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A History of Violence: Understanding the Violence of South Central's Crips

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Abstract

In the following paper, the violence of the notorious Los Angeles based gang, the Crips, will be explained as the product of the dynamic nature of violence. Violence is dynamic as violence produces more violence. As will be established, violence is not limited to physical violence. Rather, violence is present in aspects of culture such as ideology and religion. It is also found in the economic and political structures of society. An ideology of racial inferiority was used to justify and legitimize the American slave system – a form of structural violence. That ideology has been used throughout American history to justify and legitimize other forms of structural violence including the Jim Crow regime, the spatial segregation of Blacks in ghettos, programs and policies of the neoliberal state, the mass incarceration of Black males, and the expanded powers of the police. This violence, found in America's economic and political organizations, has disproportionately hurt Black Americans, including those residing in South Central, by impeding their potential to realize their fullest mental and somatic states. It has also produced more violence – the violence of the Crips.

Chapter One

“Los Angeles Street Wars Grow Deadlier” (Winter 2002)

“Crips and Bloods Endless War Has No Boundaries” (Daily News of Los Angeles 2004)

“War on ‘The Rotten Little Cowards’: Iron Gates Pledges 1,000 Officers for Gang Sweeps”
(Feldman 1988)

“Gangs Take Root: Slain Crip Glorified as Violence Becomes Part of Everyday Life” (Leaming 2007)

“In the Streets of L.A., 14 Killings in Five Days” (Booth 2002)

“Gang Violence Puts Cops on Alert At City Schools” (Celona & Edelman 1998)

Media headlines such as these have appeared through the years in reference to the notorious Los Angeles (L.A.) based gang the Crips. The headlines clearly associate the Crips with violence. The violent nature of the Crips has been sensationalized in headlines, movies, and music. Between “1988 and 2001, the movie industry released *Colors*, *Boyz in the Hood*, *South Central*, *Menace II Society*, and *Baby Boy*, which were urban dramas about the black male experience in South Central, Los Angeles” (Cureton 2008: vii). The tourist industry has capitalized on this sensationalism by offering the general public gangland tours (Associated Press 2010). While one cannot deny the association between violence and the Crips, it is necessary to better understand the nature of that violence.

1.1 Origin of the Crips

The Crips originated in Los Angeles in the late 1960’s. The sixties was a period of upheaval and tension in the United States and within Los Angeles due to an “emerging Black consciousness” (Alonso 2004: 667). The Civil Rights Movement led to the termination of the Jim Crow regime which had “reworked the racialised boundary between slave and free into a rigid caste separation between ‘whites’ and ‘Negroes’” (Wacquant 2005: 127). Following the Watts Riot of 1965, LA’s Black gangs began to mobilize politically (Alonso 2004: 666) and “turn their attention toward the social problems that plagued their community” (Alonso 2004: 666).

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP), founded in 1966 (Cureton 2009: 356), was one such Black political group. The organization “directly confronted civil inequity, social injustice, and police brutality” (Cureton 2009: 356). The L.A. chapter of the Panthers “became strong because it directly recruited frustrated, angry youth who felt alienated from mainstream society” (Cureton 2009: 356). By 1967, the BPP had become “one of the most influential Black political groups in the nation” (Alonso 2004: 667) and was considered “a threat to national security” by the FBI (Alonso 2004: 667). The suppressive actions and direct assaults of the FBI and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) against the Los Angeles BPP chapter resulted in the significant weakening of the organization in 1969 (Alonso 2004: 667).

The BPP was a source of Black national leadership. Other Black national leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Medgar Evers were assassinated in the sixties (Alonso 2004: 668). The sixties ended with Black political groups weakened, Black national leadership diluted, and L.A.'s Black youth simultaneously "searching for a new identity" (Alonso 2004: 668). The Crips emerged within this climate.

The Crips were organized in 1969 (Cureton) by BPP members, including Bunchy Carter, who were "Disappointed with the Panther Party's inability to endure government attacks" (Cureton 2009: 356). The Crips "were originally organized to be a community help association and were even endorsed by the mayor as Community Reform Inter-Party Service" (Cureton 2009: 356). The potential for the Crips to function as a community association was weakened by the murder of Bunchy Carter in 1969 (Cureton 2009: 356). Following Carter's death, the Crips "name was bastardized" (Cureton 2009: 366) and the nature of the gang changed as the focus shifted to more "self-centered activities" (Cureton 2009: 356). As the Crips "were fashioning themselves as the most omnipotent street gang in South Central" (Cureton 2009: 357), groups opposed to this emerging powerhouse came together under "an umbrella organization" (Cureton 2009: 357) – the Bloods (Cureton 2009: 357).

1.2 Gang Violence in Los Angeles

During the 1970's, "the gang's law violating activities began to occupy the attention of law enforcement" (Cureton 2008: 1). By 1972 "there were 18 Black gangs in LA County" (Alonso 2004: 669), by the 1990s there were an estimated 279 Black gangs (Alonso 2004: 669). With more gangs came "an increase of conflict and homicides, and by the late 1980's and early 1990's homicides reached epidemic levels" (Alonso 2004: 669). The California statewide increase in homicides "from 1999 to 2001 was solely a function of more gang killings in Los Angeles County" (Klein & Maxson 2006: 80). An assessment of gang homicides in Los Angeles County between 1979 and 1994, "determined that the proportion of these incidents where firearms were used increased from 71% to 95%" (Klein & Maxson 2006: 81). Between 1973 and 1992, it is estimated that "some 10,000 young people had been killed in the L.A. area's street wars" (Davis 2006: xviii). The city of L.A. experienced a "resurgence of gang homicides in 2001 and 2002" (Klein & Maxson 2006: 107). During that period, approximately sixty percent of city homicides were gang related (Klein & Maxson 2006: 107).

1.3 The Violence of the Crips: How Has It Been Explained?

Klein and Maxson, in their book, *Street Gang Patterns and Policies*, build on gang literature to develop a comprehensive, up to date source of gang knowledge. The authors specify that the impetus for their work came from the failure of gang policies and programs to meet their objectives. The authors hope that by developing a deeper understanding of gangs, policies and programs can become more effective.

Klein and Maxson define Los Angeles as a chronic gang city. Los Angeles County "of about 9 million people contains about 1,200 street gangs with about 85,000 gang members. The city of Los Angeles is said to contribute somewhat under half of those numbers" (Klein & Maxson 2006: 106). Chronic gang cities "are larger, have more gangs and gang members, and

are more likely to have entrenched gang traditions than more recent gang cities” (Klein and Maxson 2006: 226). Due to these characteristics, gang cities tend to have “Longer histories of gang rivalries, intergenerational transmission of gang values, and communities infused with gang cultures” (Klein & Maxson 2006: 226).

Based on Klein and Maxson’s gang structure typology, the Crips are a traditional gang. Traditional gangs have “generally been in existence for 20 or more years: they keep regenerating themselves. They contain fairly clear subgroups” (Kein & Maxson 2006: 176). Traditional gangs tend to be very large and “they are territorial in the sense that they identify strongly with their turf, ‘hood’, or barrio and claim it as their own” (Klein & Maxson 2006: 177). In the “Black gang culture of Los Angeles, a gang will develop subgroups within the gang to either distinguish different groups based on age in a hierarchal structure or based on geographic areas within one gang” (Klein & Maxson 2006: 185). By the end of the 1990’s, there was an estimated “199 to 213 African-American Crip” (Cureton 2008: 1) gangs in Los Angeles. Sanyika Shakur, a former Crip member in the Eight Tray subgroup, deems the violence between members of different subgroups to be far worse than the violence that occurs between members of different gangs. In his bibliography, Shakur wrote, “...Crips are the number-one killer of Crips” (Shakur 1993: 19).

Klein and Maxson assert, “Gang members do not specialize in violent offending” (Klein & Maxson 2006: 73). Rather, “Gang members commit a cafeteria of offending choices” (Klein & Maxson 2006: 74). Gang homicides “appear to be a function of spurts in gang rivalries, turf battles, and other affiliation challenges” (Klein & Maxson 2006: 81). Due to the nature of gang homicides, “The majority of victims of gang homicides and drive-by-shootings are gang members” (Klein & Maxson 2006: 83).

Based on the work of Klein and Maxson, the source of the Crip’s violence is in part understood as the consequence of “gang rivalries, turf battles, and other affiliation challenges” (Klein & Maxson 2006: 81). The Crips are particularly prone to gang rivalry on account of their being a traditional gang and living in a chronic gang city, two factors that promote the formation of subgroups.

The underclass theory has gained prominence in gang literature as a factor in explaining gang violence. The underclass theory suggests that a new group, the underclass, “has made its appearance at the heart of the county’s urban “Black Belts” in the course of the past three decades” (Wacquant 2004: 105). The underclass group “is a new entity, distinct from the traditional ‘lower class’ and separate from the rest of society” (Wacquant 2004: 105). Defining characteristics of those who belong to the underclass include “drug consumption and trafficking and a propensity for violent crime, an abiding ‘dependency’ on public aid, endemic unemployment” (Wacquant 2004: 105). The underclass “bears a specific culture or nexus of relations that determines it to engage in pathological behaviors of destruction and self-destruction” (Wacquant 2004: 105). Loic Wacquant states that the term underclass “has become virtually synonymous not simply with the ‘undeserving poor’, but with the undeserving black poor” (Wacquant 2004: 106). The discourse of the underclass is an example of cultural violence that I will further discuss later in the paper.

I believe that it is within reason to assert that there does not exist a bounty of literature that is Crip specific. Within Crip literature, the violent dynamic of the gang is readily discussed. Crip on Crip violence, Crip on Blood violence, and the criminal adventures of Crip members are all detailed. While the violent tendencies of the Crips features prominently in Crip literature, it is often written about in a fact like manner. In other words, there is often no, or very little explanation provided as to what the source of that violence is. What is discussed in great detail by many notable Crip researchers including William Dunn, Mike Davis, Steven Cureton, and Alex Alonso, is how structural factors have turned South Central into a perfect gang spawning community (Klein & Maxson 2006: 247). However, it appears as though these authors and others have made an assumption that the violence of the Crips requires no further explanation. It is as if the violence is the natural outcome of the South Central environment.

Alejandro Alonso, in his work entitled, *Racialized Identities and the Formation of Black Gangs in Los Angeles*, asserts that gang literature has “yet to make the connections between institutional practices, blatant social prejudice, and the racialization of minorities as major factors in gang formation” (Alonso 2004: 659). This paper will seek to build the connections that Alonso believes are not being made in gang literature - connecting the violence of the Crips to the dynamic nature of violence.

1.4 The Nature of Violence

My objective in writing this paper is to contribute to an understanding of Crip violence by providing new insights to Crip literature. It will be argued that the dynamic nature of violence provides a theoretical lens through which the physical violence of the Crips can be understood. I will build on insights found in literature related to the Crips, violence, and American history to substantiate my argument.

What is the dynamic nature of violence? The word dynamic is defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “marked by usually continuous and productive activity or change” (Merriam-Webster 2011). Dynamic is the opposite of static that is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “standing or fixed in one place” (Merriam-Webster 2011).

Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois’s description of violence, found in *Violence in War and Peace*, is suggestive of its dynamic nature. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois describe violence as, “nonlinear, productive, destructive, and reproductive” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004: 1). The authors characterize violence in terms of “chains, spirals, and mirrors” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004: 1). The authors use the example of “wife beaters and sexual abusers” who “were themselves usually beaten and abused” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004: 1) to illustrate this dynamic nature. The dynamic nature of violence has been illustrated in the work of Bourgois and Johan Galtung. Both have interpreted the dynamic nature of violence in different ways that will be explored below.

1.5 The Continuum of Violence

In this paper, the dynamic nature of violence will be explored through the theoretical framework of the continuum of violence. I have borrowed the expression of continuum of

violence from the work of Bourgois and Scheper-Hughes. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois's violence continuum is "comprised of a multitude of "small wars and invisible genocides" (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004: 19).

I will borrow Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois's expression, but change the meaning of it by using the ideas of various authors to develop the continuum of violence framework to be used in this paper. Bourgois and Galtung have expressed the dynamic nature of violence in a theoretical framework similar to the continuum of violence that I am proposing. Both academics have expressed the dynamic nature of violence differently from the other, but both analyze violence as functioning in a continuum-like process. Galtung, Bourgois, and I understand the dynamic nature of violence differently in regards to the types of violence that interact and how these types of violence interact along the continuum.

Bourgois, in his study of violence in East Harlem and El Salvador, analyzed the violence as the consequence of when "structural and symbolic violence fuse to translate into everyday violence" (Bourgois 2001: 9). He cited, "The result is a localized 'culture of terror' or a heightened level of everyday violence" (Bourgois 2001: 10). Symbolic violence refers to "how domination operates on an intimate level via misrecognition of power structures on the part of the dominated who collude in their own oppression" (Bourgois 2001: 7).

Galtung observes cultural violence as "an invariant, a permanence", while structural violence is a process and direct violence an event (Galtung 1990: 294). Galtung asserts that the "vicious cycle of violence" can begin with structural or direct violence, however, he identifies "a casual flow from cultural via structural to direct violence" (Galtung 1990: 295).

The theoretical framework that will be applied in the following paper depicts violence as operating in a cyclical nature and can be articulated in the following way:

Cultural Violence (expressed as an ideology of racial inferiority), legitimizes Structural Violence (found in American, and more specifically, L.A.'s economic and political structures), that influences the production of Everyday Violence (expressed as the violent interpersonal relationships between gang members). Everyday Violence then justifies and validates Cultural and Structural Violence.

As parts of the continuum of violence, cultural, structural, and everyday violence need to be defined. Galtung has defined cultural violence as, "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (Galtung 1990: 291). He states, "Cultural violence makes direct and structural violence look, even feel, right – or at least not wrong" (Galtung 1990: 291). Within the following paper, an ideology of racial inferiority will be observed as a form of cultural violence. This ideology has been used to justify and legitimize various forms of structural violence that have been directed towards Black Americans since the time of slavery.

Structural violence has been defined as the violence "which is built into the economic and political structure of society" (Petri 2002: 100). The "two major forms of structural violence are

repression in politics and exploitation in economics” (Petri 2002: 100). Forms of structural violence that have been legitimized and justified by cultural violence include legislated slavery, the Jim Crow Laws, the mass incarceration of poor Black men, and the neoliberal restructuring of the American state.

Bourgois defines everyday violence as the “routine practices and expressions of interpersonal aggression that serve to normalize violence at the micro-level such as domestic, delinquent and sexual conflict, and even substance abuse” (Bourgois 2001: 7). Within the continuum of violence proposed in this paper, everyday violence is the product of cultural and structural violence. Structural violence, legitimated and justified by cultural violence, becomes “painfully internalized” (Bourgois 2004: 303) by Crip members and is expressed as violent interpersonal relationships with other gang members. While violent interpersonal relationships are the expression of everyday violence that will be examined in this paper, everyday violence can also be expressed as alcoholism, self-destructive behaviour, etc. In effect, the structural violence at the macro- level, found in the political and economic organizations of society, has found its way to the micro-level, where it is expressed as everyday violence.

The internalization of structural violence evokes a response in its victims that can perpetuate the dynamic nature of violence. This is because the actions of victims can justify and legitimize both structural and cultural violence. For example, an ideology of racial inferiority may be supported when all that is observed are violent interpersonal relationships between Black Crip members. To some outsiders, this violence may validate a belief that Blacks are violent in nature. Interpersonal violence may justify and legitimize forms of structural violence, such as the defunding of social programs that many of South Central’s residents rely on. Acts of interpersonal violence may be used to support the idea that Blacks are not worthy of the support of the welfare system.

By bringing attention to cultural, structural, and everyday violence, the continuum of violence as a theoretical framework minimizes the likelihood that “victim blame” (Castro & Farmer 2003: S20) will occur when surveying a particular situation. Victim blame refers to situation when victims of the dynamic nature of violence are implicated in their own dilemma. If all that is observed is the outcome of the continuum of violence, such as a poor Black man engaging in the illegal economy, then it becomes logical, in a sense, that some outsiders would observe that the man was engaged in that activity for reasons such as an immoral character. Hidden from view is the way that the dynamic nature of violence has influenced such behaviour. In this paper, the violence of the Crips will be “placed in its historical and structural context lest it serve to confirm racist stereotypes and psychological-reductionist interpretations that blame victims” (Bourgois 2004: 304).

While the perpetrator and consequences of a physical beating can be readily observed, cultural, structural, and everyday violence, all with the potential to create human injury, are more invisible in these regards. The reason for this may be that “the things that are hardest to perceive are those which are right before our eyes and therefore taken for granted” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004: 20). Take structural violence for example. Structural violence is part of “the political-economic organization of society” “(Bourgois 2001: 7). It is “bureaucratic, technocratic, and automatic” (Farmer 2004: 321). Due to these characteristics, structural violence

is not easily observed. When used as a theoretical lens, the continuum of violence can render visible, previously invisible forms of violence.

As a theoretical lens, the continuum of violence forces the researcher to examine the history behind a particular situation of violence. As has been stated, the continuum of violence depicts the dynamic nature of violence that is continuous and destructive. An analysis that has as its scope of focus a particular point in time or minimal temporal lens cannot fully capture the continuum cycle.

As a theoretical lens, the continuum of violence also forces the researcher to extend their contextual scope of focus beyond the boundaries of the specific individual, group, or community being researched. The researcher needs to explore local, national and even international forms of structural violence that contribute to the production of everyday violence. In the following paper, neoliberal economic policies and programs will be highlighted as a form of structural violence found on the national level, while, restrictive housing covenants will be highlighted as a form of structural violence found in the local political structures of Los Angeles at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Paul Farmer's notion of "erasure of history" (Farmer 2004: 308) to be discussed later, captures the importance of an extended historical and contextual analysis when using the continuum of violence as a theoretical lens. Farmer asserts that without "a historically deep and geographically broad analysis...we risk seeing only the residue of meaning. We see the puddle, perhaps, but not the rainstorms and certainly not the gathering thunderclouds" (Farmer 2004: 309).

1.6 The Violence of the Crips

In the following paper, the continuum of violence will provide the theoretical lens through which the violence of the Crips will be analyzed. I will argue that an ideology of racial inferiority has justified and legitimized various forms of structural violence that have been directed towards Black Americans. These forms of structural violence have influenced the violent interpersonal relationships between Crip members.

1.7 Outline

In the second chapter of the paper, violence will be examined. I will first establish why structural and cultural violence are in fact violence. I will then further define and provide examples of cultural, structural, and everyday violence. The relationship between the different forms of violence that operate within the continuum of violence will be established. Victim blame and Paul Farmer's notion of erasure of history will be examined.

The third chapter of the paper will explore the history of the United States from the time of slavery to the neoliberal restructuring of the state and subsequent mass incarceration of Black men. I will first establish how an ideology of racial inferiority was used to justify and legitimize the American slave system. I will then show how this ideology has been reinvented and regenerated throughout American history to justify and legitimize the following forms of

structural violence: slavery, the Jim Crow regime, the establishment of Black ghettos, the mass-incarceration of poor Black men, and the policies and programs of the neoliberal state that disproportionately hurt the poor.

In the fourth chapter, I will reflect on how cultural and structural violence can be used to explain the violence of the Crips. I will illustrate how the violent interpersonal relationships between Crip members perpetuate the dynamic nature of violence by justifying and legitimizing cultural and structural violence.

In the fifth chapter, I will reflect on what insights the continuum of violence framework provides in understanding how to minimize situations of violence. I will then examine two initiatives intended to combat Crip violence: California's Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (STEP) and the LAPD's Gang Related Active Trafficker Suppression program (GRATS).

1.8 In Closing

As previously stated, Crip literature has brought attention to structural factors that contribute to the creation of communities that are more likely to spawn gangs. Structural factors including poverty, unemployment, and the loss of social programs are often identified as influencing the emergence and continuation of the Crips. What are identified as structural factors in Crip literature, have been identified as structural violence elsewhere. It is essential, as will be done in the following paper, to bring greater attention to the different forms that violence can take – calling things what they really are. Without an understanding of the source of violence, the greater the potential exists for victim blame and the erasure of history to occur.

The unique contribution of this paper to Crip literature is that knowledge from a variety of fields is being combined to develop an argument regarding the fundamental source of Crip violence. Through an analysis of American history, violence, and Crip and gang literature, the continuum of violence theoretical framework has been developed.

It is not my intention in this paper to argue that Crip members who engage in violent activity do so only because they are victims of the dynamic nature of violence. It is my intention however, to challenge the reader to look beyond the headlines in order to see the forms of violence that are less observable.

The continuum of violence is not a comprehensive framework for understanding the violence of the Crips. Factors such as individual psychology and group processes have been well documented as producing violence. In this paper, I offer what may be one piece of a puzzle in understanding the violence of the Crips – an area where more research efforts could be devoted.

Chapter Two

2.1 Violence

Jeffrey Benzien, a Boer policeman, “demonstrated before television cameras his signature torture technique, the “wet bag” which he used to force victims to give up the names of their comrades in the anti-apartheid struggle” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004: 1-2) Benzien’s testimony was part of the South African Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) hearings. The wet bag technique is demonstrative of the physical violence that was a part of South African apartheid. It takes little imagination to picture what it would be like to be subjected to such violence. It is quite likely that physical and psychological trauma would result. What was “left virtually unexamined by the South African TRC”, was “the deep structures of apartheid violence that consigned 80 percent of the African population to rural bantustands and to squalid squatter camps” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004: 2).

This example illustrates a key point that is integral to the understanding of violence that will be presented in this paper. Violence is not only physical in nature. As Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois state, “Violence can never be understood solely in terms of its physicality – force, assault, or the infliction of pain” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004: 1). Cultural and structural violence can legitimately be called violence since both, it will be argued, cause similar damage to individuals that physical violence does. In the discussion to follow, it is my objective to present to the reader an understanding of violence that goes beyond its physical form. It is my wish that the reader will be able to see cultural and structural violence as violence.

2.2 Potential Realizations Versus Actual Realizations

Galtung has stated, “violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations” (Galtung 1969: 168). Further defined, violence is the “cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is” (Galtung 1969: 168). Galtung makes another key point when he states, “When the actual is unavoidable, then violence is not present” (Galtung 1969: 168). This means that although an undesirable reality may exist, it cannot be defined as violence if that reality was avoidable. How does this definition of violence apply to its cultural and structural forms?

Cultural violence “is any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form” (Galtung 1990: 291). If an ideology of racial inferiority legitimizes and justifies, for example, the enslavement of Black people, it has directly impeded the potential for Blacks to realize their potential physical and mental states. This is because the system of slavery, upheld by a belief that Blacks are inferior, undoubtedly causes stress, both physical and mental, to an individual. This reality would be avoidable had the ideology of racial inferiority not been used to justify and legitimize Black people as slaves. Violence is therefore present.

Structural violence is found “in the political-economic organization of society” (Bourgois 2001: 7). An example of structural violence is cutbacks in social spending. A decrease in social spending may mean that fewer funds are available for social services that the poor rely heavily

on. A clean needle clinic is an example of such a service. If that service is discontinued, an individual who relied on the clinic to access clean needles for their drug use may become infected with a sexually transmitted disease (STD). This would mean that their potential somatic realization was below their actual somatic realization. The reality could potentially have been avoided had the individual had access to clean needles. Violence was therefore present.

Based on the preceding discussion it is clear that cultural and symbolic violence can rightfully be called violence. The reason? They cause similar somatic and/or mental injuries to people, as does physical violence.

2.3 Cultural Violence

As was stated earlier, cultural violence relates to aspects of culture including ideology, religion, empirical science, and art that can be used to justify and legitimize direct or structural violence (Galtung 1990: 291). Galtung states that, “One way cultural violence works is by changing the moral color of an act from red/wrong to green/right or at least to yellow/acceptable” (Galtung 1990: 292). Cultural violence is where structural violence derives its nutrients (Galtung 1990: 294). Cultural violence has the power to legitimize and/or justify structural violence as culture “preaches, teaches, admonishes, eggs on, and dulls us into seeing exploitation and/or repression as normal and natural, or into seeing them (particularly not exploitation) at all” (Galtung 1990: 295).

Galtung asserts that cultural violence is “an invariant, a permanence” (Galtung 1990: 294). Galtung’s interpretation of the dynamic nature of violence observes cultural violence as interacting with structural and direct violence in a number of ways. Structural violence can precede cultural violence. For example, “Social differentiation slowly takes on vertical characteristics with increasingly unequal exchange, and these social facts would then be in search of social acts for their maintenance, and cultural violence for their justification” (Galtung 1990: 295). Direct violence can incite cultural violence. For example, if one group of people was treating another group badly, they may “feel a need for justification and eagerly accept any cultural rationale handed to them” (Galtung 1990: 295). Cultural violence can precede structural violence. For example, racism may justify the implementation of legislation whereby Black individuals can be pulled over due to suspicion of why they are where they are.

The ideology of racial inferiority that has justified and legitimized structural violence directed at Black Americans since the time of slavery will be examined in this paper. Ideologies, according to Barbara Fields, “are real, but it does not follow that they are scientifically accurate, or that they provide an analysis of social relations that would make sense to anyone who does not take ritual part in those social relations” (Fields 1990: 109). Fields asserts, “race is neither biology nor an idea” (Fields 1990: 118). It is an ideology. Ideologies “do not have lives of their own” and they cannot be “handed down or inherited” (Fields 1990: 117). Race, as an ideology, lives today as it did at the time of slavery, “because we continue to create it today...to fit our own terrain” (Fields 1990: 117).

Slavery maintained itself for a hundred years before race provided it an “ideological rationale” (Fields 1990: 114). Fields explains that “racial ideology supplied the means of

explaining slavery to people whose terrain was a republic founded on radical doctrines of liberty and natural rights” (Fields 1990: 114). Race “explained why some people could rightly be denied what others took for granted: namely, liberty, supposedly a self-evident gift of nature’s God” (Fields 1990: 114).

Fields asserts that it is commonplace to believe that “people are more readily oppressed when they are already perceived as inferior by nature” (Fields 1990: 106). Fields does not agree with this, stating, “People are more readily perceived as inferior by nature when they are already seen as oppressed” (Fields 1990: 106). For example, “the feudal nobility of the early Middle Ages consisted of people more powerful than their fellows through possession of arms or property or both. No one at that time, not even they themselves, considered them superior by blood or birth” (Fields 1990: 106). However, due to the “nobleman’s habit of commanding others, ingrained in day-to-day routine and thus bequeathed to heirs and descendants” (Fields 1990: 106), a conviction “that the nobility was superior by nature” emerged. The “peasants did not fall under the dominion of the nobility by virtue of being perceived as innately inferior” (Fields 1990: 106). Rather, the peasants came to be perceived as innately inferior, “by virtue of falling under the nobility’s dominion” (Fields 1990: 106).

2.4 Structural Violence

Structural violence, in the context of this paper, is legitimized and justified by cultural violence. Paul Farmer has described structural violence as “the social machinery of oppression” (Farmer 2004: 319). Galtung describes structural violence as “built into structures and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances” (Brokate 2009: 76). Structural violence is found “in most, if not all, structures in society – social, political, and economic” (Brokate 2009: 76). Institutions where structural violence is present include “public schools, clinics, emergency rooms, hospital wards, nursing homes, courtrooms, public registry offices, prisons, detention centers, and public morgues” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004: 19). On account of where structural violence is embedded, “its very everydayness and its familiarity render it invisible” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004: 19). Galtung asserts that structural violence is “not an accident, but rather the outcome of human action which generates these systems in the first instance” (Brokate 2009: 76).

The following example is demonstrative of how structural violence has found its way as a conceptual tool into a variety of different fields. Paul Farmer has associated structural violence with HIV/AIDS in numerous journal articles, and on a more general level, has explored the link between preventative diseases and structural violence. Farmer and Stulac state, “racism, gender inequality, poverty, political violence and war, and sometimes the very policies that address them – often determine who falls ill and who has access to care” (Farmer & Stulac 2006: 1686). In a very poignant statement, Farmer states, “AIDS in Haiti is a tale of ties to the United States, rather than to Africa; it is a story of unemployment rates greater than 70 percent. AIDS in Haiti has far more to do with the pursuit of trade and tourism in a dirt-poor country” (Farmer 2004: 316).

2.5 Everyday Violence

The violence between members of different Crip subgroups in this paper is analyzed as being a form of everyday violence. Everyday violence follows structural violence on the continuum. At this stage, the violence from above (structural violence) has translated into violence from within (everyday violence). Another way of looking at this is to say that the violence has been translated from the macro-level into the micro-level. In a sense, structural violence was the input and everyday violence becomes the output.

Pierre Bourdieu, in the context of neoliberal economics, has alluded to this input and output equation in the following statement: “The structural violence exerted by the financial markets, in the form of layoffs, loss of security, etc., is matched sooner or later in the form of suicides, crime and delinquency, drug addiction, alcoholism, a whole host of minor and major everyday acts of violence” (Bourgeois 2001: 22). How is it that structural violence at the macro-level translates into everyday violence at the micro-level in the form of interpersonal violence?

Everyday violence is the painful internalization by individuals of the violence found in the political and economic organs of a society. Structural violence has obstructed individuals from realizing their full potential and, as such, “one reaction is direct violence. But that is not the only reaction. There could also be a feeling of hopelessness, a deprivation/frustration syndrome that shows up on the inside as self-directed aggression and on the outside as apathy and withdrawal (Galtung 1990: 295).

Franz Fanon’s theory of colonial violence and how this violence becomes internalized in colonial subjects is illustrative of the process whereby cultural and structural violence fuse to translate into everyday violence in the form of interpersonal relationships. In addressing Fanon’s theory, Jean-Paul Sartre states, “colonial aggression turns inward in a current of terror among the natives. By this I do not mean the fear that they experience when faced with our inexhaustible means of repression but also that which their own fury produces in them” (Sartre 2004: 232). He continues, “for at first it is not their violence, it is ours, which turns back on itself and rends them” (Sartre 2004: 232). Without an appropriate outlet upon which this internalized violence can be expressed, it “turns in a vacuum and devastates the oppressed creatures themselves. In order to free themselves they even massacre each other. The different tribes fight between themselves since they cannot face the real enemy” (Sartre 2004: 232).

In the context of this paper, the following example is illustrative of the painful internalization of violence from above. Neoliberal policies and programs may lead some to steal in order to survive since they have been rendered useless in the legal economy. This may influence in some individuals “confusing feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and mutual recriminations” (Bourgeois 2001: 13). In turn, these feelings and emotions may generate in some individuals “the systematic distortion of social relations and sensibilities” (Bourgeois 2001: 16) causing some to, “perpetuate interpersonal violence, usually against their friends and loved ones” (Bourgeois 2004: 303). Some victims of structural violence may now “become the local agents administering the destruction of their surrounding community” (Bourgeois 2004, p. 303). The input of structural violence “becomes obscured by a maelstrom of everyday violence” (Bourgeois

2001: 23), and “the violence is administered as much by the victims as it is by the powerful” (Bourgois 2004: 303).

In short, some individuals have experienced violence, reacted to it, and finally, it has been reproduced in their relationships with others. It should be noted that I have referred to some individuals, not all individuals, as internalizing structural violence and reproducing it in their relationships. It is not my claim that there exists a definitive causal relationship between cultural, structural, and everyday violence. I am simply proposing one theoretical framework, amongst many, that can be applied to understand the violence of the Crips. It is beyond the scope and purpose of this paper to assess why some victims of structural violence react in one way, and others in a different way.

2.6 The Cycle of Violence

When some victims of structural violence internalize the violence that they experience and it is expressed, in the context of this paper, in violent interpersonal relationships, the victim’s actions can perpetuate the cycle of violence by justifying and legitimizing an ideology of racial inferiority and forms of structural violence. For example, the violent relationships displayed between some gang members could validate or justify in the minds of some, the link between Blacks and criminality (cultural violence). Displays of everyday violence could also validate and justify the use of discriminatory police practices (structural violence), including the perception of Black skin as an authorized means for probable cause” (Wacquant 2005: 127).

2.7 Victim Blame and the Erasure of History

Victim blame and the erasure of history can occur when all that is observed is the product of the dynamic nature of violence, which in this paper is the violence exhibited between Crip members. The violence embedded in the social institutions of society that has influenced the violence of the Crips is less observable.

The “efficacy of the concept of structural violence lies in its ability to render visible the social machinery of oppression” (Farmer 2004: 319). While the consequences of structural violence, such as interpersonal violence, may be “ethnographically visible” (Farmer 2004: 319), the form of structural violence, and the cultural violence that justified and legitimated it, may not be. Without a historical analysis of the cultural and structural violence that has influenced the creation of the “ethnographically visible”, the “ethnographically visible” can come to be “a taken for granted reality” (Farmer 2004: 319). This is what Paul Farmer refers to as the erasure of history (Farmer 2004: 308). When history is erased, the complex workings of the continuum of violence are shielded from view, and all that is observed is the victim and their plight. The real enemy, cultural and structural violence, is left unscathed and unquestioned. On account of this, the victims of violence can easily be implicated in their own dilemma.

Chapter Three: A History of Violence

3.1 Slavery

The historical analysis of structural violence that has been directed towards Black Americans in the United States begins at the time of slavery. Interestingly, the first people to be bound as property in the early history of the U.S. were indentured white servants from Europe. The British settled in North America in the early seventeenth century. By 1620, “indentured servitude appeared,” becoming “a central institution in the economy and society of many parts of colonial British America” (Galenson 1984: 1). Indentured servitude “was an initial solution to an acute problem of obtaining a labour supply that existed in many regions” (Galenson 1984: 9). It has been estimated that between “one-half and two-thirds of all white immigrants to the British colonies between the Puritan migration of the 1630s and the Revolution came under indenture” (Galenson 1984: 1). Indentured servitude was not to be “the final solution to the problem of colonial American labour supply” (Galenson 1984: 10).

Indentured servants “were quantitatively most important in the early history of those colonies that produced staple crops for export” (Galenson 1984: 10). Indentured servants were first required to only grow the staple crops. However, as output of staple crops increased, demand for skilled labour began to grow “to build houses and farm sheds, to make hogsheds in which to pack and ship the sugar, tobacco, or rice for export, and to perform a variety of other crafts” (Galenson 1981: 40). The increasing demand for labour was accompanied by an increase in the “implicit annual rental cost of servants” (Galenson 1981: 40), as the supply of indentured servants could not keep up with labour demands.

African and African-descended persons arrived in the British colony beginning in 1619 (Fields 1990: 102) at a time when the law did not formally recognize them as slaves. Blacks “during the years between 1619 and 1661 enjoyed rights that, in the nineteenth century, not even free black people could claim” (Fields 1990: 103). The place of Blacks in early American society changed on account of the increasing cost of indentured servants. As the cost of indentured servants rose due to their inelastic supply, the more elastic supply of Blacks enabled the price of Black labour to fall below that of indentured servants. Thus, the transition from servant to slave labour began with the “changing relative costs of the two types of labor faced by colonial planters” (Galenson 1984: 10).

The increasing cost of white labor was not the only problem faced by the elites of colonial society. Indentured servants were increasingly “resentful at being denied the rights of Englishmen” (Fields 1990: 105). The “importation of slaves in larger and larger numbers made it possible to maintain a sufficient corps of plantation laborers without building up an explosive charge of armed Englishmen” (Fields 1990: 105). By increasingly relying on Black labour, the American plantation economy overcame the problems posed by the demands of the indentured servants, their decreasing supply, and their increasing cost.

To ensure the labour supply that the plantation economy relied on was present, slavery became systematized. Before 1661, the “law did not formally recognize the condition of perpetual slavery or systematically mark out servants of African descent for special treatment”

(Fields 1990: 104). Slavery first became embedded in Virginia law in 1661, when the “provincial assembly was beginning to identify black skin with service for life” (Wax 1973: 372). Laws “establishing slavery would not be pulled together into a full-blown slave code until 1705” (Wax 1973: 372).

The institutionalization of slavery linked black skin with “property-in-person” (Wacquant 2002: 44). Based on the definition of structural violence presented earlier, slavery can rightly be observed as a form of structural violence as it was built into the American political structure as a law, becoming part of the “social machinery of oppression” (Farmer 2004: 319). There is no need to go into the brutality of slavery here as it has been well documented elsewhere. I believe it is within reason to assert that the ability of slaves to reach their potential somatic and mental realizations was impeded by the slave system.

The institutionalization of slavery, while serving a valuable purpose in American society, posed a dilemma. How could Blacks be “property-in-person” in a democratic society founded on the “doctrine of liberty premised on natural rights” (Wacquant 2002: 45)? Barbara Fields has stated, “When self-evident laws of nature guarantee freedom, only equally self-evident laws of equally self-evident nature can account for its denial” (Fields 1990: 107). “Religious and pseudo-scientific belief in racial difference” provided the self-evident laws that soothed the contradiction between slavery and natural rights (Wacquant 2002: 45). Fields states, “Race explained why some people could rightly be denied what others took for granted” (Fields 1990: 114).

The ideology of racial inferiority that explained the “anomalous exception” (Fields 1990: 114) of why Blacks were not due their natural rights, can be observed as a form of cultural violence. The validation through science and religion that Blacks were an inferior race, allowed slavery to move from an act of “red/wrong to green/right or at least to yellow/acceptable” (Galtung 1990: 292). The ideology both justified and legitimized the slave system by making it appear “normal and natural” (Galtung 1990: 295). Without this form of cultural violence, the doctrine of natural rights could potentially have destabilized the foundation of the American economy.

The ideology of racial inferiority that justified and legitimized the slave system depended on a distinction being made between slaves and free. This distinction was translated into Whites and Negroes by the Jim Crow regime, and has survived throughout American history to present day. Thus, the ideology of racial inferiority did not stop with the abolishment of slavery as a means to justify and legitimize forms of structural violence. Rather race, as an ideology, continues today “because we continue to create it... to fit our own terrain” (Fields 1990: 118). Wacquant asserts that “Slavery, the Jim Crow system and the ghetto are ‘race making institutions’, which is to say that they do not simply process an ethnoracial division that would somehow exist outside of and independently from them” (Wacquant 2002: 54). Rather, each of these institutions “produces (or co-produces) this division (anew) out of inherited demarcations and disparities of group power and inscribes it at every epoch” (Wacquant 2002: 54).

3.2 The Jim Crow Regime

The abolishment of slavery in 1865 did not mean that Blacks became incorporated as equal members of society (Rabinowitz 1976: 340). The distinction between the two races lived on and “most southern states tried to limit the economic and physical freedom of the formerly enslaved by adopting laws known as the Black Code” (Davis, n.d.). The Black Codes were “early legal attempts at white-imposed segregation and discrimination” (Davis, n.d.). Between 1866 and 1876 (Davis, n.d.), the federal government took aim at these actions by declaring, “illegal all such acts of legal discrimination against African Americans” (Davis). The efforts of various states to implement their own forms of structural violence against Black Americans were further impeded by the “Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, along with the two Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1875 and the various Enforcement Acts of the early 1870’s” (Davis). During this period, Blacks were able to secure some rights. They “were allowed to vote, to hold public office, and even to mix with whites to a degree in keeping with the intergroup intimacy fostered by slavery” (Wacquant 2002: 46).

This state of relative freedom did not last long. Just as slavery had presented a dilemma in regards to the contradiction between democracy and bondage, the abolishment of slavery created its own dilemma. The dilemma was “how to secure anew the labor of former slaves, without whom the region’s economy would collapse, and how to sustain the cardinal status distinction between whites and ‘persons of color’” (Wacquant 2002: 45-46). White society was beginning to worry. They saw a “New Negro born of freedom, undisciplined by slavery, and unschooled in proper racial etiquette” (Litwack 2004: 124). White society was not so much alarmed by “evidence of black failure but evidence of black success, evidence of black assertion, independence, and advancement, evidence of Black men learning the uses of political power” (Litwack 2004: 127).

The dilemma posed by the freed Black man was solved when the ideology of racial inferiority was recreated and used to justify and legitimize a new form of structural violence directed at Black Americans – the Jim Crow regime. The Jim Crow regime “consisted of an ensemble of social and legal codes that prescribed the complete separation of the ‘races’ and sharply circumscribed the life chances of African-Americans while binding them to whites in a relation of suffusive submission backed by legal coercion and terroristic violence” (Wacquant 2002: 46). The Jim Crow regime “reworked the racialised boundary between slave and free into a rigid caste separation between ‘whites’ and ‘Negroes’ – comprising all persons of known African ancestry” (Wacquant 2005: 127). Blacks “could not work in the same jobs as whites or serve in the same capacities” (Bowser 1985: 309). Blacks were denied the right to vote (Litwack 2004: 124). The plantation system “remained virtually untouched as former slaves became a ‘dependent, propertyless peasantry, nominally free, but ensnared by poverty, ignorance, and the new servitude of tenantry’” (Wacquant 2002: 46).

3.3 The Ghetto and Los Angeles’s Homeowners’ Associations

In the early twentieth century, Blacks began to migrate from the South to the “booming industrial centers of the Midwest and Northeast” (Wacquant 2002: 47). Some went to Southern California in the belief of “economic prosperity, and job security” (Cureton 2008: 2). The hopes

of some individuals were dashed upon their arrival. The reality they faced was “a fertile territory for traditional White supremacist ideology, institutional inequality (in housing, education, and employment), and restrictions relative to where Blacks could socialize” (Cureton 2009: 355).

Immigrating Blacks were greeted throughout the Midwest, Northeast, and in the city of Los Angeles by yet “another system of racial enclosure, the ghetto” (Wacquant 2002: 47). The ideology of racial inferiority that had justified and legitimized slavery and the Jim Crow regime now provided the justification and legitimization of the spatial segregation of Blacks.

A ghetto is defined by Loic Wacquant as “an instrument of ethnoracial control in the city” (Wacquant 2008: 60). It is a “sociospatial contraption through which a dominant ethnic category secludes a subordinate group and restricts its life chances in order to both exploit and exclude it from the life-sphere of the dominant” (Wacquant 2008: 60-61). The population that resides in a ghetto “develops under duress a set of parallel institutions that serve both as a functional substitute for, and as a protective buffer against, the dominant institutions of the encompassing society” (Wacquant 1997: 343).

Homeowners’ associations, what Los Angeles historian Mike Davis has described as the “most powerful social movement” in Southern California that is “engaged in the defense of home values and neighborhood exclusivity” (Davis 2006: 153), influenced the segregation of the Black population of Los Angeles into segregated areas. These associations “first appeared on the political scene in the 1920s as instruments of white mobilization against attempts by Blacks to buy homes outside the ghetto” (Davis 2006: 161). This resulted in “95 percent of the city’s housing stock in the 1920’s” being “effectively put off limits to Blacks and Asians” (Davis 2006: 161). By World War One, deed restrictions were building a “white wall around the Black community” (Davis 2006: 161), confining the “small black community” (Dunn 2007: 52) into two areas: Watts and South Central. These two areas “were the only places a black man could by a house, as well as own a business” (Dunn 2007: 53).

By the 1930s, Blacks were arriving in increasing numbers to Los Angeles on account of industrialization. Overcrowding in the Black ghettos became an issue. However, “every foray by Black homebuyers into an outside residential area was met by the immediate wrath of white homeowners” (Davis 2006: 162). During the World War Two boom, “property owners secured the limited supply of housing outside Negro areas for white occupancy only by attaching race restrictive covenants to the titles” (Davis 2006: 163).

A ghetto does not just emerge. The American legal apparatus allowed spatial segregation to occur. For this reason, the ghetto is a form of structural violence. It was not until 1948 that “the US Supreme Court finally ruled against restrictive covenants” (Davis 2006: 162). Before this ruling, “white homeowner groups in Los Angeles had ample sanction in the law” (Davis 2006: 162) to ensure that Blacks lived separately from them – locked in the ghetto. The California Supreme Court first established the doctrine of restrictive covenants “in the Gary case of 1919, extended it to post facto ‘block’ restrictions in *Wayt versus Patee* (1928), and continued to reaffirm it as late as 1947” (Davis 2006: 162).

How was the ideology of racial inferiority recreated to fit the terrain of the early twentieth century as Blacks began to make their way from the South to the North? Wacquant asserts that “Fear of contamination and degradation via association with inferior beings – African slaves – is at the root of the pervasive prejudice and institutionalization of the rigid caste division which, combined with urbanization, gave birth to the ghetto at the turn of the century” (Wacquant 2004: 112). The ghetto imprinted the dichotomy of Blacks and Whites “onto the spatial makeup and institutional schemas of the industrial metropolis” (Wacquant 2002: 55).

3.4 The Neoliberal Restructuring of the State

The U.S. has embedded into its political and economic structures a neoliberal model of the state. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the details of the neoliberal model. Suffice to say, the neoliberal restructuring of the state has hurt the residents of South Central in two ways: the withdrawal of needed social programs and the exodus of jobs. The policies and programs of the neoliberal state are forms of structural violence as they impede individuals, particularly the Black male residents of South Central, to realize their potential mental and somatic states.

On a municipal level, “deep cuts have been made selectively in the budget for public services, on which blacks living in poor neighborhoods are the most reliant, whether it be public transport, subsidized housing, social and medical services, schools or city services such as trash collection and housing inspection” (Wacquant 2004: 101). Federal aid to Los Angeles that provides the funds through which social safety nets can be implemented in communities, stood at \$370 million in 1977 (Johnson & Farrell 1992-1993: 1414). By 1990, it had “dropped to \$60 million” (Johnson & Farrell 1992-1993: 1414). The defunding of community-based organizations (CBOs) has been perhaps the “most devastating for south central Los Angeles” (Johnson & Farrell 1992-1993: 1414). CBOs “were part of the collection of social resources in the urban environment that encouraged the inner-city disadvantaged, especially disadvantaged youth, to pursue mainstream avenues of social and economic mobility” (Johnson & Farrell 1992-1993: 1414).

Between 1978 and 1989, approximately 200,000 well paid “manufacturing jobs disappeared from the Los Angeles economy” (Johnson & Farrell 1992-1993: 1411). The South Central neighborhood bore the brunt of this loss, as it was the “traditional industrial core of the city” (Johnson & Farrell 1992-1993: 1411). Jobs that have found their way into South Central Los Angeles since are mainly in the “competitive sector of the economy” (Johnson & Farrell 1992-1993: 1412). Competitive sector businesses can survive “only to the extent that their prices remain nationally and internationally competitive” (Johnson & Farrell 1992-1993: 1412). On account of this, businesses “often hire undocumented workers” (Johnson & Farrell 1992-1993: 1412). This has minimized the opportunities for South Central’s residents to obtain employment in the new economic climate. The exodus of jobs that are a product of the neoliberal restructuring of the state have resulted in the “economic destruction in Southcentral neighborhoods: unemployment rising by nearly 50 per cent since the early 1970’s” (Davis 2006: 304-305).

The ideology of racial inferiority was recreated to fit the neoliberal terrain to justify and legitimize the neoliberal policies and programs that disproportionately affected the poor, thereby disproportionately affecting Blacks. The underclass theory served this purpose, emerging on the American scene in the 1970s.

The theory's claim is that a new group has "made its appearance at the heart of the country's urban 'Black Belts' in the course of the past three decades" (Wacquant 2004: 105) - the same past three decades in which the neoliberal state model has been implanted in American society. This group is characterized as having certain traits that makes them the "chief culprits for the 'street crime, long-term welfare dependency, chronic unemployment and anti-social behavior in America'" (Wacquant 2004: 106).

Two figures have come to represent the underclass. One is "the gangs of young, arrogant, violent black men, who refuse to occupy the scarce, unskilled, low-paying jobs for which they could apply" (Wacquant 2004: 108). The other figure are "teenage mothers who subsist 'on the backs' of the taxpayer via receipt of social assistance in large public housing estates" (Wacquant 2004: 108). A distinct association has made between "blackness and the 'underclass' " (Wacquant 2004: 105).

3.5 The Penal System and Expanded Powers of the Police

Just as the abolishment of slavery had ushered in a new era of Black American history, the Civil Rights movement one hundred years later, did the same. And just as the end of slavery was soon met with the Jim Crow Laws as a means to deal with the problem of the freed Black man, it did not take long for the ideology of racial inferiority to be recreated to deal with the problem of the freed Black man in the post-Civil Rights era. Loic Wacquant states that by the end of the seventies, "the racial and class backlash against the democratic advances won by the social movements of the preceding decade got into full swing" (Wacquant 2002: 53). The neoliberal restructuring of the state begun in the seventies also created a problem that had to be dealt with. That problem was the people who were left out of the new economy – particularly poor Black men who were "segments of the workforce" who were "simply no longer needed" (Wacquant 2002: 49). The American penal system was the form of structural violence justified and legitimized by the recreation of the ideology of racial inferiority to deal with these problems.

Wacquant asserts, "As the walls of the ghetto shook and threatened to crumble, the walls of the prison were correspondingly extended, enlarged, and fortified" (Wacquant 2002: 52). The walls of the ghetto were shaking as a consequence of "the joint withdrawal of the wage-labor market and the welfare state" (Wacquant 2008: 61). The net of the penal system was not far flung across all of society. Rather, statistics support that the penal net has "been finely targeted, first by class, second by that disguised brand of ethnicity called race, and third by place" (Wacquant 2008: 58). The specific targeting of the penal net has "led to the hyper-incarceration of one particular category, lower-class black men in the crumbling ghetto" (Wacquant 2008: 59).

At the close of the twenty-first century, Blacks accounted for seventy percent of all American convicts (Wacquant 2008: 59). The "cumulative risk of imprisonment for African- males without a high school education tripled between 1978 and 1998 to reach the astonishing

rate of 59%” (Wacquant 2008: 59-60). In 2004, “1 black man in 10 between the ages of 18 and 34” was imprisoned in the U.S. (Wacquant 2004: 116).

In direct relation to the mass incarceration of poor Black men is how “the courts have consistently authorized the police to employ race as ‘a negative signal of increased risk of criminality’” (Wacquant 2002: 56), and “being Black as an authorized means for probable cause” (Wacquant 2005: 127). In Los Angeles, the association of Black skin with increased risk of criminality has provided the LAPD with enhanced powers. The consequence is that “poor urban African Americans find themselves caught in the clutches of the penal system in numbers and with an intensity far out of proportion with their criminal involvement” (Wacquant 2005: 129). Residential curfews have been “deployed selectively and almost exclusively against Black and Chicano neighborhoods” (Davis 2006: 286). A consequence of this is that “thousands of youth in Southcentral acquire minor records for behavior that would be legal or inoffensive on the Westside” (Davis 2006: 286). Operation Hammer, an LAPD operation conducted in 1988, has been compared to a “Vietnam-era search-and-destroy mission” (Davis 1988: 37). During Operation Hammer the LAPD “saturated the streets with its ‘Blue Machine’, ‘jacking up’ thousands of local teenagers at random” (Davis 1998: 37). Youths were held “while officers checked their names against computerized files of gang members” (Davis 1998: 37). In total, “1,453 were arrested and processed in mobile booking offices, mostly for petty offenses like delinquent traffic tickets or curfew violations” (Davis 1998: 34). Another consequence of Operation Hammer was that “Hundreds more, uncharged, had their names entered on the LAPD gang roster for future surveillance” (Davis 1998: 37).

The distinction between Blacks and Whites was recreated to justify and legitimize the mass incarceration of Black men and the loosening of their legal protection through the association of “blackness with criminality” (Wacquant 2002: 56). The association of blackness with criminality “in collective representation and government policy...thus re-activates ‘race’ by giving a legitimate outlet to the expression of anti-Black animus in the form of public vituperation of criminals and prisoners” (Wacquant 2002: 56).

Chapter Four: The Violence of the Crips and the Continuum of Violence

I have asserted that in order to understand the violence of the Crips, the dynamic nature of violence first has to be understood. The dynamic nature of violence has been illustrated by academics including Scheper-Hughes, Bourgois, and Galtung. Violence is dynamic in the way that it is “marked by usually continuous and productive activity or change” (Merriam-Webster 2011). Just as the violence experienced by an abused child may translate into that child’s adult life as their own violence, so to can the violence found in America’s economic and political structures translate into the violence of the Crips.

I have asserted that it is necessary to look behind the violence that is reciprocated between Crip members in order to see the structural and cultural violence that have influenced that behavior. By doing so, a long history of violence directed at Black Americans is revealed. More specifically, a long history of violence directed at Black Americans residing in South Central, Los Angeles is revealed.

The ideology of racial inferiority (cultural violence) justified and legitimized the American slave system that indiscriminately associated Black skinned individuals as “property-in-person” (Wacquant 2002: 44). The Black population of America then faced the Jim Crow regime that “infected every crevice of the postbellum social system and culture in the South” (Wacquant 2005: 127). Blacks began to move northward in the beginning of the twentieth century. Some went to California. Some went to the city of Los Angeles. There they faced spatial segregation, being forcibly relegated into the area that would come to be the home of the Crips. The neoliberal restructuring of the American state added further pressure to the South Central community through the loss of jobs and the loss of needed social programs. The penal system has since swooped in to clean up the mess left by neoliberal restructuring by taking poor Blacks, those discarded from the new economy, off the street.

The application of the continuum of violence framework to American history allows for a history of violence to be uncovered. It is a history of violence that has been experienced by Black Americans as a whole, by Black Americans living in South Central, and even more specifically, by Black American males living in South Central. If violence is dynamic, then the violence reciprocated between Crip members can be explained, among other ways, as a product of structural violence that has been legitimized and supported by an ideology of racial inferiority directed at Black Americans. Alejandro Alonso states, “Groups that are subjected to exploitation eventually develop illicit and harmful characteristics and behaviors as a way to cope” (Alonso 2004: 671). Internalization has the potential to lead some “group members to victimize other group members” (Alonso 2004: 671).

The dynamic nature of violence operates in a covert way. As I have stated, structural violence is invisible in nature – embedded in a societies economic and political structures. What is not invisible is the product of the dynamic nature of violence. It is not invisible, since it is observable. By this I mean, one can actually witness everyday violence. When one Crip member shoots another Crip member, it is observable. The consequences of that shooting are observable. The Crip member who fired the gun is observable. Violent interpersonal relationships between Crip members have and continue to garner attention, being sensationalized in various media outlets, from movies to news headlines.

The consequences of the visible nature of everyday violence and the invisible nature of structural violence are victim blame, the erasure of history, and the perpetuation of further violence. When all that is observable is the violence of the Crips, then it is easy to see that violence as senseless and illogical. Victim blame becomes the logical consequence. It would be appear as though there is no one else, nothing else, to blame. The victim becomes implicated as the perpetrator.

The invisible nature of structural violence and the visible nature of everyday violence make it easy for a history of violence to go unobserved. The observable can come to be a taken for granted reality. All that led to that reality becomes “obscured by a maelstrom of everyday violence” (Bourgois 2001: 23).

The translation of structural violence, legitimized and justified by an ideology of racial inferiority, is expressed in the violent interpersonal relationships between Crip members. This

violence can and has justified and legitimized cultural and structural violence. The cycle of violence, from cultural to structural to everyday and back again is illustrated in the following example regarding the expanded powers of police officers.

As Wacquant has established, Black males “find themselves caught in the clutches of the penal system in numbers and with an intensity far out of the proportion with their criminal involvement” (Wacquant 2005: 129). The reason that Black males find themselves in increased contact with police officers can be traced to the “1968 decision *Terry v. Ohio*” (Wacquant 2005: 128). In this US Supreme Court decision, police were authorized “to carry out stops and searches on the ‘reasonable suspicion’ that criminal activity is afoot based on mere presence in a high-crime area and evasive behavior” (Wacquant 2005: 128). Interestingly, this Supreme Court decision was made during the race riots of the Civil Rights Movement. Since that 1968 decision, there has been “a steady lowering of the threshold of evidence set by the judiciary to meet this ‘location plus evasion’ standard” (Wacquant 2005: 129). The result is “stops and frisks of residents of inner cities – primarily poor persons, African-Americans, and Hispanic Americans – far out of proportion to their numbers, and often without justification” (Wacquant 2005: 129).

The ideology of racial inferiority that has justified and legitimized these discriminatory police practices is the association of Blacks with criminality. This ideology of racial inferiority is further justified and legitimized on account of the fact that more Blacks come into contact with the police – seemingly validating the fact that Blacks are indeed criminals. What is not observed is the fact that Blacks are coming into contact with the police more readily on account of a form of structural violence that has been legitimized and justified by cultural violence. On the other hand, the interpersonal violent relationships that are produced on account of this input of structural violence, justifies and legitimizes the continuance of such discriminatory police practices by providing the police with reason to stop and search Black males.

Chapter Five: What This All Means

When the violence of the Crips is understood as a product of the dynamic nature of violence, the question arises as to how the violence of the Crips should be handled. If the goal is to implement peace in the South Central community, what insights does the theoretical lens of the continuum of violence provide as to how this could be accomplished? Have such insights informed the policies and practices of the LAPD and other organizations in their attempts to deal with the violence of the Crips?

If the violence of the Crips can be explained, not necessarily in full, but in part, by the dynamic nature of violence, then efforts should be made to deal with the cultural and structural violence that has potentially produced that violence. How does a community, a nation, a world, address racism? It is beyond the scope of this paper to tackle this issue, but racism is what legitimizes and justifies forms of structural violence and therefore there exists a strong impetus to address it. The question that I believe has to be asked regarding the role that racism has played in allowing for the various forms of structural violence that have disproportionately hurt Black Americans, more specifically the residents of the South Central, to be implemented is: Would those forms of structural violence have become part of American economic and political structures had racism not figured into the equation? Take the Jim Crow regime. Would the social

and legal codes that made up the regime be implemented in the first place and then allowed to continue had Blacks been considered full citizens, those worthy of the rights and opportunities afforded to other American citizens? Now ask yourself the same question, but input the different forms of structural violence that were examined in this paper: Would _____ (input form of structural violence here) been implemented and then allowed to continue had racism not figured into the equation? Maybe the answer to these questions is the only valid starting place for developing programs and policies that could combat the violence of the Crips. Without an end to racism, structural violence may continue to function as the invisible perpetrator.

What can be done about the structural violence that has been directed at Black Americans, more specifically, the residents of South Central? As just stated, challenging the ideology of racial inferiority is the logical starting place. The neoliberal restructuring of the state, the spatial segregation of Blacks established in the early twentieth century that remains imprinted on the Los Angeles cityscape, and the mass incarceration of Black men are all forms of structural violence that, it can be reasoned, continue to impede the ability of some South Central residents from realizing their potential somatic and mental realizations.

The various institutions that work towards combating the violence of the Crips may seek to address some of these forms of structural violence. An example of such an effort may be to reinstate social programs into the South Central community, including health clinics, CBO's, and after school programs. Programs and policies of these organizations could potentially address the consequences of structural violence. Should the consequences of structural violence be minimized, the potential for violence to perpetuate may be weakened.

If the continuum of violence, as a theoretical lens, brings attention to the need for structural and cultural violence to be combated for the violence of the Crips to be combated, how has the state of California and the LAPD incorporated these insights into their programs and policies implemented to deal with the violence of the Crips? I am very briefly going to address this question by presenting two initiatives that, based on the insights gained from the application of the continuum of violence, did not deal with structural or cultural violence. One initiative is found in California law, while the other is the initiative of the LAPD.

The Gang Related Active Trafficker Suppression program (GRATS) was a LAPD operation implemented in the late eighties. GRATS "targeted 'drug neighborhoods' for raids by 200-300 police under orders to 'stop and interrogate anyone who they suspect is a gang member, basing their assumptions on their dress or their use of gang hand signals'" (Davis 1988: 40). In two months, the GRATS taskforce had "mounted nine sweeps, impounded five hundred cars and made nearly fifteen hundred arrests" (Davis 1998: 40). GRATS did not address cultural and/or structural violence.

California's Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (STEP) was passed in 1988. STEP "makes membership in a 'criminal gang' a felony" (Davis 2006: 282). Under STEP, "any person who actively participates in a criminal street gang with knowledge that its members have engaged in a pattern of criminal activity and who willfully promotes or assists any felonious conduct by members that gang" can be prosecuted (Davis 2006: 282). Interestingly, the law "provides for the prosecution of parents of gang members who do not exercise 'reasonable

care' to prevent their children's criminal activities" (Davis 2006: 183). Mike Davis asserts that STEP has "criminalized successive strata of the community: 'gang members', then 'gang parents', followed by whole 'gang families', 'gang neighborhoods', and perhaps even a 'gang generations' " (Davis 2006: 284). STEP was not formulated with structural or cultural violence in mind.

Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that the violence of the Crips, expressed in interpersonal relationships between gang members, can be explained in part, as the product of the dynamic nature of violence. Violence is dynamic and therefore it has the potential to produce more violence.

Cultural violence was expressed as an ideology of racial inferiority that was used to justify and legitimize the American slave system. The distinction between slave and free would later translate into a distinction between Black and White. That distinction has justified and legitimized the following forms of structural violence directed against Black Americans throughout American history: the Jim Crow regime, the spatial segregation of Blacks in urban ghettos, neoliberal policies and programs that disproportionately hurt the poor, and the mass incarceration of Blacks and expanded police powers.

I have argued that these forms of structural violence have impeded the ability for the Black American population in general, and the Black South Central community more specifically, to realize their potential somatic and mental realizations. Based on the theory that violence is dynamic in nature, I have argued that the violence embedded in American political and economic organizations has translated into the everyday violence of the Crips, Black members of the Crip gang are the victims of structural violence that has been directed towards Black Americans since the time of slavery. They are also the victims of the forms of structural violence that have been directed towards the South Central community. The internalization of structural violence by some Crip members has manifested into violent interpersonal relationships. These violent interpersonal relationships have perpetuated the cycle of violence by justifying and legitimizing an ideology of racial inferiority and forms of structural violence. What we as outsiders observe is the physical violence of the Crips. Less observable is the history of violence that produced that violence.

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