models such as the Navajo Nation Peacemaking Circles, and insert them into dominant cultural contexts. Finally, some approaches to restorative justice fail to take the kind of critical approach to the criminal justice system demanded by intersectional feminism (Generation Five 2007). There is nothing inherent in restorative justice approaches that challenge dominant conceptualizations of crime. Restorative justice programs have the potential to “widen the net” and include more people in the system, challenging us in the face of evidence that increased contact with the criminal justice system heightens the likelihood that perpetrators will commit more crime. Despite these concerns, I believe restorative justice models and practices provide a kind of foundation on which to develop new models of accountability that are more responsive to victims' needs and which do not rely on the prison industrial complex.

Student Movements and Consent. Jodi Gold and Susan Villari argue that the anti-rape movement has proliferated on college campuses in unique ways (2000). Campuses are important sites for the perpetuation of “rape-supportive culture” because of the age of traditional students, the pervasive use of alcohol and other drugs, the opportunity to experiment socially and sexually, and the influence of powerful male-dominated institutions like fraternities and athletic teams (Gold and Villari 2000). It was anti-rape activism on campuses, Gold and Villari argue, that brought to public attention the pervasiveness of so-called “date rape” or acquaintance rape (1999). In analyzing acquaintance rape, feminist theorists have posited that sexual coercion and sexual passivity have been eroticized in American constructions of gender roles. Male coercion and female submission have become normative sexual behavior, to the point that American culture supports rape or is “rape-supportive” (Hong 2000).

Activists on college campuses have been able to continue forms of anti-rape activism such as Take Back the Night marches and rallies that are no longer prevalent off-campus, perhaps because as students they have less to lose by making institutional demands (Gold and Villari 2000). College activists have also developed new strategies to end sexual assault, including peer education models and advocating “consent.” Peer education models are intriguing because they are mostly volunteer-run (Gold and Villari 2000), challenging the idea that social movements must be funded to pay full time staff to be successful. Peer education is prevention-oriented, focusing not only on self-defense strategies but also on deconstructing masculinity and normative sexual behavior. “Consent” frameworks deconstruct the ways that sexual coercion is presented as erotic,

and provide a clear standard for assessing non-coercive sexual relations: the “willing and verbal” consent (Gold and Villari 2000: 13).

The unique conditions of college campuses make it difficult to assess how useful peer education and consent approaches could be in non-campus settings. Who counts as a peer in non-campus community? How can people be obligated to attend peer education training if they don't have academic requirements? Can non-students afford to volunteer as much of their time? Training on how to give and receive consent is obviously not relevant to many forms of sexual assault, including where it used as a tool of intimate partner battering. However, as a locus of sexual assault, campus activism is important in and of itself. As campus activists graduate and go on to other settings, they have the opportunity to experiment with peer education models and consent frameworks to test their adaptability.

Community-Based Accountability. In 2001 intersectional feminist activists who were frustrated with the ways that current DVSA approaches ignored or eclipsed the concerns of women of color, immigrants, transpeople, queer women, and poor women, came together with people who had been organizing around incidents of state violence, including police brutality and abuses associated with the prison system (Sudbury 2003, Smith et al 2006). They produced a joint statement – the “Critical Resistance-Incite! Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex” – that claimed that an over-reliance on the criminal justice system as the solutions to DVSA was in direct contradiction to ending state violence against women (Incite! and Critical Resistance 2001, Sudbury 2003).

Incite! and Critical Resistance called on activists to “develop community-based responses to violence that do not rely on the criminal justice system AND which have mechanisms that ensure safety and accountability for survivors of sexual and domestic violence” (Incite! and Critical Resistance 2001). The term “community-based responses” encompasses any strategy whereby a group, neighborhood, organization or self-identified community attempts to provide for survivor safety and/or hold perpetrators accountable, without accessing criminal justice systems or state-sponsored social service resources. Fundamental to the concept of accountability is a belief that individuals can take responsibility for violence and change their behaviors, and that some perpetrators of violence will take an opportunity for responsibility if offered. After the statement was released, organizations such as Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA), Friends are Reaching Out Seattle, Creative Interventions, and Sista II Sista began implementing alternative safety and accountability processes (Sudbury 2003, CARA 2006). Informal groups like anarchist collectives or punk rock “scenes” also began to document their experiences with community, neighborhood, and scene-based safety and accountability experiments (see Chen et al n.d., *Thoughts on Community Support* n.d). These experiments have varied widely, including the tactics of publicly shaming perpetrators, attempting to remove perpetrators from positions of authority, boycotting perpetrators businesses, and family members and friends physically placing themselves in the homes of batterers to deter abuse (CARA 2006). Some of the strategies proposed and tried are problematic. But because of the dismal reporting rate for instances of both domestic violence and sexual assault, the bottom line is that victims of violence need more options

for responding to abuse. Ultimately, developing safety and accountability strategies will ensure that one day every victim of violence has access to a variety of possible responses to fit her needs and wishes.

Transformative Justice. Community accountability activists and theorists have had to grapple with the reality that communities are places where power and privilege exist, where people do not automatically agree on what constitutes violence nor what the appropriate response should be (Smith 2005b). Advocates from Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA) believe that creative responses to DVSA can simultaneously work to provide survivor safety and challenge community dynamics by increasing movement capacity, honoring survivor and community agency, and increasing the capacity for survivor and community self-determination (CARA 2006). Generation Five argues further that ending childhood sexual abuse (the focus of their work) requires individual, community, and political transformation (2007). This transformation draws on holistic visions of what individuals want their community to look like and takes responsibility for changing the social, political, and economic context that allows violence to happen. The Generation Five vision of “transformative justice” demands four elements in each response to violence:

1. Survivor safety, healing and agency;
2. Accountability and transformation of those who abuse;
3. Community response and accountability; and
4. Transformation of the community and social conditions that create and perpetuate violence (2007).

These elements address the gaps in both the Safety and Accountability Audit and restorative justice approaches, in that social transformation is included as equally

important to individual safety and accountability. Transformative justice demands that communities, not institutions, respond to acts of violence, but also creates a space to transform communities so that they are capable of responding appropriately to violence against women. Transformative justice redefines justice in ways that challenge the idea that current institutions can provide it. The transformative justice elements are useful tools for assessing the strategies and tactics of the anti-violence movement, whether those strategies are “inside” or “outside” the system, and for measuring the development of an intersectional anti-violence movement.

### CHAPTER 3 AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST FRAMEWORK

In a comprehensive survey of feminist methods, Shulamit Reinharz discovered that feminist social scientific research necessarily crosses disciplinary boundaries in order to challenge existing techniques of knowledge production (1992). Reinharz writes “feminism brings scholars from one field to another and creates hybrids. It exposes the artificiality of disciplinary boundaries and the need for transdisciplinary fields such as women’s studies” (1992: 160). My research methodology is first and foremost a feminist one, rather than something constructed solely from within a conventional academic discipline. As a contribution to the study of politics it is an analysis of power at the institutional level, an application of theories of the state, and a set of claims about how to organize the good or just life. I examine the political assumptions of DVSA discourse, and the repercussions of DVSA discourses on policies and procedures in local institutions. I also draw strategies and techniques of inquiry from the disciplines of anthropology and sociology.

#### Epistemology, methodology and methods

Academic research projects include an explanation of the strategies or methods the researcher used to gather data and evidence. The choice of methods is linked consciously or subconsciously to training in a specific academic discipline that provides a researcher with a theory – or methodology – about how research should proceed. Feminist researchers argue that there is an even deeper set of theoretical assumptions and

choices – epistemologies – that guide a methodological approach to research and the selection of methods (Harding 1986, Naples 2003). Epistemology is described by Sandra Harding as a “theory of knowledge” or a body of thought that explains what can be known, how a person or group of people can come to know things, and who is eligible to know things (1986). Harding suggests all three elements of research – epistemology, methodology and methods – are intertwined, but epistemological assumptions are rarely articulated in conventional discussions of methods.

The production of knowledge plays a role in the maintenance and reproduction of social and political power (Foucault 1978). All research is inscribed by power and either reproduces conventional wisdom or challenges dominant discourses (Mohanty 1988). As Chandra Mohanty says, “there can, of course, be no apolitical scholarship” (1988: 62). All elements of knowledge production including epistemological frameworks and methodological approaches have political dimensions. Nancy Naples calls this the “politics of method” (2003). Naples compellingly argues that making clear the epistemological and methodological assumptions of a research project is an essential strategy for “becom[ing] aware of, and diminish[ing] the ways in which, domination and repression are reproduced in the course of research and in the products of [...] work” (2003: 37). I describe my conceptual frameworks here with the goal of explaining how I attempted to employ methods that will further my feminist political goals.

I consider a theory or practice “feminist” if it is concerned with analyzing and challenging the implications of patriarchal organization (hooks 2000) and systems of male-domination, male-identification, and male-centeredness (Johnson 1997). There is

not one feminist theory, however, but many feminisms. As Chela Sandoval describes, some feminisms are wed to specific ideological tactics such as liberal feminism's use of an "equal rights" framework or radical feminists who create space for women to live superior lives separately from men (1991). I have been influenced by Third World, Black, ecological materialist and post-modern feminisms. What is unique about these feminisms is that a focus on gender inequality is not the sole concern of theory and practice. The theory I draw from simultaneously challenges multiple patterns of social and political domination: racism, heterosexism, classism, discrimination on the basis of physical or mental ability, colonization, war and others. Additionally, I have been influenced by anarchist and Marxist theories concerning domination of people and nature through the mechanisms of government, economic relations, and religion. The research frameworks I chose – what I am calling "feminist" – correspond with my political goals of building a world where dominant social groups are not able to systematically imprison, marginalize, exploit, and control subordinated groups.

#### Socially Situated Knowledge<sup>4</sup>

"The scientific method" for conducting research and producing knowledge conventionally relies on positivist epistemologies (Hesse-Biber et al 2004, Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Positivism assumes that researchers can be unbiased and value-free, and that they can discover an objective reality through the systematic testing of

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<sup>4</sup> I encountered this term in Sandra Harding's and Patricia Hill Collin's work, but I believe credit goes to Donna Haraway for coining this term in a 1988 essay "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective."

hypotheses about the relationship between variables (Hesse-Biber et al 2004, Denzin and Lincoln 2005, Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Challenges to positivist theories of knowledge have come from many quarters, including feminisms (Harding 1986, Naples 2003, Hesse-Biber et al 2004, Subramaniam 2009), post structuralism and postmodernism (Naples 2003, Denzin and Lincoln 2005), and post-colonial and indigenous epistemologies (Gegeo and Watson Gegeo 2001, Briggs and Sharp 2004). Non-positivist epistemologies argue that knowledge is always created in particular social and political contexts, by a socially and politically situated researcher who has access to only a partial and subjective understanding of reality (Harding 1986, Collins 2000, Hesse-Biber et al 2004, Briggs and Sharp 2004, Denzin and Lincoln 2005). For critical researchers like myself knowledge is “always already” embedded in political and social contexts, so claims that one can produce objective and value-free research are problematic. Feminist theorists have revealed the ways that positivist research projects have produced distorted results despite the claim of being objective or value-free (Harding 2004). Such research is complicit in reproducing oppression, because researchers fail to critically examine how their limited privileged perspectives play a role in crafting research questions, designing research projects, and interpreting results (Harding 2004, Hesse-Biber 2004).

As critical social scientific research has revealed the ways that knowledge production participates in the maintenance of power and control, critical researchers have simultaneously developed approaches to research that attempt to contribute to the liberation and resistance of oppressed groups (Naples 2003). Feminist methods can be

distinguished by their intentional goals of critiquing and challenging oppressive social and political structures and, as Mohanty suggests, intervening in hegemonic discourses (1988). The rigor of my analysis may be measured against these feminist theories and research methodologies including standpoint theories, intersectionality, feminist action research, and reflexivity.

### Ideology, Hegemony, and Discourse

Feminist theories and methods grew out of social activity to combat various forms of violence, oppression, marginalization, and discrimination (Harding 1986, Naples 2003). The enduring questions of feminist research concern the dynamics of oppression and subjugation, including but not limited to patriarchy and sexism. Radical feminist theories grew out of an engagement with the work of Karl Marx and Marxist theorists, and this engagement continues to be reflected in materialist feminist methodologies. Marx's theory of historical materialism suggests that history is driven by the conflict between two classes of people: those who exploit and those who are exploited. In Marx's time, he saw the conflict as occurring between capitalists (those who owned the means of production) and the proletariat (those who were forced to sell their labor for a wage). Marx argued that it was a body of ideas – ideology – that had been inculcated into the proletariat that kept workers from seeing the true nature of their exploitation and rising up against those who exploited them (Kaufman 2003, Stoddard 2007). As Nancy Hartsock puts it, dominant social groups have a stake in deceiving subjugated groups about the

nature of their subordination, and in ensuring that the dominant ideas of society reflect their interests (1983).

Subsequent theorists, including Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, and Stuart Hall complicated Marx's theory of ideology. Gramsci emphasized the ways that dominant social groups must constantly produce what he called hegemonic power in order to secure the cooperation of subordinated groups (Stoddard 2007). But because hegemony must be constantly produced, it is never unified and has gaps or perforations, places where counter-ideologies may be inserted. Foucault was even more concerned with the way that power and the power of knowledge is created and recreated at multiple sites and flows in multiple directions all at once (Stoddard 2007). Foucault argued that individuals unconsciously and intentionally draw from discourses or systems of knowledge claims in order to understand themselves. It is these understandings of ourselves, crafted from discourse, that shape our relationships with power and exploitation (Stoddard 2007).

In this research, I am concerned with exploring the components of the local discourse of domestic violence and sexual assault, discovering what influenced the development of this discourse, and exploring the impact this discourse has on local policy and practice. When the local discourse about domestic violence and sexual assault fails to critically assess how the criminal justice system, the social service system and medical models all reflect the interests of dominant social groups and negatively impact marginalized social groups, I consider it to be a hegemonic discourse. Hegemonic discourse is never a coherent body of ideas, and I have discovered some inconsistencies

in the local terrain. I am also extremely interested to locate the “gaps” in the hegemonic discourse, the spaces where the interests of non-dominant social groups have made an appearance or even taken root. Indeed, a core question of my research is to discover when and where resistance to and subversion of the hegemonic discourse is taking place in local institutions. Ultimately, I am interested in discovering how it might be possible to do what Chela Sandoval describes as breaking with ideology and successfully challenging dominant systems of power (1991).

### Feminist Standpoint Theories

Gramsci argued that hegemonic discourses come to represent the body of knowledge that might be called “common sense” (Stoddard 2007), ideas not routinely questioned because “that’s just the way it is and everyone knows it.” Feminist standpoint theories suggest that if researchers are uncritical about their social positioning and fail to engage with subjugated standpoints, they are doomed to draw upon and reproduce hegemonic discourses – common sense – in their production of knowledge (Harding 2004). A lack of critical self-reflexivity on the part of researchers, especially if they belong to dominant social groups, means that their research will not only be subjective and partial, but “partial and perverse” (Hartsock 1983: 153, Harding 1986, Harding 2004). A few individuals, academic institutes, and academic departments explicitly draw on racist, sexist, and other oppressive ideologies with the intent of producing knowledge that justifies domination, power, and privilege. Equally pernicious, though, are those research projects that uncritically draw on and unintentionally

reproduce bodies of knowledge that justify and enable violence, oppression, and marginalization of indigenous people, women, racialized “others,” and non-human nature.

Standpoint theories also provide a way to account for the way that subjugated groups can resist and challenge dominant knowledge claims and make autonomous or counter-hegemonic knowledge claims (Naples 2003). Patricia Hill Collins argues that the experiences of living life as Black women in the United States have produced a specialized, situated knowledge “embedded” in Black communities (1990). Because Black women’s thought has been developed in a context of domination and oppression, Collins says this knowledge is also a “subjugated knowledge” that has through collective action come to include ideas that “empower people to resist domination.” Collins calls this socially situated and subjugated knowledge a “Black Feminist Standpoint,” and argues that it may be better positioned than dominant standpoints to provide a “partial perspective on domination” (2000: 269). Different groups that have different experiences with subordination may also develop a partial, socially situated and subjugated knowledge or “standpoint” that can be used to understand domination. Feminist standpoint theories thus articulate the desirability of centering in analysis the knowledge claims of groups who have experienced domination and who organize for collective action and critically reflect on the nature of their subordination.

Collins describes how academic processes for validating knowledge actually work to suppress knowledges developed from marginalized social standpoints (2000). Because individuals researching from marginalized standpoints have been denied positions of

authority within knowledge validation systems, they do not have the ability to validate their claims. Collins argues that those who wish to propose alternative knowledge claims have had to rely on “alternative knowledge validation processes” (2000: 254), such as popular or activist films, books, or magazines. Valuing and drawing on popular knowledge from such sources has a subversive potential. Non-academic produced knowledge may also play a role in decolonizing our minds and institutions from the internalization of oppressive discourses (Gaventa 1991).

I came to this research as an activist outside of the academy, who was immersed in conversations, projects, and non-academic literature that spoke from the perspective of subjugated groups that are highly critical of hegemonic approaches to domestic violence and sexual assault. Prior to this research project, most of my training and exposure to the topics of DVSA came from radical women of color organizations, prison abolitionists and justice reformers, and informal collectives of anarchist and queer activists that challenge professional domestic violence and sexual assault approaches. My initial “education” came from attending conferences, exchanging zines, being part of e-mail listservs, grabbing pamphlets from informational tables, and trading well-worn copies of books with friends. Throughout my graduate coursework I have sought out material published in conventional academic mediums, such as peer reviewed journals. The conceptual framework I use draws on academic literature, but also on activist produced or popular material to bring other perspectives. In this research, I will use the standpoints generated by radical women of color and queer organizers as lenses with which to examine the institutions and discourses of DVSA in Humboldt County. I believe this

strategy will allow me to uncover ways that power and privilege might be operating in the local network of DVSA responders.

### Intersectionality

I call this research an “Intersectional Feminist Audit” because the framework of intersectionality has been my gateway to feminist theory in general and to the topics of domestic violence and sexual assault in particular. Woman battering and rape were in fact the topics that Kimberlé Crenshaw focused on in the essay where she coined the term “intersectionality” (1994). In that essay, Crenshaw argues that multiple overlapping and intersecting categories of identity – race and gender for example -- constitute an individual’s subjectivity. Crenshaw was drawing on more than two decades of Black and Third World feminist thought that contested the characterization that the experiences of middle-class white women were the same as the experiences of working class Black women simply because they were all considered “women.” Audre Lorde and others had written about this before: how the experience of one’s gender identity is mediated by one’s race, class, sexual, and ability identity (see Lorde 1984 and Moraga 1983). The concept of “essentialism” has come to refer to those theories that continue to suggest that there is a universal experience that all women share that binds them together. Crenshaw instead suggests that identity groups be reconceived of as coalitions between people of multiple subjectivities coming together for a common purpose (1994). Race, in one of Crenshaw’s examples, could be conceptualized as a coalition between men, women, straight and gay people fighting the oppression of racism.

Perhaps more developed in Crenshaw's essay is the claim that patterns of domination and oppression – racism and sexism for example – overlap and intersect. Crenshaw argues that people who belong to multiple subjugated groups, and are targeted for multiple forms of domination, have a “qualitatively different” experience of domination than those people who experience oppression in one area of their identity, but are privileged in other aspects (1994: 95). When those fighting domination fail to take an intersectional approach, according to Crenshaw, they end up marginalizing the unique experiences of those who are targeted by multiple systems of oppression. Intersectional feminist research has heeded Crenshaw's call to describe the qualitatively different experience of marginalized women and to propose alternative strategies for responding to the needs of marginalized women (see chapter two).

### Feminist Action Research

In her survey of feminist research methods, Reinharz uncovered evidence that feminist scholarship is consistently, if not inherently, integrated with social change or “action” (1992). Reinharz sorted the action components of feminist research into categories: from participatory or collaborative research projects where the communities being studied take active roles in the conduct of research, to “demystification” research that sheds light in areas where a lack of information is furthering the marginalization of a group of people. My approach to this research project can be characterized as a type of what Reinharz calls “Evaluation Research” (1992: 189). This is not evaluation as it is deployed in the current regime of scientific evidence-based and outcome oriented

practices, but an interrogation of the goals and procedures of specific policies and organizations (Reinharz 1992). I am seeking to understand and evaluate the current domestic violence and sexual assault movement, and the opportunities to increase the movement's intersectional approaches. It is my hope that my analysis will be useful for developing new strategies or adapting existing programs to better respond to the diverse needs of those targeted by violence. With that in mind I am committed to popularizing this research in some form after its publication as a thesis, and relaying it out to the broader community.

Merely producing feminist scholarship for Chandra Mohanty is “a directly political and discursive practice in that it is purposeful and ideological” and counters, resists or intervenes in hegemonic discourses (1984). For me, the idea that research can be political action in itself is not to be confused with the idea that it is okay or even desirable to seek knowledge for knowledge's sake. I believe that the only research worth conducting is research that has the goal of improving social conditions, even if it is not explicitly linked to a particular program, project or campaign.

### Positionality and Reflexivity

Leela Fernandes suggests it is the researcher who is most profoundly changed by the research process, even despite intentions to use scholarship as a tool for social change (2003). Scholarship can and does easily become a kind of thievery, a taking without reciprocation, especially when the researcher comes from dominant groups and studies the “problems” of marginalized communities. Concern about this power dynamic, where

the researcher receives the lion's share of benefit from research and those that inform receive nothing or are perhaps harmed by the research, has given rise to a methodological technique called reflexivity. Feminist researchers reflect on their relationships with their subjects and the power dynamics at play in the research process (Naples 2003).

Fernandes marries this reflective process with an approach to knowledge production as a set of ethical practices concerning the collection of information from informants, the representation of subjects, and the consumption of the knowledge product (2003). In short, part of ethical research practice is to reflect on my positionality – the sources of power and privilege I bring with me to the research process – as it relates to the kind of access and information I received in my field of study and how I present my research.

I am a 29 year old white, college-educated, queer woman who has lived in Arcata (a college town located in northern California) for ten years. I grew up in a working class family, and even had the fortune of visiting the union hall as a child with my father who is a boilermaker. Owing to my education you could call me middle-class at present. I currently do not practice an organized religion, but I was raised as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the LDS or "Mormon" church). I have been profoundly affected by being part of a family associated with a socially conservative religion and by being located in multiple socio-economic positionings throughout my life. All of these subject positions brought with them certain opportunities and limitations as I conducted my research. By virtue of being a woman and being white, my interest in this topic wasn't questioned in the ways it might have been had I been male or non-white; unfortunately, domestic violence and sexual assault have been constructed in the

dominant narrative as white women's issues (Simmons 2006). On the other hand, non-white individuals perhaps viewed me as an outsider and were not fully candid, though I believe that under the circumstances that great trust was placed in me. It is important to me to note that my work on domestic violence and sexual assault in Humboldt County is not definitive, and that significant contributions to knowledge have been and continue to be made by local tribal members, Hmong community members, Latino/a immigrants, African Americans, poor people, formerly/currently incarcerated people, people with mental health challenges, youth, people with physical disabilities and many others.

My age and youthful appearance created an opportunity for the informants who had been involved in DVSA for many years – the elders – to “school” me in the ways of the world and in the ways of Humboldt County. These activists were eager to share their wisdom with an interested young person. As a college educated person, assumptions were made at times about my class background that enabled an informant to talk with me candidly about how he or she viewed people from lower-class statuses. Most ethical concerns in feminist and other social scientific literature regard people from dominant groups studying subjugated people. In this research I struggled with the ethics of studying people who currently have more power than I do to direct policy and impact people's lives. Studying the center of local administration from outside that center – socially, politically and ideologically – led me to explore the method of institutional ethnography which I explain further below.

By being involved in punk rock communities and anarchist-oriented collectives working on various projects for over ten years, I have had the opportunity to participate

in responses to cases of domestic violence and sexual assault where the survivors were reluctant or unwilling to call the police or authorities to intervene. When I joined a prisoner rights and prison abolition organization called Bar None in 2003, my critique of criminal justice system responses to violence became much sharper. Some prisoners that I work with through Bar None have been labeled “violent” through specific laws or policies that seem clearly based on racial prejudice, such as being institutionally labeled a “gang member” because one has non-European cultural tattoos or artwork on display. On the other hand, many people who perpetrate violence in our world are acting in the “legal” capacity of businessmen or soldiers and are not considered criminal or held accountable for their actions. But despite skewed notions of violence and who perpetrates it, I cannot forget my family members and friends who have survived rape and childhood sexual assault, and those who have been brutally killed and not survived. As a feminist and prison abolitionist I remain committed to ending *all* forms of violence against women and marginalized people. I believe this is the most urgent project of our society and this belief lies at the core of this research.

### Grounded Theory

Qualitative research focuses on the “nature of things [...] meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions” (Berg 2009: 3). Qualitative methodology can reveal the critical process by which people create meaning (Cresswell 2003). A qualitative methodology gives the subjects of the research an opportunity to steer the conversation to what is most important. I hope this research has

served as a reflection tool for the participants of the research when it comes time to craft policy and make programmatic choices.

This paper uses a grounded theory approach to institutional and discourse analysis. The grounded theory approach is one where researchers simultaneously analyze data as it is gathered, returning to gather additional focused data as more abstract conceptual categories emerge (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Charmaz 2005). Theories are “grounded” in the data rather than conceptualized at the beginning of the research as hypotheses that have only theoretical connection to the data. Kathy Charmaz argues that a grounded theory approach allows researchers to juxtapose the reflective meaning that informants of a research project generate with academic and scholarly generated concepts, introducing “fresh insights and ideas” (2005: 513). This research project is part of on-going conversation and action I am involved in Humboldt County and with activists outside of the county, about how to reduce our reliance on punitive and prison systems while not letting go of our ideals that victims of violence be provided safety and justice.

### Institutional Ethnography

Ethnography has no universal definition, but by engaging with the body of work called ethnography, method writers have detected a common multi-method mode of data collection called fieldwork and a particular strategy of analysis that draws on grounded theory (Reinharz 1992, Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Hammersley and Atkinson set out five features of ethnographic fieldwork that clearly reflect my research process

(2007). One, this thesis is a study of the everyday behaviors and attitudes of people involved in the network of agencies and organizations charged with responding to domestic violence and sexual assault. There was no laboratory experiment or controlled settings with this study. I went to where people already are to learn about what they do and say in their normal everyday environments. Two, my process of data collection was “unstructured” in the sense that I did not have a fixed research design at the beginning of the project (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:3). I began with a general interest in the topic of violence against women, and gained permission from the university to conduct interviews. My key concepts emerged in a spiral process, narrowing down as specific problems emerged.

Three, a small-scale focus. Ethnography has been predominantly used by anthropologists to study distinct cultural groups, and traditionally groups that white Western society was unfamiliar with. Sociologists later employed the method in the study of rural communities or urban neighborhoods (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). This project is geographically confined to Humboldt County, California, and more specifically to the northern half of the county, but it is not an immersion into the general culture of Humboldt, nor does it draw a picture of the lives of the strange, the exotic or the outsiders. Instead I draw upon the strategy of institutional ethnography, taking a fieldwork approach to studying a set of institutions connected by a specific purpose. Marjorie DeVault describes the institutional ethnographer as a researcher who looks inward “toward the centers of power and administration” in order to understand the “contingencies of ruling that shape local contexts” (1999: 48). Just as DeVault describes,

I have examined the connections between and internal to institutions and attempted to understand how these connections are coordinated “via ruling regimes and their texts” (1999: 49). The result is a kind of “map” that charts the discourse, practices and policies at work in this set of institutions that may be useful for designing strategies for change.

Four, I used multiple techniques of data collection, including participant observation, interviewing, and artifact collection. I observed and was a participant at cross-agency meetings of people working in the DVSA business, I attended public events such as movie screenings and candidate forums where DVSA was a topic, and I attended college classes and community trainings designed to build competency in dealing with DVSA. I also conducted ten semi-structured interviews with people who are knowledgeable about the occurrence of domestic violence and sexual assault in Humboldt County, and familiar with the responses to these forms of violence by governmental and non-governmental organizations. Informants included program managers and staff from non-profit and governmental agencies that respond to domestic violence and sexual assault in Humboldt County, and knowledgeable community leaders involved in domestic violence and sexual assault campaigns in Humboldt County. The interviews took approximately one hour to complete and were conducted in a private place of each of the interviewees choosing, such as their office. My first informant was a person that I have known personally for several years and who is very visible in the community as a person working on these issues. This person examined a map I had made of the agencies and organizations that take part in responding to DVSA and gave me some names of individuals who worked at these agencies. My informant suggested three

or four people that she thought would have a lot to say about the topic. In this way I generated a “snowball sample” of people to interview, asking my current informant to recommend a name of someone else. While attending public events and meetings I had informal conversations with people working at various agencies and when the conversation was particularly interesting, I followed up on these conversations with a request for an interview. Finally, I collected material artifacts to analyze. I attempted to collect every document that was referenced in the interviews I conducted, including agency mission statements, influential articles, and studies that agencies had conducted. I also collected brochures and handouts at events where agencies had set up informational tables.

A word on confidentiality: some participants asked that I use their names in the published results of the study. Otherwise all participants are listed as informant or interviewee and I did my best to obscure the specific connection each person has to agencies and projects in Humboldt County. A map of organizations that work on domestic violence or sexual assault issues in Humboldt County is included in the data section, and interviewed individuals and materials from the study were drawn from those agencies or projects.

Finally, according to Hammersley and Atkinson’s framework for what counts as ethnography, my data was analyzed by looking at “meanings, functions and consequences of human actions and institutional practices” (2007:3). Researchers employing ethnographic methods have struggled with the problems of representation that I mentioned earlier in this section. It is a journalist’s job to report exactly what an

informant has said or done, but it is a social scientist's job to interpret what an informant has said or done. What if there are differences between what an informant says or thinks she means, and the meaning the researcher attaches? A researcher may employ collaborative research methods and grant a subject editing rights, but ultimately it is up to the researcher to make the final say. One strategy for minimizing the potential of misrepresenting informants is feminist discourse analysis.

### Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis focuses on the patterns of words, phrases, concepts and ideological frameworks that appear throughout the research process, rather than focus on the truth or reliability of an informant. Content analysis is a perhaps more familiar method, which Berg describes as a "systematic examination" with a "body of material in order to identify patterns, themes, biases and meanings" (2009: 338). However, Berg and others have described the actual practice of content analysis as transcribing material into written form and actually counting the number of times a particular word or phrase appears (2009). Instead, I analyze data for the power of specific concepts, not necessarily their quantity, and examine the work that discursive components do for an institution's policies and practices.

#### CHAPTER 4 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT INSTITUTIONS AND DISCOURSES IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY

In chapter two, I presented a brief history of the role of feminists in developing social movements organized against domestic violence and sexualized violence. I described some radical feminist and intersectional feminist concerns about the relationships the anti-violence movement has built with the state and how these problematic relationships are predicated on certain assumptions about the potential of the state to become more democratic. In chapter three, I outlined the intersectional feminist lens I am using to examine domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, intervention, advocacy, and accountability work. This chapter will describe what I found when I looked at an anti-violence movement in Humboldt County. Those who study anti-violence movements urge caution in conflating social service work with social change work, even though the two are certainly connected. Because of the implementation in certain kinds of governance, including neo-liberalism, bureaucratization, scientific administration, and the development of the non-profit model for social welfare, I believe it is more difficult to trace a social movement and to understand how social movements might be in part embedded in social service institutions. I describe in this chapter the various organizations involved in responding to DVSA in Humboldt County on a daily basis, the definitions of domestic violence and sexual assault that are operating locally, the working theories of what causes violence, and views on the role of the state in responding to violence. Some of the organizations I list describe themselves as part of a

movement to end violence, some are instead legally mandated to respond to violence and do not describe themselves as part of a social movement. These agencies and projects are linked because they try to coordinate services and because people, resources and ideas are shared or circulated among them. In the next chapter, I will compare this day to day institutional and discursive terrain with the conventional, radical feminist, and intersectional narratives about anti-violence movements that I described earlier.

### “The Neighborhood”

Humboldt County is located in the far northwest corner of California. The county runs along the Pacific coast and spans west to the Trinity Alps and Six Rivers National Forest. To the north of Humboldt is one other county before the Oregon state border, and to the south is the start of California’s wine country. Eureka is the county seat and largest city in Humboldt, and lies above the imaginary line that divides northern from southern Humboldt. Most of Humboldt’s population of about 130,000 lives in one of the towns along north/south state Highway 101. Between the towns of Fortuna and Garberville, those towns along the highway are very small indeed, leading the Garberville/Redway area to act as the main center of commerce for the southern half of the county. The main west/east route is Highway 299, which like the 101 dips up and down, and twists around forested hills in never more than two lanes of traffic. Willow Creek is a small town on the 299 that lies just on the eastern edge of the county and serves as the gateway to the Hoopa Indian Reservation and the Trinity River recreation area.

Humboldt is geographically isolated from the rest of the state. Train service stopped to Humboldt County many years ago. The commercial airport in Humboldt has just one gate, and only turboprop planes frequent it. Standard size shipping trucks currently cannot manage the narrow curves of Highway 101 at the point of Richardson Grove. While the majority of people live along the 101, others have settled in remote places which do not have many of the trappings of so-called modern society, including police forces, and are occasionally inaccessible when roads wash out. I consider Humboldt to be a “rural” county because a significant part of the landscape is inaccessible by modern transportation networks, and because so many residents are living in the hills or in towns that have limited access to services such as grocery stores, gas stations, or hospitals.

The people on the north coast are majority white and live in a landscape marked by legacies of racialized violence. Just off Highway 101 are numerous sites where Native Americans were murdered, massacred, and otherwise dispossessed of their land and resources. Policies such as the kidnapping and placement of Native American children in federally run “boarding schools” continued into the twentieth century, which means many elders and adults alive today had grandparents or even parents who were forcibly taken from their families. Today Native people lament the loss of some knowledge and cultural practices because they could not be passed down between generations. These policies also created a profound distrust of government agencies that offer “help” to Indian families and children. The termination policies of the mid-1900’s also have lingering impact, as tribes such as the nearby Klamath lost control of huge portions of land and

natural resources in the federal effort to “take care” of poverty on Indian reservations. Respectful non-tribal members publicly observe that much of the metropolitan areas in northern Humboldt are stolen Wiyot Tribe heritage lands, if not official reservation country. Two reservations take up large portions of the northeast portion of the county: the Yurok Reservation and the Hoopa Valley Reservation. Other bands of American Indians have been granted or purchased Rancherias from which they offer services and attempt to cultivate economic opportunity for their tribal members.

Other non-white groups also experienced racialized violence in Humboldt. In the last decade of the 1800’s, white hatred against Chinese immigrants culminated in a forced expulsion of all the residents of Eureka’s “China Town.” The contemporary Hmong population in Humboldt lives daily with any remnants of such anti-Asian sentiment.

Humboldt County is home to Redwood National Park and several state parks dedicated to showcasing the last of the original Coastal Redwood trees that blanketed the landscape before the timber boom of the late 1800’s. Prior to the extreme decline of the timber industry beginning in the 1960’s, up to half of all people living in Humboldt were employed in some kind of timber harvesting, production or support jobs. Environmental regulations protected much of what remaining old growth forests there were in the 1970’s, contributing to a further decline in timber and igniting an on-going conflict between timber workers and “environmentalists.” Today, the official economy is dependent on services, retail, health care, and state and local government, including Humboldt State University and College of the Redwoods. The vast majority of employers and services are located in the Eureka and Arcata micropolitan area, with smaller clusters

of jobs/services in nearby Fortuna and McKinleyville. The biggest employers in Humboldt County are various levels of government. Efforts to bring state and federal dollars in through the acquisition of grants are simultaneously attempts to provide services to the community and economic development strategies. Unlike urban areas, local organizations do not have as much access to large philanthropic organizations, and are more significantly supported by state and federal funding.

Humboldt County's remoteness is alternately viewed as an opportunity and as a problem. In the 1970's, individuals and families who wished to escape the trappings of city life bought parcels in the hills of Humboldt and began to live "off the grid" without electricity or sometimes running water. These "back to the landers" grew their own food and raised their own animals and invested in small towns like Weitchpec or Petrolia to provide schooling for their children and other services. Some of these "back to the landers" grew marijuana on their property for personal use and to supplement their incomes. Marijuana growing continues to be a defining feature of the landscape and local economy, though some believe that the operations have become more sophisticated and in some ways dangerous to local families and ecology. An informant argues that people wandering around in the woods protecting their growing operations with weapons and security systems creates barriers for social organizations trying to reach out to isolated families.

Humboldt has not escaped the pressing problems of America's rural areas, including drug and alcohol use, gun violence, poverty, racial hatred, homelessness, and family violence. For some, the "outlaw" culture generated by pervasive and large-scale

marijuana production is a complicating factor for many of these problems, a barrier to building a supportive and strong community. One informant suggested that it might be easier to perpetrate and hide domestic violence and sexual assault in this county because of the geographic isolation of many families, the pervasive use of illegal drugs that socially isolates families, and the machismo that can evolve when men are using their hands to survive in the “wilderness.”

#### Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Institutions in Humboldt County

Two organizations -- North Coast Rape Crisis Team (NCRCT) and Humboldt Domestic Violence Services (HDVS) – constitute the first generation of what informants call “advocates.” I call them voluntary organizations because they are not legally mandated to respond to domestic violence and sexual assault, but were formed because individuals took it upon themselves to respond to DVSA when the system did not. I choose the term “voluntary organizations” because “advocate” can be an official job title and I want to remind my readers that I am not examining individual behavior but institutional structures and discourses.

By local accounts, the North Coast Rape Crisis Team was the first organization established in Humboldt County with the mission of ending rape and sexual assault. NCRCT was started in 1974, at a time when non-profit rape crisis centers were springing up all over the country. The mission statement of NCRCT articulates the guiding framework of the team and reflects how the organization sees itself as linked to social change movements.

Mission: We commit ourselves as individuals, as a Team, and as community members to address all forms of oppression which underlie and promote sexualized violence. We seek to be allies to those who are marginalized by any form of oppression and to inform our work through the wisdom of survivors. To this end, we strive to provide survivor-centered, supportive services to people of all ages, genders and circumstance who have been affected by sexualized violence. Further, through community partnership, collaboration, prevention education and activism, we seek to be an agent of change towards our vision – “A world without violence.”

Currently the NCRCT offers a number of services to anyone who has experienced sexual assault, including a 24-hour confidential crisis hotline, information and referrals, counseling and support groups, accompaniment to medical providers and appointments with the legal system, and general advocacy. NCRCT also has a prevention education component that includes general sexual assault awareness, Women’s Self-Defense classes and the Child Abuse Prevention Program (CAPP). These latter two activities are funded in part by Violence Against Women Act monies funneled through the state Department of Public Health, and county Child Abuse Prevention funds. NCRCT had a representative – most often a member of their prevention team -- at every public event that I attended on the topic of sexual assault or domestic violence. The team participates in some way in nearly every collaborative DVSA effort I encountered in Humboldt, including having a strong presence on the Humboldt State University campus. NCRCT is also connected on a statewide level as a member of California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CalCASA), a technical assistance, training, and policy-making coalition. CalCASA, according to an informant, is also very committed to anti-oppression work and to building a sustainable anti-violence movement.

An informant, who has been involved in DVSA work for over 30 years, pegs the beginning of the battered women's movement locally to the non-profit organization Humboldt Domestic Violence Services (HDVS), formerly known as Humboldt Women For Shelter. Humboldt Women for Shelter opened a small office in 1977, staffed by crisis workers that offered help to battered women in crisis across the county. In 1979 staff organized the county's first Take Back the Night rally, and soon after opened the county's first domestic violence shelter. The vision of HDVS is "the elimination of domestic violence," which they hope to achieve through their mission of "break[ing] the cycle of violence through services, education and advocacy." HDVS primarily and inexhaustibly offers core services to survivors of domestic violence: crisis counseling; community referrals; emergency shelter, food, clothing and transportation for both victims and their children; court accompaniment, restraining order assistance, support groups and peer counseling. HDVS was represented in local community collaborations and at local events concerning domestic violence, but not necessarily when the topic was sexual assault in general.

Humboldt Women for Shelter started out as a consensus-based, feminist influenced organization run by volunteers and people earning little money, who took action to help rural women whom the state and social institutions had failed to protect. As one interviewee puts it, the early participants were activists who saw themselves as part of a movement to end violence that also provided services to those in need. Those involved in the beginning of HDVS recall feeling like they were really standing up against authority; one informant said, "We were kinda looked at as these women that

were stirring stuff up.” They sought and used government funding from the beginning, but the passage of VAWA in 1994 dedicated a stream of federal money for domestic violence emergency shelters that at one point made up to 40 percent of HDVS’ budget.

The name Humboldt Women for Shelter was changed to its current gender neutral incarnation in the early 2000’s, despite some controversy among those involved in the organization about whether the change symbolized a distancing from feminist roots.

Dawn Watkins, the Programs Director at HDVS, believes that for a long time the organization shifted focus from being a group of activists providing services to being a service providing organization. Dawn suggests,

“Running a shelter is a lot of work. Day to day work takes up so much energy . . . for whatever reason the focus became on providing services, and less on the bigger picture. Either that was all the time people had, or that is where the money was, or people who were feminist and really activist cycled out and different people moved in. And then there was just the 80’s and the Reagan era and there was a whole different mindset in the country on what was possible and what wasn’t possible” (pers. comm.).

In 2009, HDVS completely lost the shelter funding that had been distributed through the California State Public Health Department. According to Dawn, the loss of funding for shelters statewide reinvigorated the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (CPEDV) to communicate more effectively to legislators and society what exactly domestic violence organizations offer and why they are a necessity. Dawn said that the partnership is motivated to promote statewide policy again, after a period when they were not engaging in activism. Dawn noted that it is a change for HDVS to support a staff person like her to participate so actively in the statewide coalition.

I do not have comprehensive information about the history of Six River's Planned Parenthood (SRPP), but I do know that they were founded in Humboldt in 1975. The local Planned Parenthood plays a role in responding to sexualized violence and domestic violence because of their on-going advocacy for the right of women and all individuals to have control over their own bodies, including their reproductive capacities and sexual lives. SRPP opened their education department in 1977 and began offering family life and sexual education programming at local high schools and middle schools. Part of the mission of Six Rivers Planned Parenthood, according to their web site, is to "educate about healthy, responsible sexual behavior and reproductive choice, ensuring that sexuality is understood as a lifelong aspect of being human." In 1998, SRPP started the Spare Change theatre group. Spare Change accepts 20 youth applicants each year and provides them with the skills, knowledge, and forums to educate their peers about youth health issues – issues that the teens generate themselves but have almost always included topics such as teen dating violence and sexual abuse. A representative from SRPP was present at some of the events and meetings I attended but they were not as ubiquitous as other agencies.

Just a few years after HDVS started, the Humboldt County Victim Witness program opened in 1982, when the District Attorney's office received a grant from the state. Unlike activist organized NCRCT and HDVS, Victim Witness was initiated by a law enforcement agency, though some of the original volunteers and staff were not trained in law enforcement but came from the general community. The program is currently funded by the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) Public

Safety and Victim Services Division, which disperses money from restitution ordered from felons to provide legislatively mandated services to victims. Victim Witness works with people who have experienced a wide variety of crimes, though domestic violence victims have been a particular focus of the organization. Victim Witness' mission statement is "to help reduce the amount of trauma victims of crime experience." Victim Witness primarily assists victims with community referrals, opening 'victims of crime claims' (financial reimbursement for having to deal with crime), and navigating the criminal justice system (explaining the court process, keeping victims informed about court dates and outcomes). A representative from Victim Witness was at many of the public events I attended, and Victim Witness participates in most of the local collaborations, except for collaborations at Humboldt State University. Victim Witness is currently collaborating with the new Hoopa Project Connect – a prevention education program on the Hoopa Valley Reservation that I describe below. They also have other materials that speak specifically to Native victims of crime, demonstrating their commitment to the needs of Native people in Humboldt County.

Victim Witness is an organization that straddles the fence between "advocates" and what informants call "law enforcement," or what I call legally mandated organizations. Legally mandated organizations are required to respond to domestic violence and sexual assault and can be sanctioned if they do not. This category of organization includes law enforcement, courts, probation departments, medical care providers and other mandated reporters. The laws and policies that mandate certain institutions to respond were demanded and fought for by the battered women's and anti-

rape movements, but it does not mean that those legally mandated institutions see themselves as part of a DVSA movement. In fact, some individuals within those legally mandated institutions may be ignorant of the DVSA movement's goals or may be resistant to DVSA movement concepts and frameworks. Local professionals argue that Humboldt County is only now, after 30 years of work, overcoming historic tensions and antagonisms between "law enforcement" people (legally mandated) and "advocates" (those who work for voluntary organizations). One informant remembers the tension they experienced while working for a legally mandated organization:

"When I started there was a lot of agency bashing. I was scared of rape crisis workers. I was told by law enforcement that they were "man-haters," "a bunch of lesbians." There is more communication now. . . It used to be when you walked into a room, law enforcement would stand on one side and advocates would stand on the other. I would sit in the middle! It has taken years and a lot of humor to diffuse that split a little. I am very proud of how we work together in Humboldt County now."

Other informants relate similar stories of mistrust, miscommunication, and conflicting goals between legally mandated organizations and voluntary agencies. When asked about situations when victims refuse to participate in the prosecution of their perpetrators, current District Attorney Paul Gallegos noted at a District Attorney Candidate Forum on Domestic Violence that a victim's safety plan and the response plan of his office are often "diametrically opposed." Advocates, who encourage survivor-centered approaches that follow the lead of victims, may be frustrated when law enforcement agencies push forward on their mandates without meeting the needs of individual survivors.

How law enforcement responds has been a primary target for change by the battered women's and anti-rape movements here as elsewhere across the country. A local informant recalls that prior to legal changes in California, police officers were trained to "counsel and separate" individuals involved in "family disputes." Legal suits brought against police departments in California in 1976 and 1985 (not in Humboldt), argued that this type of police response was ineffective, and that further, police departments failed sometimes to respond at all to calls for help (Hector 1997). A local informant who has been involved in the movement for many years relates, "At the time the movement started, nobody cared in the government. A lot of work went into getting systems to care and to gain financial support."

According to another informant, legal and policy changes gave law enforcement the missing tools they needed make arrests. The interviewee related their perspective on current policy this way:

"From a law enforcement perspective, we always say, well, an arrest makes somebody safe because for a while that person is in custody. . . We know that batterer won't abuse that victim while they are in custody. That's why California has "pro-arrest" laws. . . Not mandatory arrest, but agencies should have policies that if you can make an arrest you should."

In 1977, the California Legislature passed a law that made some domestic violence assaults punishable as a felony, enabling police officers to make some DV arrests without having actually witnessed the act (Hector 1997). A local informant suggests that another milestone came in 1986, when SB 1472 was passed requiring police response to incidents of DV, training of officers, and data collection on DV calls. It wasn't until 1996, that California police officers had the authority to make a warrantless arrest based on

reasonable suspicion (without having seen the act themselves) of *misdemeanor* domestic assaults (Hector 1997). Similarly, prior to 1979, rape laws in California explicitly excluded rape and sexual offenses perpetrated by legally married spouses. In 1993, spousal rapes laws expanded from requiring “force” as an element of the crime to including sexualized violence that occurred by coercion or when the victim was incapable of giving consent (Greenson 2008).

If, as an informant suggests, the law changes increased the number of individuals arrested for domestic violence, the Humboldt County Superior Court, Humboldt County District Attorney’s Office and Humboldt County Probation Department also had to change over time to process the new DVSA cases. Out of all violent crime categories, however, rape and sexual assault cases continue to be among the least reported and least prosecuted compared to their actual occurrence in the community. Both the Public Defender and District Attorney offices have a staff member who handles solely DV cases. Allison Jackson ran a campaign in 2010 against the current District Attorney Paul Gallegos primarily based on her perception that he was lax on DV cases and had underfunded the DV unit in the office. Not only do judges hear a significant number of misdemeanor DV cases, they also hear fee waiver requests for batterer’s intervention programs and monitor compliance with “informal” probation and the 52-week intervention program. This has increased their workload to the point that the idea was presented at the 2010 DA Candidate Forum of a devoting an entire courtroom to domestic violence cases. Lifetime registration and residence requirements for “sex offenders” which the local sheriff’s department and parole office oversee, have also changed. While

only a small portion of the probation department's caseload is felony DV cases, probation is responsible for certifying the county's batterer's intervention programs and individual officers also work with batterers who are serving sentences for other crimes.

Local informants suggest that it was money from the first Violence Against Women Act that facilitated a major expansion of pro-arrest policies in 1994. "If you want federal money then you have pro-arrest laws," an informant says. The expanded policing powers in Humboldt that came in the early 1990's contributed to a "second-wave" of expansion in the domestic violence and sexual assault response system. A number of DVSA organizations and projects developed 16-17 years ago when VAWA dedicated funding for training local probation/law enforcement agents, prevention and education programs, and domestic violence/sexual assault services. I discovered that VAWA funds travel through complicated bureaucratic layers involving federal departments such as the Center for Disease Control or the Office of Women's Health, and California state departments such as the Department of Public Health or the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA). Even when an agency might be getting money directly from Public Health or CalEMA it might have originated from federal purse strings.

In 1994, the county's second domestic violence shelter opened in Garberville, located in Southern Humboldt, and operated by a non-profit called Women and Children in Crisis in Southern Humboldt (WISH). Humboldt County's Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC, which I discuss more in detail below) started in 1994. The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), a collaborative approach to victim-sensitive forensic medical examinations, also started in 1994. Soon after in 1997, Humboldt

County's Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP, originally the Domestic Violence Prevention Program) opened out of the County's Department of Health and Human Services. In the late 1990's and early 2000's the FVPP spearheaded an effort to create a "Family Violence Strategic Plan" to coordinate prevention efforts across the county, but according to sources this plan was never implemented.

During the 1994 peak of the DVSA movement's "second wave," California law began to require that any person who is eligible for probation for a domestic violence conviction attend a 52-week domestic violence treatment or "batterer's intervention" program. The Family Violence Program (FVP) out of Humboldt Family Service Center is currently one certified batterer's intervention program. According to a local informant, the FVP started at the Open Door Community Health Clinic in the early 1980's as a group for men who wanted to help other men stop violence. Several programs in the county are certified on a yearly basis by the probation department: the others are Men/Women Exploring Non-abusive Directions (MEND/WEND), Breaking the Cycle, PAVE and the Hoopa Batterer's Intervention program. These programs are somewhat unique in the DVSA field because while batterer's intervention programs can be organized as non-profits, they can also be privately owned businesses. Like the other certified intervention programs, FVP offers a two-hour per week, 52-week treatment group facilitated by group leaders who are trained by Humboldt Family Service Center. To participate, men convicted of domestic violence charges must pay \$20 a week or apply for a fee waiver from the court. (WEND is one program that accepts women convicted of battering). In the group, participants learn about: the abusive cycle of family

violence, alternatives to violence, how to make informed independent decisions about their relationship, the roots of violent behavior patterns, how to take responsibility for one's own anger and abusive actions, and healthier patterns of interaction and communication.

Although I am somewhat unfamiliar with their founding date, other than to know it was prior to 1990, one other notable program in Humboldt County is the Womyn's Resource Center at Humboldt State University. The WRC is a student run office which attempts to raise awareness about oppression and social injustice on the HSU campus. One student is hired each year to be the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Coordinator, but all staff assists in organizing events and informational campaigns around the topics. A "Take Back the Night" week of events, culminating in a rally on campus and march through the surrounding town of Arcata, is held each April through the sponsorship of the WRC. The WRC web site describes Take Back the Night (TBTN) as "an annual act to end sexualized violence; because we recognize that sexual violence is being perpetrated as a weapon of war against women in the HSU community, in addition to other communities we identity with." The site goes on to explain that although TBTN marches were started nationwide 35 years ago as a way to demonstrate the right of women to feel safe in public places from the threat of rape, it has evolved to become a space where survivors become empowered by publicly sharing stories about all types of sexualized violence and by being with other survivors. Historically, the rally and march have only been open to survivors of violence who are "women identified women," but 2011 will mark the first time that men are invited to participate in the local march.

Recent DVSA activity may constitute a “third wave.” In addition to the renewed policy activity of Humboldt Domestic Violence Services’ statewide collaborative, several new projects are piquing excitement and finally coming into fruition after years of planning. When I asked local informants what they are most excited about in 2010 and 2011, several innovative projects stood out: the activities of the Sexual Assault Prevention Committee at Humboldt State University, the implementation of the Domestic Violence Response Team, the acquisition of some money that will go toward conducting a Safety and Accountability Audit, a coalition of anti-violence workers who go into schools called Humboldt Overcoming Abuse and Prejudice, and the startup of Hoopa Project Connect. I discuss the activities of some of these projects in sections that follow.

Currently then, coordinated community councils and policy committees, prevention/education projects, first responders, survivor service providers and criminal justice system agencies make up Humboldt County’s response to DVSA. Local government, non-profit organizations, for profit/private-owned businesses, tribal governments, and both college campuses are involved, using county, state and federal monies, user fees, and charitable donations to fund their work. But other organizations or professionals find themselves caught up in the local DVSA apparatus – including youth and family serving professionals and medical personnel – because they are required by law to report suspected family violence, domestic violence, and/or incidents of sexual assault and abuse. These same people may be in a position to refer victims of violence to services or aid them in other ways.

Mandated reporters may or may not be trained to work with survivors of violence or batterers. The authors of “An Assessment of Humboldt State University’s Capacity to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Assault” (hereafter “the HSU assessment”) found that most Student Affairs units at HSU were not trained to respond to victims of sexual assault (McCrigler et al 2008). If reporters/responders are trained, it is likely they were by one of the voluntary organizations I described above. The Humboldt County Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP) for example has trained CalWORKS workers on the dynamics of domestic violence and how to assist their clients who may be experiencing DV, and occasionally offers voluntary trainings that are open to any community member or service worker interested in learning skills in this area. The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) Health Committee put together a form and instructions for medical providers on how to report in a way that “afforded the most safety” to the survivor of violence. The committee also trained medical personnel at one point. At the time of this research, I was unable to obtain a copy of the packet and must assume that many current medical personnel also do not have access. Ultimately, training may introduce new concepts, approaches and skills to mandated reporters, but it doesn’t mean that those individuals will accept a political analysis of the role of violence in oppression, nor, as I’ve already pointed out, will they view themselves as part of a movement to end DVSA.

### Defining Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Local organizations are involved in generating terms to describe the evolving understanding of domestic violence and sexual assault and in contesting existing concepts

and theories. The power of naming violence plays a crucial role in survivorship and in designing intervention and prevention programs. The clarification of terms was an element of many conversations I had, materials I collected, and local events I attended. As one informant described different conceptual frameworks “when I talk about prevention I’m talking about arresting somebody or putting more lights up somewhere. When [they] talk about prevention they are talking about people don’t want to do it [violence] anymore!”

Legal definitions of intrafamilial violence and sex crimes must have specific and narrow elements that prosecutors can prove in criminal justice proceedings. For example, “rape” according to California Penal Code § 261 refers only to non-consensual, heterosexual, penis-in-vagina intercourse with anyone other than a legal spouse (North Coast Rape Crisis Team n.d.1). There are separate legal statutes prohibiting spousal rape, sodomy, sexual battery, and sexual assault (North Coast Rape Crisis Team n.d.1). In my interviews with law enforcement, probation officers and other legal professionals, they sometimes referred to acts, and the people who perpetrated them by the California Penal Code section which prohibits their behavior. 273.5’s are felony domestic violence cases, 243(e)(1)’s are misdemeanor DV cases that get informal court probation instead of formal probation. 261’s are rape convictions, 262’s are spousal rape cases, whereas 243.4’s are sexual battery’s that don’t meet the specific legal requirement of male/female, vagina/penis sexual penetration.

Non-legal organizations that respond to violence, on the other hand, commonly use terms that have citational meaning; they are terms that are repeatedly used or “cited”

by other agencies, academics, grant funders and public health agencies. Further, there is incentive to expand definitions in advocacy work in order to meet the needs of survivors whose experiences might not exactly match narrow legal definitions. In a survey of material available at local agencies, “domestic violence” is most commonly used to refer to patterns or cycles of primarily physical abuse between spouses or intimate partners. Most of the material notes that this abuse is also called “battering.” Emotional and verbal abuses such as making threats, name-calling, destroying property or controlling money were also noted as common elements of domestic violence. “Intimate Partner Violence” is a less commonly used term to refer to the same set of abuses. “Family Violence” on the other hand was used as an umbrella term that includes domestic violence/intimate partner violence, but also child abuse and elder abuse. There are many entanglements between domestic violence and child abuse. Some agencies that respond to intimate partner violence also provide services to the children of the women who flee abusive situations. In some minds, witnessing violence perpetrated on a parent in the home is considered to be a form of child abuse and/or cause to provide therapeutic services to the children. In this research, I have not specifically discussed with my informants the specific concerns of children, and focus mainly on adult on adult violence.

In my survey of local agency material, “sexual assault” is used to refer to “any sexual act without consent, including rape” whether perpetrated by someone who knows the victim or is a stranger to the victim (North Coast Rape Crisis Team n.d.2). Some of the brochures also use the term “sexualized violence.” One brochure explains that “sexualized violence can be used as a weapon of oppression to maintain a negative

‘norm’ or systems of power . . . Hate crimes often include sexualized violence as a method to degrade, demoralize and assert power over another” (North Coast Rape Crisis Team n.d.3). When a sexual assault is perpetrated against a minor it is sometimes referred to as “sexual abuse” or “child sexual exploitation.” I have not discussed with my informants the specific concerns of minors, and tend to focus more on sexual assault that occurs against adults. However, this is not a distinction that local organizations make as they respond to incidents of sexual assault against individuals of any age.

### Theories of Violence

The second question of my research was to investigate if and how the local response system incorporates the feminist analysis that domestic violence and sexual assault are tools used to systematically oppress women. If such an analysis was not present or prominent, I hoped to discover what other theories of violence have complicated it or replaced it. Readers may recall from chapter two, that criminological theories usually explain violence in terms of a mix of free-will choice and factors beyond the control of the individual including: biology/genetics, psychological maldevelopment, environmental influences, involvement in deviant sub-cultures, being labeled as deviant and/or lack of equal opportunity (Lab et al 2004). What causes violence in the criminological mind is lack of harsh consequences and/or rehabilitation opportunities. This is the general theory that explains the Humboldt County Probation Department’s attempt to scientifically assess the likelihood of a perpetrator re-offending based on a

matrix of substance abuse, mental illness, education, anti-social friends, and previous convictions.

A similar, but non-criminological framework, views domestic violence and sexual assault as “public health epidemics.” District Attorney Paul Gallegos articulated this framework succinctly at the DA Candidate Forum on Domestic Violence: DV, he said, is a “pervasive illness” in our community that ranges from “benign” to “catastrophic,” that we need to reach out to “heal.” Like other public health campaigns, the prevention strategies that grow out of this framework include developing brochures and informational material alerting the public to this epidemic and giving them tools to protect themselves and their children. In the public health model, people suffering from domestic violence and sexual assault need access to treatment or therapy to learn how to change their violent patterns and to create healthy relationships.

In another variation on the public health framework, domestic violence and sexual assault are viewed as “learned” or “environmentally influenced behaviors,” absorbed from witnessing family dynamics, community, and cultural patterns. In the learned behavior model, the goal is for individuals to recognize the way they have internalized problematic elements of family and cultural life and make the effort to change themselves. The learned behavior model justifies the role of helping professions in intervening in youth lives and offering therapeutic services to individuals experiencing violence. Prevention strategies in the learned behavior framework attempt to educate young people or “make them aware” of unhealthy relationship dynamics in order to

“break the cycle” of family violence. The Humboldt County Family Violence Prevention Program explains this education approach:

“Strategies for preventing family violence must be grounded in work to replace deeply ingrained knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that condone and perpetuate family violence with beliefs that promote safety, justice and compassion” (FVPP n.d.).

Public health theories of violence, like criminological theories, also account for neurobiological factors. One informant who works with batterers says that some of the men are simultaneously dealing with traumatic brain injuries, poverty, and drug and alcohol abuse, and they have internalized cultural messages about masculinity that suggest control and domination of “weaker” people is okay and desirable and that it is okay to objectify people. This informant includes biological, psychological and environmental influences in the framework, with awareness that it is an uphill battle against culture.

Some workers in the DVSA can articulate very comprehensive theories of the ways that social organization and unequal access to power cause violence, but in many public settings they deploy what I call a “coded theory of violence.” As this theory is publicly presented, such as during the 2010 Stop the Violence campaign, domestic violence is caused by the batterers’ desire for absolute power and control. Paula Arrowsmith-Jones, an interviewee from NCRCT on a segment of Stop the Violence, explained on-air that batterers have a sense of “entitlement” that they feel gives them the “right” to control and dominate their intimate partner. The root causes of sexualized violence and domestic violence in this theory are community belief systems that it is okay

to use violence to control or get what one wants from other people. For those who are in on the “code,” some of that sense of entitlement is understood to come from social systems of oppression and privilege named as patriarchy, white supremacy and heterosexism. But when I asked informants if they talked about the relationship of oppression to violence with other professionals, they explained that they may occasionally do so with small groups of co-workers, but that in larger networks such an analysis is “implied, not necessarily overtly talked about.” One informant described,

“Internally we talk about it [oppression] quite a bit. Some of us talk about it more than others. Those of us doing prevention work, because anti-oppression work is at the core of prevention work. . . . At the meetings I go to there is space. An advocate or someone will say something like: Well we know that me of color are more likely to be prosecuted than a white guy so we have to keep that in mind. It is in a conversation when someone from a social justice framework inserts it, and others will nod and agree or challenge it and say that it is not true.”

For those not in on the “code,” entitlement may take on the more general meaning of negative learned behavior.

The use of the code is strategic. One informant described using different sets of coded language to introduce advocacy concepts to law enforcement agents/agencies and public health agencies. This informant believes that while an officer may not operate under a social justice framework, two or three useful concepts in hand – such as survivor-centeredness and understanding a batterer’s drive for power and control – make a difference to the experience of some survivors of violence. Indeed, I have heard survivors publicly praise certain individual officers who employ advocacy based concepts in their work. But sometimes, when agencies are not grounded in a social justice framework, the code is enforced on workers. Two informants related experiences were they or others

they worked with were actually restricted by their superiors from saying explicitly what kinds of oppression play a role in violence; they could for example say “social oppression,” but not “sexism” or “racism.” Informants who work at public agencies report pressure not to be “too political” because they are working with “taxpayer” money and have to represent all constituents not one political perspective. Talk about specific forms of oppression, such as racism, has been interpreted as “too political” for public agencies.

The framework is further “coded” by the use of gender-neutral language and/or to point out that DVSA can happen to women, children, *and* men. “Sexual assault happens to children, adults, females and males” reads the SART brochure. Humboldt Domestic Violence Services provides “ongoing strength based programs for women, men and children,” and changed their name in the early 2000’s in part to not discourage male survivors of violence from seeking assistance. The material I surveyed and conversations I had often mentioned that domestic violence and sexual assault were found in gay, lesbian, queer and transgender relationships, challenging the assumption that only heterosexual people had such problems.

In private however, my informants often used gendered language in talking with me: “she” is most often the victim, “he” is most often the perpetrator. The language is backed up by statistics that demonstrate that females are much more likely to experience sexual assault and be battered, while males continue to be much more likely to perpetrate an assault or abuse. A handout prepared by Hoopa Project Connect points out that 95% of DV victims are female, while 95-98% of perpetrators are male, and that battering is the

“largest single major cause of injury to women” (Hoopa Project Connect n.d.1). Another handout from NCRCT estimates that 91% of victims of sexual assault are female, while 9% are male (NCRCT n.d.2). The coded theory of violence avoids restricting services just to women, while those who share the “code” continue to understand that domestic violence and sexual assault are extremely gendered acts of violence.

Some of my informants had a detailed theory of violence that included elements of the political uses of violence, but they did not identify their theories as feminist or were unwilling to limit the cause of violence to gender oppression. These informants suggested that violence would be enacted in the home quite naturally because we live in a culture that supports and promotes violence. More than one informant articulated the belief that life in the United States is characterized by a generalized acceptance of violence that is generated from a widespread lack of respect for humans. In this theory, the incidence of domestic violence is rampant in a “culture of violence” where institutions and nations perpetrate war, racism, and capitalism on their own and foreign citizens. Multiple issues are connected in this framework, from domestic violence to war. Violence, one informant argued, is constantly reflected back to us as the norm and this must have something to do with why there is no uproar when violence happens in our homes and on our streets. Their work against domestic violence and sexualized violence is guided by what they called a human rights framework and is part of an overall challenge to violence that will make life better not just for women but for all people.

A feminist political analysis of the relationship between sexism, patriarchy, racism, heterosexism and domestic violence and sexual assault is sometimes made

explicit to the public and not coded. A Hoopa Project Connect handout names “male privilege” as one source of the entitlement that batterers feel to treat women like servants (n.d.2). North Coast Rape Crisis Team points out in a brochure that sexism is an “attitude” “tolerated by our society” that manifests as disproportionate sexualized violence against women (n.d.3). At the Act to End Sexualized Violence seminar I attended at HSU the instructors presented a framework that linked sexual assault to a culture that supports rape by making domination by males and submission by females seem sexy. The prevention efforts of the Act to End class reflect this feminist theory of violence by giving students the tools to recognize rape supportive culture and to intervene in daily rape supportive acts. The university is seen by some of my interviewees as the main generator of theory, but say they feel it is somewhat “silo-ed” from efforts in the rest of the community. They feel there is a separation between academia and the “action” in the community that makes a feminist political analysis challenging to generate and maintain in day-to-day work. The moments of explicit feminism demonstrate attempts to expand the bounds of what is considered feminist, from challenging just gender roles to include challenging other systems of oppression such as colonization/genocide that also limit and exploit women.

### DVSA in Indian Country and Beyond

According to a local informant in the law enforcement field:

“For people from different populations their experience of violence is going to be different. But law enforcement responses can’t be. . . What we need to be doing is to make sure we are not unequally applying the law to people from particular races or cultures. We are not supposed to be treating anybody differently.”

However, tribal sovereignty on reservation lands and federal usurpation of sovereignty for certain crimes complicates the experience of domestic violence and sexual assault in Indian Country and surrounding areas. There is also a growing articulation by some local professionals that Native experiences of DVSA require approaches unique from the non-Native population. A few exclusively Native-serving organizations have been developed, resource materials geared for Native people have been composed, and service providers have been invited to cultural competency trainings.

Three large tribes in Humboldt County (four smaller Rancherias also are recognized) all offer or have in recent history offered domestic violence and sexual assault services to their tribal members. The Yurok Tribe Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Program in Klamath offers emergency shelter/services, referrals, court advocacy and accompaniment, and peer counseling. The Wiyot Tribe Social Services department has also offered services to domestic violence victims. The Na:whongwh xw E:Na:Wh Stop the Violence Coalition (NESTVC) in the Hoopa Valley Reservation operates a domestic violence shelter and offers other services to survivors.

One of the most exciting new projects happening locally is Hoopa Project Connect, started in Spring 2010 on the Hoopa Indian Reservation, with funding from the Office of Women's Health Family Violence Prevention Fund (Sanchez 2010). The project monies are designed to develop and disseminate prevention education materials to the sovereign area. The grant will fund Project Connect to conduct a community needs assessment, generate educational materials and have a presence at community events

(Sanchez 2010). At one of Project Connect's first public events, written material and a video screening presented a message I had not encountered at other events in Humboldt: "Battering is Not Traditional." A film was screened at the event called *Listen to the Grandmothers*, which discusses how European contact, and patterns of genocide and assimilation altered the cultural checks in indigenous societies that created safety for Native women, and exposed Native women to domestic abuse. In the audience conversation that followed the video, comments were made about how cultural transmission was an important strategy for reaching out to Native youth, and that it is specifically important for elder men to publicly communicate the importance of respecting women.

Similar intergenerational cultural transmission strategies have been implemented by Two Feathers Native American Family Services. Riding the crest of the 1990's "second wave," Two Feathers opened in Northern Humboldt in 1998. Two Feathers originally opened with money from the Office for Victims of Crime to serve people in Native American families (that means anyone who identifies as Native or who is living in a home with Native people) experiencing all forms of family violence. Two Feather's mission is:

"To promote the stability and security of families, and to protect the best interest of Indian children. We are committed to incorporating cultural traditions that encourage a balance of emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual health. We are dedicated to collaborating with both Indian and non-Indian agencies to achieve these goals and to honor the privacy of Indian families."

Two Feathers services include information and referrals, emergency services, and advocacy/accompaniment, but they also offer therapy for groups, families and individuals

that is culturally relevant to local Native Americans. Children, for example, can access Therapeutic Cultural Groups where they may participate in drumming, regalia making or fieldtrips to cultural sites. Two Feathers initiated the Intertribal Women's Advocacy Network (ITWAN), which operates as a sub-committee focused on Native concerns of the Humboldt County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council.

Similar to Hoopa Project Connect's theory of violence, in the Act to End Sexualized Violence course at Humboldt State University, one of the instructors discussed the ways that rape has been used as a tool of genocide against Native Americans in Humboldt County. If you want to get rid of a group of people, the instructor said, you can outright kill them, or you can change their genetic makeup by sexually assaulting them. Rape is also an effective strategy for emasculating native men, who might have felt it was their duty to protect the women in their community. The instructor went on to explain that sexualized violence continues to be a pervasive tool of oppression against Native people. A handout from NCRCT points out that "American Indian women are the only ethnic group more likely to be assaulted by a male outside their own ethnicity." To observe that it is mostly men from outside Native culture perpetrating sexualized violence on Native women complicates the cultural transmission prevention strategy used to respond to family violence.

These voluntary approaches to domestic violence in Indian Country are justified because of the unique colonization/genocide theory of violence that such agencies have generated, but also because of general mistrust of legally mandated organizations by Native people. One informant shared concern that the history of forced commitment to

boarding schools has made local Native people suspicious of government entities. Grandparents who were kidnapped and forced into boarding schools where they experienced extreme institutional violence had very good reasons to be wary of anyone who wears a uniform, and they passed this caution onto their children and grandchildren. This interviewee said, “It sounds like it was a long time ago, but there are still people alive today who experienced boarding schools. We were taught not to trust the system. There is a lot of fear for Native women of the system. . . We are in the process of healing at this time.” This interviewee shared that Native women and children may also risk spiritual repercussions for reporting, according to the informant, if it is made public that they were violated and others label them as impure and unfit to participate in religious ceremonies. “Native women,” an informant relates, “we suffer physically, emotionally AND spiritually.”

None of my informants brought up concerns about serving the Hmong community, located mostly in Eureka, nor is there a Hmong sub-committee on the DVCC. I did hear a rumor that an HSU student had completed her senior research on appropriate responses for DV agencies when working with Hmong women, but I was unable to contact this student. However, I did encounter some awareness of the unique problems that Latina immigrants might face in dealing with DVSA. At the District Attorney Candidate Forum on domestic violence, the candidates were asked about how they might enhance access to the DA’s office for minority populations. Paul Gallegos, the current DA who was re-elected after that forum, stated that if undocumented immigrants call law enforcement to respond to a case of DVSA “there is a good chance they will be

deported.” But, he went on to say, there is nothing his office can do to stop that. At the last DVCC meeting, there was interest in reinvigorating the Latin@ Concerns sub-committee, especially because of the paucity of services that exist for Spanish-speaking people. One DVCC representative pointed out that many Spanish-speaking individuals turn to Paso a Paso, a maternal infant health program at St. Joseph’s Hospital, for help, though this program is certainly not always available in times of crisis.

### The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault System

The organizations that respond to domestic violence and sexual assault in Humboldt County can be thought of as part of a DVSA response *system* because they are connected in numerous ways, through legally mandated relationships and voluntary collaborations. Figure 1 below maps out the institutions that are legally mandated or volunteer to respond to domestic violence and sexual assault in Humboldt County. The chain of legal mandate starts with medical providers and children/family workers who are required by law to report suspected incidents of child abuse, domestic violence and sexual abuse. A report or a direct call to the sheriff, city, tribal or campus law enforcement agencies initiates an investigation into criminal activity. If the victim experienced sexualized violence, they may be asked to submit to a Sexual Assault Response Team forensic medical examination. If the victim was a child, the specialized Child Abuse Services Team (CAST) will interview them. If the Humboldt County District Attorney receives enough evidence to press charges, defendants enter the court system. If an offender makes a plea-bargain or is convicted by a trial jury, they may be



assessed by the probation department for community supervision eligibility. If convicted of a misdemeanor DV charge offenders will be sentenced to participate in a batterer's intervention program as part of their sentence. The victim's information is forwarded by law enforcement agencies to the Victim Witness Program that is mandated by state law to offer financial compensation to victims of crime out of funds collected through felony restitution. If there are children involved in a domestic violence situation, an entirely new set of child welfare organizations may be required to respond.

The efficiency of this set of legally mandated relationships was not the focus of my investigation. A Safety and Accountability Audit such as I describe in chapter two, would delve deeper into the processing of cases by the local criminal justice system. The Humboldt County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) has for several years attempted to organize an Audit, and just recently secured some funding toward that goal. The DVCC formed in 1994 as a "partnership of public and private agencies and individuals who are committed to a constant and coordinated county-wide response to domestic violence." In addition to trying to organize an Audit, the DVCC draws otherwise on the Duluth Model and the work of Ellen Pence. The language of providing a "coordinated community response" echoes the strategy of the Duluth Model to integrate and track local service provision. The DVCC's goals are safety of victims, accountability for people who abuse, and prevention of domestic violence. They seek these objectives through interagency collaboration, professional training and community awareness/education. When the DVCC first started, Violence Against Women Act funds channeled through the Office of Violence Against Women and the local District

Attorney's Office paid for two staff positions to organize the work of the DVCC. The DVCC is currently however, an all-volunteer effort consisting of quarterly Council meetings held in various locations across Humboldt (including one in Southern Humboldt and one in Hoopa each year) and more frequent sub-committee meetings. Sub-committees include: the Prevention Committee, the Intertribal Women's Advocacy Network (ITWAN), the Services-Treatment Committee, the DV Death Review Team, Latin@ Concerns Committee and the All Species Protection Committee.

The Board of the DVCC includes representatives from public health, the probation department, batterers intervention programs, North Coast Rape Crisis Team, Humboldt Domestic Violence Services, Humboldt State University Department of Social Work, and youth and family serving non-profits. The vast majority of the individuals who attend DVCC meetings work at some type of professional agency or organization that serves survivors, perpetrators or youth and families in general. Because the emphasis is on coordination of county services and networking among agencies, the council is not well known by the general public in the same way that HDVS or NCRCT might be. The public may not be aware that it is the DVCC sub-committee organizing certain projects such as the Silent Witness display or the Domestic Violence Response. Because the vast majority of the council's regular participants work at voluntary agencies, the DVCC's devotes a certain amount of time and energy to involve their "judicial partners" including court officials, the probation department, the prosecution side of the district attorney's office, and public defenders. For example, the DVCC co-hosted the forum on domestic violence and child abuse for the District Attorney candidates. The Domestic Violence

Response Team (DVRT), a program where advocates ride-along with police officers, is organized as a DVCC sub-committee. I discuss DVRT more in detail below.

A handful of people with legally mandated responsibilities have taken on voluntary leadership roles in responding to DVSA collaborations like the DVCC, have acquired VAWA or other state/federal money, and/or have made responding to DVSA a priority for their organizations. Legally mandated organizations thus sometimes interact voluntarily with each other and with voluntary organizations. Some of my informants believe that the level of collaboration between legally mandated and voluntary organizations is unusually high in Humboldt County. One informant said,

“I am proud to be part of a collaborative team. Humboldt County is rich in resources. We would win the world series of advocacy collaboration! . . . There are so many interdisciplinary teams in this county and it is not like that in every county. Because of this collaboration, survivors are given a blanket of resources.”

Another informant pointed out that this collaboration is a direct result of funding that was available through VAWA starting in 1994. According to this informant, VAWA money brought agencies together for training that didn't normally work together, including law enforcement, the probation department, attorneys, victim advocates and batterer's intervention programs. Further, according to this informant, this was the first time some people on the “law enforcement” side – who started to work in the field after the DVSA “first wave” – began to think about how to improve their agency's domestic violence and sexual assault responses.

VAWA still mandates interdisciplinary collaboration in order for agencies to be eligible for grant money. Humboldt State University's Sexual Assault Prevention

Committee (SAPC) has invited representatives from the Arcata Police Department, the University Police Department and the District Attorney's office to participate in SAPC, in preparation of applying for monies that demand collaboration with those agencies. According to an informant, in order to apply for VAWA's "Campus Grant" administered by the Department of Justice, this kind of collaboration with the criminal justice system is required. SAPC was organized at the university to advise the Executive Committee and the Vice President of Student Affairs about campus policies on sexual assault, and to coordinate campus educational programming on sexual assault. The SAPC includes faculty, staff, and students from such departments as the University Police Department, the Associated Students Organization, the Critical Race Gender and Sexuality Studies Department (formerly the Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies departments), the Student Health Center and off-campus representation from the North Coast Rape Crisis Team.

A local informant suggests that the SAPC was re-invigorated about 5 years ago when a student was raped by a stranger in the parking lot of the university's library. Many students were outraged by the attack and began to agitate for action to challenge sexualized violence on campus. A sub-committee of SAPC organized a weekend seminar class called "Act to End Sexualized Violence" that has since been offered at least once a year. According to the class syllabus, students analyze sexualized violence as "a tool of social control/domination" that is "interconnected with the social construction of masculinity and femininity as well as hierarchies of race, class, sexuality, physical ability and nation" (2010 course syllabus). To receive credit for the class, students are asked to

“take some action to help eliminate sexualized violence at HSU.” Projects have ranged from organizing speak-outs to making videos to attending Take Back the Night.

The Chair of SAPC organized Women’s Studies (now CRGS) students to conduct an assessment of the University’s compliance with a California State University Chancellor’s Executive Memo advising CSU’s on sexual assault policy. From the assessment came a “Strategic Plan for Preventing and Responding to Sexualized Violence at Humboldt State University.” Part of the plan includes the development of a peer education program “involving students from a wide cross-section of campus.” As of this writing, the application for VAWA funds is designed to implement this peer education program. A local informant explains that sexualized violence is particularly normalized on college campuses because of “party culture” which a small number of people exploit in order to perpetrate sexualized violence against intoxicated or incapacitated students. Additionally, traditional college age students are at an age where they may be exploring their sexuality for the first time, in the midst of a culture where everything is sexualized and gender roles of male domination and female submission are eroticized. This makes anti-sexual assault work particularly important for the college, but historically under-invested in by the university. The peer education program is an attempt to give students the tools to intervene in daily acts that contribute to normalized sexualized violence or “rape supportive culture.”

In addition to policy-making collaborations, local agencies participate in bi-lateral trainings and make bi-lateral agreements. Victim Witness, for example, has developed an agreement whereby the Eureka Police Department sends a copy of the police report from

domestic violence incidents to Victim Witness, so that advocates can follow up with victims and offer them services. Local police departments have also agreed to pass on to victims a business card sized resource guide, so they may choose to call a crisis line if and when they are ready.

Cross-agency teams such as the Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) have formed locally to take on specific tasks. DVRT is a partnership between the Eureka Police Department (EPD) and a DVCC sub-committee that began operating in Summer 2010. Through DVRT, civilian advocates from Humboldt Domestic Violence Services ride along with EPD officers on three or four shifts per week responding to mostly domestic violence calls. The idea is that while an officer's main priority is to handle and potentially arrest a violent person, the advocate is available to use crisis response training to talk with and aid the victim(s) of violence. Local accounts suggest that this strategy has been helpful for officers responding to all kinds of situations where they do not have the training or information to assist victims. Local accounts also argue that having advocates and officers ride around together in a car has improved historically tense relationships between the two groups. The DVCC has prioritized seeking funding to make DVRT a 24 hour program.

The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) was formed in 1994, and housed at St. Joseph's Hospital, which continues to fund a nurse coordinator position. The SART is a team of professionals including trained forensic medical examiners, law enforcement officials, the North Coast Rape Crisis Team, and the SART nurse coordinator that provides 24-hour responses to victim of sexual assault. When a victim reports a sexual

assault to law enforcement, that agency may request a medical evidentiary exam and transport the victim to St. Joseph's for the exam. The evidence collected at the exam may be used to pursue criminal charges against a perpetrator of violence. The mission of SART is "to protect the Sexual Assault Survivor from further harm and lessen the risk of emotional trauma."

Multiple agencies also participate in organizing annual community awareness campaigns including Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October and Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April. Typically, annual events during these months include the Silent Witness and Clothesline displays, vigils for victims of violence, setting up informational tables, and asking the Board of Supervisors to make proclamations in support of DVSA work. In 1995 another community awareness campaign was born: the "Stop the Violence, Start the Healing" campaign on the locally owned and operated KHUM radio station. Cliff Berkowitz, the founder of KHUM and an on-going KHUM DJ, told me that Stop the Violence was born before he moved to Humboldt. Cliff was working as a national radio consultant when he had the idea to design a radio education campaign similar to the Great American Smoke Out, but around the issue of gang violence. When Cliff moved to Humboldt he started talking to others about the types of violence that needed to be addressed. Sheri Johnson, the current Chair of the DVCC, helped to convince Cliff to take on the topic of domestic violence. Every November for 15 years now, Cliff devotes three weeks of his morning radio show to the voices of experts and local callers discussing aspects of domestic violence, other forms of family

violence and sexual abuse. The campaign culminates in a two hour “Healing Breakfast” which is free to the public and broadcast live on the radio.

The activity around the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault that I have described in this chapter will perhaps seem comprehensive for a county the size of Humboldt. It is true that Humboldt is blessed with more non-profit agencies and collaborations than surrounding rural counties, which some speculate is related to having the university located here. I conclude this chapter by noting that while a cadre of dedicated people has vastly improved the quantity and quality of DVSA responses in Humboldt, it is still a small cadre. The number of people working on domestic violence and sexual assault as part of their job or main source of activism could, and regularly do, fit in a large conference room.

### Viewing the Institutions of the State

My informants have complicated views about the role of state institutions in responding to violence. Many interviewees identified problems with the ways the criminal justice system, the western medical system and the social service system respond to domestic violence and sexual assault. Unlike some intersectional feminist activists, they stopped short of arguing that those institutions shouldn’t be involved in responding to DVSA.

Criminal Justice System. Despite being “the only [accountability] system we have,” my interviewees are broadly concerned that the criminal justice system is not achieving its stated objectives. There is consensus that prosecution for domestic violence

and sexual assault is low compared to the actual occurrence in the community. Individuals that I interviewed in the legal system explained that when law enforcement is called out to respond, there are many cases where the District Attorney (DA) argues that he doesn't have enough evidence to successfully prosecute. Many sexualized violence cases are not immediately reported and may not have visible injuries, diminishing the amount of physical evidence that can be collected. Another problem with evidence collection is the low rate at which victims of violence feel safe enough (whether from their perpetrator or from the state) to testify in court, undercutting the primary source of evidence the criminal legal system relies on. According to one interviewee this is not a unique problem to Humboldt County, but a structural problem with the evidentiary requirements of the legal system that make it unable to deal with sexualized violence. One interviewee told me that the DA resorts to prosecuting for other crimes (such as substance possession) when there isn't enough evidence for a DV charge, just to hold perpetrators of violence accountable for something.

Another broad concern about the local criminal justice system is the inefficiency of mandating domestic violence treatment. At the time of my research, there was concern about how the intervention programs were doing at holding perpetrators accountable for their actions. When an individual is sentenced to a program on a misdemeanor<sup>5</sup> they are only monitored by the court and are not assigned a probation officer. According to local

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<sup>5</sup> A misdemeanor charge is conventionally defined in the U.S. as a charge for which the maximum sentence is anything less than one year in county jail. A felony charge is defined as a more serious charge for which a sentence could include more than one year of incarceration.

sources, compared to the probation department's overall caseload very few are felony domestic violence cases. Without a probation officer overseeing, sources say, the batterer intervention program is much less likely to be completed. A judge who may see someone on "informal probation" infrequently has fewer tools to ensure that people convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence attend domestic violence treatment. At a DVCC meeting I went to, attendees discussed how people ordered to attend an intervention program either have difficulty finding a program that will take them if they can't pay, or they take advantage of the indigent loophole to avoid going to the program. Even if individuals do get a spot in a treatment program, the amount of support the program can provide a person who does want to change their behavior is minimal. Programs are two hours a week and do not include peer support outside of the meetings like other life change programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous. An informant at a local intervention program told me that they only expect about one-third of the people who start the group to finish it. Underlying all is the challenge of trying to get people to change their behavior through court order. As one informant put it, "The way they have it set up is not necessarily conducive to making a transformation. There are good people who work at those programs, but in general those programs have mixed reviews of success."

At least two of my informants were concerned about the ability of the prison system to teach any kind of useful lesson to those incarcerated. According to one interviewee, if the battering relationship is about power and control then society is sending a very conflicting message to batterers by putting them in prison, a place of ultimate power and control. Some law enforcement agents told me that criminal justice

agencies used to be, and may still be, complicit in perpetuating forms of social oppression. They also reported other concerns, including that law enforcement supervision can in some cases increase the likelihood that individuals will be prosecuted for more crimes than if they had not been under supervision; that prosecution shouldn't be pursued to the detriment of survivor centeredness; and that you don't end violence by arresting people. As these examples illustrate, many DVSA workers have developed a critique of the inabilities of the criminal justice system to provide accountability.

In addition to broad awareness of the deficiencies of current evidentiary and accountability processes, I encountered concern that the criminal legal system is not a useful safety/accountability option for some survivors of violence. Some interviewees articulated that seeking help from the system is not an option for many people in our community, including undocumented immigrants, drug users, people living in extremely isolated areas, people worried about having their kids removed, homeless people, people manufacturing meth, or people growing marijuana. These and other groups of people may have been targeted for criminal prosecution in the past and many would no doubt be reluctant to invite law enforcement into their homes, camps, or properties. One interviewee noted that poor people without resources are most likely to get arrested for DV because they have fewer resources to hide their behavior from neighbors, social service workers, and law enforcement. Native youth have been shown to be disproportionately represented in our juvenile justice system, so it is not unlikely that Native adults are also overrepresented. In essence, we have a local system where the first line of defense against violent attack is a hard call to make for the most marginalized

people in our community. But those people who question incarceration as an accountability mechanism have felt marginalized by others in the local DVSA system and/or not sure what else could be done differently. Efforts to share critiques are hindered, according to an informant, by beliefs that to be critical of the criminal justice system means that one is not a feminist or fully supportive of victims of violence. The message is: despite major systemic flaws, the criminal legal system is the only system we have, so we have to stick with it.

Western Medical System. The use of the public health framework and system to achieve DVSA movement goals concerns advocates. Organizations like the Family Violence Prevention Program that operate through the public health system have been able to do inspiring work such as screening the film *Sin By Silence*. The film explores the efforts of incarcerated women to change California state law to recognize evidence of battered woman's syndrome during homicide trials. Likewise, North Coast Rape Crisis Team receives funding through the state Public Health Department and has been able to do prevention and education work with clearly articulated political analysis.

But my informants expressed frustration with how the public health system constrains the ability of workers and survivors to articulate the political causes and consequences of violence. One interviewee shared a story of attending a workshop where the facilitators from the public health system spent considerable energy avoiding the word "racism," in favor of obscure and confusing talk about "issues that arise when one group of people historically has had some advantage over other groups of people." When pressed, the facilitators explained that the Centers for Disease Control required them to

remove the word racism from their presentation. Another informant relayed similar pressure to avoid explicit discussion of systems of oppression like white supremacy and xenophobia while operating under a public health model. One of my interviewees believes the entrance of public health systems has done much to professionalize the field, to increase reliance on scientific-based data, and to proscribe the roles for community participation in anti-violence work. Further, an interviewee suggested to me that public health models limit opportunities for survivor healing, because they individualize the problem rather than aid people in recognizing their experiences are part of a common problem. This informant noted that recognizing the collective problem of sexualized violence is a very political act, and public health models avoid politicization of issues.

Advocates have expressed some concerns about the California law that requires medical providers to report injuries that are suspected to have come from domestic violence and sexual assault. Mandated reporting requires professionals to report with or without consent of the survivor. This puts medical professionals in very conflicted positions as they try to both conform to the law and be survivor-centered. As noted above, the DVCC Health Committee attempted in the past to respond to this concern by creating a packet for mandated DV reporters and training them to be survivor-centered, although this packet and training are currently not available.

Social Service System. I encountered concern by DVSA professionals about the role that the social service and welfare/entitlement system might play in re-traumatizing victims of violence when social workers blame victims for violence. Some DVSA agencies are involved in training entitlement workers directly, or in offering general

training to any interested social service worker who would like to improve their support of victims/survivors. One of these trainings is the “How Can I Help?” workshop offered in the past by the county Family Violence Prevention program.

Advocates expressed concern that marginalized people may be deterred from seeking out social services, particularly undocumented immigrants. Some professionals suggest that immigrants may be worried about being reported to immigration officials if their status isn't legal. The appearance of “cultural competency” training for DVSA professionals also points to awareness that Native people may have reasons to avoid contact with social services agencies. Reasons include legacies of exploitation and abuse of Native people by organizations claiming to help or serve, such as the government distribution of something as innocuous as blankets as a cover for spreading smallpox.

In general, social services, entitlements, and particularly DVSA services were presented as “good,” something our community needs more of, something to do more outreach about. My informants spoke about a never-ending need for victim/survivor services in Humboldt. One interviewee describes the job of DVSA professionals as “find[ing] the cracks and the gaps in the system to help victims navigate the system.” However, interviewees said that while they are doing the never-ending daily service work, other people get to make “the laws” and create that system. Some informants shared with me concern that prioritizing service work is effective at diverting their energy from social change and policy change work (Kivel 2007). After several years of what she described as putting activism on the back burner, Dawn Watkins from HDVS is leading the charge to provide opportunities for service providers to participate in the work of

developing strategy for an anti-violence movement. As I was conducting this research she invited me to participate in a discussion about how to continue direct service work while simultaneously doing work to shift community norms.

Far from putting the onus solely on service workers for failing to think more in terms of movement building, my informants articulated how service work is prioritized by the state and state institutions. One informant decried funding requirements that individual change evaluation measures be in place, as these requirements obscure opportunities to step back and take stock of the cultural impact of a social movement. One interviewee reported that at times funding for prevention work is difficult to get from the state, which often prefers to fund projects that respond to violence once it has happened. In addition, I observed that the most well funded careers in the DVSA system are those that respond to violence once it has occurred, including attorneys, judges, medical doctors, psycho-therapists, and correctional officers. No one in Humboldt is getting rich doing prevention and education.

Prior to undertaking this research, I worked in various capacities with homeless youth and families, families with an incarcerated parent, previously incarcerated people and families living in extreme poverty. I had many conversations with people about how the experience of applying and receiving social services is uncomfortable and sometimes traumatizing. Many that I talked to related negative emotions associated with social workers whom they perceived as being in a place to identify all of their failures and to map out exactly how they needed to live in order to keep their kids, their housing, and

their meager welfare incomes. It is not a stretch for people who must seek social services to begin to view social service workers as “cops” who are paid to monitor poor people.

This is the insidious side of social service institutions that was not discussed by my informants. Through this lens, the strategy to get public institutions to respond to domestic violence and sexual assault feeds into Foucault’s theory of bio-power that I discussed in chapter two (1978). Some of my informants did provide me with examples of the pressure on social service and helping professions to act as vehicles for the state to collect information on the sexual lives of individuals and to manage sexual lives through their policies and practices. Similarly, mandating medical providers and child service workers to respond to DVSA works as another mechanism of control and surveillance, only this time workers are also being controlled as they do their jobs. Mandated reporting follows the logic that more reporting somehow means our community is doing a better job at responding, which is not necessarily the case. In fact, having been a mandated child abuse reporter, I have felt that reporting becomes seen as the end of responsibility for front-line workers, cutting off their creativity and resources for solving problems.

The State. In Humboldt County, current or past political regimes trouble many in the movement, but activists have not given up on dreaming of a democratic state. The state is most often/virtually always viewed as pluralist, as having the potential to mediate group needs if only political regimes could be shifted. The reduction or elimination of funding by the state was at times perceived as a failure on the part of groups to clearly communicate their necessity for families and communities. Broad patterns of systemic oppression reproduced by state institutions were at times described by interviewees as

lack of “communication,” lack of training for individuals working in those institutions, lack of legal “tools,” or elected official’s political stances. When voluntary agencies are swayed away from social justice frameworks, it is chalked up to “leadership” rather than specific processes of the non-profit system or institutionalization. Neo-liberalism in some cases was viewed as acceptable because it provides money for non-profits through the privatization of public services. One informant wished for the flexibility that they perceived non-profits as having, as they felt so constrained by the public agencies.

I also identified what Catherine McKinnon calls “Marxist moments” (1989) when the state is critiqued as a field of power constituted by the domination and exploitation of subjects, and the policing of the boundaries of the national body. I have already discussed how Native people and anti-colonialist allies describe the state as complicit with genocidal policies. Similarly, people working with undocumented immigrants recognize the inability of the state to respond to DVSA against immigrants because the state is simultaneously targeting immigrants for other forms of brutality and violence. Despite these moments, the movement continues to view the state as a potential vehicle for increasing the health and well being of Humboldt County residents.

CHAPTER 5  
CO-OPTATION AND RESISTANCE IN THE DVSA SYSTEM

“I feel like the next ten years are going to be a lot of changes because of these challenges.

In the [19]80’s, there was all this money that came into the DV world and with that money came all the strings and all the professionalization. That money is going away in a huge, ginormous way. And there are several ways to look at it but one of them is as an opportunity. It means we can re-evaluate why we’ve been doing the work. Have we been doing the work to get money? Or have we been doing the work to get the important work done? . . . Now is our chance to take a look at everything we are doing and say okay what of this is not useful? And we’ve had to do it because of strings tied to grants but now we can chop that and really focus on what our community names as important.”

-- *DVSA professional*

In the last chapter I mapped out the institutional responses to domestic violence and sexualized violence and the discursive terrain in Humboldt County, California. I described the organizations, projects, and collaborative efforts of the DVSA system; how DVSA is defined; theories of violence; and views of the state and state institutions. In this chapter, I identify points at which local anti-violence work matches the critical narratives of radical feminists or intersectional feminists, but I also uncover evidence that complicates and challenges those narratives. I examine the political analysis of domestic violence and sexual assault and the structural barriers DVSA workers face in building and sustaining a movement that can end violence by dismantling systems of power, privilege, oppression and exploitation.

Still Political After All These Years

As always, further investigation complicated the narratives about anti-violence work. In contrast to narratives about grassroots activism slowly become professionalized,

I learned from someone who was paid through a federal program to work for HDVS in the late 1970's that federal and state money funded pieces of DVSA work in Humboldt County from the very beginning of the movement. Reinforcing Shepard and Pence's argument (1999), I discovered that not all people that have been involved in DVSA work for multiple decades identify as feminists or were influenced by feminism to get involved. Some law enforcement professionals do not believe the criminal justice system is effective at holding people accountable or preventing violence. Instead, the DVSA system in Humboldt County has included a complicated mix of organizations, ideologies and funding strategies from the beginning. Some organizations have stayed true to feminist roots and some that started out in non-feminist places have become more feminist and intersectional as certain people have used them as vehicles for change.

Radical feminist narratives about the anti-violence movement suggest that feminist activists in the 1960's and 1970's started out articulating a very clear political analysis that violence disproportionately enacted against women by men functioned to maintain systems of patriarchy and sexism. In the narrative, as feminist organizations accepted funding from the state and became professionalized, the movement became depoliticized (Romany 1994). This narrative was compelling to me because prior to this research, while working as a youth and family case worker at local non-profits, I was

frustrated by being asked to manage clients without an outlet for conversation about the bigger picture and the political structures limiting the decisions my clients could make.<sup>6</sup>

After this research, I acknowledge that I was mistaken in believing that individuals who work in the helping professions personally lack a political analysis, just because the discourses of their agencies do. I also discovered that some organizations are better able to implement a social justice vision than others. When I examined the DVSA system in Humboldt County I discovered many individuals with strong political analyses of the causes of domestic violence and sexual assault, and I found individuals strategizing against violence using social justice frameworks. Inspiring to me was to encounter like-minded individuals working at non-profits and public agencies, at batterer's intervention programs, and even in law enforcement, who have spent time reading, attending conferences, and reflecting on the politics of domestic violence and sexual assault. To cultivate one's own political analysis is an act of resistance in the face of a hegemonic DVSA system that has problematic individualizing theories of violence.

Radical Feminist narratives about anti-violence movements being depoliticized are too simplistic for another reason. Providing services has become the public face of DVSA work, but policy work, prevention and some culture change work have retained a presence. At times this movement building work has been extremely marginalized, less emphasized, or drained of resources, but a few agencies have tried to do both service

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<sup>6</sup> As I was writing this I was excited to learn that a group of direct service providers who share similar frustrations were meeting regularly to discuss the bigger picture facing their clients. They call themselves "Service Providers Against Scarcity Models" or SPASM.

provision and changing community norms even when economic and political times are tough. North Coast Rape Crisis Team stands out as a model in this regard. Most prevention work is very individualized on how to keep oneself safe from violence and how to support a friend who has experienced violence, but some projects – such as Spare Change – have been explicit in trying shift community values around what healthy relationships look like.

The hegemonic DVSA discourse carefully draws boundaries around the types of violence that the state will take responsibility for. In the past, the state would only be responsible for violence that police officers witnessed, or only violence perpetrated by a racialized stranger on a white woman. As they have done from the beginning of the DVSA movements, some survivor advocates have pushed the boundaries of types of violence the community should respond to. Out of everything I discovered in my research, I was most inspired by some key local efforts to develop a multi-layer analysis of violence as it operates simultaneously on personal, institutional, community, national, and transnational levels. Readers will recall that this is the type of analysis advocated by intersectional feminist theorists such as the members of Incite! Women of Color Against Violence and the Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment.

One example of a multi-level analysis that stood out to me is the attempt by the Sexual Assault Prevention Committee (SAPC) at Humboldt State University, the Womyn's Resource Center at HSU, and the North Coast Rape Crisis Team (NCRCT) to bring the concept of "sexualized violence" into local discourse. In chapter four I introduced this term that some local voluntary organizations use to encompass all acts

that a survivor experiences as a sexual assault or violation. As it is defined by these organizations, acts of sexualized violence are conducted with the purpose of exerting control and domination, through the technique of forced and non-consensual sexual contact. This conceptualization permits a more complex analysis of violence than narrow terms used by the state or institutions such as rape or sexual harassment. Sexualized violence simultaneously operates on an interpersonal level and on other social levels, such as when it is used as a tool to dehumanize an occupied community or nation, or when it is used as a tool of genocide, colonization and war. While the concept of sexualized violence broadens our view to understand the many types of violence the community must confront if it truly wants to protect women's rights or human rights, the concept also empowers many more people to respond to violence on a daily basis. A criminal justice based approach to sexual assault limits my role as a community member to supporting alleged victims and condemning convicted perpetrators if they are proven guilty in the court system. (Or, as is far more likely, people can support the alleged perpetrator against an attack by the state by shunning or threatening the victim.) If I understand how sexualized violence works as a tool of larger social systems of control and domination, I can become emotionally tied to the issue because I will be able to see how larger social systems have impacted my sexual life and the sexual lives of everyone I know. I can also notice points for intervening daily in a culture that promotes sexualized violence. This is in fact the message of the Act to End Sexualized Violence course to students at Humboldt State University.

Advocates also are making attempts to link domestic violence to other levels of institutional, community, national and transnational forms of violence in line with intersectional feminist frameworks. North Coast Rape Crisis Team has been exemplary at contextualizing intimate acts of violence within larger systems of inequality, exploitation and oppression. They have also consistently included domestic violence within the scope of sexualized violence. They have both created informational materials that discuss these connections – such as the pamphlet “What’s Hate Got To Do With It?” – and discussed these issues during some of their public presentations, particularly those on the HSU campus.

I have already introduced the framework presented by Two Feathers Native American Family Services and Hoopa Project Connect that suggests domestic violence is caught up in the historical and on-going colonization and genocide of Native American people. Colonization and genocide are not necessarily the concepts or terms that Two Feathers or Hoopa Project Connect would use to describe their work. These are theoretical terms that I use to expose the possibilities for strategy of their particular analysis of DVSA. If one accepts, as I do, their analysis that white contact and specific policies and practices of colonization destroyed the cultural checks that kept women safe from intimate partner battering, then to effectively respond to domestic violence communities, tribes, nations and states must take responsibility for dismantling continued practices of colonization and providing reparations for past legacies of genocide. Activity to deconstruct and heal from colonization must simultaneously take action to respond to sexualized violence and intimate partner battering as a weapon that colonizers used to

impose patriarchy on Native people (Smith 2005a). The genocide/colonization theory of violence broadens the opportunity for anti-violence coalitions and empowers bystanders/community members to take action to end violence.

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council “All Species Committee” has generated a framework that links intimate partner abuse, other forms of family violence and human violence against animals. The All Species Committee points to evidence that individuals who are willing to injure and/or kill animals, particularly family pets, are more likely to feel similar entitlement to injure people in their family. This committee attempts to expand the boundaries of the types of violence that Humboldt communities should intervene in: their analysis explores the inconsistency of tolerating cruelty to non-human animals in the quest to build a community where humans treat each other with respect. This “eco-feminist” perspective provides grounds for people working for the protection of animals to work in coalition with people working to end DVSA.

I have been involved in a final act of resisting the bounds of hegemonic DVSA discourse. Through my involvement with Bar None, a local prisoner’s rights and advocacy organization, I have worked with local DVSA groups and organizations to link intimate partner battering and sexual assault with what I identify as “institutional violence” perpetrated by the criminal justice system. Myself and others from Bar None have been invited to share this perspective at the Womyn’s Resource Center organized Take Back the Night Rallies, and at the Family Violence Prevention Program’s screening of the film *Sin By Silence*. Using Marxist and intersectional feminist criminological theories I discussed in chapter two, Bar None explores the ways that the same women

who have survived family and partner violence are disproportionately incarcerated through drug criminalization and other laws/justice practices. Systematic policies and practices make incarcerated women and men vulnerable to sexual assault by other prisoners and correctional staff while inside prison. Treatment by correctional staff can look and feel very much like a battering relationship: corrections personnel employ verbal, emotional, physical, financial and other types of abuse to control and dominate prisoners, especially gender non-conforming people. These overlaps between so-called domestic violence and sexualized violence, and the violence inherent in the criminal justice system, expand the bounds of what kinds of violence our community should respond to and create opportunities for coalition.

In chapter four, I described how advocates who have personal social justice analyses “coded” their language in public collaborative settings. Coding could be misinterpreted as depoliticization. Some theories of violence – criminological and public health ones – are not political. Individuals working in agencies with these frameworks are constrained from being political. But that doesn’t mean the people in the system don’t have political analyses, nor that they don’t try to strategically deploy them. It is clear that this coding is capable of shifting the conceptual frameworks of non-social justice organizations. Collaborative efforts, some that are troublesome to me as I detail below, have created opportunities for voluntary agencies to shift the theoretical frameworks of legally mandated organizations. The Sexual Assault Prevention Committee (SAPC) has in a few short years significantly changed the discursive terrain of sexual assault policy at Humboldt State University. Their law enforcement partners articulate more complicated

concepts including: risk versus responsibility, the dynamics of stranger versus non-stranger assault, consent, and prevention versus risk reduction strategies. Coded language has also been successful to a lesser extent at spreading the idea that “oppression” plays a role in perpetuating domestic violence and sexual assault. Some police officers and public health agencies have begun to talk of oppression as if it has always been a part of their professions’ discursive practices, according to an informant. Shifts in conceptual frameworks impact policies and practices, which can improve the experience of victims who choose to report in these systems. Another benefit of shifted conceptual frameworks is better working conditions for people employed by legally mandated organizations and organizations with more constraining discursive practices. The incorporation of advocacy-based concepts to explain violence gives those workers theoretical tools to do more useful kinds of work.

Part of the coded theory of violence I have discussed is using gender-neutral language when discussing violence. In the critical literature, gender neutrality is symptomatic of attempts to distance the DVSA system from its feminist roots and a sure sign of the depoliticization of the anti-violence movement. Coding talk about violence in gender-neutral terms does make the causes and consequences of violence ambiguous, and for that reason presents a barrier to sustaining a DVSA movement. However, I found that some individuals and organizations use gender neutral language because they truly want to be welcoming of victims of all genders, including trans and intersex people, and survivors of violence from all relationships, including gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual and same-sex relationships. To be responsive to the experiences of everyone in our

community, especially those people who have been historically marginalized by the anti-violence movement, is not sign of depoliticization but of complex political analysis. Unfortunately these attempts at reaching out to all survivors of violence can make invisible the extremely gendered nature of sexualized violence and domestic violence, not to mention the racialized, classed, ableist, and heterosexist nature of violence. Like the coded theory of violence, those who are not “in” on the reasons for gender neutrality can misinterpret this as a suggestion that violence is the equal responsibility of all people. Gender neutrality complicates the effective communication of a theory of violence, and thus requires more effort to share such a theory of violence.

Finally, I have observed a growing trend toward intersectionality by DVSA workers. Increasing awareness that violence is about more than just gender oppression is present in both the human rights framework preferred by some, and in attempts to push the bounds of what is conventionally thought of as feminism. The introduction of cultural competency models or trainings that address the unique experiences of Transpeople, for example, represent an awareness that in the past heterosexual middle class white women were considered the typical victims of violence. Some local efforts are being made to articulate the qualitatively unique experiences of survivors at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and ability.

#### A Movement to End Violence?

A small number of individuals report that they are supported by their organizations and/or statewide coalitions – such as the California Coalition Against

Sexual Assault or California Partnership to End Domestic Violence – to develop political analysis and to link this theory to action. Some individuals have also quite recently (within the past few months) organized spaces for professionals to gather and reflect on the “bigger picture” of social change. One example is the effort of Dawn Watkins, Programs Coordinator at Humboldt Domestic Violence Services to start a “systems review” using the “theory of change method.” I attended the first community “summit” for this review, where youth service providers were invited to explore the “why” of the work they do, in order to assess services as strategies for change. Dawn also was one of the facilitators for a regional training and network building meeting that explored many of the concepts I discuss in this paper, including how to build an intergenerational social change movement to end violence.

Despite new efforts to re-invigorate organizing, I remain concerned that the political goals and strategies of anti-violence work as a social justice movement are not visible to the general public, nor to everyone who works at agencies that respond to DVSA (particularly legally mandated agencies). Most often the public is made aware about the existence and experience of violence and of the services agencies provide. With notable exceptions, less often presented to the public is the vision of building a world without violence by dismantling systems of power, privilege, oppression, and exploitation.

While I was surprised and inspired by the political analyses that local workers in the DVSA system have, I think it is accurate to say that the local “movement” lacks a unified set of political goals, space to openly develop intersectional theories about the

problem of violence, and opportunity to strategically develop and reflect on action. Durazo suggests that to discern a system from a movement, one can measure the prioritization of hiring professionals over community organizers; the operation of hierarchical, corporate-like structures instead of consensus-based collectives; and the offering of therapeutic social services over popular education (2007). To this I would tentatively add the focus on securing funding for full-time staff over the development of volunteer-run peer education models.<sup>7</sup> For these reasons, I would describe Humboldt anti-violence work as generating more of a DVSA “system” than an anti-violence “movement.”

Part of the challenge in spreading the movement is spatial. Most of the core DVSA agencies and professionals are located in the city of Eureka, with the remaining agencies located in the smaller cities of Arcata, McKinleyville, Garberville and the Hoopa Valley reservation. More remote outlying areas have less access to the resources and people working at domestic violence and sexual assault agencies, though the organizations and people do their best to reach even the most remotest corners of the

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<sup>7</sup> I am aware that people need money to pay their bills and survive in a capitalist economy, and to suggest volunteer-based models may bring up the concern that some people will have more privilege and resources than others to volunteer their time. I also believe that change will not come without a mass-based social movement and I do not see any other way of doing this than to motivate many people to give a little of their time to organized efforts. As a person who was raised in a religious community where everyone was expected to include service to others in daily life, I have witnessed how much can get done this way. As a person who has volunteered a tremendous amount of my time, I have a negative reaction to being asked to volunteer more of my time. Yet I am surprised every day to learn that there are people out there who have NEVER volunteered for a cause and might be open to doing so.

county. In addition, some DVSA agencies are housed entirely at confidential locations, owing to the nature of some of their victim/survivor services, or are housed in buildings that are highly securitized. While these agencies are easily accessible by phone, they may have less of a “presence” in Humboldt because they are not physically visible.

Part of the challenge of spreading the movement is a disconnect between generations that affects how people can become involved in DVSA work. Many of the leaders/administrators in the DVSA system are individuals who have been doing the work for 25 to 30 years or even longer. Their ideas about DVSA and appropriate community responses have come from personal experiences with violence, from working with survivors and/or perpetrators, and from experimenting with many different strategies and tactics for change over the years. Their experience lends itself to being called on as professional experts on the topic of DVSA in many different types of settings, where they may choose to use the coded theory of violence out of ease or necessity. I have indicated that the coded theory of violence is premised on a social justice framework that has evolved in some ways from the original feminist premise, and which advocates have developed politically acceptable ways of talking about. One informant suggested the code can be relied on too much, that advocates can forget to name themselves as feminists and identify their social justice frameworks. This interviewee argues, “Organizations need to not be afraid to say ‘yes, we are a feminist organization, yes, we are part of a social justice network, and yes we do see [violence] as an outcome of oppression’.” The overuse of the code may play a role in obscuring how political analysis is passed on between

generations, how younger people get interested and active in DVSA issues and develop political analysis of violence.

Dawn Watkins from HDVS, who is a mid-career professional, spoke to me about this at some length. Dawn describes growing up in the 1980's after the golden era of identity-based social movements had ended: "The whole culture around us was apocalyptic. My whole world culture is the Dead Kennedy's [a punk rock band]. That wasn't focused on creating change, it was pointing out everything that was wrong in every part of the world." Dawn suggests that she and others of her generation did not experience the powerful social movements of the past, nor did they study feminism in college like many of the youngest DVSA staff. Like Dawn, mid-career workers may have come to the field after working in a variety unrelated professions in the 1990's when money infused the DVSA system. A tension exists, according to Dawn, between older activists who are coming from a primarily feminist orientation, and her generation that comes from other frameworks such as "human rights." When people like Dawn hear or use the coded theory of violence, they may be speaking from a whole other set of theoretical assumptions than activists who got involved in anti-violence work from a so-called second-wave feminist framework.

To further complicate matters, one informant suggested that teen and youth activism around issues of domestic violence and sexual assault looks so radically different from identity-based, older technology movements of the past, that older generations may not even recognize it as activism. People that I talked to who have been involved in the work since the 1970's and 1980's expressed to me many concerns about

passing on the movement to younger generations: they were unsure how young people could develop a political analysis of violence because they haven't been exposed to the social movements of the past, and they didn't see as much evidence of young people volunteering for social justice causes. Similarly unclear or unrecognized may be the activism or resistance of marginalized members of our community, such as homeless people, sex workers, marijuana growers, non-English speaking people, or queer people, who may not use the mainstream channels of social change such as non-profits. If these individuals are not recognized as working on DVSA issues, then they won't be brought to the table to strategize with more professionalized activists. Informants shared with me the distress they feel at figuring out how to honor the experience of older generations, while realizing that younger people and marginalized community members need to be welcomed in to the movement and given leadership roles.

In addition to generational gaps, interviewees did not report very many spaces to develop an intersectional feminist theory of violence across DVSA agencies. Those cross-agency reflection moments that were reported to me – such as a “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats” strategy meeting that took place in 1998-99, and a Family Violence Prevention Strategic Plan required of the county by the Department of Health and Human Services at one point – were either not implemented or I could not obtain copies of the conclusions. From what I have learned of these planning spaces, they focused more on developing services than developing a movement. The lack of space for professionals to generate a common political strategy hinders the movement from identifying priorities. Additionally, coordinated responses are in danger of reflecting

the priorities of some individuals who have been in long-term leadership roles, and of not being aware of priorities from other activists such as youth or survivors of violence who are marginalized in the broader community.

### Co-optation by the State

The strongest barrier against the development of a movement that can end violence by dismantling systems of power, privilege and oppression is co-optation by the neo-liberal welfare state. What the conventional DVSA narrative describes as positive trends in the movement toward professionalization, and the accumulation of resources and legitimacy, I consider as structural challenges put in place by the state to building an anti-movement. Co-optation here refers to strategies that entice or threaten organizations and individuals to participate in the anti-violence movement in ways that benefit the agenda of the state.

For example, requirements to receive state and federal funding have coerced or enticed anti-violence activists to organize their efforts through the non-profit model. Without federally recognized non-profit status, organizations are ineligible to receive state and federal funding, and often private philanthropic funding. Incite! Women of Color Against Violence have done an excellent job of describing the many ways that gaining official non-profit status from the government requires particular structural adjustments that constrain an organization's ability to be part of social movements (2007). These adjustments include hierarchical organizing structures, funding for therapeutic social services over community organizing, prohibiting non-profits from

participating in lobbying or other political work, and providing more money for intervention work than preventative efforts. In other words, the non-profit structure makes it difficult for agencies to divert resources from their commitments to services into building movement to end violence. Similar to my descriptions of people constrained by the funding sources for public agencies, state, federal and private funders may put explicit restrictions on organizations to use non-political language and models or to cut off associations with political activists.<sup>8</sup>

State and federal funding requirements have also contributed to the professionalization of DVSA work. Descriptions of a “professionalized” workforce within in the DVSA system conjured for me images of doctors in white coats, social workers with advanced degrees, attorneys, and probation officers who have studied criminology or criminal justice studies. While such individuals are far more likely to participate in the DVSA system today than 30 years ago, most of my interviewees did not fit these descriptions of academically trained professionals. Instead, they moved up through the ranks, taking on more responsibility in non-profit, for-profit and public agencies through a combination of experience, participation in on the job training, and the adoption of a professional persona. One significant element of the professional shift, then, is the professionalization of people that started out as activists or even just people seeking a meaningful job. Individuals that are perceived to be “professionals” will be those that are given respect and attention by non-advocacy organizations, more

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<sup>8</sup> At a meeting I was at, a participant related that this is happened to domestic violence shelters that supported the activism of a radical group called the “Purple Berets.”

responsibility and chances to move ahead in the ranks, and be able to persist in those collaborative activities that receive federal and state funding. Some of my interviewees noted that they believe it to be the case that those activists who aren't interested or capable of being "professional" sometimes leave or get pushed out of the movement. Activist leaning individuals may be deterred from applying for professionalized positions in the first place, or they may not be hired for fear of them not fitting in. Professional practices may at times be deployed tactically by social change workers, but they begin to creep into everyday behavior as workers "get into a rut," and measure "how things are done" by citing what has been done before.

As individuals begin to identify as professional DVSA workers, new barriers are constructed that make it difficult to bring new people into DVSA work. Due to funding, physical space, and training resource limitations, there are only so many job positions available in DVSA agencies, and thus only so many people that can "do the work." It can be difficult to volunteer for DVSA agencies because of the amount of time individuals are asked to devote to training and the amount of time agencies say they need from volunteers to make it worthwhile to devote energy to supervising them. I discovered that many DVSA related activities are geared toward professionals only, or end up advertising a great deal to people that are already professionals in the field or have a great deal of knowledge on the topics.

The DVSA system became professionalized for complex reasons. One informant remembers, "We learned a lot of things. We learned you didn't pick somebody up at their house, you met them in a public place." As this example suggests, professional behavior

grew partially from lessons learned in the field about how to avoid dangerous situations and keep oneself safe in order to be able to continue doing the work. But learning to see danger is also no doubt shaped in certain ways by insurance and liability reduction requirements of the non-profit and public agency system. VAWA and other contemporary funding streams have also cultivated professionalism in numerous ways. State and philanthropic funders require agencies and organizations to measure individual change, to implement pre- and post-tests, collect statistical information from participants, and conduct other “professional” assessments. Those agencies that can demonstrate scientific professionalism are thus afforded the resources to look better organized and more capable of making “evidence-based” impact.

In a third illustration of co-optation by the state, funding requirements coerce or entice anti-violence workers into collaborating with particular state institutions. State and federal funders often require organizations and agencies to include law enforcement and criminal justice system partners in prevention and other efforts. The demand for collaborative efforts by funders requires the development of language that is going to be acceptable to everyone at the table, so participants might avoid political or “divisive” frameworks in order to avoid risking any collective goodwill generated. In order to collaborate, voluntary organizations spend significant amounts of time and energy to slightly shift the conceptual frameworks of their law enforcement partners, rather than generate an entire social justice framework, invest in popular education and other movement activity. The quest for collaboration may also lead voluntary organizations to attempt to distance themselves from their feminist history in order to overcome the

historical tensions between “advocates” and “law enforcement.” This is a major distraction from efforts to build a broad-based anti-violence movement and doing other prevention work. Shifting discursive frameworks through collaboration is a different kind of work than shifting structural power. Collaboration has been very beneficial to legally mandated organizations – it has created training opportunities, increased job opportunities, and provided an avenue for these organizations to help people, or at least seem like they are. On the voluntary organization side, however, mandated collaboration with law enforcement constrains the ability to think outside the box and develop alternative accountability projects, even when there is a broad consensus that criminal justice approaches are currently ineffective. Collaborating with such partners reinforces the message that the criminal justice system is the legitimate, appropriate, and superior response mechanism for the occurrence of domestic violence and sexual assault.

What I call the “institutionalization” of the DVSA system constrains the development of an anti-violence movement. The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 is described as a success in the conventional narrative because it infused the system with money, new organizations, and people. According to some of my informants, opportunities for DVSA funding, including but not solely VAWA, increased the number of organizations that went after the money. Those organizations that were already “institutions” in the sense that they operate as hierarchical bureaucracies with sets of formal policies, procedures and discursive practices were perhaps best poised to collect such money. As a result, organizations that didn’t start with feminist analysis were able to become part of the DVSA system starting in the early 1980’s, and very rapidly so in the

early 1990's. In some cases when professionals in legally mandated agencies take on voluntary leadership roles in responding to DVSA, acquire VAWA money, or make DVSA a priority for their organizations, they are able to improve the community's response to DVSA. But sharing the work to respond to DVSA with non-advocates presents anti-violence movements with a lot of challenges, including loss of control over the politics of the movement and the frameworks, policies and practices of the organizations now claiming to be partners in anti-violence work.

For example, the institutionalization of the movement, combined with funding requirements for voluntary agencies, played a role in sedimenting the current narrow definition of what counts as domestic violence. The term "domestic violence" as I discussed in chapter four, is defined in the local discourse as "intimate partner battering." Battering is a unique form of violence that needs attention, but limiting domestic violence to battering narrows the kinds of violence that the community, domestic violence agencies, and legally mandated agencies are responsible for. The narrow definition of domestic violence can limit coalitions with people working primarily on issues of sexualized violence. Sexual assault is only introduced as a weapon of a batterer, when a broader definition of DV might conceptualize intimate partner battering as a technique of sexualized violence.

Furthermore, narrowing the definition to intimate partner battering diverts our attention from other dynamics of violence that happen inside the home. Police brutality, homophobic family violence or neglect, deportation of undocumented immigrant parents, violence experience by those who are differently-abled/disabled at the hands of personal

care assistants, and the exploitation of poor people by unscrupulous landlords are all examples of violence that happen inside the home that are eclipsed by the current narrow definition. The same few organizations are asked to represent the anti-violence movement every time at local events, when others could be invited to join an anti-violence coalition. Increasing collaboration with local organizations that serve immigrant women like Paso a Paso (a mother-infant-child health program) or that serve homeless youth like the Raven Project could deepen and enrich the local DVSA discourse and response system and anti-violence movement.

Funding requirements and institutionalization of DVSA also generate competing theories of violence and constrain explicit political analyses of violence. As I have discussed, bringing public health agencies into the work and funneling DVSA money through public health agencies has been problematic. Public health models describe violence as an individual “illness,” implying that some people are sick with it and some people are well and free of it, a far cry from identifying the role violence plays in constituting the interlocking systems inequality, exploitation and oppression pervading every aspect of US society. Domestic violence and sexual assault are imagined in the public health framework as pervasive germs that a person can pick up/learn anywhere, rather than tools promoted for use by dominant social groups to maintain their positions of privilege and entitlement. In a public health model, the solutions become providing information to the community about how to reduce individual risk by taking individual precautions, and if a person has already contracted they disease/been victimized, how they may acquire treatment. A social justice theory of violence looks at the ways United

States' society values violence and control and is organized around systems of exploitation and domination. If sexualized violence is part of our cultural and institutional fabric and surrounds us like smog, then we must shift hegemonic ideologies and systemic structures to challenge violence. Bringing the public health model into the movement diverts attention from the need for structural change and toward individual risk reduction.

Finally, funding requirements and institutionalization channels anti-violence energy into certain kinds of community responses and away from other kinds of responses. In one short example, state and federal funders may demand that agencies produce a certain number of people served by a project, rather than prioritizing the quality of service. As a professional worker who tried to operate from a social justice framework, I know how easy it is to get mired down in helping individuals navigate the system rather than organizing people to challenge structural oppression – what I would consider to be the most quality work I could do. Over and over again I have witnessed service workers so focused on individual change measurements that they blamed clients for their failures rather than taking the time to consider how their clients will never be completely successful unless they are empowered to challenge larger social systems of oppression, privilege and exploitation.

In short, the state attempts to narrow the focus of the movement through the mechanisms of funding requirements for voluntary agencies and the institutionalization of domestic violence and sexual assault as social problems. Funding requirements have aided in the proliferation of the non-profit model, demanded professionalization, and required collaboration with problematic institutions of the state. These processes

constrain the development of a social movement by privileging particular ideas what kinds of violence the community should respond to, particular analyses of violence, and particular sets of community responses to violence. Reading the state with my Marxist, post-modern, intersectional feminist lens, I understand that the state has a stake in shifting focus on certain levels of violence and away from others. It's possible to gain some resources for DVSA work, but the state is fundamentally wedded to systems of power and privilege.

### Resistance, Subversion, and Strategy

While I do not know all the details of Humboldt Domestic Violence Services' story, what I do know fits the cautionary tale about grassroots organizations moving away from their feminist analysis due to the processes I have described above. The organization shifted its mission from ending violence to the more ambiguous "break the cycle of violence." The organization at one point attempted to "distance" itself from feminism by changing their name. By the admission of the programs director, HDVS until fairly recently has been exclusively focused on providing excellent services to their clients, but rarely participated in broader social change strategies. North Coast Rape Crisis Team, on the other hand, has been able to maintain a very strong political analysis and to lead prevention efforts while simultaneously providing services. As non-profits, both organizations have faced funding, professionalization and collaboration pressures. However, people in leadership and on the board of the organizations have demonstrated different commitments to the philosophy and vision of the organizations. There is no

clear blueprint as to how to craft a non-profit institution that remains true to social justice theory and structures as leadership changes in the institution.<sup>9</sup>

Some individuals working in the system can and do resist dominant frameworks, and work passionately to improve the experience of the clients they work with against the constraints of institutions. No matter how hard a handful of individuals work, however, their passion does not equal a broad-based movement to end violence. While conducting this research I collected ideas generated by local professionals for developing anti-violence strategies that could subvert the hegemonic DVSA framework, and could be useful for re-invigorating and sustaining a local anti-violence movement.

One informant suggested the time is ripe to move past the demands for collaboration to re-invigorate an anti-violence movement: “I feel we have gone more back to activism . . . I’ve been focused on really affecting long-term change and not just how do we work more closely together.” This informant went on to explain that voluntary organizations have experienced a shift in the past few years to where an anti-violence movement is beginning to regenerate. This informant argued,

“It is a current big topic in the trainings and meetings where we get together and talk about this very thing. How are we going to move this movement forward? . . . . Because one thing we all agree on is that we are not being effective at ending it [violence]. We’re providing really great services and we’ve got that down but we need to go back to the original mission of trying to end it and figuring out where violence comes from and trying to get at the root of it.”

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<sup>9</sup> It has been suggested locally that writing the history of organizations and movement efforts and pairing that with efforts to actively collaborate and mentor younger generations might help organizations to maintain a political analysis.

Even as people working at voluntary agencies feel the spark of a re-invigorated movement, how to bring the movement to the public in the face of the institutional barriers I describe above remains a challenge. “For culture change,” an informant acknowledged, “you need a larger body of people to be engaged.” This informant explained that they had had good experiences working with small groups who have “really ethical ways of working with each other,” but when bringing projects up to an institutional level it becomes difficult to keep strong political analyses intact. Further, this informant worried about the ways that social movements can be “both disciplinary and emancipatory” if people with privilege are centered to “articulate their interests and set agendas that marginalize those who are already marginalized” in broader society.

If I have successfully argued that certain requirements attached to state and federal funding have increased the problematic processes of professionalization, non-profitization, and mandated collaboration, then loss of that very funding may create a space to question those same processes. Dawn Watkins suggested to me that the loss of state funding reinvigorated the statewide Coalition to End Domestic Violence to articulate why domestic violence work should still be a public priority. In a time when the state of California has made massive cuts to many social service program budgets, has it created an opportunity to revisit our community priorities? As I write this, Planned Parenthood is facing the loss of all its federal funding. Local supporters of Planned Parenthood organized a rally in front of the courthouse and have attempted to generate support through electronic social mediums such as Facebook. The concern that budget cuts can generate could be channeled into expanding the base of the local anti-violence

movement. If 100 people can be convinced to spend an hour on the courthouse steps, could 100 people be convinced to spend even a half an hour weekly to violence prevention or culture change efforts? Andrea Smith argues that rather than seeking funding to pay program directors to work “5,000 hours a week,” a movement where many people gave a little would be far more effective at ending violence (Smith 2006b).

Because so much of the hegemonic DVSA system’s resources and energy is put into responding to violence once it has occurred, I see efforts to prioritize prevention projects as resistance and the jumping off points for reinvigorating a strategic anti-violence movement. The Stop the Violence campaign on KHUM provides an exciting model of using media to get out in the hills and meet people where they are. The Stop the Violence campaign is exciting precisely because of the amount of time the station donates to the cause and the subsequent depth of conversation that is able to happen. Might the campaign increase its impact if other local stations simultaneously devoted time to the same topic? What would happen if conversation on the program shifted from risk reduction and the availability of services to discussing the multiple levels that violence operates on, strategies for movement building, and providing skills for community members to intervene in a “culture of violence”?

I am excited to see to fruition the efforts of the Sexual Assault Prevention Committee at Humboldt State University to acquire prevention funding. With such funding they propose not only to reduce the risk of sexualized violence, but to shift the campus culture that promotes sexualized violence. One specific strategy in the plan is most unique: providing skills and resources to bystanders/everyday community members

rather than develop interventions for potential victims and perpetrators, or train workers/professionals to respond as part of their jobs. The effort to reach out to bystanders looks excitingly like building a broad-based movement to end violence.

On the intervention front, because the local DVSA system is so broadly concerned about the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in responding to domestic violence and sexual assault, there may be opportunities to propose alternative accountability systems and processes. Activists who can develop alternative accountability models based on the principles of restorative or transformative justice may be able to leverage the discontent and gain support. The local probation department and law enforcement agencies have a unique opportunity to work with the most geographically and socially isolated people in the county, people who struggle connect with available services. This is an incentive to generate support for the anti-violence movement within the ranks of the criminal justice system. Unfortunately, probation and law enforcement officers are in positions of control and domination over the individuals on their caseload, not unlike the position of power leveraged by those who use interpersonal violence to get what they want from people deemed inferior or weaker. There are numerous ways that criminal justice officers can abuse and control the people they work with.

I have personally witnessed police officers unnecessarily threatening people, abusing power, and using extreme force. I am outraged by several civilian deaths at the hands of local police forces in Humboldt County over the past few years, including the shooting deaths of a 16-year-old boy and mentally ill individuals. I am, like many others,

extremely disturbed by the case of the Blue Lake Police Chief who was charged with horrendous acts of sexualized violence against his wife and ex-wife, and who was convicted of stockpiling illegal and extremely dangerous weapons. I hope my law enforcement interviewees recognize the extreme faith I have in them as individuals when I say I understand that they joined law enforcement because they believe they can help people. I also want to honor those survivors who have relayed to me their gratitude for an individual officer who was helpful to them in their time of need. My hope is that these officers could be counted on to support an anti-violence movement, even if that movement does not put the same amount of energy into courting legally mandated agencies as the current DVSA system does. Might individual officers be counted on to advise victims on non-criminal justice system methods of accountability were we to develop them? Might individual probation officers be counted on to get out in the hills and spread the word about a how to connect with a blossoming anti-violence movement? One of my law enforcement interviewees argued that they believe the criminal justice system shows a perpetrator that a community is united against their actions, rather than burdening the victim with this task. Might individual officers support an anti-violence movement if it demonstrated a community united against violence?

On the other hand, the success of the Domestic Violence Response Team combined with the knowledge of the criminal justice system's ineffectiveness hints at an entirely alternative direction for first responding. What would it be like to be able to call someone to help you in an emergency whose job was not to investigate and prosecute for crime, but to de-escalate the situation, listen without judgment, help you strategize what

would make you safe, and assess the potential of a perpetrator of violence to actually take responsibility for their actions?

I have discussed how some of the available accountability processes are problematic. But I do wonder if people attempting to build alternative accountability processes can learn anything from what people working in batterer intervention programs and the probation system have come to understand about “how to get people to change” through psycho-social interventions. As anti-violence organizations such as Creative Interventions (Oakland, California) have experimented with accountability models, they report that persuading offenders to participate can sometimes be difficult in a world where it is just as easy to move to a new town and start life over (Rachel Herzig, pers. comm.). Similarly, it is difficult to think about how to hold people accountable in extremely close-knit communities where to call law enforcement might be seen as inviting the colonizer into your home. Current institutionalized psychosocial interventions are focused on changing individuals and not on social systems, but there are elements that are interesting to think about as vehicles for accountability and social change. Two interviewees proposed ideas for making the batterer intervention programs more strategic. One idea is to build a batterer residential program, similar to a drug treatment facility, where individuals who believe that personal change is in the best interest of themselves and their families could receive comprehensive treatment and earn rewards such as visitation with their families. A second idea was to build on-going peer accountability into intervention programs, where participants could have mentors who could call them out on continuing controlling behavior and are available to connect with

them outside of weekly programming. Both ideas might aid in increasing the number of individuals willing to take responsibility for their choices.

Finally, I appreciate the past efforts of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council to develop a packet of information for medical care providers who are required by California state law to report suspected domestic violence injury to local law enforcement. The packet was designed to help medical personnel make the report in a way that “afforded the survivor the most safety,” according to an informant who helped create the packet. Mandating people to respond to domestic violence and sexual assault, and even training them and giving them tools to do so appropriately is not equivalent to building a broad anti-violence movement. The mandated reporting law, however, may be a vehicle for building support for the anti-violence movement among medical personnel. Being somewhat aware of the requirement, and knowing that domestic violence is a serious problem in our community, some medical providers may be interested to learn other ways of helping survivors of violence.

One alternative to mandated reporting is a harm reduction model (Koyama 2006). According to Koyama, harm reduction models attempt to minimize the negative impact of activity such as drug use, by meeting those involved in the activity “where they are at” (2006: 218). The Raven Project is a drop-in center and outreach program for homeless and runaway youth that employs a harm reduction model in Humboldt County. Raven staff meet homeless youth where they are at by traveling to camps and places where homeless youth live and hang out. They provide youth with supplies that will reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections and other threats to health. The goals of harm

reduction interventions must be determined by the users of the intervention, rather than the state or service providers (Koyama 2006). Instead of being mandated to report suspected domestic violence, medical providers could be mandated to ask survivors what they could do to increase the survivor's safety. Survivor's needs could be systematically collected this way and used to evaluate the services.

CHAPTER 6  
BUILDING AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST MOVEMENT  
TO END VIOLENCE

“In order to effect social reform, it is imperative that reform efforts intrinsically involve oppressed communities. Without their experience and guidance, activist movements will find their strategies and political rhetoric reappropriated by the systems of oppression they specifically wish to challenge” (Chandler and Kingery 2002: 98).

In Humboldt County, California, some individuals and some domestic violence and sexual assault agencies have remained committed to having an analysis of the politics of domestic violence and sexual assault, even as that analysis is changing in the face of intersectional feminist analyses. However, the overall DVSA movement has suffered from efforts to depoliticize that violence against women is about more than gender. However, the overall DVSA movement has suffered from efforts to depoliticize the theory that is presented to the public and to prioritize response strategies that don't fundamentally challenge institutional systems of control, domination, and oppression. The neo-liberal welfare state has in many ways been successful at co-opting domestic violence and sexual assault work in ways that mask structural/institutional forms of violence that occur in the home and private sphere, are sexualized, and serve to marginalize women, women of color, queer people and “others.” Local advocates are either actively implementing or curious about ways to validate the multiple forms of identity that survivors of violence have, and thus have created space for intersectional feminist analysis and approaches. With some notable exceptions they have taken fewer steps to develop strategies that challenge the ways violence works at multiple levels in

society – individual, community, institutional, national, and transnational. Activists in the movement would like more space among agencies and generations to explore explicitly how violence is a manifestation of systems of inequality and works to reinforce those systems of inequality. I believe the movement could benefit from dialogue about how the state – not just particular actors within the state – operates as a field of power that uses violence and exploitation to generate legitimacy. This makes alliances with state institutions dangerous, to be approached with great caution, even if the alliances are short-term and strategic. The movement could use space to step back from the tempting individualistic focus, to re-strategize ways for structurally shifting power in order to end violence.

My goal for this research is to provide some critical insight into the structural barriers to building and sustaining an anti-violence movement, and to create more space for reflection on DVSA work as a social justice movement. My concern is the same as the Safety and Accountability Audit's: How does this action or intervention enhance or diminish safety for survivors and accountability for perpetrators (Sadusky et al 2010)? I take a broad view of the threats to survivor safety, including state and institutional forms of violence. I look at the ways that institutional behavior, not just policies and procedures, impact the kind of safety and accountability that institutions provide. I hope to expand the question of safety and accountability to include the principles laid out by Generation Five:

- Survivor safety, healing, and agency
- Accountability and transformation of those who abuse
- Community response and accountability

- The transformation of community and social conditions that create and perpetuate violence (2007).

My concluding thoughts here are my recommendations for strengthening the local anti-violence movement. They have been generated based on my opportunity to reflect one on one with my interviewees about movement strategy, and I present those ideas that seem to be supported by the concerns and schemes of multiple informants. These ideas are certainly not definitive. In fact, I sincerely hope that my informants and others who work locally on DVSA issues will examine them as a basis for collective discussion. My deepest wish is that these ideas will be freely borrowed from, critiqued for their terrible flaws and perhaps used as a catalyst for projects that are creative, useful and that speak to intersectionality in ways that I can't even dream of yet.

### Strategies for Building and Sustaining a Movement

***1. Make domestic violence and sexual assault projects, organizations, and agencies accountable first and foremost to survivors of violence and marginalized members of our community.*** Who gets to determine the priorities of DVSA agencies? Who participates in strategic planning? Whose voices count the most when needs assessments are conducted? Who sits on DVSA advisory boards or provides oversight of DVSA work? Organizations put tremendous effort into crafting programs to meet the demands of funders, and in collecting evaluation data that funders demand. Usually agencies get lots of feedback from their partnering organizations and community leaders who sit on their advisory boards. But victims/survivors of violence and their friends and family members who are not experts on violence and who don't have experience working in the

DVSA field don't always have opportunities to meaningfully guide the goals, objectives, practices and policies of DVSA organizations.

Non-expert survivors should have forums for guiding agencies/projects, such as advisory boards, strategic planning retreats, speak-outs, truth and reconciliation commissions, and seats in collaborations and coalitions. But they also should have opportunities to gain the political analysis and skills to give meaningful feedback. Agencies can facilitate this vision by offering space for survivors to engage with other survivors and develop a big picture of the collective impact of violence. Organizations can include political education in their objectives to aid survivors in increasing their awareness of how their individual situation is tied to a larger political context. Leadership training and mentorship will aid survivors in gaining the confidence to speak. Furthermore, organizations should develop mechanisms to ensure that negative feedback from clients/survivors is not tied to whether those clients continue to receive services. If agencies are unwilling to implement this on their own, Emi Koyama argues that clients can and should develop their own unions or coalitions to ensure they have a forum to address their grievances against service providers (2006).

An intersectional approach to survivor-centered planning shifts the center of focus onto survivors who are marginalized in broader society and in anti-violence movements. The movement can no longer afford to operate as if the average victim of violence is a white, middle-class heterosexual woman. Different priorities and strategies will emerge when agencies seek and facilitate guidance from survivors of violence who are Black, Latina, Asian, mixed-race and Native; queer, lesbian, bi-sexual, trans and intersex; people

who use wheelchairs or prosthetic limbs or who have physical and mental challenges that are not visible; poor people, homeless people, sex workers, refugees, immigrants, and working class people. It is not a matter of adding a few “Others” to a steering committee, but actually building feedback mechanisms around the voices and experiences of marginalized people, and “pivoting the center” to explore multiple partial perspectives on domination (Collins 2000).

The current proposal by the Domestic Violence Coordination Council (DVCC) to conduct a Safety and Accountability Audit is an opportunity to implement an intersectional survivor driven assessment process. Survivors of violence who are currently or have in the past navigated the criminal justice system can generate the standards to assess whether a practice or procedure is enhancing or diminishing their safety and effectively holding perpetrators accountable. Survivors could give feedback at speak-outs, truth and reconciliation commissions or focus groups. It would take great courage on the part of local criminal justice agencies to open themselves to the scrutiny of the clients and survivors. A Marxist-influenced intersectional feminist view of the state would doubt that it is possible for a state institution to voluntarily shift its services to meet the needs of clients and survivors. This relates to another element in survivor-centered planning: that advice and input given by victims/clients actually is the primary guide by which decisions are made. Tweaking a few policies and practices may indeed enhance survivor safety and perpetrator accountability, but to be truly survivor-centered a movement must be prepared to completely abandon a particular framework, organization or project if it isn't doing what it is supposed to. This is the difference between a client

feedback mechanism mandated by a funder and a movement that is accountable to marginalized groups within its constituency.

***2. Re-invigorate prevention efforts as a way to build a grassroots anti-violence mass***

***movement.*** Current prevention efforts are geared primarily to spreading awareness about the problems of domestic violence and sexual assault, dispelling myths, and providing information to individuals on how to get help or support survivors once violence has occurred. Skill based prevention efforts often revolve around self-defense – how to protect oneself from attack or abuse – or how to give and receive sexual consent. The concept of bystander intervention presents an alternative way to think about prevention efforts that provides a role for participants outside of the potential victim/supportive friend/anti-violence expert/potential perpetrator roles: that of a witness who can take action to intervene in the abusive/oppressive behavior of their friends, family member, acquaintances and strangers. Prevention efforts will shift from individual risk reduction to movement building by giving community members the skills to take on active roles that challenge violence and the systems of power, privilege and oppression that promote and enable violence.

Bystander intervention projects train individuals to disrupt cultures of violence on a daily basis by using popular, often peer-based education, about oppression and the ways personal relationships can replicate oppression, and skill-sharing on intervention techniques. Current prevention efforts cannot afford to be shy about pushing the movement agenda forward: they must talk about how interpersonal violence perpetuates systems of social oppression and how violence operates at multiple social levels.

Otherwise, violence seems like an equally shared responsibility of all people in society, rather than a systematic tool used by powerful groups against marginalized groups. In order to stay engaged, grassroots supporters of social movements need skills, meaningful opportunities to engage in the work, and to see their work make a difference. Prevention work that does these things, such as through bystander intervention training, is a vehicle for building a movement and not just a more aware public.

Prevention work is most powerful when it is in person, but we are in a unique time where multiple forms of mass media are extremely accessible in terms of who can make it and who can receive it. We can develop innovative strategies to reach people who have been isolated from larger social movements, through the mediums of radio, internet, cell phone, and more. What if the Stop the Violence campaign took on the topic of bystander intervention, using the radio as a forum to share anti-oppression information and intervention skills? What if the Stop the Violence campaign was adopted by every local radio station on the same week in November so that it became more difficult to just switch the dial? Media work is also an excellent opportunity to provide leadership roles for youth in the movement, as they tend to be familiar with the cutting edge mediums and software programs, and learn quickly how to create and share media products.

***3. Radically re-think what it means to hold perpetrators accountable and stand in coalition with those who are experimenting with new models.*** This community needs a menu of options for providing survivor safety and perpetrator accountability. Currently, victims of violence may contact Humboldt Domestic Violence Services, North Coast Rape Crisis Team or other social service agencies to strategize about how to get to a safe

place if they do not want to call law enforcement. But many people have no other option to hold a perpetrator accountable than to pursue the criminal justice system. I am very concerned that victims of violence are frequently reluctant to “cooperate” with law enforcement and testify in court against their attackers. But rather than continue to extort victims to call the police, and believe they will do so “when they are ready,” I believe this reluctance tells us that something is very wrong with the criminal justice system as a strategy of accountability. Contacting the criminal justice system is an option of last resort for many people in Humboldt County, including undocumented immigrants, drug users, people involved in the Child Welfare System, homeless/houseless people, people growing marijuana in the hills or in their homes, and activists who have been targeted by police for their political activities. People who have been targeted by the criminal justice system in the past, who have experienced the trauma of having a loved one go through the criminal justice system, and/or who don’t believe with good reason that the system will keep them safe, are only going to cooperate with prosecution as a last resort. We should have options for responding before this moment, and we should have options that provide people the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions early on. Because our current criminal model provides very little incentive for people to admit to harmful behavior, I believe it is difficult to know how many people who use violence might admit to harming others and take responsibility were there more incentive to do so.

At Humboldt State University, the Student Conduct system may be a resource for bringing complaints against students who perpetrate violence, although information about the system is not well known by students (McCrigler 2008). Batterer intervention

programs are open to individuals to attend on a voluntary basis, if an individual can afford to pay. When demands are made that perpetrators take responsibility for their actions and change their behavior, these two programs are tools that could be used, especially in earlier stages of violent behavior. They provide a jumping off point for thinking about the many different ways accountability could happen. In order for accountability to be effective, a strong community must be in place that will believe victims of violence and make a long-term commitment to supporting perpetrators in their transformations. Fortunately, anti-violence work both demands a strong community and provides opportunity to create such a community. Incite! Women of Color Against Violence and other organizations such as Creative Interventions have already started the process of thinking about how non-expert and non-legally mandated community members can participate in holding offenders accountable for their actions. These organizations are clear that the burden cannot fall on victims to hold their perpetrators accountable, but that it is the responsibility of the surrounding community to carry the burden. I have been a privy to informal attempts to implement alternative accountability processes under the radar of local institutions. It is painstaking, frustrating, and long-term work that is not as easy as believing that if you call the authorities, they will take care of it. Ultimately though, I have found it to be empowering to believe that personal transformation is possible and to know that there is something you can do to respond to violence with your own passion and creativity.

Local agencies and collaborations could take a public stand in support of alternative accountability options. What impact could it have if local organizations spoke

out publicly against the ways that the criminal justice system is not always an option for their clients, and often not the best option? Mainstream DVSA groups should support the need for multiple methods of accountability, acknowledging that because of intersectional experiences with violence, one method of accountability is not enough for our community. DVSA groups are in the perfect position to collect the stories of alternative accountability experiments and make them available to the public to engage with, reflect on, critique and adapt. Indeed, this is the strategy of Creative Intervention's Storytelling and Organizing Project<sup>10</sup>, which use personal narratives to inspire creativity in thinking around accountability. All of this mainstream work would buffer and support the underground experiments with accountability.

***4. Build a coalition that balances making strategic shifts inside the system with outside the system work to shift structural power.*** I have argued that non-profit organizations and public agencies are structurally constrained from building a movement that can end violence. Without structural and systematic change of legally mandated organizations, voluntary organizations will forever be helping their clients navigate the system. Statewide policy coalitions give individual service providers, who as non-profits or public agencies have limits on the political work they can do, leverage to promote political agendas. Similarly, I envision a local coalition of individuals who are working radically “inside” the system as service providers and prevention educators and individuals who are organizing “outside” the system to challenge structural power and

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<sup>10</sup> [www.stopviolenceeveryday.org/](http://www.stopviolenceeveryday.org/)

build alternative mechanisms for safety, accountability, and cultural transformation.

Groups are already working outside of the non-profit and public agency model on issues of institutional and state violence, including the prison industrial complex, anti-immigrant policies, systemic causes of homelessness, and alternatives to the conventional mental health system.

Coalition work between these groups and DVSA service providers would be difficult, because of the ways that people inside the system have been offered concessions by funders if they cut off contact with radical groups and give up more radical agendas. Radical groups on the other hand have a tendency to view “insider” work as meaningless because it doesn’t get at the “root causes” of issues. But imagine the political leverage that could be generated if non-profits and public agencies allied with, supported, and nurtured self-sustaining volunteer-based, grassroots efforts to identify violence that occurs on the institutional level and to hold people in power accountable for that violence. A first minor step would be to invite outsider groups to coalition tables and to participate in public anti-violence events. This would begin to look like a movement that was capable of organizing against the complex, intersectional, and multi-levels of violence.

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APPENDIX A  
HUMBOLDT COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE &  
SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES

<b>Coordinating Councils and Policy Committees</b>	
Humboldt Domestic Violence Coordinating Council	Chair, Sheri Johnson (707) 826-4452 Mail: PO Box 880, Eureka CA 95502
HSU Sexual Assault Prevention Committee <i>contact for "Act to End Sexualized Violence" courses</i>	Chair, Kim Berry (707) 826-4925 www.humboldt.edu/stoprape/
<b>Prevention Projects</b>	
Humboldt County Family Violence Prevention Program <i>contact for Silent Witness Project</i>	(707) 441-5551 908 7 <sup>th</sup> Street, Eureka CA 95501
Hoopla Project Connect	(530) 625-4261 ext. 245
North Coast Rape Crisis Team <i>contact for Child Abuse Prevention Project, Self-Defense, and Clothesline Project</i>	(707) 443-2737 (business line)
"Stop The Violence" Radio Campaign	KHUM 104.7 fm (707) 786-5104 (business line) khum.com PO Box 25, Ferndale CA 95536
HSU Women's Resource Center <i>contact for Take Back the Night</i>	(707) 826-4216 www.humboldt.edu/hsuwomen HSU campus, House 55, Room 105
Six Rivers Planned Parenthood Education Department <i>contact for Spare Change</i>	(707) 445-2018 www.plannedparenthood.org/srpp/ 3235 Timber Fall Court, Eureka CA
United Indian Health Services Community Health and Wellness Program	(707) 825-5070 Potawot Health Village: 1600 Weeot Way, Arcata CA
<b>First Responders</b>	
Law Enforcement	Emergencies: 911 Sherriff's Dept.: (707) 445-7251 Eureka Police Dept: (707) 441-4060 Arcata Police Dept: (707) 822-2428

	University Police Dept: (707) 826-5555 Fortuna Police Dept: (707) 725-7550 Hoopa Valley Police: (530) 625-4202 Yurok Tribal Public Safety: 482-8185
Domestic Violence Response Team	Not an emergency contact. Contact Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, Humboldt Domestic Violence Services, or DA Victim Witness
Sexual Assault Response Team	Not an emergency contact (707) 445-8121 ext. 5907
Humboldt Domestic Violence Services Confidential Crisis Line	1-866-668-6543 (707) 443-6042
North Coast Rape Crisis Team Confidential Crisis Line	(707) 445-2881 (collect ok)
<b>Advocacy/Survivor Services</b>	
North Coast Rape Crisis Team	(707) 443-2738 (business line)
Humboldt Domestic Violence Services	(707) 444-9255 (business line) <a href="http://www.hdvs.org">www.hdvs.org</a>
Na:whongwh xw E:na:wh Stop The Violence Coalition	(530) 625-1662
Women and Children in Southern Humboldt	(707) 923-4100 (business line) 1-800-211-1188 (crisis line) <a href="http://www.wishshelter.org">www.wishshelter.org</a> PO Box 642, Garberville CA 95560
DA Victim Witness	(707) 445-7417 1-866-561-9043 712 4 <sup>th</sup> Street, Eureka CA 95501
The Emma Center	(707) 825-6680 <a href="http://emmacenter.org/">http://emmacenter.org/</a>
Yurok Tribe Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Program	(707) 954-4775 (707) 445-2422 ext 1006 <a href="http://www.yuroktribe.org">www.yuroktribe.org</a>
Wiyot Tribe Domestic Violence Program	Wiyot Tribe Social Services: (707) 733-5055

Two Feathers Native American Family Services	(707) 839-1933 1-800-341-9454 www.twofeathers-nafs.org 2355 Central Avenue, Suite C McKinleyville, CA 95519
<b>Accountability for Perpetrators of Violence</b>	
Humboldt Superior Court Family Court and Criminal Court	(707) 445-7256 <a href="http://www.humboldt.courts.ca.gov">http://www.humboldt.courts.ca.gov</a> Family Law Self-Help Center 825 5th St., Room 305 (third floor) Eureka, CA 95501
District Attorney's Office	(707) 445-7411 825 5 <sup>th</sup> Street, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Eureka CA <a href="http://co.humboldt.ca.us/distatty">http://co.humboldt.ca.us/distatty</a>
Humboldt County Probation Department	(707) 445-7401 <a href="http://co.humboldt.ca.us/prob/">http://co.humboldt.ca.us/prob/</a> 2002 Harrison Street, Eureka CA
Humboldt State University Judicial Affairs	(707) 826-3361 <a href="http://www.humboldt.edu/studentrights">www.humboldt.edu/studentrights</a> HSU campus, Nelson Hall East, Rm 216
Certified Batterer's Intervention Programs	MEND/WEND: (707) 441-8630 Breaking the Cycle: (707) 442-7806 PAVE: (530) 625-4236 Humboldt Family Service Center: (707) 443-7358
<b>Other Resources</b>	
Raven Project <i>Drop-in center for homeless and runaway youth</i>	(707) 443-7099 523 T Street, Eureka CA <a href="http://www.facebook.com/ravenproject/">www.facebook.com/ravenproject/</a>
Paso a Paso <i>Information for pregnant women and Spanish-speaking families</i>	(707) 441-4476 or 4477 (Habla Español)
Bar None <i>Prison abolition and alternatives to incarceration</i>	PO Box 1, Arcata CA 95518 <a href="mailto:barnonearcata@gmail.com">barnonearcata@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://www.wordpress.org/barnonearcata">www.wordpress.org/barnonearcata</a>