

The Kings ain't playin' no one tonight: Desanctifying property as an abolitionist practice in Sacramento

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Abstract

This article considers the significance of disrespecting property as a long-standing practice of abolition. As an organizer, observer and participant, I consider a series of Black Lives Matter protests in Sacramento that transgress the dictates of property in the city. I apply Cedric Robinson's under-examined theory of the *terms of order* to understand these transgressions as fundamental threats to assemblages of capitalism, whiteness and policing. As the ruptures caused by protests and riots reveal, property is neither static nor infallible as an arrangement of space. Rather, it is relational and contingent on state force and self-disciplined social behavior. I argue that transgressing the physical markers of property reflects a more revolutionary practice of destabilizing the ideologies of social order upon which property depends. Such interruptions *desanctify property* by refusing its legitimacy as an arbiter of social life and movement in space. Desanctifying property practices the forms of collectivity, autonomy, and deviant kinship that abolition demands. In situating my methods in this work, I offer a framework of abolition geography as a way of study that participates in social movement, focuses on everyday practices of revolution, and refutes hegemonic ideas of social life and scale.

Keywords

Property, race, policing, order, abolition, Black Lives Matter

Introduction

On the afternoon of 22 March 2018, the largest protest in Sacramento's recent memory made a spontaneous move. Mobilized by the police murder of Stephon Clark three days prior, we had marched as planned from City Hall, through downtown, and onto the

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I–5 highway. As we blocked both lanes of highway traffic, about 500 strong, the idea originated to take the protest to the nearby Golden 1 Arena. This quickly gained collective approval and momentum, as word spread that an NBA game between the Sacramento Kings and the Atlanta Hawks was about to begin. Arriving at the arena, we circled the perimeter and locked arms. Employees of the center barred the doors from the inside so that nobody could enter or exit. Hundreds of fans faced off with protesters. Many claimed to support Black Lives Matter but furiously challenged how this place or this action had anything to do with the cause.

In the days following Stephon Clark's death, Sacramento joined an ever-growing list of cities to gain national attention as part of the Black Lives Matter movement. Following mass protests including the shutdown of the Golden 1 Arena, the city underwent the host of responses that are typical of these uprisings—the arrival of the National Guard and the FBI, the flourishing of organizations for profit, the use of conciliatory measures by local government, and the extreme scrutiny by media. The state of California's District Attorney and the FBI announced independent investigations into the case.

The magnitude of these reactions stood in stark contrast to the silence that met the routine murders of black people in the city. The same groups that organized the protests following Stephon Clark's death had been struggling for years to support the families whose loved ones had been killed by police. It was a steep uphill battle to get recognition by the media or support from the city or the state. Families were generally ignored by local and state government and were often harassed by law enforcement. Over the course of at least the previous 20 years, no police officers had been charged for murder or manslaughter. These officers continued to work and even went on to win medals of valor (Chavez, 2017).

This routinization of death in Sacramento reiterates a racial geography of entrenched segregation and enclosure of wealth. Sacramento's history exemplifies the successive regimes of urban renewal, redlining and predatory financial practices that have decimated the economic and political power of black communities and restricted them to state abandoned, militantly policed neighborhoods (Hernandez, 2009). As the capital of California, Sacramento is central to the massive infrastructure of policing and incarceration that Gilmore (2007) characterizes as the "golden gulag," and is home to a city police department that is more lethal than those of the coastal cities of Oakland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles (Mapping Police Violence, 2021).

Just as Sacramento's Black Lives Matter movement rested upon the ongoing work of organizations in the city, the mass uprisings that distinguished the nationwide movement depended on an array of already existing organizations (Ransby, 2018). The watershed uprising in Ferguson in 2014 marked a crisis in the legitimacy of policing that was both unifying and internally conflicted (Gilmore and Gilmore, 2016). In response to Michael Brown's "legal lynching" that year, a constellation of organizations came together to sustain this explosive movement and the protests and riots—otherwise known as direct actions—that defined it (Taylor, 2016: 256). As the uprising commanded the world's attention, groups and individuals associated themselves with Black Lives Matter in a range of ways: from organizing and participating in direct actions, to offering material support and advocacy, to appropriating and profiting from the movement. In this chaotic manner, the many organizations that fell under the umbrella of Black Lives Matter—whether self-described or perceived as such—came to represent a broad array of political views and tactics irreducible to a bounded organization or political philosophy.

This article focuses on the abolitionist impulse of the Black Lives Matter movement, which I situate in an uninterrupted history of black freedom struggles. This tradition of abolition is an unfinished project to dismantle the architectures of racial capitalism—it is

not an end but is rather an ongoing “struggle over the terms of the future” (Davis, 2003; Haley, 2018: 16; Robinson, 2000). Organizations focused on the abolition of prisons and policing are the gravitational center of the contemporary abolition movement. These organizations resist institutionalization or accommodation to capitalism. Furthermore, they often refuse a sharp or moralistic distinction between protest and riot, as they reject the terms of state-sanctioned modes of engagement and discourse (Walcott, 2021).

In framing this article, I return to the scene at the Golden 1 Arena where the disruption of the King’s game was in progress. I consider the emotionally charged question of what possible connection there was between blocking entry to this arena and Stephon Clark’s murder. Such transgressions of private space in direct action—whether read as protest or riot—emerge consistently and provocatively in abolitionist movement. Challenging divisions between public and private, state and not-state, these transgressions and their surrounding discourse in Sacramento are challenges to think through what abolition requires. I approach these challenges by asking the following questions: what ideologies lend property legitimacy as a relationship to space? How do abolitionist movements undermine this legitimacy? What kind of social life does property require and what alternative forms of social life emerge in its abolitionist contestations?

To answer these questions, I visit three direct actions in Sacramento in 2018, which I recount as an organizer and participant. I organized with the Sacramento chapter of the Black Lives Matter Global Network from 2016 until its dissolution in 2019. I was one of about 30 organizers in our predominantly black and queer collective. Our chapter took a leading role in organizing each of the actions considered here, among dozens of other direct actions and community events throughout the year. I draw from recorded notes about my experience at actions to develop an ethnography of these events and their larger movement. I also draw from informal recorded conversations with organizers reproduced with their permission.

I situate my methods in this piece within a broader argument about abolition geography as a methodological challenge. I follow Gilmore’s (2018) concept of abolition geography as a way of studying the world situated within a practice of world-making. I find abolition geography to demand engagement with mass movements in their everyday practices of abolition rather than just in their most visible actions. I further consider the need for abolition geography to demystify and expose common-sense ideas of order, authority, and the state by denaturalizing familiar categories of social life and scale. Finally, I consider the need for the methods of abolition geography to take affect seriously, engaging the felt experiences of oppression, freedom, love and care. In doing so, I argue that abolition geography must dispense with epistemological respectability politics that preclude radical ways of thinking and practicing liberation.

Stemming from my ethnographic work, I argue that disruptions to property are practices of abolition. Such transgressions expose and contest the maintenance of property as imperative to the state’s function as a vehicle for racial capitalism. In doing so, they lay bare the reproduction of property as a racial project that is always ongoing, incomplete, and unstable. These rejections of the sanctity of property threaten the state’s veneer of order and infallibility. Simultaneously, they transgress and denaturalize the forms of social life that property requires by practicing deviant forms of kinship and collectivity.

My theoretical framework to understand property, policing, and social life is unique in its centering of Cedric Robinson’s (2016) exposition on the concept of order. In *The Terms of Order: Political Science and the Myth of Leadership*, Robinson identifies order as an abstraction at the base of Western political thought. Distinguished by the routinization and

institutionalization of violence, this idea of order lends legitimacy to the forms of authority and hierarchy that Western political arrangements require.

Robinson's framework is under-explored in the geographic literature. Where Robinson focuses on the role of the terms of order in structuring political theory, I apply his ideas to think through order as an arrangement of space and social life. Robinson gestures towards this human geographic line of thought, posing that order can be understood not only in "lawfulness—in time" but also in "design—in place" (39, emphasis original). This brief gesture sparks many important questions about order as a spatial project. Approaching this line of inquiry, I find order to be an ideological base for geographies of property and policing and to be an entry point for their abolitionist contestations.

I bring Robinson's *Terms* into conversation with Gilmore's (2018) framework of abolition geography to understand disruptions to order as spatial practices of abolition. Read together, these frameworks reveal both the order required by racial capitalism and the place-making required by abolition as ongoing spatial processes. Each exerts an ideology that shapes space provisionally rather than completely or permanently. As such, hegemonic relationships of property are always vulnerable to abolitionist appropriations of space. These appropriations *desanctify property* by rejecting its material, ideological, and social dictates.

Enactments of race and property

The maintenance of space as property is always partial and incomplete. This maintenance requires an exertion and performance of ownership in space that is not a universal practice but is rather geographically and historically specific. Rooted in a colonial history, the making of property is perpetually reenacted as an act of conquest. This reproduction of property is central to maintaining the state's function as a vehicle for capital interests (Smith, 1992). Through processes of expropriation, partitioning, and policing, the maintenance of property entrenches the socio-spatial relationships necessary to racial capitalism (Blomley, 2003; Bonds, 2019; Melamed, 2011; Ranganathan, 2016). As such, property is more meaningfully thought as processual and relational rather than static or physical.

Ideologies of property and race are produced and maintained in concert with one another. Property rights in the United States originated as an "exclusively Euro-American faculty" imperative to colonialism and to a carceral economy based in plantation slavery (Camp, 2004; Goldstein, 2008: 839). The perpetuation of white supremacy and the maintenance of property continue to coincide in their necessity for extreme yet routinized violence to discipline the movements of non-white bodies (McKittrick, 2013; Singh, 2014; Walcott, 2021). As such, whiteness and property share a "common premise—a conceptual nucleus—of a right to exclude" maintained through policing (Harris, 1993: 1714). As whiteness reproduces itself through regimes of property, racial concepts can "evolve, transform, and shift" as necessary to uphold these systems of ownership (Bhandar, 2018; Omi and Winant, 1994: 3).

Property, policing, and the terms of order

For Robinson (2016), an idea of order is the basic unit of Western political thought and is foundational to its forms of social life and power. Order is imagined as a quality of civilized life that must be perpetually protected from attack or regression. The terms of order demand a faith in the legitimacy of existing hierarchies of power to protect against these threats. Order is both an ideology and an aesthetic, a process and a product. It is reproduced visually through the physical parceling of space, the signifying of its appropriate uses, and the

discipline of out of order bodies and behaviors. Its ideological terms and their physical manifestations generate “the outlines of social reality” just as they obscure other possible socio-spatial arrangements (Robinson, 2016: 4). These terms of order underly the concept of property as the only rational and civilized relationship to space.

The image of a “thin blue line” between order and chaos has characterized policing in the United States for decades and has gained recent cachet in Blue Lives Matter discourse (Wall, 2020). The representation of order as ideologically neutral thinly obscures the racialized worldviews that underly it. This idea of order holds together an array of ideologies inherent to the dictates of whiteness and property. As such, the maintenance of order by police is a fundamentally racial project. Police represent themselves not simply as law enforcement, but rather as arbiters of law *and* order, and by extension, civilized life itself. Their imperative to subdue racial threats in the name of order both precedes and exceeds the letter of the law.

Property and social life

The material forms of order and property are maintained not only by infrastructures of violence, but also by hegemonic forms of social life and ideology (Blomley, 2003). These forms of belief and behavior are more foundational to perpetuating property than the brute force of the state. As such, property is less physical than it is metaphysical, as it relies on a shared consciousness and observation of its legitimacy (Harris, 2020). Property coheres as a set of spatial expectations that are rooted in whiteness and protected by law.

Beyond a way of knowing and navigating the outside world, notions of property prescribe understandings of selfhood and social life. The maintenance and transmission of property solidify the gender roles and family structures that perpetuate capitalism (Cooper, 2017; Federici, 2004). These structures require the preservation of normative contours between body, home, and community (Smith, 1992). For Harris (2020), these factors produce an “intimate affective tie” that unites property with identity (9). Thielen-Wilson (2018) further demonstrates that affronts to property relationships are felt to threaten white subjectivity itself. As a mediating factor of individuality and social life, property is foundational to the felt experience of race and space.

Property interrupted: Black social movement and collective life

Disruptions to order and property, both on their physical and ideological planes, have been an enduring practice in black freedom struggles. Just as a facade of order is maintained visually in space through physical boundaries, demonstrations that transgress, disrupt, or destroy these artificial partitions are among the most provocative and visually arresting tactics of protest. Indeed, the transgression of property relationships represents the point of departure from respectable to criminal forms of direct action. These ruptures reveal the contingencies and limits of the exertion of ownership over space, as the materiality of property balks in the face of transgressive forms of social life and movement.

Everyday collective uses of space affront the sanctity of property relationships just as surely as protests and riots. Practicing mutual aid and communal life outside the confines of the home, these practices subvert the forms and scales of care and social reproduction condoned by the state (Tyner, 2007; Woods, 1998). In doing so, they threaten the state’s mythology of property as a totalizing relationship to space and as a container for social life. J. Edgar Hoover’s portrayal of the Black Panther Party’s free breakfast program as “the greatest threat to the internal security of the country” in 1968 is especially illustrative of this perceived menace (Churchill and Vander Wall, 1990: 123; Heynen, 2009). Indeed, non-

traditional structures of family and care that are common in black communities are consistently treated by the state as a threat to its ideological fabric (Frazier, 2001; McKinney, 2018; Moynihan, 1965).

In considering the non-traditional family structures and support systems of marginalized black people, Cohen (2004) identifies queer life practices and systems of care that can mobilize a “politics of deviance” against disciplined forms of social life. She finds hope for such a politics in criminalized forms of autonomy and collectivity that reflect the “creativity, adaptability, and transformative possibilities” of black queer social configurations (36). Here, queer social life is not restricted to the social life of self-identified queer individuals, but rather includes non-normative forms of kinship more broadly. Bailey (2014) elaborates on how black queer kinship systems engender support and care within the hostility of urban space as they refashion the meaning of family and home. Such collective appropriations of space subvert the regimes of ownership that arbitrate social life through gendered norms of family and community.

Notes on abolition geography as method

For Gilmore (2018), abolition geography is a way of studying situated within a context of relationship building, social movement, and reimagined ways of being in the world—or, “worlding ourselves.” These contours resonate with Joy James’ assertion that “our capacity to continuously define ourselves, to rebel, and most importantly to love . . . anchors us into the real world and changes the world simultaneously” (Decolonial Feminist Collective, 2021, emphasis added). For both Gilmore and James, self-definition and the transformation of social life are central to the ideological work of revolution. Encouraged by these thinkers, I offer notes on abolition geography as method as they guide this and future work.

Building theory through social movement

Through a grounding in social movement organizing, scholarship can better theorize abolition as constructive towards new social architectures and spatial ideologies, rather than simply destructive of existing ones. Basing scholarship in the demands and questions of social movement counteracts a tendency in academic thought to morbidly reproduce blackness as injury and lack (McKittrick, 2011; Woods, 2002). Such an integration between scholarship and social movement has distinguished black intellectual traditions in which study is itself a practice of revolution (Kelley, 2016; Marable, 2011; Quan, 2013).

Finding abolitionist possibilities in everyday life

Foregrounding the everyday practices of abolitionist organizing counteracts a false understanding of social movement as defined by spectacular instances of protest rather than sustained by ongoing infrastructures of care and transgression. Within the ever-present context of premature death, everyday practices of collectivity, mutual aid, and the sustenance of life form the base of social movement and are crucial sites of inquiry (Kelley, 1990; Onaci, 2020; Woods, 1998). Each of these practices are “provisional life-ways” that distinguish and materialize abolition geographies (Gilmore, 2018).

Attuning to affect

Arguing for the abolition of property, Walcott (2021) identifies places that “Black people feel, deep in their bones . . . should not exist” (31). Conversely, Gilmore (2018) identifies

unboundedness—as it is felt and desired—as revealing places of abolitionist possibility. In each case, affect underlies knowledge of what revolution must be for and against. Taking affect seriously can mean considering sites of extreme reactivity as analytically important. I find that the diametrically opposed felt experiences surrounding protest and riot are a crucible through which abolition can be learned.

Revealing forgeries in the familiar

INCITE! (2007) encourages scholars to work towards demystifying the state—especially, as Rodríguez (2007) emphasizes, in its common-sense ideas of law and order. Such work is central to abolition geography, as countless familiar ideas—including justice, security, freedom, gender, family, and community—must be revealed for their forgeries. This method is exemplified in Cedric Robinson’s approach to exposing the myths that underly sites of authority and order (Edwards, 2016; Quan, 2013). Robinson reveals common-sense categories as fabrications while uncovering already-existing revolutionary alternatives. Similarly, Smith (1992) applies a geographic approach to exposing standard units and scales of social life, identifying the power structures behind them, and considering the radical possibilities of their abrogation.

Cohen (2004) and Spade (2015) elaborate on the possibilities for queer life and thought to unsettle dominant ways of knowing and naming social categories. For Cohen (2004), queer and deviant ways of life seize a “definitional power” to counter hegemonic myths of how society must be structured. She poses that these myths operate under the “guise of some normal or natural order to life” (33) and that unsettling them means “redefining the rules of normality that limit the dreams, emotions, and acts of most people” (38). Spade (2015) elaborates upon how this power to redefine and unsettle common ideas of social life is necessary to trans survival and community, revealing the violent forgeries of “normal life” as it is commonly circumscribed.

A year of protest

Vigil—19 March 2018—Meadowview light rail

On the evening of 19 March 2018, a vigil was held to respond to the murder of Stephon Clark. The night before, Stephon had been hunted by city police officers assisted by a county sheriff’s helicopter, purportedly in response to vandalism. He was shot 20 times in his back and side outside of the house he shared with his grandmother and her husband. The police who shot him claimed to have mistaken his iPhone for a gun.

The vigil was held at the Meadowview Light Rail Station, blocks away from Stephon Clark’s home. It was a gathering of family, friends, community leaders, clergy, media, and frequent attendees of protests in Sacramento. Those who knew Stephon mourned and were prayed over by clergy, while others stood quietly along the sidewalk with protest signs. For some who attended—whether to grieve, stand in solidarity, or get a story for local media—grappling with what had happened went alongside grappling with *where* it had happened. The fact that Stephon Clark was outside of his own residence, his grandparent’s home, trying to get inside, made the murder especially shocking. And for some who weren’t from the area, the fact was appalling that a sheriff’s helicopter was involved in tracking down Stephon Clark. For others, the routine presence of police helicopters or “ghetto birds” in Meadowview was no surprise, but a fact of life. One circled the vigil where we stood.

The impossibility of black ownership in space. Following Stephon's murder, his step-grandfather, Tommy Thompson, made the following statement:

Never would I have thought I could be murdered in my own home by the police. The home I paid for isn't safe from the police and any of those bullets could have taken my life with Stephon. This is not why I worked hard all of my life. (Lewis, 2019)

His words demonstrate that the set of expectations that define property ownership unravel in black places, where walls are entirely permeable to the force of the state. The physical markers of his home space emerged as immaterial compared to the ideologies that unite whiteness and property as mutually constitutive. Black ownership emerges in these thought systems as at least a contradiction and at most an existential threat to the terms of order that property is meant to maintain.

The state performs the invalidity of black ownership in space with little nuance on a regular basis. The deployment of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams to crush walls and batter doors in black homes is a routine, hyper-visible tactic of policing (Davis, 1990). The use of helicopters for close range surveillance in black neighborhoods further reproduces the immateriality of black property ownership. The helicopters that hunted Stephon Clark and attended every gathering in response to his death undermined any idea of privacy, safety, or autonomy. As an occupying force in private and public spaces alike, such a blanket of armed state presence negates the expectations afforded by property ownership.

Turn up for Stephon Clark—22 March 2018—City Hall, I-5 highway, Golden 1 Arena

On the afternoon of 22 March, demonstrators began to gather outside of City Hall for a protest publicized as *Turn Up for Stephon Clark*. Two days before, many of us had attended the City Council meeting in this building, demanding answers and commitments to action from the city. At the meeting, the Chief of Police had dispassionately reported the official narrative of the events of the night of 18 March. Predictably, he stated that the officers had feared for their lives, so much so that they handcuffed him after shooting him (City of Sacramento, 2018).

As the group grew to hundreds, demonstrators took turns speaking on bull horns and began to lead chants. By 5:30, the protest began to move towards the I-5 highway. After heading up the northbound ramp, we overtook both sides of the highway. As rush hour traffic backed up in either direction, intensity and emotion built. Somewhere in the crowd, the idea originated to move to the Golden 1 Arena several blocks away. The idea quickly gained enthusiastic collective approval, as word spread that an NBA game between the Sacramento Kings and the Atlanta Hawks was about to tip off.

We moved from the highway, allowing traffic to resume, and marched to the Golden 1 Arena. As we locked arms around the stadium, security personnel locked the large glass doors from the inside and stared out. Protesters began to chant, as a call and response: "Who are the Kings playin' tonight? No one!" Fans became animated and violent, as some tried to fight their way through the protest line. Confusion and anger boiled as they faced off with protesters.

Property and individuality. Where the highway blockage was met relatively quietly and with some show of support, the scene at the Golden 1 Arena was charged and hostile. Barring entry to the arena seemed to be taken as a personal attack by many who planned to attend the game, even as there were hundreds of others in the same situation. Shouted arguments

between fans and protesters revealed dramatically opposed—but similarly intense—felt experiences of the action. For protesters, rage boiled in collectivity alongside a feeling of triumph in people power and joy in transgression. In contrast, many fans experienced this disruption to property as a senseless and obscene transgression that threatened their very subjectivity. Even those who professed support for Black Lives Matter argued that this was one step too far.

From my place in the line, I was especially impressed by the words of one individual—a white man who shouted and gesticulated that this was not what he had fought for in Vietnam. His words epitomized the way that this attack was felt on a personal level. For him, the ability to access the arena was intertwined with his identity as an American and a patriot. His individuality was mediated through this expectation of access to space. Freedom, for him, meant the personal freedom to go into this arena.

Despite the insistence by fans that this action was nonsensical, the symbolism of the arena as an architecture of power was felt and intuited—even if not readily explained—by many protestors. In fact, the history of the arena, the I-5 highway, and their surrounding area is directly linked to the structural racism and militarized policing that characterize Stephon Clark's Meadowview neighborhood. The relationships between these places are upheld by the ongoing racialized production and maintenance of property in the city.

A microcosm of dispossession. The space that the I-5 highway and the Golden 1 Arena occupy has been central to the entrenchment of whiteness as property in Sacramento. The portion of I-5 blocked by protesters was built in the 1950s through the destruction of what was then called as an “ethnic enclave” (Joo, 2018). This enclave, the West End, was an integrated and economically independent neighborhood when it was claimed and razed by the city for commercial development and highway construction. This practice of urban renewal caused an exodus of non-white people to neighborhoods such as Meadowview that lacked racially restrictive contracts. The new stretch of I-5 connected white suburbs to the redeveloped employment and commercial center on the West End's footprint (Hernandez, 2009). In 2015, the Golden 1 Arena was constructed in this same footprint through a \$255 million city subsidy, driving rapid displacement and gentrification in the area (Hooks, 2017).

The flow of the protest from City Hall, to I-5, to the Golden 1 Arena, traced these waves of dispossession, and in doing so, blurred the line between public and private space. Where rallying at City Hall alone could be read as a straightforward demand for equal protection under law, the move to the Golden 1 Arena spoke to the impossibility of this by connecting black dispossession to the basic function of capitalism. The chant, “Who are the Kings playin' tonight? No one!” disrupted the enshrined status of property as control over space while claiming an alternative form of agency in collectivity.

Happy birthday to the fence—20 September 2018—District attorney's office

The week after the Golden 1 Shutdown, our chapter began holding weekly protests at the District Attorney's office to demand charges for the officers who killed Stephon Clark. The protests were meant to bring attention to the failure of the DA to charge officers in any of the cases of murder by police since she took office. They continued for the 11 months until the decision not to charge was announced. These actions involved barbecuing, playing music, and holding signs in front of the office. About a month into the protests, on 20 April, the DA's office put up a rent-a-fence around the complex. Protests continued, and

adorning the fence became a regular part of the ritual. On 20 September, we threw a five-month birthday party for the fence, complete with cake, lawn games, and performances.

My conversations with attendees of the fence's birthday party revealed that connecting property to policing is intuitive; the fact that police protect property over the people is almost a truism. The fence, to many, symbolized white fear of black people and black political consciousness as a threat to white property. Like the police themselves, the fence represented a form of oppression that black people had to pay for through tax dollars. Still, attendees of the birthday party expressed some affection for the fence. One organizer stated, "at first it was a middle finger to the community, now the fence has a positive symbol—it gives us a platform." Another added, "we've decorated the fence, we're going to feed the fence, we've built a relationship with the fence . . . we're here to get healing and joy."

The fragility of order and the joy of sacrilege. After five months of existence, the fence emerged not only as a symbol of continued dispossession in the black community, but also as a fond presence. It offered comic relief, as decorating it with signs made it easy to satirize and subvert. It provided a blatant and tangible symbol of the frailty of property relationships and the expectations that uphold them. The maintenance of property emerged as fragile and porous, much like the rent-a-fence itself.

In addition to rendering the fence absurd as a physical presence, this celebration also transgressed the disciplined forms of social life that property requires. Sharing food with those living on the streets and practicing collective forms of care were themselves a threat to the partitioning of social space that the terms of order demand. Rejecting the hegemonic boundaries that circumscribe community, care, and family, such deviant collectivity is especially sacrilegious to regimes of property. Rejecting property both as a relationship to space and as a relationship to one another was a cause for celebration at the fence's birthday party.

Conclusion

Over months of revolt in Sacramento, both mass protests and mundane practices of collectivity disrupted the social life of property in the city. They challenged a militant police force that had stewarded interconnected processes of dispossession, racial partitioning, and state-sanctioned death. From blocking access to the Golden 1 arena to satirizing the rent-a-fence surrounding the District Attorney's office, these actions revealed that the power of property to dictate movement relies not only on police power but also on social convention. Participants in these actions refused to uphold the customs that maintain property as an inviolable relationship to space and social life. Such irreverence, I argue, desanctifies property by rejecting it as common sense and unveiling its underlying myths.

Such a healthy disregard towards property falls within a larger abolitionist project to denormalize and overhaul the most familiar arrangements of social life. In thinking through this imperative, I have considered the role of abolition geography as a way of study and action that reimagines social life outside of the violent bounds maintained by and for racial capitalism. In doing so, it practices the kinds of redefinition and transformation of both individuality and togetherness that are central to the work of revolution. By contesting arrangements of property and their attendant terms of order, abolition geography invites us to step into different ways of relating to each other and to the spaces through which we move. Such a practice of study and action means living, imagining, and building our world differently using the abundant resources we have in one another.

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