

Educational work beyond carceral logics

Stereoscopic engagements with
educational philosophy and abolitionism

Maggie Beth O'Neill



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Abstract

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Schools are often burdened with solving societal problems. The way in which these problems are defined by society influences the approaches taken to address them and informs how the work and purpose of schools is understood. In Sweden, one such problem that has received increasing attention in recent years is crime. This dissertation addresses the educational implications of such developments. Framing schools in relation to crime is made possible through carceral logics, which are the taken-for-granted ways of thinking that criminalization, the police, and criminal justice are reasonable solutions to societal issues. The work of this dissertation can be understood as paying attention to the conditions under which education may or may not happen within and beyond carceral logics. This dissertation takes its starting point in the assumption that, if we are concerned about the educational potential of schools, we need to be able to account for the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics within schools. Using a stereoscopic approach that considers both educational philosophy and abolitionism, this dissertation explores the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics within schools through educational-philosophical inquiry. This dissertation argues that educational possibilities are limited in a school of crime prevention and police involvement and proposes how education could be made possible through educational work beyond crime prevention and police involvement. Furthermore, this dissertation imagines practices beyond carceral logics in schools and discusses new possibilities for educational work. The overall contribution of this dissertation offers an argument for what might be educationally lost when the school is framed in relation to crime and imagines beyond the societal demands such a framing

imposes. Ultimately, the arguments in this dissertation are discussed through a theorization of educational work beyond carceral logics.

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Part I: Setting the scene to explore
and imagine beyond carceral logics
in Swedish schools

Chapter 1 Introduction

Schools are often burdened with solving societal problems. The way in which these problems are defined by society influences the approaches taken to address them and informs how the work and purpose of schools is understood. In Sweden, one such problem that has received increasing attention in recent years is crime. This dissertation addresses the educational implications of such developments. This introductory chapter sets the scene for the entire dissertation and guides the reader toward its aim and research questions, as well as their justification. The chapter begins by introducing the policy context of crime prevention and crime reporting in schools and how these matters have been considered in previous research. Following this, I briefly introduce the concepts and the approach that form the inquiry that I conduct in this dissertation. Ultimately, the aim and research questions are introduced, alongside some reflections on their justification, as well as a brief outline of how the dissertation is organized.

Schools and crime in a policy context

Over the past several years, there have been a variety of reports and government proposals that consider the school through its relationship to crime. These documents reveal important insights into how crime shapes understandings of the school. A recent report from the Swedish National Agency for Education (in Swedish *Skolverket*) emphasizes the role that schools play in preventing crime (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2023). This report refers to the Swedish Criminal Code's definition of crime, which is an act that is described in the criminal code or in another act of law or statute and for which a penalty stated in the code is provided (Swedish Code of Statutes 1962:700 Chapter 1 section 1). While the age of criminal responsibility in Sweden is 15 years old (Swedish Code of Statutes 1962:700 Chapter 1 section 6), the report goes on to note that as of 2023, an act can be considered a crime even if the child cannot be sentenced to penalty or sanction (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2023). In addition to referring to the Criminal Code, the report also recognizes that the question of what constitutes a crime is complex in relation to children and young people and that there are different ideas and philosophies around the question of crime. So, while

the report recognizes the complexity of defining children's behavior through notions of crime, the school is nonetheless supposed to help prevent crime.

An additional report, from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (in Swedish *Brå*) (2024), suggests that, while the number of reports to the police concerning serious violence in schools has increased, there is “no apparent increase in the prevalence of serious violence in schools over the past 15 years” (p. 8). A related report, from the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare (in Swedish *Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), emphasizes cooperation between schools, social services, the police, and the free-time sector (i.e., youth centers and youth organizations). This report further highlights the way in which school is viewed both as a place of crime prevention and as a place where crime occurs, which includes the need to cooperate with the police. There is no formal legislation that determines when a school should report incidents to the police, except in cases when the school has confiscated stolen goods, drugs, doping substances, knives and other weapons, or hazardous goods from students (Swedish Code of Statutes 2010: 800 Chapter 5 section 23). In cases where incidents are reported to the police, it is the principal who carries the responsibility for doing so (Swedish Code of Statutes 2010: 800 Chapter 5 section 23). The principal is also responsible for order in their school (not including adult education) (Education Act 2010: 800 Chapter 5 section 5), and is obliged to investigate the circumstances surrounding any alleged abuse in the school (Swedish Code of Statutes 2010: 800 Chapter 6 section 10). As of April 1, 2025, schools and other public institutions are required to disclose certain information to the police and other law enforcement agencies (Government bill 2024/25:65). This further demonstrates the increasing tendency to connect the work of the school to the work of the police.

The recent government report *Schools Against Crime (Skolor mot brott)* (Swedish Government Official Report, 2024:17) includes suggestions for changes to be made in the Swedish Education Act (Swedish Code of Statutes, 2010:800). The recommendations in *Schools Against Crime* seek to counter crime and increase security in schools. Similarly to the reports mentioned above, the school is described as a common place where crime occurs. The report states that criminal behavior can be defined in different ways, including though not limited to, *an order problem, an offense, bullying, and discrimination (som ett internt ordningsproblem, en kränkning, mobbning, och en diskrimineringsgrund*, p. 121). According to the report, the primary purpose of a police report is to ensure the incident can be investigated by the police and eventually lead to a *criminal justice response (straffrättslig reaktion*, p. 251). This

report gives further indications of how the current political context criminalizes student behavior in schools.

Moreover, the report *Schools Against Crime* (Swedish Government Official Report, 2024:17) also emphasizes the important role played by schools in preventing future crime. The justification for police conducting body searches and the police's role in crime prevention are also mentioned in the report. In addition to this, it has been suggested that a new Chapter 5 be added to the Education Act, establishing the school system as an area of crime prevention through the implementation of different tasks. This would give schools both the opportunity and obligation to work on certain security issues (p. 276). *Schools Against Crime* is a lengthy report that details numerous ways in which schools and their work are to be understood in terms of crime, but this is not limited to recommendations for changing the Education Act. The report also makes recommendations for changes to the curriculum across education levels, from preschool to adult education.

The report describes how current curriculum for Swedish schools begin with a section entitled “Fundamental values and mission of the school,” which describes the fundamental values that Swedish schools are said to embody. The *Schools Against Crime* report suggests an addition to the description of these values. Currently, the curriculum for all school levels states: “Education should convey and instill respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based” (Swedish Government Official Report, 2024:17, p. 46, my translation). The suggestion made in the report is to add the phrase “education should convey and establish respect for the laws and other rules that apply in the community” (Swedish Government Official Report, 2024:17, p. 37)¹. This recommendation reveals an increasing shift towards a discourse more oriented toward law and order. But this discourse is not the same as that which has been noted in recent educational research in Sweden regarding the juridification of education. The juridification of education discourse refers to how issues in schools have increasingly been understood in legal terms and actions related to a legal discourse (Novak, 2019; Rosén et al., 2020). One aspect of this is a greater emphasis on rights and legal responsibilities in schools. (Hammarén et al., 2015; Lindgren et al., 2021; Rosén et al., 2020). The above suggestion for a change in the curriculum here can thus be interpreted as law and order via a relation to crime. The report *Schools Against Crime* and the other reports mentioned

1 In Swedish the full sentence is “Utbildningen ska förmedla och förankra respekt för de mänskliga rättigheterna, de grundläggande demokratiska värderingar som det svenska samhället vilar på *samt de lagar och andra regler som gäller i samhället*”.

above indicate a shift towards placing greater emphasis on the school's role in relation to crime.

Schools and crime in a research context

The relation between schools and crime in the policy context can also be seen in current research. Academic research has problematized the ways in which the school is an important institution for crime prevention in Sweden (Sandahl, 2016, 2021; Vainik & Kassman, 2018; Wahlgren, 2014). However, this consideration of schools as actors in local crime-prevention work is a recent phenomenon (Lunneblad, 2022). In recent years, behaviors like disruptiveness, bullying, and violence have increasingly been treated as crimes (Hammarén et al., 2015; Odenbring et al., 2019; Lunneblad et al., 2019). When such behavior in schools becomes classified as crimes, the behavior of students become a matter for the police rather than a question about pedagogical relations (Odenbring et al., 2019). Consequently, in several municipalities in Sweden, police and local authorities have created joint action plans to handle situations in schools where “there is reason to believe a crime has been committed” (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019, p. 75). Frequently, an incident of physical violence is followed by the filing of police reports and includes filling out a pre-printed form (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019).

Characterizing the work of schools in relation to crime is not, however, without tension. Interviews with school professionals indicate that they feel “great pressure” to report incidents to the police, and that this creates a conflict for them (Odenbring et al., 2019, p. 1018). School professionals display ambivalence regarding how to respond to violence and other problematic behavior in their schools (Odenbring et al., 2019). According to Odenbring et al. (2019), the “relational and pedagogical discourse is clearly in conflict with a legal discourse” (p. 1018). Furthermore, school professionals believe that dealing with problems in the school should begin with a pedagogical and relational approach and are skeptical of framing issues in terms of discrimination, harassment, or crime (Odenbring et al., 2019).

Despite the political push for increased cooperation between schools and the police, there is disagreement between them about how this cooperation should look (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). Lunneblad and Johansson (2019) suggest that the act of filing a police report creates a dilemma because, while doing so could serve as a sign of support for the victim, it could also be considered a sign of pedagogical failure. This dilemma leads to the question: “where should we draw

the line between social pedagogical work and police work, between education and crime?” (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019, p. 82). These tensions and questions hint towards the educational implications of when schools are considered in relation to crime. In this research, we can see that there is a tension between what is understood to be the work of the school and what is understood to be the work of the police. Thus, we can see that there is something important at stake for practices in schools when the work of the school becomes connected to notions of crime and the police. The overall contribution of this dissertation offers an argument for what might be educationally lost when the school is framed in relation to crime, and imagines beyond the societal demands such a framing imposes.

While the research described above suggests that there are educational implications when the school is considered in relation to crime, I suggest that the analysis of the educational implications in previous research is limited because it does not problematize carceral logics as such. Carceral logic is a mindset based on punishment and control; a mindset “that suggests criminalization is the best paradigm to organize human life and solve social problems” (Coyle & Nagel, 2022, p. 1). To further understand the educational implications of when schools are framed in relation to crime, the ways in which carceral logics inform educational possibilities needs to be further problematized. This leads me to an explanation of how carceral logics, abolition, and the educational are considered in this dissertation. It is necessary to already here elaborate on these concepts, as they are what inform my exploration.

Carceral logics

Before describing how carceral logics are considered in this dissertation, I first provide a background description of how these logics are conceptualized across different disciplines. Carceral logics² as a term has been taken up within the fields of criminology, sociology, political science, education, law, political theory, women’s studies, and more. In their formal manifestations, carceral logics are the logics that organize institutions like the police, prisons, the legal system, through a punishment and control mindset (Coyle & Nagel, 2022; Gruen & Marceau, 2022; Lopez, 2022). These logics foreground criminalization, surveillance, and

2 In different literature, the singular form (logic) and the plural form (logics) are both used. I choose to use “logics” because I consider it to be more encompassing, but when referencing a specific text, I use the form that appears in that reference.

imprisonment as central to public safety (Lopez, 2022). Carceral logics therefore can be understood as the logics that justify the operations of criminal justice systems. State institutions that enforce carceral logics include, though not limited to, the police, courts, prisons, and other centers of detention.

Further, Coyle and Nagel (2022) argue that carceral logic contributes to “control and punishment regimes” that have furthered the “colonial, racializing and capitalist agendas of dominant nation states (especially European ones)” (Coyle & Nagel, 2022, p. 3). In a similar vein, Wang (2018) argues that carceral techniques of the state are formed by and work together with the goals of global capitalism. Additionally, Lopez (2022) suggests that rather than merely reflecting an unjust criminal legal system along racial lines, carceral logic reinforces it. That is, carceral logics work to uphold larger structures of oppression through creating the justifications for criminalizing and punishing those who fall outside of what is viewed as ideal or productive within colonial, racist, and capitalist systems. In this way, carceral logics are not only to be understood as concerning crime and criminal justice but are logics that function in tandem with larger structures of oppression.

An additional scholar who has foregrounded the concept of the carceral is Michel Foucault (1977) in his well-known publication *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Foucault (1977) describes “the carceral” in numerous ways: as in the form of carceral archipelago, carceral network, carceral regime, carceral mechanisms, carceral methods, carceral circles, carceral system, carceral apparatus(es), carceral action, carceral transformation, carceral machinery, carceral system, carceral institution, carceral net, carceral continuity, carceral pyramid, carceral continuum, carceral texture, and carceral city. His work is often cited in literature that engages with different aspects of carceral logics (e.g., Ben-Moshe, 2020; Coyle, 2018; Lemos, 2022; Davis et al., 2022). However, his work has been criticized for not adequately taking gender and race into account in his history of punishment and the prison (Davis, 2006; James, 1996). Joy James (1996) argues that Foucault (1977) “contributes to the erasure of racist violence” (p. 24). According to James (1996), Foucault (1977) ignores racist and sexist state violence and colonial violence, and this, she contends, limits the extent to which his work offers “theoretical resources for resistance to U.S. state violence” (p. 42). I return to this critique shortly.

There are also more subtle and informal manifestations of carceral logics. Informal expressions of carceral logic are found in ideologies and practices that inform education (Coyle & Nagel, 2022; Meiners, 2014; Rudolph, 2023). Educational scholar and teacher educator Carla Shalaby, describes carceral logics

as the “normalized and seemingly commonsense ideas, practices, behaviors, and ways of being and thinking that have been shaped—often unconsciously or invisibly—by a commitment to punishment, imprisonment, exclusion, and disposability” (2021, p. 110). Also writing within the field of education, Strayhorn (2021) argues that schools reproduce and reify carceral logics through practices rooted in punishment, surveillance, and coercion. One example of the normalization of carceral logic in schools, according to Lopez (2022), is the idea that the police are positive mentors and role models who should be used in schools. Carceral logic brings “unnecessary policing and criminal punishment” (p. 390) into areas of life that lie beyond “the traditional criminal sphere” (Lopez, 2022, p. 390). Carceral logics can be seen in the reports, proposals, and research that was introduced at the beginning of the dissertation. Logics make certain practices and regimes possible (Glynos & Howarth, 2008) and taken into the context of the school, carceral logics make certain practices in and around the school possible.

In the case of this dissertation, carceral logics can be understood as the taken-for-granted ways of thinking that criminalization, the police, and criminal justice are reasonable solutions to societal issues. These logics can be understood as what makes it possible to frame the school in relation to crime, which also makes certain practices possible within schools, by providing the motivations and assumptions that such a framing requires. That is, it is carceral logics that make it possible to situate the work of the school within the carceral order. By carceral order, I mean the organization of society through criminalization and a reliance upon the police and criminal justice. Gruen and Marceau (2022) claim that carceral logics shape “our understanding and analyses of social problems and solutions” (Gruen & Marceau 2022, p. 4). Therefore, carceral logics inform not only practices in schools, but also how we are able to reflect upon, analyze, or imagine beyond these practices. The ways in which carceral logics make certain questions and practices possible can be seen, for example, in the question: “where should we draw the line between social pedagogical work and police work, between education and crime?” (Lunneblad and Johansson, 2019, p. 82). In this question, what distinguishes pedagogical work from police work, and education from crime, can be understood as the point of interest, where police work and crime are understood as legitimate, yet distinguishable from what Lunneblad and Johansson (2019) refer to as social pedagogical work and education. Inquiries that follow this kind of question are based upon an assumption that takes the police and crime for granted. This question and type of inquiry makes sense within a framework of carceral logics,

but this leaves these logics *as* carceral logics invisible and unproblematized in such research. This is perhaps not very strange, given the way in which society in general takes these logics and their manifestations for granted; however, in this dissertation, I start from a place that questions these commonsense assumptions.

The problem that carceral logics pose for schools is not only that these logics are embedded in larger structures of imperialism, sexism, and racism (Coyle & Nagel, 2022), but also that they limit what it is possible to inquire into when they are at play. Because the Swedish research described above does not problematize the ideas of crime or the police as such, I suggest that its questions and conclusions function within a framework of carceral logics and therefore cannot inform us about the educational implications of and beyond these logics *themselves*. In other words, this research does not account for the educational implications of framing schools in relation to crime because it cannot account for the framing itself, or perceive beyond it. One way to account for these carceral logics is to problematize and imagine beyond them through abolitionism. I turn there now.

Abolitionism

To explore the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics, this dissertation draws on abolitionism. I detail aspects of abolition already in this introduction chapter because it is crucial to understand the ways in which abolitionism works both as a problematization of, and as an imagining beyond, carceral logics. It is this problematization and imagining beyond that make the exploration of this dissertation possible.

The abolitionist thought and practice that I draw upon in this dissertation is sometimes called prison abolition, penal abolition, prison-industrial-complex³ abolition, or police abolition. James (2022) contends that “abolitionism does not exist in the singular form: abolitionism comes with an ‘s’” (p. 199). While abolitionist theory and practice vary greatly (Shelby, 2022), the form of “abolitionism” upon which I draw on can be understood as the approaches that problematize, challenge, and imagine beyond carceral logics and their manifestations across society. So, while in the following paragraphs I will use the

3 The term “prison industrial complex” has been used by scholars and activists to highlight that the increases in prison populations have been driven by “ideologies of racism and the pursuit of profit” (Davis, 2003, p. 84). The “notion of a prison industrial complex insists on understandings of the punishment process that take into account economic and political structures and ideologies” (Davis, 2003, p. 84).

language employed by the scholars I am referencing, I myself use the word “abolition” to signify a form of abolition that encompasses all these abolitionisms⁴.

Penal abolition “rejects the ‘criminal justice’ paradigm” (Coyle, 2018, p. 81) and “contests that the *raison d’être* of ‘criminal justice’ is public safety and justice” (p. 81)⁵. Notably, penal abolition does not call for reform but instead “historicizes ‘criminal justice’ as a tool of white supremacy, colonialism, heterosexism, and the numerous forms of patriarchal capitalist hierarchy/advantaging” (p. 81). Penal abolition is about changing the logics and practices that are widely accepted within the criminal justice paradigm (Coyle, 2018). Abolition rejects the commonsense equating of justice to criminal justice and instead invites alternative understandings of justice and its implications (Kim, 2021). Taken together, abolition problematizes the criminalization, the reliance upon institutions of criminal justice (like the police, the criminal legal system, and prisons), and the notions of justice that comprise the carceral order. In chapters 4, 5, and 6, I further explore abolitionist thought regarding crime, the police, and responses to violence to explore the educational implications of carceral logics.

The abolitionism I draw upon in this dissertation is largely informed by abolitionists based in the USA, which is where abolitionism emerged and is widely discussed. However, abolition has also been discussed in the Scandinavian context, perhaps most notably through the work of Norwegian sociologist Thomas Mathiesen. Mathiesen (2015) describes abolitionism as a stance—“an attitude of saying no” (p. 31). It is saying no to, among other things, “prisons and penal systems as human (and inhumane) solutions” (Mathiesen, 2015, p. 32). Mathiesen’s abolitionist academic work began in the 1960s and continued until his death in 2021, focusing primarily on prison and penal abolition. While the abolitionist movements in the USA and Scandinavia are not the same, they have both challenged the fundamental idea that prisons, and their logics, are valid and essential. This line of thinking enables us to explore educational implications beyond carceral logics.

Abolition is not only a problematization of the current carceral order, but rather abolition also goes beyond what is possible in carceral logics. Abolition seeks to build a form of justice that does not depend upon the carceral state and

4 Usually, in texts that discuss abolition, “abolition” is written in this form. Cabral (2024) notes the word “abolition/ism.” I use “abolition” and “abolitionism” somewhat interchangeably.

5 Although in this article, Coyle (2018) uses the term “criminal justice logic,” as opposed to “carceral logic” (as in Coyle & Nagel, 2022), I understand both to be a reference to the carceral order and interpret them as indicating more or less the same thing.

criminal justice institutions (Rodríguez, 2019). Abolition entails the creation of new democratic institutions (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018) and does not treat people as disposable (Cullors, 2019). One way in which this is done is through transformative justice, which challenges ideas that justice is something that can be achieved through criminal justice systems (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). Beyond challenging ideas of justice through imprisonment, transformative justice seeks to meet the needs of those who have been harmed; in part, by transforming the conditions under which harm occurs (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022; Davis et al., 2022; McLeod, 2019).

Transformative justice is more than just an alternative to a criminal justice system. Rather, it “challenges all aspects of authoritarianism, domination, and control within society today” (Nocella II, 2011). While I engage with an educational understanding of transformative justice in chapter 8, it is important to note that it has been practiced for generations in a variety of communities, notably in Indigenous communities, Black communities, immigrant communities, poor and low-income communities, communities of color, people with disabilities, sex workers, queer and trans communities (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022; Mingus, 2022). It is important to note this to be clear about the tradition and communities from which transformative justice has been practiced. In this dissertation, the transformative justice that is part of abolition provides a way to think beyond carceral logics.

In addition to drawing on transformative justice to imagine beyond carceral logics, I also draw on the work of abolitionist educators who have engaged with abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition. That is, abolitionist educators have engaged in the practices of abolition in the classroom and have taught abolition as subject matter (e.g., Barraclough, 2010; Jackson & Meiners, 2010; Rodríguez, 2010; Shalaby, 2021). This is an additional aspect of abolition that enables the exploration of educational implications beyond carceral logics. I discuss this further in chapter 7.

One reason why it is suitable to engage with abolition when considering carceral logics in schools emerges from the critiques of Foucault (1977) made by abolitionist scholars Angela Davis and Joy James. As mentioned above, both are critical of Foucault’s lack of consideration of state and colonial violence, particularly as enacted along racist and sexist lines (Davis, 2006; James, 1996). Understood in this way, following Foucault in an analysis of carceral logics would leave these aspects of carceral logics invisible. Furthermore, James (1996) contends that Foucault (1977) “fails to explore resistance to violence [which] seems to suggest that only social work is viable within the carceral” (p. 43). To my mind,

what James (1996) critiques here is Foucault's failure to go beyond carceral logics. These critiques of Foucault are important to me because, in engaging with abolitionism, this dissertation is rooted in a tradition of thought that does not obscure or erase racist and sexist (and more) state violence, and in a tradition that resists state violence and the carceral itself.

Within abolitionism there lies the idea that policing, criminalization, and prison systems are rooted in racism, cisheterosexism, classism, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, and colonialism (e.g., Ben-Moshe, 2020; Davis, 2003; Kaba, 2021; Purnell, 2021; Rodríguez, 2019). While I will not be analyzing the racism, cisheterosexism, etc. of specific carceral logics in terms of analytical categories, it is crucial to understand that these logics are understood as inseparable from these forms of oppression. Under an abolitionist understanding, to act within carceral logics is to act within these forms of oppression. The police, criminalization, and institutions of criminal justice are seen to reinforce oppression, and are understood as institutions and processes that enact forms of oppression because the police, criminalization, and prisons have historically worked to maintain and enforce alignment with a white, cishet, nondisabled, not poor (often property owning), man who is a legal citizen (e.g., Ben-Moshe, 2018; Davis, 2003; Kaba, 2021; Kaba & Ritchie, 2022; Purnell, 2021; Rodríguez, 2019).

Engaging with abolition brings into focus the reality that structures of oppression are always already embedded in the carceral order, while also offering a way to imagine beyond this order. I draw upon abolition to both problematize and imagine beyond carceral logics in schools, but problematizing and imagining beyond is not in itself an inquiry into the *educational* implications of and beyond these logics. Exploring the *educational* implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools requires an understanding of education as a phenomenon. I turn there now.

Considering the educational

Any attempt to explore the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools brings up the question of what is meant by *educational*. As educational scholar and philosopher of education Sharon Todd (2023) notes, “to ask why education matters, or what education is for, is to give a very specific direction and shape to what one thinks the purpose of education is” (p. 23). In this dissertation, I largely draw upon the following scholars within the field of philosophy of education: Sharon Todd, Gert Biesta, and Carl Anders Säfström. To my mind,

their work begins with, what Biesta (2012a) describes as, “educational issues rather than philosophical ones” (p. 3). That is, a significant amount of their scholarship concerns philosophizing and theorizing about what makes education *educational*. Their philosophical arguments provide me with the language in this dissertation to explore the *educational* implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools. Todd (2016a) views educational contexts not only as sites of application for philosophy but as sites of philosophizing in themselves. Similarly, Biesta argues that philosophy of education is not about applying philosophical discussions to educational problems, rather educational philosophy is about framing educational problems as an educational discussion (2012b). While it would be possible to offer a philosophical or sociological analysis of carceral logics in schools, I draw upon discussions within educational philosophy to specifically situate my questions and analysis within a concern for education.

The discussions I draw upon within educational philosophy are further explored in the remaining chapters but, at the most general level, Todd, Biesta, and Säfström argue that for there to be education, the student needs to be treated as a subject capable of change and transformation, not as an object in need of intervention (Biesta & Säfström, 2011; Biesta, 2022; Säfström, 2021; Todd, 2023). Education therefore entails the possibility for change and transformation that emerges through students’ lived existence⁶. Todd (2014) notes that much of the work done in education is based on an idea of transformation. While the idea of transformation through education might seem given, the “conditions of transformation” (Todd, 2014, p. 154) are perhaps less clear. Transformation within an educational understanding is an idea of transformation where “transformation is something other than the mere achievement of being educated into predefined roles or abilities, no matter how well intentioned they may be” (Todd, 2014, p. 159). Education requires the possibility for change (Säfström, 2021). Part of giving students the opportunity to exist as subjects, according to Biesta (2022), consists of paying “attention to the conditions under which this may—or may not—happen” (p. 13). The work of this dissertation can be understood as paying attention to the conditions under which education may or may not happen within and beyond carceral logics. If we are concerned about the educational potential of

6 My use of the term “lived existence” here comes from a combination of Todd’s (2021) description of education as a process through which one “becomes a subject capable of both living and leading a life well with others” (p. 250) and Biesta’s (2022) suggestion that “educational questions are fundamentally *existential* questions” (p. 9, italics in original).

schools, we need to be able to account for the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics within schools.

In chapter 3, I elaborate on the existential, weak instrumental, and relational qualities of education that, in my view, serve as the basis for education as emancipation (Säfström, 2010, 2011, 2021) subjectification (Biesta, 2010a, 2010b, 2013, 2020, 2022), and becoming (Todd, 2011, 2020, 2023). The normative philosophical arguments describing education as emancipation, subjectification, and becoming provide the language to explore educational implications in terms not only of educational possibilities but also give language to explore the work that makes education possible. By educational possibilities, I mean possibilities for education to emerge in and beyond carceral logics. In this dissertation, I consider the work that makes education possible, that is, *educational* work, to be the work that makes change and transformation possible for students. Therefore, part of the need to account for the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics means exploring the work that could make education possible in and beyond these logics. Through this exploration, this dissertation is also positioned within Educational Work⁷, which is a field and subject area that sheds light on pedagogical practices (Hultman & Martinsson, 2018).

Given that Swedish schools are currently framed in relation to crime, it is first necessary to clarify why and how I draw upon both abolitionism and discussions within educational philosophy.

Educational implications through stereoscopic optics

I have suggested that the current literature engaging with aspects of crime and the police in Swedish schools does not sufficiently account for the educational implications of when the school is framed in this way. I have also suggested that abolition and discussions within educational philosophy offer a way forward toward understanding the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics. This is the first way abolitionism and discussions in educational philosophy are considered together in order to make something else visible. That is, they come together to make visible a concern for the educational implications of when schools are framed in relation to crime. Engaging with both abolitionism and

⁷ This dissertation is carried out within the field and third-cycle subject Educational Work⁷ (in Swedish *pedagogiskt arbete*). Educational Work is a uniquely Swedish construction that was established in the early 2000s. This is expanded further in chapter 2.

educational philosophy together in order to make visible what has been previously left unseen is inspired by educational philosopher Marianna Papastephanou's (2021a, 2021b) stereoscopic approach. Papastephanou's (2021a, 2021b) argument for stereoscopic optics within the field of philosophy of education stems from a critique of what she considers to be the postmodern use of "perspectives." For Papastephanou (2021a, 2021b), the perspective metaphor is limiting because it does not capture the complexities of considering different concepts together. An alternative to the optics of perspectives is stereoscopic optics (Papastephanou, 2021a, 2021b). A stereoscope is "an optical instrument with two eyepieces for helping the observer to combine the images of two pictures taken from points of view a little way apart and thus to get the effect of solidity or depth" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Stereoscopic optics functions as a methodological framework throughout the dissertation. The exact intricacies of my use of stereoscopic optics varies slightly across the different chapters, as will be discussed. In chapter 4, the stereoscopic optics is used to consider both abolitionist structural problematizations with an educational-philosophical assumption of equality. In chapter 5, the seemingly static discourse and problematization of the police is considered together with an ontological assumption of change found in educational philosophy. In chapter 6, the stereoscopic approach helps us question essential social categories through a relational educational philosophy of uniqueness and abolitionist understanding of responses to harm. In chapter 7, the stereoscopic optics helps to identify some limitations in educational philosophy through the ways in which abolitionism moves beyond the current condition. Finally, in chapter 8, I further develop educational-philosophical thoughts through a more affirmative meaning found in abolitionist transformative justice praxis.

Abolition and educational-philosophical discussions of education raise different and (at times) conflicting questions. Abolition largely focuses on structures of oppression and injustices as a departure point for understanding and action, while the educational philosophy I engage with largely rejects the idea that education can be defined through these structures and instead focuses on the relations and ethics that make education possible. In this dissertation, I use both to flesh out the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools. Specifically, I lay out the educational possibilities and possibilities for *educational* work. Moving forward, I italicize the *educational* in *educational* work to signify that I am referring to specific practices that make the change and transformation of

education possible, as opposed to assuming that all practices in schools can be considered educational. This brings us to the aim and research questions.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools. In order to realize this aim, the following research questions will be addressed.

1. How can educational philosophy and abolitionism be used stereoscopically to analyze what is educationally at stake in and beyond carceral logics?
2. What is educationally possible in a school of crime prevention and police involvement?
3. How can imagining beyond carceral logics open up new possibilities for *educational work*?

Inquiring into these questions through a stereoscopic engagement with abolition and educational philosophy is similar to Todd's (2016a) notion of starting "from a slightly different place" (p. 406) in order to explore something "new." Todd (2016a) starts in a slightly different place in her engagement with the work of Emmanuel Levinas and suggests that the point of this method is not to "find" a concept that no one else has seen, but rather it serves to reposition Levinas' thought in such a way that "new life is breathed into it" (Todd, 2016a, p. 406). Todd (2016a) argues that doing this shifts the way in which we are able to comprehend an idea or concept; therefore, by starting from a slightly different place, we shift our relationship with these ideas and concepts. By drawing upon both abolitionism and discussions within educational philosophy, I am starting from a slightly different place. This dissertation breathes new life into an understanding of the educational implications of when the imagined role of the school and practices of the school are informed by notions of crime. While my point of departure is in the current situation in Sweden, carceral logics are not unique to Swedish schools (e.g., Coyle & Nagel, 2022; Meiners, 2014; Rudolph; 2023); therefore, my analysis and arguments are relevant beyond Sweden. I explore the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools and ultimately theorize *educational work* beyond carceral logics. In ways that will unfold across the coming chapters, this dissertation contributes to educational abolitionism.

Justifications and clarifications

This dissertation contributes both to educational scholarship and to a larger societal discussion. It contributes to previous research in the field of education in several ways. Firstly, it contributes to research on aspects of crime and the police in Swedish schools (e.g., Hammarén et al., 2015; Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019; Odenbring et al., 2019; Sandahl, 2016, 2021; Vainik & Kassman, 2018; Wahlgren, 2014) through an analysis that accounts for the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics. This is achieved through both problematizing and imagining beyond carceral logics through engaging with abolitionism and educational philosophy in Part II and Part III. In this way, this dissertation both accounts for the educational and for (and beyond) carceral logics in ways that are underexplored in the current literature. Further, this dissertation adds to previous research in the field of Educational Work, which is a field concerned with teachers' work and practices in schools by theorizing *educational* work in schools both when schools are framed in relation to crime and when they are imagined beyond crime.

In addition to contributing to previous research, this dissertation contributes to an important discussion within the overall political climate in Sweden in which the police and harsher policies on crime are increasingly seen as solutions to societal problems. While Sweden has long had a reputation of exceptionalism with low rates of imprisonment and humane prison conditions (Pratt, 2008), this discourse has been problematized and critiqued (Barker, 2013). The Swedish is penal order has been described as “mild and harsh simultaneously” (Barker, 2013, p. 7). This is particularly the case for people who are considered to be “unwanted or underserving ‘others’” (Barker, 2013, p. 21). Sweden has generally been less inclined to classify day to day conflicts as crime but there has been heightened cultural awareness to crime in recent years (Kivivuori, 2014; Vainik & Kassman, 2018).

The backdrop to this dissertation is particularly concerning given that the number of children in jail has increased in recent years (Swedish Prison and Probation Service, 2023), the increased powers given to crime-prevention authorities to use preventative coercive measures in crime prevention (Government Bill 2023/24:117), the police now have expanded powers to search people and vehicles in certain designated areas (Government Bill 2023/24:84), as well as the government's desire to have child prisons (Swedish Government Official Report, 2023:44) and lower the age of who can go to prison for crimes with a possible sentence of four or more years from 15 to 14 (Swedish

Government Official Report, 2025:11). While this dissertation cannot offer an analysis of this overall climate, the work presented here does offer an educational analysis, which can tell us something about the potential consequences this political climate entails for teachers' work and students' experiences in schools. In this way, this dissertation contributes an analysis that can be seen as part of a larger problematization and imagining beyond the carceral logics that are present in the overall political climate in Sweden.

Before moving on to the structure of the dissertation, I need to provide some clarifications. Instead of exploring how carceral logics play out in schools (which would be an empirical question), I flesh out the possibilities for education when these logics are at play and imagined beyond. While I relate to empirical research and also offer ideas about practices in schools, I do not make claims about how students' possibilities play out in actual schools. The educational-philosophical analysis in this dissertation makes a theoretical contribution that could be helpful for practitioners through expanding understandings of practices beyond carceral logics.

The structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is organized as follows. Part I includes chapters 1–3. Chapter 1 presents the problem I am concerned with, the aim, and the research questions. In chapter 2, I position this dissertation within the field of Educational Work and further relate it to research that includes aspects of when the school is considered in terms of crime. In chapter 3, I address the first research question. I lay out how the existential, weak instrumental, and relational qualities of education, along with aspects of abolitionism, form the methodological approach to my stereoscopic exploration.

In Part II, I problematize carceral logics and explore the ways in which they inform educational possibilities. Each chapter addresses an aspect of the second research question. In chapter 4, I discuss what is educationally possible in a school of crime prevention, by drawing upon the idea of education as emancipation and abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization. In chapter 5, I explore what is educationally possible in a school of police involvement, by drawing on the notion of education as subjectification and abolitionist views of the police. In the final chapter of Part II, chapter 6, I explore what is educationally possible in responding to violence in schools by drawing on the conceptualization of education as becoming and abolitionist approaches to violence and harm.

In Part III, I address the third research question and imagine beyond carceral logics by drawing upon different abolitionist practices, together with the educational-philosophical conceptualizations previously discussed. In chapter 7, I draw upon the abolitionist practice of abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition, together with ideas of education as emancipation, in order to flesh out new possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics in general and beyond a school of crime prevention in particular. In chapter 8, I draw upon abolitionist transformative justice praxis, together with education as subjectification and becoming, to offer new possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics in general and beyond police involvement in schools specifically. Chapter 9 presents a concluding discussion and ideas for future research.

Chapter 2 Positioning in relation to previous research

In this chapter, I position this dissertation within the field of Educational Work and further discuss previous literature that explores various dimensions of when the school is framed in relation to crime. I predominantly draw upon research from Sweden, but also include international examples, to further establish the ways in which the school is framed through carceral logics and to expand upon the tensions, complexities, and inequalities that are revealed in this sociologically oriented research. Firstly, I describe the background to the establishment of Educational Work as a third-cycle subject and as a field of research, and position this dissertation as paying particular attention to practices in schools in terms of their *educational* aspects. I then summarize several existing doctoral dissertations within the field of Educational Work to offer some ideas about how research within the field can be understood. Following this, I mention critical research within the field and further elucidate what my research brings to the field of Educational Work. Then I provide an overview of research in Sweden that addresses different aspects of the school in relation to crime prevention, the police, and responses to violence. Finally, I summarize how my research adds to this previous literature.

Educational Work

This dissertation is carried out within the field and third-cycle subject Educational Work⁸ (in Swedish *pedagogiskt arbete*). Educational Work is a uniquely Swedish construction that was established in the early 2000s, in part, because there was the concern that “educational research was failing to address the practical concerns of teacher education and schooling generally” (Arreman, 2008, p. 161). Additionally, it was established due to a desire to conduct educational research within teacher

8 In the dissertation the capitalization of Educational Work signifies a reference to the field, discipline, and third-cycle subject.

education departments (Arreman, 2008), and to make those with a bachelor's degree in teacher education eligible for doctoral-level studies. Arreman (2008) describes Educational Work as a research discipline and subject with a desire to “develop cross-disciplinary research approaches to practice” (Arreman, 2008, p. 161). Broadly speaking, Educational Work was established to connect research to the practical work of teachers and to expand research opportunities for those with a teacher background (Arreman, 2008; Hultman & Martinsson, 2018). Educational Work can be understood as a research field (in Swedish *forskningsområde*) that is interdisciplinary and sheds light on the phenomenon of pedagogical practices in ways that are relevant for the work of teachers (Hultman & Martinsson, 2018). Furthermore, it is a subject area (in Swedish *ämbesområde*), in which students who study it can develop the skills to describe, analyze, and understand pedagogical practices (Hultman & Martinsson, 2018).

In addition to Educational Work being a research field and subject, Educational Work can also be understood as a field of knowledge (in Swedish *kunskapsområde*) that is concerned with practices aiming to lead to learning (Hultman & Martinsson, 2018), and as something that teachers and pedagogues do (Hultman & Martinsson, 2018). This dissertation contributes to Educational Work as a *research field* through my dissertation as a doctoral student in the *subject area* which describes, analyzes, and understands pedagogical practices. By not taking it for granted that practices within schools are *educational*, I contribute an educational-philosophical analysis that pays particular attention to practices in terms of their *educational* aspects to the field of Educational Work.

Educational Work as a research field is perhaps most visible in doctoral dissertations in the third-cycle subject Educational Work. This means that the signifier of “dissertation in Educational Work” contributes to the visibility of Educational Work as a research field. Without this signifier, it is often difficult to distinguish which research lies within Educational Work and which does not, because often research within Educational Work overlaps with research in Education (in Swedish *Pedagogik*), as well as General and Subject Didactics (in Swedish *Allmän didaktik* and *Ämbes didaktik*). Langelotz and Rönnerman's (2016) research looks at 44 dissertations that were produced between 2001 and 2015 in the research subject Educational Work and their findings show that while inspired by practice, these dissertations largely seek to develop knowledge about the profession and school in general, as opposed to developing methods and ways to work (Langelotz & Rönnerman, 2016). Part of what defines research in Educational Work is an interest in the practices within schools or other

institutions, although the knowledge interest and conclusions drawn from this research differ (Arreman, 2008; Hultman & Martinsson, 2018; Langelotz & Rönnerman, 2016).

Some dissertations in Educational Work have researched a variety of aspects of teachers' practices and pedagogical leadership (e.g., Ekström, 2007; Forssten Seiser, 2017; Holmgren, 2006; Lifmark, 2010; Lundström, 2008; Schwartz, 2013). By researching aspects such as how working conditions affect pedagogical practice (Ekström, 2007), the dilemmas faced by teachers in their work when teaching something like "fundamental values" (Lifmark, 2010), or principals' pedagogical leadership practices (Forssten Seiser, 2017), these dissertations contribute knowledge to the field through a focus on the practices of teachers and school professionals. There are also dissertations that research aspects of the school but do not take their point of departure in the practices of teachers or school professionals. These dissertations engage in broader theoretical work through research about, but not limited to, students' experiences and subjectivities (e.g. Engdahl, 2014; Harling, 2017; Schwartz, 2013), how norms are constructed in schools (e.g. Bengtsson, 2013; Rantala, 2016), how policy governs both teachers and the school (e.g. Cooper, 2019; Eilard, 2022), and specific practices that occur in schools such as attendance and documentation (e.g., Bodén, 2016; Elfström Petterson, 2017). This research highlights the conditions imposed on students and schools and contributes knowledge to the field through analyses of what is made possible in or in relation to the school.

In addition to dissertations in Educational Work, the field is also made visible through the research of scholars who hold or have held employment positions in Educational Work; notably, professors in Educational Work. One such scholar is Eva Reimers, whose work has explored, among other things, queer pedagogy (Reimers, 2020), nationalism in relation to teachers' practices in pre-schools (Reimers & Puskás, 2022), and homonationalism in teacher education (Reimers, 2017). This kind of research adds knowledge to the field of Educational Work that specifically takes a critical approach to questions of teacher practices and education.

This dissertation is similar to the research described thus far in that it also contributes knowledge about practices in schools and what is made possible by the conditions placed on students from a critical orientation. Reimers and Harling (2019) suggest that the core of Educational Work is found in its relevance for the teaching profession and for teacher education. According to Reimers and Harling (2019), this should not be thought of as a limitation in terms of research objects,

problems, methods or theories. Rather, this core opens up a range of possibilities for research because it encourages us to ask ourselves about the relevance of educational research in relation to educational practice (Reimers & Harling, 2019).

The research I have discussed so far can be understood as offering an empirical analysis of practices within schools and in relation to them. While this empirical research contributes relevant and important knowledge to the field, in this dissertation, I take a different approach to research. Through educational-philosophical inquiry, I offer new ways of imagining practices in schools by exploring a topic that has not previously been researched in the field. This inquiry takes inspiration from the idea that an important aspect of educational research is that it can help educators to see, understand, and imagine practices differently (Biesta, 2007), and that the study of education has been and can be constructed differently (Biesta, 2011). By conducting research that can help educators to see, understand, and imagine their practices in and beyond carceral logics, this dissertation offers new knowledge to the field of Educational Work that is attentive to aspects of justice in relation to practices in schools. I now turn to research that explores aspects of when the school is considered in relation to crime outside of the field of Educational Work.

The school and crime prevention

Framing the school in relation to crime is not unique to Sweden. Law professor Jonathan Simon (2007) details how social problems in the USA have been reconceptualized as crimes and how the “War on Crime” has resulted in “governing through crime.” One domain that he considers is how education has been reformed through crime, in part, through The Safe Schools Act of 1994. This resulted in schools being required to have written policies regarding their close cooperation with the police and “juvenile justice” agencies, and a “crime-fighting strategy” (Simon, 2007, p. 218). One result of this is the “reframing of students as a population of potential victims and perpetrators” (Simon, 2007, p. 209). Another aspect of approaching the work of schools in relation to crime is that they “have responded by adopting a range of innovations that borrow directly from criminal justice” (Simon, 2007, p. 220). This includes increasing efforts to police students, particularly in schools located in “high-crime areas” (Simon, 2007, p. 221). Against this backdrop, the pedagogical knowledge of school professionals competes with the knowledge of crime-related institutions to inform practices within schools (Simon, 2007). These tendencies have similarities to those in Sweden.

Within the fields of social work, criminology, and the educational sciences, the school is considered an important institution in relation to crime-prevention work in Sweden (Lunneblad, 2022; Sandahl, 2016, 2021; Vainik & Kassman, 2018; Wahlgren, 2014). Conveying knowledge about crime and punishment, laws, and desirable norms and values is part of the teaching mission and socialization function of the school (Lunneblad, 2022; Vainik & Kassman, 2018). Schools have long had the role of disciplining and controlling students considered in need of supervision (Qvarsebo, 2006, as cited in Lunneblad, 2022), and over the past several decades this has increasingly included a focus on crime prevention (Dahlstedt & Foulter, 2021; Lunneblad, 2022; Wahlgren, 2014). Sandahl (2021) notes that schools are often considered to be key arenas for crime prevention by both researchers and policy makers. This expectation can be seen in initiatives like the cooperation between the school, social services, the police, and free-time sectors (SSPF) (Lunneblad, 2022). This research leads to questions of how an emphasis on school as an institution of crime prevention institution matters for the role and work of schools. While school has been considered a place of crime prevention for some time, the discourses conceptualizing the educational task of public schooling have varied across time (Wahlgren, 2014).

Wahlgren (2014) discusses how, in the 1970s to the mid-1980s, in official documents from the National Council for Crime Prevention, National Police Board, and the Swedish National Agency for Education emphasized strengthening children's "place and involvement in society" (p. 227). In part, this included an emphasis on allowing students to participate in decision-making processes in the school (Wahlgren, 2014). Wahlgren (2014) describes this as a discourse of emancipation where crime prevention was understood as a "side effect that will follow automatically from a more inclusive society" (p. 227). This discourse of emancipation can be understood as based on the idea that the school can provide the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute to students' future emancipation. In the 1980s and 1990s, a discourse of deterrence emerged in which "the crime preventative education project" was "framed as something that should react to unwanted behavior and promote self-discipline" (p. 228). A discourse of safety/security has dominated in the 21st century (Wahlgren, 2014). This discourse is influenced by "the rationale of situational crime prevention" and it largely focuses on addressing situations that are perceived as risky and/or unsafe (Wahlgren, 2014, p. 228). According to Wahlgren (2014), this discourse is similar to the emancipatory discourse in that it focuses on making students active participants, but there is a notable difference. In the emancipation discourse there

was the idea that students needed to be given influence in school and, in so doing, crime prevention would follow, while in the safety/security discourse students are seen as “a piece in a puzzle in the larger crime preventative work of society” (p. 229). Wahlgren (2014) argues that the responsibility that is “manifested in the safety/security discourse is responsibility for preserving a local social order, an order threatened by crime, and not a responsibility for changing a flawed social order” (p. 232). Here we can see a notion of safety/security that is defined specifically in relation to crime.

Wahlgren’s (2014) work highlights ways in which schools and students’ roles in relation to society are constructed in crime-preventative discourses. One conclusion is that, over time, crime prevention has changed from a collective to an individual responsibility, and crime-prevention education has changed from being part of a “bigger democratic movement for societal change to becoming something that is more about transferring a set of pre-defined views about right and wrong” (Wahlgren, 2014, p. 231). Similar to the tension between the emancipation and the safety/security discourse (Wahlgren, 2014), the double objective of the school to be both a democratic arena and a crime preventative arena is reflected in school practices (Fransson & Lunneblad, 2023). This research highlights that ideas of what crime prevention is, and ideas of who and what it is that prevents crime, informs how crime prevention is understood in relation to schools.

Furthermore, Dahlstedt and Foultier’s (2021) research into “public programme for crime prevention through education” (p. 376), contends that students are instructed to take responsibility, make the right choices, and promote security in their communities. They argue that the “students are constructed as specific kind of subjects, referred to as *agents of change*, with certain abilities and characteristics” (Dahlstedt & Foultier, 2021, p. 376, italics in original). Somewhat similarly, Popkewitz et al. (2006), referring critically to the Swedish context, point to another aim of crime prevention and suggest that the “logic is clear: the child and the youth have to be rescued before they enter the gateways of the prison” (p. 443). In this research, crime-prevention education can be understood as an education that is intended to give students what they are imagined to need in order to avoid criminality.

While school is considered as a potential solution to crime through crime prevention, it is also paradoxically understood as a problem for crime, because it can be a place that contributes to crime, or a place where crime occurs (Lunneblad, 2022; Wahlgren, 2014). In the school’s work toward crime prevention and in

handling so-called crime, schools cooperate with outside agencies, one of which is the police.

The school and the police

While the use of laws to regulate schools is not new, the extent to which legal concepts and views are used to control education has increased over the past decade in Sweden (Lunneblad, 2019; Novak, 2019; Rosén et al., 2020). This phenomenon is defined as the juridification of education, school, and youth behavior (Lunneblad, 2019; Novak, 2019; Rosén et al., 2020). In part, this focus on laws can be understood as an increased attention to children's rights and vulnerability in school (Lindgren et al., 2021). This has resulted in a zero-tolerance policy under which schools are legally obligated to protect children from bullying and degrading treatment (Lindgren et al., 2021). However, understandings of youth crime are not set, as Estrada (2019) notes that people's understanding of youth crime, and ideas about how society should react, vary across places and times.

Berndtsson's (2019) research shows that principals and student health teams categorize, explain, and react to degrading treatment and violence in schools in different ways. Not only this, but the extent to which the police are involved in schools also varies (Berndtsson, 2019). The socio-economic conditions and ethnic segregation of schools can be linked to these differing views (Berndtsson, 2019). For example, despite the fact that the principal and student health team are aware that parents at a school in a "segregated urban lower-working class area" with "immigrant backgrounds" are afraid of the social services and of the police, the collaboration with the police is described as "very good" by all school staff and the police are even included in meetings the school has with parents (Berndtsson, 2019, p. 107). This school files a large number of police reports, despite parents' opposition, because there is the widespread belief "that students and their families are in need of care and supervision from [the] authorities, such as the social services and the police. The school considers itself to be an important part of this collaboration" (Berndtsson, 2019, p. 108). This research highlights how police presence and collaboration with the police results in the further marginalization of students and their families in these areas.

In contrast, at a school in an "upper-middle-class area" that consists of "ethnically white inhabitants" living in a rural setting, filing police reports is not common (Berndtsson, 2019). When police reports do occur, according to the

school professionals, parents do not protest and even think that it might teach their child to take responsibility for their own actions. There is no concern in this specific school that the children will be treated as criminals or that a family will be investigated by the social services (Berndtsson, 2019). This research highlights that the lack of police presence and no fear of the police maintains a level of privilege for the students and parents in these areas.

In addition to variations in general police involvement in schools, there are different motivations for why school professionals involve the police in incidents of violence in their schools. Lunneblad and Johansson's (2019) study, in which they interviewed school professionals about their handling of violence in schools, showed that, usually, professionals say that they report to the police is when there is physical violence or it is very clear that a crime has been committed (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019).

But reporting to the police is not something that is decided on by school professionals *alone*, because schools in Sweden are instructed to report violence and crime within their premises (Lunneblad et al., 2016). While there are certain regulations and instances when school professionals might report to the police, research indicates varying motivations relating to why they report. For example, reporting to the police is imagined to be an important way to show respect for those who have been subjected to a crime (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). Another motivation for filing a police report is that it is believed to show that the school professionals are taking the incident seriously and are "concerned and considering the victim's perspective" (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019, p. 89). What can be seen in this research is that the motivations for involving the police through police reports are, in part, based on a belief that the police are, at least some of the time, the appropriate institution to which to turn.

In addition to these concerns for students who have experienced alleged crime, there are also pedagogical reasons for reporting. A police report is understood to serve as a way of letting students know that the same laws that operate outside of school also apply within it (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). Reporting to the police is said to have the pedagogical and communicative effect of teaching students about the rules and the consequences of breaking those rules (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). However, there have been doubts expressed by school professionals about reporting to the police; as one school counsellor stated, "I can also feel like it is a weak society that leaves everything to the police" (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019, p. 89). While this research highlights pedagogical motivations for reporting to the police, a potential problem in terms of what such reporting to

the police can mean in the bigger picture is also noted. Notably, pedagogical motivations for reporting to the police look different depending upon where the school is located. Professionals in schools situated in “middle-class areas” stress the importance that filing police reports has on reestablishing parents’ trust in the school, while at the same time expressing fear that filing these reports could cause parents to lose confidence in the school (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019).

Alternatively, at schools in “socially disadvantaged areas” (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019) reporting to the police is framed differently. School professionals describe reporting to the police is an important way to show students, parents, and other people in the area that they are a part of the Swedish legal system (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). One principal at a school in a “socially disadvantaged area” stated “we have to show that we trust in the police and this society. Therefore, we call the police when something serious happens” (Lunneblad et al., 2019, p. 75). Furthermore, school professionals expressed concerns around the development of “parallel societies” and viewed involving the police as a way to avoid this (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019, p. 91). In Johansson and Lunneblad’s (2019) interview study, both school professionals and police officers emphasized a focus on policing segregated areas (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). That said, school professionals in “socially disadvantaged areas” did express ambivalence due to their awareness that students could be more easily labelled as criminals due to the high police presence both in the school and the surrounding area. (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). This research suggests that general motivations for involving the police reinforce existing societal marginalization and inequality.

The literature that has been described above in this section is from the Swedish context, but police involvement also occurs in schools in the USA. Schools often have so-called School Resource Officers (SROs) who are uniformed police officers whose presence in schools can be seen as a positive pedagogical intervention with crime-prevention purposes (Coon & Travis, 2012; Warnick & Scribner, 2020). Similar to how the Swedish research indicates how police involvement differs along the lines of existing marginalization and inequality; this can also be seen in research in the USA. Unsurprisingly, students who are racialized and “lower class” experience harsher punishment, surveillance, and police reporting (Irwin et al., 2013). Along similar lines, “non-heterosexual” young people experience disproportionate punishment from both schools and the criminal justice system (Himmelstein & Brueckner, 2011). Relatedly, LGBTQ and gender-non-conforming young people “are ‘under particular scrutiny in schools,’ which often

results in punishment and victimization” (Snapp et al., 2015, p. 76). Furthermore, Black girls in schools are “punished more frequently and more harshly than their White and Latinx girl peers [and] they are also punished according to more subjective criteria steeped in educators ‘racialized’ and gendered perceptions” (Lambooy et al., 2020, p. 60). Similarly to research in Sweden (e.g., Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019), in the US context there is also disagreement between the police and school personnel regarding the role of the police in schools (Coon & Travis, 2012). The work of police officers in schools can range from being guest speakers or teaching about crime prevention and safety, to being involved when crime or violence occurs or is suspected (Coon & Travis, 2012). Coon and Travis (2012) conclude that police in schools exist in two worlds: as sworn officers employed by a policing agency and as school resource officers who work in cooperation with school principals and staff. While Sweden does not have the same SRO equivalent as the US, the police are involved in schools in Sweden in different ways. The Swedish research described in this section, therefore, can be understood as part of a larger field of research that addresses police involvement in schools. I have introduced the US research context as one example of this larger research field. But the act of involving the police is not where the implications of their involvement ends, as reporting to the police entails a specific kind of response. I turn to this now.

The school and responses to violence

There is no consensus on how to define violence and school violence, in particular, is complex (Hammarén, 2022). Often, different concepts of violence are used in scholarly literature in ways that overlap, and notions of violence also generally overlap (Hammarén, 2022). One response to violence in schools in Sweden concerns the change under which a child formerly seen as a bully is now considered a criminal (Hammarén et al., 2015). In Sweden, the school principal is the one who makes decisions about when incidents should be reported to the police, but because it is often teachers or other school staff who witness the incident, several people are usually involved in such decisions (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019).

In several municipalities in Sweden, the police and local authorities have created joint action plans designed to deal with situations in schools (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019). The reporting of student violence as criminal offences to the police has increased in recent years in Sweden (Vainik & Kassman, 2018). Vainik and Kassman (2018) note that, in general, there is no consensus regarding what

kind of incidents should be reported to the police as criminal offences and that violence among schoolchildren can be regarded in many ways. They state that there is no reliable data on violence in Swedish compulsory schools, because since students are under the age of criminal responsibility, and reporting is not mandatory, there are no official statistics on police reports (Vainik & Kassman, 2018). In their study, they analyzed 1,239 police reports filed in 10 municipalities in Stockholm County. These reports were filed in response to violence committed by students aged 7–14 in compulsory school from schools with different average income levels, between 2000 and 2010. Their results showed that the majority of all “offenders” were “boys,”⁹ on average public schools reported more incidents than private schools, and there was no significant difference between larger and smaller schools or those with different proportions of boys and girls or immigrants. The largest differences were found between “schools with higher and lower merit ratings, indicating that relatively fewer incidents were reported in schools where the pupils were more successful in obtaining high grades” (2018, p. 70). They suggest that “the degree of police reports on a school level seems to be best explained by socio-economic factors and they also found that the “report rate was extremely high in resource schools¹⁰” (2018, p. 74). The most common type of incident reported to the police was an assault committed by a boy or boys near the age of criminal responsibility (Vainik & Kassman, 2018). But, notably, police reports for students under the age of 15 are directed to social services, so it is not always clear why incidents are reported to the police at all, given that the principals know that these reports will be redirected to the social services (Vainik & Kassman, 2018). Vainik and Kassman (2018) argue that an increase in school-related police reports “cannot easily and directly be explained by a general increase of school violence” (2018, p. 73). Their research shows that filing police reports results in inequality in socio-economic and ableist terms, where schools in municipalities with lower average incomes, and in schools with students who perform and act outside of the “ideal school performance” (high grades) and outside of “normal behavior” for a school, report more frequently. A related result can be seen in

9 The authors do not explain what they mean by gender, so it is unclear if they mean cisgender boys and cisgender girls or if they also include trans children and non-binary children. This is the case every time “boys” and “girls” are referred to in the literature in this dissertation.

10 According to the authors, resource schools are “designed for small groups of children with severe psychosocial or neuropsychiatric problems that can lead to acting-out behavior and difficulties with reading and understanding others’ feelings, which could induce more incidents” (p. 75).

research in the USA, where African American students with disabilities are more likely to be suspended or expelled than other students with disabilities (Skiba et al., 2008).

When the response to violence is to file police reports in Sweden, what gets reported has specific characteristics. One characteristic is the nature of the violence that is reported. Reporting to the police requires a “concrete event that can be retold in a report” (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019, p. 77). Lunneblad and Johansson (2019) argue that the consequence of this is that “violence that is diffuse in nature and more difficult to discover is seldom reported to the police” (2019, p. 77). School professionals have difficulties identifying specific problems or behaviors as crimes (Lunneblad et al., 2016). The police, on the other hand, define violence and a variety of problems in schools through a focus on “questions of violence, guilt, crime and responsibility” (Johansson & Lunneblad, p. 2019, p. 91). Perhaps, then, it is unsurprising that there is disagreement between school professionals and the police regarding the use of police in schools (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). One reason for not reporting to the police given by school professionals is that it could negatively affect students’ future employment (Lunneblad et al., 2016). According to school officials, framing problems at the school as crimes is something they avoid for as long as possible (Lunneblad et al., 2016). Similarly, there is the view expressed by school officials that police reports should not be used too frequently (Lunneblad et al., 2016). This research gives an indication of the difficulties and tensions faced by school professionals have when responding to violence in the way that filing a police report requires.

Another aspect of responding to violence in schools in this way is the use of the categories of victim and perpetrator¹¹. Responding to violence by filing police reports means that the categories of victim and perpetrator of a crime are used (Hammarén et al., 2015; Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019). Describing someone as a crime victim stems from the categorization of them being on the receiving end of a behavior that has been deemed a crime, done by someone who is categorized as a criminal (Alexius, 2020). However, these positions are unstable, because a student may be a victim in one situation and then become a perpetrator in another (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). Schools professionals often face dilemmas when judging who is the victim and who is the perpetrator (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019). Hence, these categories can be problematic in schools because problems at schools rarely involve “an ideal victim or an ideal offender” (Lunneblad et al., 2016,

11 Sometimes the word *offender* is used in the research, but for clarity I use *perpetrator* unless in a direct quote.

p. 399). Often, violent incidents may be part of larger and more complex relationships that have existed over an extended period of time (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019). These complexities are not easily captured in a police report.

Furthermore, there are disagreements between the parents of students identified as victims and perpetrators (Alexius, 2020). In Alexius' (2020) research of cases reported to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, parents exclusively considered the description of an incident from their own child's perspective, in contrast to the more complex view of the incident from the perspective of the school personnel. The school staff and the different sets of parents all had "different perceptions both of what had happened and of how the events should be interpreted. Moreover, they had different views of which social norms ought to prevail in school" (Alexius, 2020, p. 376). This shows that responding to incidents in schools can be full of conflicting interests between different parties.

Another problem with using the categories of victims and perpetrators of crime is that not all students, want to be classified as victims, particularly boys, according to one school counsellor (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). Using these categories and filing police reports is not always considered beneficial for the long-term work and relationships between students and parents (Lunneblad et al., 2016). Importantly, there are differences in the treatment of these categories amongst schools in demographically different areas (Odenbring et al., 2019). According to Odenbring et al. (2019), material conditions seem to influence the ways in which "victim" is used as a category, where in "socially and economically disadvantaged urban areas, there seems to be more talk about violence and victims" (p. 1020).

Additional critical scholarship both within and outside of Sweden unsettles the categories of victims and perpetrators. Schott and Søndergaard (2021) give examples of research that suggesting that bullying cannot be understood in terms of victim, perpetrator, and bystander categorizations (Salmivalli et al., 2005) and that these positions are complex and shifting (Kofoed & Staksrud, 2018). It is not only that these positions limit how bullying can be understood but, similarly to Johansson and Lunneblad (2019), Schott and Søndergaard also note that students often do not want to be categorized as victims (2021). These categorizations are, at best insufficient and, at worst, harmful when responding to bullying in schools.

While this research highlights how these categorizations are used and the tensions around their use, another aspect of such categorizations can be found in how they also set into motion what this response to violence is imagined achieving. For example, school officials express that responding to violence through a police report can serve as "a kind of rehabilitation for the victimized students"

(Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019, p. 81). Similarly, police officers contend that their involvement in schools is needed and beneficial for students (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). One reason that reporting to the police is valuable is that, according to one police officer, it is a way of “showing that you care” (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019, p. 91). Another police officer suggested that schools should file more reports as a way to help students who are being harassed at school (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). In addition to this response being understood as offering support to victims, it is also understood as helping the perpetrators in different ways. It is believed that filing a police report will help students to accept that they have done something wrong (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). The police report is understood as having consequences, where “the reported individual is made responsible” and “can be sentenced to punishment” (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019, p. 79). In this research, responding to violence by filing a police report is thought to support both the victim and the perpetrator.

Summary

In this chapter, I have further positioned this dissertation within the field of Educational Work and in relation to literature that explores different dimensions of schools’ relationship to crime. Through conducting educational-philosophical inquiry, I contribute to previous research within Educational Work through offering a different way to conduct research within the field. In both Part II and III, the field of Educational Work is contributed to through theorizing *educational* work. The literature reviewed in this chapter explores different dimensions of schools’ relationship to crime and can be understood as offering an analysis that contributes knowledge regarding sociological implications of different aspects of schools being framed in relation to crime. This research brings into focus the tensions, complexities, and inequalities that arise when schools and the work of schools is framed in this way. These conclusions are all important for this dissertation, because they serve as the point from which my exploration begins and serve as a point where my research will contribute. However, as previously introduced, my research extends beyond the sociologically oriented analysis present in this literature through an educational-philosophical analysis. The chapters in Part II and III address aspects of what has been raised in this chapter regarding the school and crime prevention, the police, and responses to violence.

Chapter 3 Educational possibilities through a stereoscopic approach

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the first research question—how can educational philosophy and abolitionism be used stereoscopically to analyze what is educationally at stake in and beyond carceral logics? The chapter lays out the methodological approach of my study. I first begin by briefly describing aspects of critical pedagogy in order to create a common backdrop for my engagement with educational philosophy and abolitionism. Bringing educational philosophy and abolitionism together is not an entirely straightforward endeavor, as they are rooted in different assumptions, ask different questions, and attempt to solve different problems. While abolitionism addresses systemic forms of injustices, the educational philosophers I engage with in this dissertation are more concerned with ethics and relationality than with notions of injustice. I draw out some of the tensions here between critical pedagogy, educational philosophy, and abolitionism in my endeavor towards transformative and non-deterministic pedagogical relations.

The connection between critical pedagogy, educational philosophy, and abolitionism is made to show the ways in which the exploration of this dissertation has similarities to the concerns critical pedagogy, through an attention given to justice, while at the same time is in alignment with critiques levelled against critical pedagogy in terms of assumptions made regarding relations between students, teachers, and knowledge. After describing aspects of critical pedagogy, I go on to the discussions within educational philosophy that inform my exploration before turning to abolitionism. Following this, I describe my stereoscopic approach. The chapter ends with some methodological reflections.

Critical pedagogy

I begin with critical pedagogy for two reasons: to acknowledge and appreciate the tradition of educational scholarship that is committed to societal transformation and combatting different forms of structural oppression, from which this dissertation is indebted to and contributes to; and to motivate my chosen

engagement with certain discussions within educational philosophy and abolitionism. I first lay out aspects of critical pedagogy that have some commonalities to what I explore in this dissertation, followed by critique of critical pedagogy and how my work is situated in relation to these critiques. Even to suggest that I am beginning by describing “critical pedagogy” is somewhat of a misnomer, because “critical pedagogy” has many meanings (Apple, 2011). As Kincheloe (2008) notes “all descriptions of critical pedagogy—like knowledge in general—are shaped by those who devise them and the values they hold” (pp. 5–6). The description that I offer in the following paragraphs is a description that includes aspects of critical pedagogy that hold specific relevance for the work I am doing in this dissertation, rather than offering an overarching summary of what critical pedagogy *is*. This is also the case for my description of the critiques of critical pedagogy. I note particular critiques that relate to the larger discussions I draw upon in this dissertation.

Perhaps the most famous person within the tradition of critical pedagogy is Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire. The concepts of banking education, critical consciousness, and education as the practice of freedom (Freire, 2000) have long been central to the work of educators within the tradition of critical pedagogy. Other notable critical educators who have drawn upon, critiqued, and expanded upon Freire’s work include, although by no means are limited to, bell hooks, Peter McLaren, Michael Apple, and Henry Giroux. These scholars have: critiqued the way in which knowledge acquired in schools reproduces an unequal social order along the lines of class, gender, and race (Apple, 1982); critiqued school as a place of domination, but also recognized it as a place of resistance and liberation (McLaren, 1993; McLaren, 2015); proposed “that education is a form of political intervention in the world that is capable of creating the possibilities for social transformation” (Giroux, 2004, p. 34); and highlighted the importance of “teaching that enables transgressions—a movement against and beyond boundaries” (hooks, 1994, p. 12). Similarly to these critical educators, I also recognize schools as places that can reproduce inequalities along (although not limited to) lines of class, gender, and race, while at the same time recognizing the potential of schools and classrooms to be places that reach beyond this reproductive function.

Relatedly, McLaren and Giroux note that, within a “critical theory of education” critical pedagogy emerged as an attempt to “examine schools both in their historical context and as part of the social and political relations that characterize the dominant society” (McLaren, 2002, p. 27). A crucial aspect of

critical pedagogy is that it is counter-hegemonic and challenges existing relations of exploitation and domination (Apple, 2011). Kincheloe (2008) notes that teachers engaged in critical pedagogy always face challenges “concerning justice, democracy, and competing ethical claims” (p. 1). In part, this means that critical educators understand that schools and educational practices are “politically contested spaces” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 2). I also consider schools to be politically contested spaces, where part of the role of the teacher is to challenge existing relations of exploitation and domination in classrooms, and recognize that this is no straightforward task.

According to Zembylas (2013), critical pedagogy promotes and attempts to create “transformative, empowering, and transgressive” educational experiences, and has the central aim to:

engage teachers and students in a critical, dialectical examination of how power relations (particularly connected to the construction of knowledge) operate in schools and society and create or sustain hegemonic structures; and, to equip teachers and students with the language of critique and the rhetoric of empowerment to become transformative agents who recognize, challenge, and transform injustice and inequitable social structures. (pp. 177–178)

Critical pedagogy has played a significant role in introducing ways of thinking about practices and praxis that seek to challenge the status quo and oppressive structures within society, and this dissertation is indebted to and acknowledges the importance of critical pedagogy’s entrance into educational thought and practice. The concerns of critical pedagogy also have some similarities to the concerns of abolition, as will be developed below. Similarly to critical pedagogy, I am also concerned with the status quo and oppressive structures in society in relation to carceral logics. However, instead of drawing upon critical pedagogy to inform my analysis, I now turn to some of its critiques to further position the line of educational thought upon which this dissertation draws. While my work is inspired by and connected to these aspects of critical pedagogy, there have also been critiques of critical pedagogy that inform why I engage with particular notions of education, notably by feminist and decolonial scholars.

bell hooks (1994) critiques the sexism of language in Freire’s earlier works and is critical of what she calls the “phallogocentric paradigm of liberation” in his work where “freedom and the experience of patriarchal manhood are always linked as though they are one and the same” (p. 49). Despite these critiques, hooks (1994) maintains the importance and value of Freire’s insights. In critique also stemming

from a similar recognition of the importance of Freire's work, decolonial scholars Esteva, Stuchul, and Prakash (2005) suggest that he assumes that "the oppressed cannot liberate themselves by themselves" (p. 14) and that he does not account for the ways in which "people have rebelled by themselves against all sorts of oppressors" (p. 15). Bejarano (2005) problematizes Freire's approach to emancipation, and that of those who follow him, and critiques his pedagogy as being "based on the assumption that it contained the formula that would enable others to understand 'how the world is' and in what way and to what extent it must be transformed" (p. 55). Similarly, Bowers (2005) notes that Freire's pedagogy is based in Western assumptions about knowledge and what it means to be human. Furthermore, Siddhartha (2005) critiques Freire for relying upon an oversimplification of the terms "oppressor" and the "oppressed." Zembylas summarizes some critiques of critical pedagogy as a pedagogy that "not only entails problematic dualisms (e.g. oppressed/oppressor; empowered/disempowered; dominant/subordinate) but also fails to imagine alternative manifestations of criticality that go beyond rationalistic and teleological assumptions" (2018, p. 6). He continues: "Freire's situating of the work of liberation in the minds of the oppressed, as a humanist self-critique is different from decolonising projects that always position the work of liberation in the particularities of colonisation and the structures of the colonisation process" (Zembylas, 2018, p. 6). These critiques highlight some of the shortcomings of Freirean critical pedagogy without dismissing its importance. Related criticisms have been made towards critical pedagogy by feminist scholars inspired by post-structuralism.

Elizabeth Ellsworth's well-known (1989) article, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy," takes issue with what she considers to be critical pedagogy's reliance upon the idea that students and teachers are rational subjects and the general rationalism required by critical pedagogy. This is problematic, according to Ellsworth, because it assumes a universal rational person who is "European, white male, middle class, Christian, able-bodied, thin, and heterosexual" (p. 304). She also troubles the teacher-student relation in critical pedagogy, within which "the goal is to give students the analytical skills they need to make them as free, rational, and objective as teachers supposedly are to choose positions on their objective merits" (p. 306). Critical pedagogy, according to Ellsworth, is paternalistic in the same way that "traditional education" (p. 307) is and assumes an unproblematic role of the teacher to end students' oppression. Furthermore, Ellsworth argues that critical pedagogy cannot account for the "dynamics of subordination present among classroom participants

and within classroom participants in the form of multiple and contradictory subject positions” (p. 315). Ellsworth (1989) highlights the dualisms that critical pedagogy often relies on as problematic for the complexities that exist between teachers and students.

In *Feminism and Critical Pedagogy* (1992), Patti Lather makes the case for post-critical pedagogies (which are notably not mentioned in Hodgson, Vlieghe, and Zamojsk’s 2018 *Manifesto for a Post-Critical Pedagogy*) and suggests that such a pedagogy:

foregrounds movement beyond the sedimented discursive configurations of essentialized, romanticized subjects with authentic needs and real identities, who require generalized emancipation from generalized social oppression via the mediations of liberatory pedagogues capable of exposing the ‘real’ to those caught up in the distorting meaning systems of late capitalism. (p. 131)

Lather’s (1992) critique, together with the others I have described in the last few paragraphs, leads me to the discussions within educational philosophy I draw upon in this dissertation.

I draw primarily upon the work of Sharon Todd, Carl-Anders Säfström, and Gert Biesta, who are also inspired by (although not limited to) post-structuralism in their philosophizing of education. I draw upon these educational scholars, not because they “solve” the issues of critical pedagogy just raised, but because their conceptualizations of education and educational practice are not based in formulaic assumptions about how to change the world, do not rely upon dualisms between the teacher and student where the student is dependent on the teacher to end their oppression, and do not draw upon the idea of an essential or authentic human in order to conceptualize education. This is not to say that Säfström and Biesta necessarily recognize these feminist and decolonial critiques in their work, but that these scholars theorize education from a different point of departure than that which has been raised as problematic in critical pedagogy. Specifically, Todd, Biesta, and Säfström all discuss what makes education *educational*. Their philosophizing of education as such provides me with one way to explore educational implications. Importantly, I turn to these educational scholars not to dismiss critical pedagogy, as I think can be the case in Säfström’s and Biesta’s work (e.g., Biesta, 2010a; Säfström, 2021) due to a lack of thorough engagement with the actual scholarship of educators in the field of critical pedagogy—an exception of this is Biesta (2017), in which he discusses Freire’s pedagogy in depth—and a lack of engagement with feminist and decolonial critique of critical pedagogy. Rather, I turn to their discussions in order to explore the educational implications

of and beyond carceral logics in the school in a way that I hope will, as Lather (1992) describes it, “*resituate* our emancipatory work as opposed to destroy it” (p. 127, italics in original). Todd, Biesta, and Säfström, although not in the same way, all emphasize existential, weak instrumental, and relational qualities of education, which enables the exploration of educational possibilities. I turn there now.

Existential, weak instrumental, and relational qualities of education

Post-structuralism has influenced the educational sciences in various ways for decades. This body of scholarship is vast, and, in this dissertation, I draw upon philosophers of education who have been inspired by the post-structural tradition. Their discussions of education highlight the existential, weak instrumental and relational qualities of education, which are concerned more with what is ethically at stake in education than notions of injustice. Here lies an inherent tension within the dissertation, that of dealing with notions of crime and justice while drawing upon post-structural thinkers concerned more with ethics and relationality than structural questions of oppression and societal change. This tension is productive because it works throughout the dissertation to bring forward different aspects of the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics.

According to Todd (2016b), education is “an existential experience that is not just something to be controlled but which is open to surprise and uncertainty” (p. 623). Focusing on the existential qualities of education and asking questions about how it is experienced highlights the ways in which education is an educational phenomenon, rather than an economic or social one (Todd 2016b, 2022). This theorizing draws attention to how education is something that is experienced and raises questions around what needs to be in place for education to emerge. Biesta (2022) argues that “the *existential* question—the question how we, as human beings, exist ‘in’ and ‘with’ the world, natural and social—that is the central, fundamental and, if one wishes, ultimate educational concern” (p. 3, italics in original). For Biesta, (2022), educational questions are questions that are concerned with “how we are, how we exist, how we try to lead our own life, what we will do with who we have become, with what we have learned, with the new skills we have acquired...” (p. 29). These concerns are within what Biesta describes as an existential paradigm of education, where the work of education “has to do with encouraging the self to be a self, encouraging the self not to walk away from itself”

(2022, p. 33). This theorizing of education focuses on how the work of the educator should be attentive to students' existence.

Many educational scholars are critical of overly instrumental views of education (Biesta, 2013; Masschelein & Simons, 2013; Osberg & Biesta, 2021; Todd, 2022, 2023). Todd (2023) cautions against any idea of education that reduces it to an instrument or mechanism that “can simply mete out an alternative form of socialization (no matter how equitable, just, and free we think society will be as a result)” (p. 79). Todd (2011) recognizes the “inherent ambivalence of education: we want to educate for change, but we want to do so by ensuring what students become” (p. 509). She suggests that while education needs to respond to problems like poverty, illiteracy, sexism, and racism, this cannot be its aim or purpose (Todd, 2011). Instead, argues Todd (2011), we need to respond to real problems in the world in ways that “do not instrumentalize education, and do not cement our certainties, but that turn education itself into a response—a response oriented toward the actual persons we encounter and the collective struggles they face” (Todd, 2011, p. 509). Todd (2022) makes a distinction between what she calls “strong view of instrumentalism” and “weak instrumentalism.” Strong instrumentalism operates politically through positioning education as a tool that combines national educational policies with economic interests, whereas weak instrumentalism “is also purposive in its openness to transforming what *is* through creating conditions for the unpredictable and unexpected to emerge” (Todd, 2022, p. 346, italics in original). For Todd (2022), instrumentalism per se is not always negative or reductive; that is, she suggests that what makes education educational is “always doubled sided” (p. 346). Education, then, is “about a weak instrumentalism insofar as it carries a directionality conducive to some form of desire for the ‘passing on’ of tradition, but it is also about embodying opportunities for students to experience something beyond the predetermined” (Todd, 2022, pp. 346–347).

Todd (2022) suggests that practices of education cannot be solely reduced to serving a predefined end, rather they have an inherent purpose. Relatedly, Säfström argues that:

the problem with instrumental education, in the final analysis, is that it creates self-referencing frameworks, and itself can be understood as a property of such frameworks. Self-referencing frameworks make change impossible and reduce education to processes of adjustment to that which is already given, rather than breaking out from it. Education without a conception of change is simply not education at all. (Säfström, 2021, p. x)

This theorizing highlights that the work of educators should extend beyond the general frameworks we have been given. In this way, the work that makes education possible can be understood as the work that makes change and transformation beyond the predetermined for students possible.

Furthermore, there is a strand of educational scholarship that theorizes education as a relational phenomenon (e.g., Adami, 2017; Biesta & Säfström, 2011; Hållander, 2020; Ruitenberg, 2015; Todd, 2003). Within this view of education, attention is given to the ethical dimensions of the educational relationship (Adami, 2017; Biesta, 2013; Säfström, 2021; Todd, 2003). Scholars within this strand are critical towards views of education that predetermine student subjectivity and instead ask questions about what it means for education to be attentive to the students' undefinable subjectivity. In part, this means creating an "appreciation of subjectivity that is not yet defined, not yet filled with content or substance" (Todd, 2011, p. 511). This is the view that subjectivities are always in a state of becoming (Todd, 2011). Educationally speaking, Todd (2011) suggests that we should consider the pedagogical space as an "unpredictable site, where we cannot know with any certainty what the future holds and which subjects will unfold in its midst—subjects both unique and different, in relation" (p. 511). Having a relational understanding of education means to consider education as the possibility where the student subject can emerge as a concrete other (Todd, 2003). This theorizing draws attention to the educational significance of creating spaces where students' unpredictable subjectivities are allowed to emerge through relations. In this way, the work that makes education possible can be understood as the work that engages in relations where students' subjectivities, or as Biesta (2022) calls it, "subject-ness", can emerge.

Theorizing education in a way that highlights the existential, weak instrumental, and relational qualities of education brings into focus a specific concern for what makes education possible. These views of education lead to an understanding of education as emancipation (Säfström, 2010, 2011, 2021), subjectification (Biesta, 2010b, 2013, 2020, 2022), and becoming (Todd, 2011, 2020, 2023). This theorizing of education is further developed in the remaining chapters and serves as the basis for my exploration of educational possibilities in and beyond carceral logics in the school.

I engage with the concepts of education as emancipation, subjectification, and becoming because they provide more precise language for considering what education is, how it is appealed to, and how it emerges. This enables my exploration into the educational possibilities in and beyond carceral logics. I am

not suggesting that these are the only ways to theorize education, or that education is only these things; rather, I am suggesting that, through this understanding of education, I am able to inquire into its possibility in schools and into the work that makes education possible. That is, they all offer ways of understanding the work that makes change and transformation possible for students through an ethical and relational dynamic between educators and students. The educational scholars I largely draw upon in this dissertation are strongly inspired by, although not limited to, the thinking of Jaques Rancière, Hannah Arendt, and Emmanuel Levinas. I generally only engage with the educational philosophers and their interpretations of these other thinkers because what I am seeking is the educational aspects lifted in relation to the aforementioned thinkers. That is, what is “useful” about the work of Rancière, Arendt, and Levinas for this dissertation stems from how their theorizing has been put to work through its use in educational-philosophical discussions. In this way, I engage with educational scholars who have “translated” the work of Rancière, Arendt, and Levinas into forms of educational philosophy.

While this educational philosophy is able to provide language and concepts to help us understand the educational significance of an appeal to students’ existence, and the instrumental and relational aspects of certain practices in schools, it generally accounts for education in terms of ideal ethical and relational aspects of education. It is unable to provide the language for understanding the educational possibilities of and beyond the *specific* conditions of carceral logics in schools. That is, this educational philosophy in itself does not enable us to understand how carceral logics (and beyond) make an appeal to students’ existence, transformation, and possibility to emerge as subjects possible or not. While these scholars in educational philosophy have not taken up carceral logics, these logics have been pursued by abolitionist scholars and educators in relation to schools.

Abolition and school

There are notable similarities between the work of abolitionist educators and the critical pedagogy discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Both are concerned with addressing structural injustices and societal change in different ways. That said, critical pedagogy and abolitionist pedagogy are not the same. Abolitionist pedagogy will be further elaborated upon in chapter 7, but in this section, I further describe how abolition offers one way to understand carceral logics in relation to the school.

Many abolitionist educators view schools as sites that are underpinned by carceral logics and where carceral logics manifest (e.g., Love, 2019; Meiners, 2013; Rodríguez, 2010; Shalaby, 2021). Referring to the US context, Hernandez et al. (2021) argue that schools have “never been immune to the ideological and material reach of prisons and policing” (p. 18). Because abolitionist educators have this view of the school, part of their work focuses on problematizing certain practices in schools that are informed by carceral logics. Abolitionist educator Shalaby (2021) problematizes how classroom management often follows the same “logic that undergirds prison” (p. 106). Prison in Shalaby’s work is an idea, not just a place—it is “an idea that depends upon other ideas in order to exist as a place” (Shalaby, 2021, p. 106). Shalaby’s critical stance is also reflected in the work of Rodríguez (2010), who argues forcefully that “the prison has developed a capacity to organize and disrupt the most taken-for-granted features of everyday social life, including ‘family,’ ‘community,’ ‘school’ and ‘individual social identities’” (p. 7). Rodríguez contends that “the prison regime’s presence” in schools informs routines, the curriculum, and administrative protocols (2010, p. 11). Relatedly, Whynacht, Arsenault and Cooney (2018) suggest that “abolitionist pedagogy, then, must also commit to exploring the complex and seemingly infinite connections between the violence of the prison and everyday life” (p. 142). Several abolitionist educators have long worked to do just that.

A notable special issue of the journal *Radical Teacher* took up aspects of abolition in terms of teaching, pedagogy, and school as early as 2010. In this special issue, educator and abolitionist Rodríguez (2010) describes abolition in terms of pedagogy and teaching and raises questions about the work of teachers in relation to an abolitionist framework. Since then, additional notable publications within the domain of abolition and education include Bettina Love’s (2019) *We Want to do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*, and Education for Liberation Network and Critical Resistance Editorial Collective’s (2021) *Lessons in Liberation: An Abolitionist Toolkit for Educators*. Relatedly, educational scholar Brian Cabral has introduced the notion of “educational abolitionism praxis,” which he describes as “a guide forward toward alternative theorizations of schooling in the United States and alternative modes of pedagogy and educational lifeworld” (2024, p. 289). Importantly, Cabral (2024) suggests that he is not aiming to “delineate what educational abolitionism is, but to dis-orient us toward an experimental tool that fundamentally shifts what is possible through a focus on abolition and its offerings” (p. 289). These scholars and educators position the work of abolition in direct relation to work in schools both by

engaging with abolitionist approaches in the classroom (which I define as abolitionist teaching) and in terms of teaching abolition as kind of subject matter.

Writing specifically about abolition in relation to the work of teachers, Rodríguez (2010) argues that a primary question for teachers is “whether and how the act of teaching can effectively and radically displace the normalized misery, everyday suffering, and mundane state violence that are reproduced and/or passively condoned by *both* hegemonic and critical/counter hegemonic pedagogies” (p. 8, italics in original). According to Rodríguez (2010), the “teaching act is constituted by the technologies of the prison regime” (p. 10). Rodríguez (2010) is critical of contemporary liberal, progressive, critical, and radical teaching and he suggests that what “is usually required, and what usually works as a strategy for teaching against the carceral common sense, is a pedagogical approach that asks the unshakable, posits the necessity of the impossible, and embraces the creative danger inherent in liberationist futures” (p. 12).

Beyond only the school context, abolition entails the problematization of criminal justice and solutions to problems offered through carceral logics, and includes the building of world that is rooted in alternative relations of safety and justice. Abolition as an approach has the “ultimate aim of removing the prison from the social and ideological landscapes of our society” (Davis, 2003, p. 107). Abolition is an organizing practice with an aspiration to think about harm and solutions to harm differently and is a paradigm for doing so (Purnell, 2021). Abolition rejects any idea of creating a gentler prison and policing system and instead promotes an active move towards creating a world that does not rely on the police and prisons at all (Kaba, 2021). Abolitionism is within feminism and is both a practical method and a philosophical tool (Davis et al., 2022; Guenther, 2022).

While abolition can be understood in a variety of ways, it does face critique. Penal and police abolition have been criticized for being utopian and idealistic (Coyle, 2018; Fryer 2023). Fryer (2023) criticizes the way in which descriptions of abolition are hard to understand and are therefore difficult to scrutinize. In a philosophical analysis of abolition, Shelby (2022) is skeptical of prison abolition and contends that there is an important difference between the demand for more humane prisons and the demand that there should be no prisons. Prison abolition has been critiqued for not being able to sufficiently account for what to do with and how to address “the dangerous few” (Frampton, 2022). These critiques can be understood in large part as rooted in a belief in the overall justifications of the criminal justice system.

Forms of incarceration have been used for centuries, and its justifications have been based on theories of “retribution, deterrence, consent, forfeiture, fairness, reconciliation, rehabilitation, moral education, and other things” (Shelby, 2022, p. 3). Shelby (2022) contends that incarceration has a legitimate and necessary societal purpose, including punishment, crime prevention, and harm prevention. While these critiques are understandable, an abolitionist approach nonetheless challenges these assumptions. In this dissertation, I follow the abolitionist problematization of these assumptions because they enable understandings of carceral logics. In particular, I draw upon abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization and abolitionist views of the police.

Aspects of abolition have also received critiques from the other end of the spectrum. Davis (2006) notes that, while the work of abolitionists like Nils Christie and Louk Hulsman offer important insights, “there is no sustained analysis of the part antiracism might play in the theory and practice of abolitionism” (pp. 365–366). Similarly, Saleh-Hanna (2017) has critiqued penal abolitionists and critical criminological work (e.g., Hulsman, 1986) for not sufficiently considering racist, imperialist, or patriarchal aspects in their understandings of crime and the criminal justice system. Recognizing these critiques, I purposefully draw upon abolitionist thought and practice that is rooted in the recognition of the racist, imperialist, and patriarchal foundations of the carceral order. That is, in my analysis, I understand carceral logics and the carceral order as inherently operating within larger structures of racism, capitalism, patriarchy, and more.

There are also critiques of abolitionist notions of transformative justice. I have already mentioned transformative justice in chapter 1 and will return to it again in chapter 8, but I include some descriptions of transformative justice here in order to situate some of the critiques it faces. Transformative justice has been popularized by social movements that hold a prison abolitionist politics (Kim, 2018). It specifically seeks to address harm and other issues outside of the criminal legal system and is based on an explicit desire to create justice in ways that the carceral state does not and cannot (Kim, 2021). Transformative justice “takes as a starting point the idea that what happens in our interpersonal relationships is mirrored and reinforced by the larger systems” (Kaba, 2021, p. 149). Kaba (2021) argues that, in order to address harm and transform the conditions under which harm occurs, it is crucial to always keep the relationship between interpersonal harm and larger systems in mind. Transformative justice seeks to address broader social, political and economic realities, as opposed to only focusing on the responsibilities of individuals (McLeod, 2019). Shelby (2022) is critical of

transformative justice because it requires the willingness of those who have done and experienced harm to participate, which he suggests cannot always be achieved for numerous reasons. For example, victims and survivors might not feel safe being around the person who harmed them, particularly if that person does not show any remorse (Shelby, 2022). Shelby (2022) contends that there needs for a form of justice (criminal justice) that is available in situations where this willingness required by transformative justice is not possible. In my understanding of abolitionist thought, abolitionists would not disagree with Shelby's (2022) assessment that transformative justice requires participation that is not always possible. Where the abolitionist response differs from Shelby (2022) is that Shelby (2022) concludes that this requires criminal justice, whereas abolitionists look towards a focus on harm and changing the conditions under which harm occurs in order to create justice.

I draw upon abolitionist notions of transformative justice not because I assume that it is possible to practice all aspects of transformative justice in all situations at all times (which is not what abolitionists would claim either, as will be developed in chapter 8), but because transformative justice helps us to understand the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools. In particular, I draw upon abolitionist approaches to violence and harm in order to problematize responses to violence in schools informed by carceral logics in chapter 6, and draw upon transformative justice praxis, specifically practices of creating safety, focusing on addressing harm, and transforming the conditions under which harm occurs, in order to imagine beyond carceral logics in chapter 8. Abolitionist educators and scholars help us to both problematize how practices in schools can be understood in terms of carceral logics and imagine beyond carceral logics through practices in schools. However, this problematization and imagining beyond of practices in schools, in itself, says less about how the possibility for education is informed by these practices or the educational potential of such practices. This leads me to how I consider both discussions in educational philosophy and abolitionism together.

My stereoscopic approach

In chapter 1, I introduced how educational philosophy and abolitionism together make it possible to explore the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools. In this section, I further elaborate on how they make visible the possibilities for education and *educational* work in and beyond carceral logics. This

approach is inspired by philosopher of education Marianna Papastephanou's (2021a, 2021b) discussion of stereoscopic optics.

Papastephanou (2021a, 2021b) proposes a stereoscopic outlook on justice in philosophy of education scholarship and it is this stereoscopic approach that informs my method. Within the field of philosophy of education, Papastephanou notes that justice is often only considered from "one perspective" and that justice is often used as a "free- or self-standing concept" (2021a, p. 11). According to Papastephanou, a perspective "regulates the visibility of aspects within a homogenized space and thus lets some aspects remain hidden or partly visible" (2021b, p. 1). Alternatively, "stereoscopic technology enables sighting sets of images that, outside of the viewing apparatus, could have escaped the eye" (Papastephanou, 2021b, p. 13). A stereoscopic approach to justice, according to Papastephanou (2021b), enables "a more 'collective' vision of justice within scanned space and time" (p. 13). It is this technology that enables my analysis.

In the remaining chapters of this dissertation, I use a stereoscopic approach to consider a school of and beyond carceral logics. A school of carceral logics is a school with crime prevention and police involvement, whereas a school beyond carceral logics is a school beyond crime prevention and police involvement. By looking at the "images" of a school of and beyond carceral logics through stereoscopic optics, it becomes possible to understand possibilities for education and *educational* work through the new image that they produce together. Abolition can be understood as capturing one picture of the school of and beyond carceral logics, while the educational philosophy captures a slightly different picture. These images are different from one another, and thus, different aspects of the school are visible in each image. Viewing these images together through the stereoscope makes something else visible. What becomes visible through the stereoscope are the possibilities for education and *educational* work in and beyond carceral logics in schools¹².

Neither educational philosophy nor abolitionism are "applied" to each other; thus, a stereoscopic approach does not collapse or merge educational philosophy

12 While I do not explore stereoscopic notions of justice, as Papastephanou (2021a) does, I believe that my consideration of the educational possibilities of and beyond carceral logics does coincidentally have implications for the relationship between justice and education in ways that I develop further in chapters 8 and 9, where I discuss educational understandings of transformative justice and educational abolitionism. In this way, this dissertation opens up further opportunities to explore Papastephanou's (2021a) question: "what justice helps us rethink education?" (p. 12).

and abolitionism. Rather, they are brought together to make it possible to see the educational possibilities that might otherwise have “escaped the eye” (Papastephanou, 2021b, p. 13). The theories of education and the aspects of abolition that I draw upon ask different questions, engage with different problems, and stem from different struggles, all of which have normative implications. Different concerns are foregrounded within these traditions. The educational-philosophical discussions that highlight the existential, weak instrumental, and relational qualities of education focus on how education can be understood and made possible. In this theorizing, education is an experience that is defined by an openness and the freedom to emerge as a subject capable of change and transformation in ways that cannot be fully determined by structural power or categorizations. This could be understood as being in tension with the structural concerns of abolitionism. Abolitionism is concerned with justice, ending structural oppression, transforming material conditions, inequalities, and societal change. This could be understood as being in conflict with the educational-philosophical positions I draw upon, which emphasize the ways that education as a phenomenon cannot be defined by structures, or applied in the name of changing them. While some readings of abolitionism could argue that it is too critical, too structural in its critique, and thus over determines the subject position of students, I suggest that the educational element of abolitionism is found in what it opens up that is of educational concern.

Abolitionism highlights large and deterministic structures, whereas the educational philosophy used in this dissertation pays particular attention to singular subjects in the theorizing of education. In drawing upon abolitionism, together with positions in educational philosophy, I take seriously the desire to avoid reducing education to roles that are too determinative or instrumental, while at the same time remaining aware that this can risk resulting in a kind of education from no-where, for no-one. I draw upon both educational philosophy and abolitionism in order to explore educational implications without obscuring who these implications matter for. In this way, I view the tensions as productive, because they draw our attention to different aspects that form the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools. But more than only drawing our attention to different aspects, in considering both abolition and educational philosophy together, it becomes possible to overcome the shortcomings of each. If I were to only engage with these discussions in educational philosophy, my analysis would perhaps only focus on relational and ethical aspects that form educational possibilities but would lack in a consideration of how larger structures

of oppression and injustice inform these possibilities. If I were to only engage with abolitionism, my analysis would perhaps only focus on the societal reproduction of carceral logics in schools but would lack in a consideration of what is educationally at stake and possible in and beyond these logics. Normative arguments in educational philosophy provide the language to understand educational possibilities, and abolitionism provides the language to problematize and imagine beyond carceral logics. Through the stereoscope, the educational possibilities of and beyond carceral logics become visible in a way that would not be the case if educational philosophy or abolition alone were considered. Together, it becomes possible to analyze what is educationally at stake in and beyond carceral logics. What is at stake is the possibility for education and *educational* work in and beyond these logics.

As already described, the discussions in educational philosophy that highlight the existential, weak instrumental, and relational qualities of education lead to a theorization of education as emancipation, subjectification, and becoming. All of these conceptualizations can be understood as holding the idea that education happens through relations that make change and transformation of the student subject possible. The work of abolitionist educators described in this chapter, and abolition more generally (as developed in the remaining chapters), offers a way to think about the possibilities for change and transformation in and beyond carceral logics without taking the racial, patriarchal, and capitalist aspects of these logics for granted.

However, abolition does not just contribute to the problematization of carceral logics and imagining beyond them. In addition, it contributes to educational thinking because it puts actual conditions on how the possibility for education emerges, and this enables a further understanding of the work that makes education possible. To my mind, the abolition and educational philosophy that I draw upon both start with a premise of change and transformation, but from somewhat opposing starting points. Abolition starts from a place where transformation stems from a recognition of and imagining beyond the carceral order. That is, the transformation that abolition enables is always connected to the transformation of larger structures. Alternatively, in the theorizations of education as emancipation, subjectification, and becoming, transformation and change stem from the ways in which the student subject cannot be determined by these larger structures. In one way, drawing upon them both could seem contradictory, because abolition starts in a place that the discussions within educational philosophy steer away from. But in my reading of abolition, although it starts in a

place that recognizes and imagines beyond social structures, the transformation and change that it invokes is not a change and transformation that *requires* an overdetermination of the student subject in relation to larger structures and processes of oppression. Rather, it is a change that transcends them.

As will be developed further in chapters 7 and 8, the abolitionist practices I discuss are not coercive, and therefore they, to my mind, can be understood as not replicating the strong instrumentalization and over determination of the subject that make up so much of the discussions within educational philosophy when defining what makes education educational. Furthermore, justice in abolitionist practice “strives perpetually to remain open to change in response to changing need and changing times” (McLeod, 2019, p. 1647). The abolitionist practices I draw on in chapters 7 and 8, to my mind, open up routes for understanding possibilities for education and envisioning *educational* work in ways that are conducive to the change and transformation of students that is stressed within educational philosophy. At the same time, drawing upon abolition allows me to push the idea of education as emancipation, subjectification, and becoming further, because through its emphasis on systems of oppression and societal transformation, abolition makes it possible for me to theorize the ways in which these matter for the possibilities for education and *educational* work. In this way, in chapters 7 and 8, the tension between discussions within educational philosophy and abolition (that is, the tension between the change that emerges in a given subject and the change that emerges within societal transformation) work together in a stereoscopic view to conceive of educational possibilities and *educational* work beyond carceral logics. The educational-philosophical discussions, to my mind, rightfully theorize education in a way which highlights that education cannot be about forming or reducing students to their positions within pre-existing orders. However, I think that this theorizing under theorizes the educational potential in the resistance to and imagining beyond these orders. In this way, abolition adds to educational thinking and practice in a way that these discussions within educational philosophy alone do not. When abolition and discussions within educational philosophy are considered together, despite their tensions, they enable an understanding of what is educationally at stake in and beyond carceral logics that is marked by solidity and depth.

I use a stereoscopic approach in the remaining analysis chapters in the following ways. In chapter 4, I use the theorization of education as emancipation and abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization to discuss what is educationally possible in a school of crime prevention. I chose to engage with

education as emancipation in this chapter because it offers one way to understand what the change and transformation of education is, while abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization offers a way to understand how the crime preventative school informs possibilities for this change. In chapter 5, I use the theorization of education as subjectification and abolitionist views of the police to flesh out what is educationally possible in a school of police involvement. I chose to engage with education as subjectification in this chapter because it offers one way to understand what underpins the change and transformation of education, while abolitionist views of the police offer one way to understand how the institution of the police informs the possibilities for this change. In chapter 6, I engage with notions of education as becoming and abolitionist approaches to violence and harm to describe what is educationally possible in responses to violence in schools. I chose to engage with education as becoming in this chapter because it offers a way to understand how the change and transformation of education emerges through relational encounters, while abolitionist approaches to violence and harm offer one way to understand how responses to violence inform the possibilities for this change.

In chapter 7, I engage with abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition, together with education as emancipation, to describe possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics in schools in general, and beyond the crime preventative school specifically. I chose to engage with abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition because they offer one way to imagine practices in schools beyond carceral logics. Finally, in chapter 8, I use abolitionist transformative justice praxis, together with education as subjectification and becoming, to flesh out possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics in general, and beyond police involvement in schools specifically. I chose to engage with these abolitionist practices because they offer ways to imagine new possibilities for *educational* work.

Methodological reflections

Conducting my analysis through stereoscopic optics can be understood in similar terms to what Andreotti and de Souza (2016) have called “beyond reform” in terms of critical educational research. They distinguish “beyond reform” research from “soft reform” and “radical reform” (Andreotti & de Souza, 2016). According to Andreotti and de Souza (2016), a soft reform research question could be: “How can education strategies for the marginalized or excluded be more effective in bringing them up to our standards?” A radical reform research question could be:

“How does the existing system exclude and marginalize Others?” A beyond reform research question could be: “How have our imaginaries been limited by modernity?” The questions that Andreotti and de Souza (2016) pose matter for what we imagine the work of education to be. I situate this project in a similar way to how they conceptualize “beyond reform” critical educational research. That is, in problematizing carceral logics and imagining beyond them, this dissertation does not merely seek a discussion of, for example, “how carceral logics are reproduced in schools” (although this underpins my analysis); rather, in problematizing and imagining beyond these logics, I push the kinds of questions that can be posed in research in Sweden that frames schools in relation to crime. Instead of engaging in a pure critique of how carceral logics are reproduced in educational institutions in a similar or dissimilar way as in society, I engage with questions that push beyond the ways in which the taken-for-granted carceral order has limited our understandings of and possibilities for education.

The current version of this project emerged from years of interest in critical pedagogy, critical educational research, and prison abolition. I began this dissertation with an interest in how prison abolition could be thought in relation to institutions of education. Having come across prison abolitionist ideas several years ago for the first time in *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* by Angela Davis (2016), I felt that connections could be made between “education” and prison abolition, and, at the beginning of my project, I tried to make these connections. But it was only when I began to read educational-philosophical work which conceptualized education as such that I realized that the questions I was posing were more complex than I had previously thought. I was bound by my understanding of education as a context and an institution. Similarly, while doing more reading around prison abolition, I realized that the discussion was larger than just the prison; wider logics were at play. At the same time, I was also reading research literature regarding the juridification of education, schools, and youth in Sweden and saw that there was a lack of discussion about what education is beyond education as an institution or context. In this literature, I also saw that things like crime and the police were taken for granted and that the wider logics I had been reading about in abolitionist readings were also at play here, although not in identical ways.

My current dissertation is the culmination of these realizations and has emerged from a deep engagement with the work of educational and abolitionist scholars, in addition to a consideration of research in Sweden that discusses different aspects of school in relation to crime and the police. It is also important for me to

acknowledge that part of the reason why I am able to draw upon abolitionism in my project as a white, currently non-disabled, femme-presenting, US American living in Sweden,¹³ is because of the real lived experiences people have with criminalization and policing, and because of the labor of the abolitionists who have been active in the movement for decades. While I consider myself to be a part of the abolitionist project, it would not have been possible for me to “come” to abolition without the labor and lived experiences of people who experience racism, cisheteropatriarchy, ableism, nationalism, imperialism, and capitalism in ways that I do not. Some might view the description of myself through these social categories as being in conflict with the educational philosophy I employ, but I contend that troubling these social categories through theorizing education in a way that contends that education as a phenomenon cannot be determined by these kinds of categories (which, in part, is what a conceptualization of education through its existential, weak instrumental, and relational qualities does), is not the same thing as invoking these social categorizations as a matter of research ethics (which is what I am doing here). I invoke these social categorizations in order to be transparent about the nature of abolitionist knowledge and my engagement with it in the knowledge production of this dissertation.

Finally, in alignment with the way in which education is theorized in this dissertation, and in alignment with my understanding of aspects of abolitionism, I do not only want to offer the reader more knowledge about how carceral logics in schools can be understood or imagined beyond. Instead, this dissertation invites the reader into a different kind of relation to the concepts and practices that are presented throughout this work in a way that encourages (always emergent) change.

13 I do not mean that I think I (or anyone) can be reduced to these static, fixed categories, but I also think they should be named as a matter of ethics.

Part II Problematizing carceral logics in schools

The analysis in Part II is based on a problematization of carceral logics in schools. I suggest that, in different ways, these logics present problems for the possibilities for education. I also develop ideas about the work that could make education possible beyond these logics.

Chapter 4 Educational possibilities in a school of crime prevention

The purpose of this chapter is to address the first part of the second research question—what is educationally possible in a school of crime prevention? To do so, I use conceptualizations of education as emancipation and abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization. Education as emancipation and abolitionist thought on crime can be understood as capturing two different images of the school of crime prevention. I view these images stereoscopically to analyze the educational possibilities in a school of crime prevention.

The chapter begins with a description of the theorizing of education as emancipation, followed by abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization. Through a stereoscopic approach, I describe how a school of crime prevention can be understood in terms of schooling and inequality, which presents problems for possibilities for education. I also introduce alternatives for how education could be made possible *in* the school beyond crime prevention.

Education as emancipation

In order to understand what is educationally possible in a school of crime prevention, it is necessary to further elaborate on an understanding of education. One way to theorize education is through the concept of emancipation that is inspired by the work of Jaques Rancière (Biesta, 2010a, 2013, 2017; Säfström 2010, 2011, 2021). Both Carl Anders Säfström and Gert Biesta have engaged significantly with the work of Rancière in their theorizing of education, and in this chapter, I draw on this work. While Biesta and Säfström draw upon various texts by Rancière in their work, the idea of emancipation they espouse can be captured through Rancière's idea of emancipation as acting on the presupposition of equality (e.g., Rancière, 1995) and emancipation as a “rupture in the order of things” (Rancière, 2003, p. 219). Säfström (2021) argues that education is about change and always concerns emancipation, which, he claims, is “inevitable for any education worthy of the name” (p. 26). What makes education more than just a reification of society is the possibility for emancipation. Säfström (2021) suggests that “education is

conditioned by emancipation” (p. 37). Crucially, in this theorizing of education, emancipation is something that happens in the now, not in the future (Säfström, 2021, Biesta, 2013).

In addition to drawing upon Rancière to discuss emancipation, Biesta (2010a) also uses Rancière’s work to theorize his notion of subjectification¹⁴. Subjectification is similar to how Biesta describes emancipation, and to some extent, emancipation and subjectification seem to indicate the same thing in parts of Biesta’s theorizing. In fact, Biesta (2010a) even suggests that “emancipation can be understood as a process of *subjectification*” (p. 46, italics in original). Ruitenberg (2013) notes that a notion of subjectification informed by Rancière is about a kind of political subjectivity, where “people become political subjects when they contest the borders of an existing political order to make themselves visible and audible” (p. 92). Subjectification in the Rancièrean sense is “relevant in political relations to the world... subjectification happens when a person disidentifies from a role or position in an existing social order, and re-identifies in a way that names a disagreement with that social order” (Ruitenberg, 2020, p. 140). Biesta (2010a) draws upon Rancière and describes subjectification as the appearance “of a way of being that had no part and no place in the existing order of things” (p. 47). The existing order of things is the “police order” which is “an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and that sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task” (Rancière 1999, cited in Biesta, 2010a, p. 47). Drawing on Rancière, Biesta (2010a) suggests that “police should not be understood as the way in which the state structures the life of society” (p. 47). The police order is more general than this, as it concerns the social relations that govern the appearance of a subject (Biesta, 2010a).

The police order is “all-inclusive in that everyone has a particular place, role, or position in it; there is an identity for everyone” (Biesta 2010a, p. 48). Although everyone is included in the order, this is not to say that everyone has a say in the “running of the order” (Biesta, 2010a, p. 48). When Säfström (2010, 2011, 2021) discusses the dominant order that is presented through schooling it is also, in my reading, a reference to the police order. In this way, education as emancipation occurs when students or teachers exist as subjects in a way that has no place in the existing order. While in this dissertation I do problematize and discuss the literal

14 As I explain in chapters 5 and 6, Biesta draws upon different scholars in his theorizing of subjectification, and I mention it here because some of his writing around subjectification also applies to the idea of education as emancipation in ways that inform my analysis in this chapter.

police as an institution, particularly in chapter 5, Rancière's police order (and Biesta and Säfström's engagement with the notion of the police order to distinguish subjectification and emancipation as something different from the police order) does not pose a contradiction to the analysis I conduct in this chapter. This is because, in this chapter, I elaborate on how the crime preventative school establishes the carceral order—the organizing of society through criminalization, a reliance on the police, and criminal justice—through relations within the school.

Relatedly, Todd (2018) considers education as a cultural practice committed to “emancipation and transformation in reframing and reengaging conventional modes of being” (p. 977). Todd (2023) also draws upon Rancière to highlight that emancipation should not only be understood in terms of the freedom from a social order or the freedom to act, but that it is also about “the *enactment* of equality and is not just about freedom from or freedom to” (p. 33, italics in original). Todd (2023) contends that Biesta does not fully account for the educational significance of this enactment. By considering the educational possibilities within the crime preventative school, I engage with a notion of emancipation while also placing real conditions on it which, I argue, inform the possibilities for the enactment of emancipation. While Todd (2023) emphasizes the significance of the body in the enactment of equality, I emphasize the ways in which the practices of carceral logics matter for the enactment of equality. That is, they matter for the possibility for education as emancipation. While Todd's analysis and my own are not the same, my analysis attempts to be attentive to what I understand to be what Todd is critiquing—the somewhat decontextualized subject present in Biesta's work.

A critique of Rancière's work that is largely missing from the educational scholarship that I draw upon concerns what political scientist and scholar of Women's Gender, and Sexuality studies Holloway Sparks (2016) describes as “Rancière's disinclination to theorize the gendered, sexual, racial, colonial, and other forms of power that dramatically shape contemporary possibilities for dissensus and disruption” (p. 421). Sparks (2016) argues:

As valuable and productive as Rancière's ideas are, his failure to heed the lessons offered by critical scholars, postcolonial critics, feminist, and others about the ongoing dynamics means that his work discounts less visible and/or apparently less successful practices of democratic disturbance that nonetheless disrupt existing logics of domination in important ways. Ignoring this broader and sometimes more subtle set of disruptive practices, [she] contend[s], helps perpetuate the all-too-common tendencies of Western scholars to theorize from an unacknowledged center. (p. 421)

To my mind, this critique holds for the theorizing of education as emancipation in the educational scholarship I draw upon. So, while I engage with this scholarship, I do think that there can be a tendency to theorize education from an “unacknowledged center.” That is, in suggesting that emancipation is a crucial aspect of what makes education educational, without a clear discussion of whose emancipation and under what conditions this emancipation can take place, it can become unclear within the educational theorizing who this supposed emancipation matters for.

Another aspect of the idea of emancipation concerns the status of knowledge and the role of the educator in education as emancipation. Drawing upon Rancière once again, Biesta (2017) problematizes the role of explanation in emancipatory education. Rancière (2010) describes explanation as an arrangement by which knowledge is “to be transmitted in accordance with the supposed limited capacities of those under instruction” (p. 3). This creates a situation of inequality where “those who know nothing are in relation with those who know” (Rancière, 2010 p. 3). Alternatively, emancipation is based on equality, and “all emancipation can promise is to teach people to be equal in a society ruled by inequality and by the institutions that ‘explain’ such inequality” (Rancière, 2010 p. 9). In this way, Biesta (2017) argues that “*emancipation doesn’t ‘run’ on knowledge* (which is why the argument should be read within the confines of the discussion about educational emancipation)” (p. 66, italics in original). This is not to say that teachers do not have knowledge but that “*knowledge is not the ‘way’ of emancipation*” (Biesta, 2017, p. 66, italics in original).

Educational scholar Michalis Christodoulou (2020) is critical of this view that explanation cannot be emancipatory and suggests that “emancipatory living is not a matter of imposing the savant’s truth on the ignorant; and cultivating students’ reason does not mean that teachers develop power relations with them, as Rancière (and unfortunately, Biesta) claims” (p. 27). Without giving up the possibility that some explanation might have emancipatory potential, in this chapter, I discuss the ways in which I understand the crime preventative school to be functioning in terms of explanation that is not emancipatory. I suggest that the crime preventative school can be understood in terms of explanation by describing one way to understand the intended use of the knowledge taught in a school of crime prevention. In this, I agree with Moilanen and Huttunen (2021), who suggest that “it might be problematic to ask whether the transmission of knowledge is emancipatory or not. A more pertinent question could be when the teaching of knowledge promotes student emancipation” (p. 738).

This idea of education as emancipation helps us to explore educational possibilities by providing a language to understand what it is that makes education as emancipation possible. In the next two sections, I further discuss education as emancipation by describing emancipation as an assumption of equality and education as different from schooling.

Emancipation is an assumption of equality

Both Säfström and Biesta draw upon Rancière's discussion of equality and inequality in their own theorizing of education. Equality in the Rancièrian sense "is not an ontological principle, but a political one" (Ruitenbergh, 2013, p. 98). According to Biesta (2013), Rancière offers the central insight that, as long as equality is something that is projected into the future through some kind of intervention, like education, "we will never reach equality but will simply reproduce inequality" (p. 96). To avoid reproducing this inequality, the assumption of equality is something that must be acted on in the here and now, not in the future (Biesta, 2013). According to Biesta (2010a), the assumption of equality as something that must be acted upon in the here and now, and not as some future goal, is in conflict with the "pedagogy of traditional emancipation" (p. 53). The "pedagogy of traditional emancipation", according to Biesta, conceives of education as "a practice in which those who do not yet know receive knowledge from those who do know (and are thus dependent upon those who know for their trajectory toward equality and emancipation)" (Biesta, 2010a, p. 53). This idea of education is "grounded in a fundamental inequality between the one who educates and the one who receives—and needs—education" (Biesta, 2010a, p. 53). This critique has also been made by others (as discussed in chapter 3), including educational scholar Lesley Bartlett (2005), who problematizes the view of students' knowledge as false consciousness, which leads to the idea that students are then in need of the teacher "to serve as the vanguard to lead students to a predetermined conclusion that served their 'real' interests" (p. 360). I follow these critiques in recognizing the problems of this student-teacher-knowledge relation in what Biesta refers to as "the modern 'logic' of emancipation" (2017, p. 55). Furthermore, I recognize this critique as part of a larger critique that has been made by feminist scholars (e.g., Luke & Gore, 1992; hooks, 1994; Walsh, 2015) and decolonial scholars in ways that Biesta does not acknowledge or explore. I draw upon the idea that it is a problem for education as emancipation if inequality between teachers and students is assumed to discuss how the crime preventative

school can be understood in these terms. By drawing upon abolitionist thought in this chapter, my analysis is able to explain how this teacher-student-knowledge relation can be understood in an actual context, as opposed to thinking of it as something that can be understood as a universal stand-alone relation (which I find to be somewhat the case in these discussions of inequality and equality). That is, in order to understand and envision how equality can be assumed in actual practice, there needs to be an additional level of analysis that Biesta and Säfström's work under theorizes.

Assuming equality between teacher and student means that emancipatory teaching is done through the verification of this equality, that is, by making equality true by “acting as if it were true in order to see what follows from it” (Biesta, 2017, p. 64). Emancipation is not an “outcome of a particular educational trajectory” (Biesta, 2010a, p. 58); rather, emancipation “means to act on the basis of the presupposition—or ‘axiom’—of equality” (Biesta, 2013, p. 90) and to be emancipated means to act on this assumption. Emancipation can thus be an educational moment, something that is experienced, an experience that disrupts the accepted order of things. This is different than schooling, to which I now turn.

Education is not schooling

In part, Säfström (2010, 2011, 2021) builds his idea of education by juxtaposing it with what he calls schooling. Säfström is not the only educational scholar to emphasize the difference between education and school. Many within the tradition of critical pedagogy and critical education have made distinctions between school(ing)/educational institutions and education (e.g., Freire, 2000; hooks, 1994; Shujaa, 1993; Stovall, 2018). For example, Shujaa (1993) argues that “schooling is a process *intended* to perpetuate and maintain the society’s existing power relations and the institutional structures that support those arrangements” (p. 330, italics in original), whereas education is “the process of transmitting from one generation to the next knowledge of the values, aesthetics, spiritual beliefs, and all things that give a particular cultural orientation its uniqueness” (pp. 330–331). In Säfström’s theorizing, schooling works as a kind of foil to education as emancipation, and I describe the aspects of Säfström’s concept of schooling that provide a language for understanding education as emancipation.

According to Säfström (2021), it is through schooling that students are instructed into a social order that is presented as real. Students can learn and progress through schooling but are expected never to question the order itself

because that “would be to question reality itself” (Säfström, 2021, p. 34). Schooling works by regulating students’ social positions and instructs them into ways of living and being (Säfström, 2021). Säfström (2011) describes schooling as a “managerial function of the state” (p. 199), under which students are subjects of regulation instead of education. The concept of schooling therefore brings to the fore the ways in which students are molded into an order through the establishment of said order via instruction.

Relatedly, schooling “is about occupying a position corresponding to one’s place in the (naturalized) social order” (Säfström, 2021, p. 19). Through schooling, problems that students experience in school are turned into properties of the students themselves, rather than being seen as “contextually produced” (Säfström, 2021, p. 12). An example of this can be seen, Säfström (2021) suggests, in a White Paper preparing for teacher education reform in 2012, where interventions in special needs education are directed towards “the troublesome child” rather than “a child in trouble” (as discussed in Beach et al., 2011). When problems become characteristics of students, students become objects to fix. Turning problems into characteristics of students therefore presents problems for education as emancipation because it relies upon a logic that seeks to fix students via an intervention from the teacher or school at large. The problem becomes something to fix within the student as opposed to there being a problem within the order itself.

In schooling, students’ talents, skills, and abilities are framed as “natural properties of the self, rather than social and political constructs, and as such schooling is thought of as bringing those properties out and circulating them for the profit of the economic order” (Säfström, 2021, p. 19). In this way, schooling is effective in creating a workforce and can lead to class mobility, but in so doing, schooling works within “the existing capitalistic economic order rather than operating against it” (Säfström, 2021, p. 7), and the distinctions between rich and poor remain. Moreover, it is not only that the distribution of people’s skills, talents, and abilities that is said to lead to class mobility functions within the existing capitalist economic order, but that in placing students into different functions of society, schooling confirms the current order and works as an “integral part of the order, rather than as an alternative to, such an order” (Säfström, 2021, p. 7).

Relatedly, Säfström (2021) suggests that there is a kind of double inequality established through schooling, arguing:

this is fundamentally the problem with schooling: the idea that we get the society explained to us in schools, and that such society explained is an order

of inequality. Even the structure of explanation itself is reproducing this order between those who already know and those who do not; between those who need to listen and those who have the right to speak, and to decide who is in and who is out. (p. 49)

The concept of schooling brings into focus how inequality works within the relationship between teachers, students, and knowledge.

Furthermore, Säfström (2021) suggests that, if society is “essentially split between precarious populations and the rich and powerful, schooling cannot change this fundamental hierarchical social order but rather is an expression of this order” (p. 40). This statement could perhaps make us feel that there is a determinative character to education as a reflection of society, but education and schooling are not the same thing—education works through a different “logic than schooling: education is conditioned by emancipation” (Säfström, 2021, p. 37). Emancipation is possible despite schooling, and to the “extent that emancipation and freedom show themselves, education is possible within systems of schooling, or structures of oppression” (Säfström, 2021, p. 38). Emancipation in the school is possible precisely because there are “real people in actual schools”¹⁵ (Säfström, 2021, p. 19). That is, when education as emancipation does occur in schools it happens in spite of schooling, through the educational moments made possible by teachers and students that fall outside of the totalizing and reproductive grasps of schooling. Emancipation “always happens in the interplay between ‘the order of truth’ and the disturbance of that order. That is, emancipation is a break with schooling” (Säfström, 2011, p. 200). Therefore, to be emancipated is to be able to see inequality and to assume and verify equality (Säfström, 2021). So, while education as emancipation would not be found in the ways in which a school of crime prevention can be understood in terms of schooling, this is not to say that education as emancipation is impossible in the actual school.

In the theorization of education as emancipation, education is the change and transformation that occurs through the assumption of equality, which means to act in ways that disrupt the given order. This theorizing makes it possible to understand what is educationally possible through an ideal of emancipation, but it cannot enable an understanding of educational possibilities under the specific

15 Although hooks (1994) does not use the same language as Säfström, she makes a similar reflection when discussing education as the practice of freedom that is worth noting here. She asserts, “the classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress” (p. 207).

conditions in a school of crime prevention. To understand this requires an understanding of the order crime prevention is a part of, and this is where I now turn.

Abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization

Abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization provides the language to understand the carceral order through notions of crime and criminalization. I begin with conceptualizations of crime offered by the field of criminology to position what it is that abolitionist thought problematizes. According to Gottfredson (2011), the definition of “crime” has long been a topic of debate for criminologists. In simple terms, crime is often defined through its relation to the law (Wikström, 2006). Wikström (2006) offers the following definition: “*crime* may be defined as *an act of breaking a moral rule defined in criminal law*” (p. 63, italics in original). Therefore, the state is both part of the process that makes certain behaviors criminal and also forms the institutions that respond to said behaviors. The criminal justice system includes cooperation between, although not limited to, the police, the courts, the prison system, and other legislative bodies, and assumes that it is capable of dealing with all problems that are deemed criminal (Hulsman, 1986). Critical criminologists have long contended that crime has no ontological reality (Hulsman, 1986; McLaughlin, 2011). Problematizing the concept of crime as such, Hulsman (1986) argues, leads to “the *abolition* of criminal justice as we know it. Because ‘crime as an ontological reality’ is the corner stone of such a type of criminal justice” (p. 67, italics in original). McLaughlin (2011) argues that crime as a concept must continue to be problematized because “dominant constructions misrepresent and distort the real problem of crime” (p. 53). Problematizations around crime as such are a key part of abolitionist thought.

Abolitionist professor of crime and justice studies, Viviane Saleh-Hanna (2008), notes that “penal abolitionist academic discourse emerges through the critical criminological academic context, with subparadigmatic affiliations to radical criminology” (p. 417). However, Saleh-Hanna (2017) is critical of abolitionist scholarship that over emphasizes crime as a social construction which is part of criminal justice and criminal justice institutions, as opposed to recognizing crime as part of what she refers to as a structure of racist-imperialist-patriarchy. Nevertheless, the idea that crime is a social construction, as opposed to a fixed phenomenon is widely held in abolitionist thought (Ritchie & Martensen,

2019). Saleh-Hanna (2017) describes her work as an abolitionist theory *on* crime, not *of* crime and contends that “crime’s possibility requires White supremacy as a backdrop. Without such a backdrop, crime would not enter into the realm of identifiable logic” (p. 420). In this dissertation, I engage with the abolitionist problematization of crime that acknowledges crime’s racist-imperialist-patriarchal roots and am following Saleh-Hanna’s (2017) assertion that “the notion of crime is impactful, widely accepted as real and attached to actions believed to be universal to human behavior by the majority” (p. 419). This concept of crime provides the language to understand how crime operates as part of the carceral order.

Abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization contends that not all violence is a crime, and not all crime is violent and that, in actuality, the great majority of violence and harm is not criminalized (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). Thought of in this way, crime rates are not something that can necessarily give an indication of harm or safety (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). For example, the acts of violence regularly committed by the police and military are not considered crimes (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). Furthermore, the violence of structural, economic, and environmental injustice that frequently leads to what Ruth Wilson Gilmore has termed “premature death,” often does not count as crime either (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). These understandings of crime bring into focus how a concern to address crime is not necessarily based on a concern for violence and harm, but is instead a concern based within a carceral order.

Instead of considering crime to be an indicator of violence, abolitionist thought contends that it is a constructed category that is “largely the product of political decisions made in service of maintaining existing relations of power” (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022, p. 45). Similarly, Ben-Moshe (2020) suggests that who and what the state defines as criminal and as crime is dependent upon power relations connected to race, sexuality, nationality, class, ability, and gender. The construction of crime and the criminal, and how to respond to them, according to Kaba and Ritchie (2022), is a product of “social, political, and police decisions” (p. 60). This highlights that crime is constructed by those in power in the interests of maintaining existing power relations. This idea of crime provides the language to understand how crime functions as part of a carceral order of inequality.

Crime does not stand on its own—it is established through a process of criminalization (Saleh-Hanna, 2008). Coyle (2018) argues that the category of “the criminal” emerges through the criminal justice system through “their *conceptualization* within law, to their *surveillance* through police, and finally to their *processing and management* through courts and prisons” (p. 80, italics in original).

Criminalization can be understood as “a social and political process that determines which actions or behaviors—and by who—will be punished by the state” (Ritchie & Ritchie, 2017, p. 4). Chartrand and Rougier (2022) view criminalization as a part of colonial modernity, where patriarchy, white supremacy, and imperialism interlock to form a system of justice. Relatedly, Nagel (2022) argues:

When penal abolitionists parse through annals of history written from the perspective of the elites, they must note the Manichean logic which dictates that there are laws for ‘decent’ people who write and execute the laws, as much as they remain above the law. These laws are foisted upon ‘indecent’ people: the rabble, the racialized, the stateless denizens of the world. The club of the law comes down hard on the downtrodden, who are banished into carceral fortresses, warehoused in psychiatric hospitals, reform schools, boot camps, and other total institutions. The law is cavalier toward those who commit atrocities but exist within the pale—safeguarded by capital and social connections to those who write or administer the law. (p. 46)

Challenging the concept of criminalization itself sheds light on the interests and relations of power that are served through the process of criminalization (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). Coyle and Young (2022) note that people are dehumanized through the language of criminalization. They argue that this dehumanization first takes place by “finding ways to criminalize people in communities of color and/or people in poor communities” (p. 140). Through this, “the criminal” is created and is understood as “deserving of containment and punishment” (Coyle & Young, 2022, p. 140). This understanding of criminalization brings into focus how criminalization can be understood as a process that is based in inequality. Abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization provides the language to understand the crime preventative school in relation to the carceral order. This makes it possible to understand the specific conditions that inform the educational possibilities of a school of crime prevention but cannot explain how these conditions matter educationally speaking. In the following two sections, I draw upon abolitionist thought on crime and criminalization, together with ideas of education as emancipation, to explore what is educationally possible in a school of crime prevention.

Establishing the carceral order through crime prevention

In this section, I flesh out how a school of crime prevention can be understood through the terms of schooling. I begin with a paragraph from the recent report *Schools Against Crime* (which was introduced in chapter 1). This report details the following:

We stress the important role of schools in preventing future crime, that is, helping to prevent children and young people from developing criminal behaviour. Many aspects of the school's basic mission can contribute to this. We pay particular attention to the importance of good school belonging and good academic performance as factors that protect against negative non-normative behaviour and criminality, negative non-normative behaviour as a risk factor for ongoing negative non-normative behaviour, and the importance of early, well-targeted and coordinated efforts to prevent a negative spiral. We emphasise that the school's role in crime prevention efforts is dependent on the school being able to carry out its basic mission. (Swedish Government Official Report 2024:17, p. 31)

It is interesting to discuss this report and the motivation behind it because it captures how the current government frames the school in relation to crime.

In a school of crime prevention, the construction of what crime *is* is established and made real through the imagined work of the school. That is, when there is an idea that the work of the school can and should prevent crime, the work done by the school then makes a specific understanding of crime real. When the school is supposed to prevent crime, it is not necessarily the case that a particular school has to discuss crime itself to make a certain understanding of crime real, but it is in the idea that school as an institution is supposed to prevent crime where certain crime and certain solutions to crime become understood and established as real. Similarly to how Säfström (2021) claims that the existing capitalist economic order is made real through schooling, I assert here that crime and the carceral order of which it is a part of are made real through a school of crime prevention.

The establishment of the carceral order as real can be understood as rendering students into objects of intervention. One way in which this happens is to place students into an instrumental relationship with knowledge in the crime preventative school. One interpretation of the idea that the school is supposed to prevent crime, is that students are expected to take the knowledge and skills they

learn at school and put them to use in society insofar as they avoid crime in accordance with society's current construction. This is reflected in the example at the beginning of this chapter, but also appears in research (e.g., Dahlstedt & Foultier, 2021; Lunneblad, 2022; Wahlgren, 2014). For example, Dahlstedt and Foultier's (2021) study on a "crime prevention through education" program shows that students are taught to make choices in the name of freedom, responsibility, and security, but that there "is *one* right choice, and *one* right way, based on current norms, that students are to be taught to choose, *by themselves*" (p. 381, italics in original). This knowledge is also of course saturated with values and norms about what it is that prevents crime and who it is that needs to be a target of such crime preventative interventions. Because it is believed that schools can and should prevent crime, the value of general knowledge gained in school can be understood in terms of its potential contribution to crime prevention. Here, students are made into objects that need to be fixed through the "correct" knowledge. This can be understood as an instrumentalization of knowledge itself. That is, the knowledge itself is supposed to prevent crime.

However, it is not only that students are made into objects of intervention through an instrumentalization of knowledge, but also, through such instrumentalization, what students are expected to do with their knowledge has also already been determined; they should use the knowledge to take their place within the carceral order. So, it is not only the knowledge itself that is instrumentalized for crime-prevention purposes, but the students' relation to this knowledge is also instrumentalized for crime preventative purposes. Thus, students are positioned as objects to be altered to fit into the established carceral social order, which limits the possibilities for education as emancipation.

When the school is considered a place of crime prevention, I contend that it is not only that students are fitted into the established carceral social order, but also that, through the carceral order that is made real (and students' placement into this order), this order is confirmed. The idea that crime exists and that it can and should be prevented through the work of schools further confirms and maintains the carceral social order because, when the schools is supposed to prevent crime, it does not make sense to question crime or the carceral order. The reinforcing of the current order, rather than challenging it, has similarities with Wahlgren's (2014) description of the crime-prevention discourse that has dominated the 21st century so far, which is about "protecting society against change by upholding the unquestionable pre-given democratic order" (p. 232), rather than transforming society. The carceral order is made real through the very ways in which students

are expected to use their knowledge and skills they have acquired at school to take their place within the carceral order. To be properly schooled at the crime preventative school, then, would mean accepting crime and the carceral order as natural and accepting one's place within that order, which presents problems for the possibilities for education as emancipation.

When crime and the carceral order are established as real, which is what I have suggested occurs within the crime preventative school, the possibility for students' existence beyond this order is not encouraged. Therefore, the crime preventative school should not be understood as emancipatory because, once again, the order itself remains unquestioned and unmovable. In this way, the crime preventative school functions as schooling that confirms the carceral order, where the opportunity to disrupt or disagree with this carceral order is diminished. Instead of merely inserting students into the carceral order, *educational* work could serve to trouble this order itself.

Of course, it could be argued that the crime preventative school has the democratic purpose of preparing future citizens to exist in a society that is ruled by law. Or that the crime preventative school helps students to develop a sense of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior in society. While the abolitionist thought that I draw upon challenges such assumptions, I would still suggest that, even if these arguments held, it would not change the nature of the problems for emancipation just suggested. The argument that the crime preventative school prepares future citizens to exist in a society that is ruled by law and that only accepts certain forms of behavior, I contend, is still limited to an understanding that the carceral order is necessary for society to function. This works to further establish the carceral order, which is problematic for education as emancipation in the ways that I have just described. Alternative ways to organize relations that hold educational possibilities will be discussed in chapters 7 and 8.

Students and “the criminal”

In this section, I develop how a school of crime prevention can be understood in terms of inequality through the criminalization of students. One interpretation of when the carceral order becomes established in schools, is that the properties of the potential criminal are projected onto students. Considering students as potential criminals can be understood as rooted in inequality in two different ways. Firstly, it is because this criminalization of students can itself be understood as a process based in inequality. Secondly, an inequality can be seen between the

teacher and the student when students are considered potential criminals. In the crime preventative school, I suggest, students are brought into a relation with the teacher in which the teacher is supposed to explain to students what it is they need to know to help them not become criminals. This can happen specifically through “crime preventative education” (e.g., Dahlstedt & Foulter, 2021), but also when school is understood to have an overall crime-prevention role. In suggesting that the knowledge taught in school becomes knowledge that should be used to prevent students from becoming future criminals, I do not mean that the knowledge students are presented with in, for example, math class literally gives them the direct knowledge of how to not commit a crime. Rather, the knowledge taught in math class that can be understood as knowledge that students can use to fit into the carceral order as non-criminals. The knowledge of the crime preventative school is laced with attitudes and values that encourage participation in the carceral order. I am not suggesting that teachers necessarily view their work in the classroom as crime preventative, but given that, for example, academic performance is connected to students’ potential criminality (Swedish Government Official Report 2024:17), it is a reasonable interpretation that the knowledge taught in school is intended to be used in this criminal-related way. The extent to which this is the case presents problems for education as emancipation because it is based on a relation of inequality between teachers and students. *Educational* work could then mean treating students as subjects who are not in need of the kinds of knowledge that would confirm their place in the carceral order.

The crime preventative school can be understood as working under the assumption that, once students have the proper knowledge explained to them, they can become equal to the non-criminal teacher. In this way, there is an inequality between the teacher and the student, where the student is dependent upon the gaining the *knowledge* the teacher possesses in order to become the equal of the non-criminal teacher within the current order. Here, the relation between teacher and student here can be interpreted as a relationship that limits the possibility for education as emancipation because it is a *relationship* where the students are dependent upon the teacher for their future equality. Within a school of crime prevention, there is inequality both in the process of criminalization of students and also in the relationship between teacher and student that is established in relation to criminalization.

Furthermore, when some students are regarded as potential criminals who need to become non-criminals, this places responsibility for becoming a “non-criminal” on to the student as something they can achieve in the future and assumes that,

with the right intervention, the student can become non-criminal, thus affirming the inequality upon which the process of criminalization is based on. Students are potential criminals, criminals, or non-criminals, all of which categories are connected to the notion of “the criminal.” Success as a student thus turns into a successful step into the non-criminal, where failure as a student is to become a criminal. Thus, students end up in a paradoxical relationship to the criminal category in a school of crime prevention. That is, in the crime preventative school, students are both the problem and the solution for their supposed potential criminality. This is similar to the paradox of how school has emerged as both a problem and a solution for crime (Lunneblad, 2022). When students are either the problem or the solution for their supposed potential criminality, they are defined through an imagined relation to the criminal category. The criminal category becomes assumed as natural and unquestionable, which further establishes students’ position within the carceral order. This is not to say that teachers and school professionals themselves eagerly use categorizations of the criminal to describe students. For example, school staff in Alexius’ (2020) study suggested that staff largely avoid using words like “crime” and “victim of crime.” But, nonetheless, the crime preventative school can be understood as relying on the criminal category. It does not make sense to prevent crime if there is no potential criminal. The category of student as potential criminal presupposes crime prevention.

Similarly to my discussion in the previous section about students taking their place in the carceral social order in relation to crime, I argue here that, in the school of crime prevention, students are inserted into the carceral order, where they are ordered through the identities imposed upon them through criminalization. Through a criminalization process that underpins the crime preventative school, I suggest, students are placed into the carceral order through the ways in which they are categorized as potential criminals, non-criminals, or current criminals, which is to say that they are not intended to disagree with this order. To problematize things further, in understanding the process of criminalization as based in inequality largely rooted in the maintenance of power relations in relation to race, sexuality, nationality, class, ability, and gender, it can be argued that not all students are actually perceived as “potential criminals,” and thus they are not really captured in the idea of the crime preventative school. This adds another layer of problematics for education as emancipation, because it means that, in this interpretation, some students are inserted into the carceral order in ways that other students are not. This is not to say that any students are intended to exist beyond the carceral order

in the crime preventative school, but, when not all students are actually viewed as potential criminals, these students can be understood as being in the position of non-criminal from the beginning. In this case, the crime preventative school becomes a place that establishes and maintains the carceral order through interventions for *some* students, but not all—where students who are considered in need of intervention are those who need to adapt to the unequal carceral order. This can be seen in research suggesting that parents at a wealthy, white school do not worry that their children will be treated as criminals (Berndtsson, 2019). This can be understood as an additional layer of inequality. Because the criminalization of students in a school of crime prevention is based on inequality at two levels, this is a problem for education as emancipation. *Educational* work could instead be treating students as subjects who cannot be determined by a relation to the criminal category.

Summary

In this chapter, I have analyzed what is educationally possible in a school of crime prevention through a stereoscopic approach. I have described how the crime preventative school can be understood in terms of schooling and inequality, and therefore the possibility for education as emancipation is limited. A school of crime prevention can be understood in terms of schooling in several ways. In the crime preventative school, crime, and the carceral order of which it is a part, are established as real. This makes students into objects of intervention through an instrumentalization of knowledge and, through such instrumentalization of knowledge, students are expected to take their place within the carceral order. Here, students are objects to be fixed and inserted into the already established order, which is to confirm such an order. Furthermore, the crime preventative school can also be understood as being based on inequality. This is partly because crime and the carceral order themselves are based on inequality, but also because the crime preventative school assumes the inequality of students. That is, it assumes that students need to know more in order to not become criminals. Similarly, the criminalization of students is also based on a process of inequality, but more than this, it establishes inequality in the relationship between teachers and students. Finally, in the crime preventative school, students are both problems and solutions to their supposed criminality, but, in both cases, they are imagined in relation to the criminal. The criminal identity placed on students through criminalization further cements their position within the carceral order.

For all these reasons, I argue that practices *of* a school of crime prevention present problems for the possibility for education as emancipation. However, this does not mean that the work of education, the work that makes change and transformation possible, is not possible *in* school beyond crime prevention. *Educational* work could be to treat students as subjects capable of disturbing the carceral order. *Educational* work could be the work that assumes equality from the order that criminalizes students. *Educational* work could be to act on the assumption of equality in the teacher–student relation beyond what can be defined by criminalization. *Educational* work could be to challenge the order itself in the classroom. *Educational* work *in* the school beyond crime prevention could be the work that encourages change and transformation by treating students as though they cannot be determined through a relation to criminal categorizations or their supposed place within the carceral order.

This means that, as educators, we need to be aware of practices within a school of crime prevention. A school of crime prevention cannot be separated from a larger societal context of inequality. This matters for the possibility for education and *educational* work, but it also matters in terms of which students the idea of the crime preventative school is intended for. For education as emancipation to have a chance in schools, we need to question the carceral logics that form a school of crime prevention and question the ways in which these logics inform practices in schools. This might mean asking questions such as: In what ways might our work assume certain ideas about crime and criminals? In what ways might our work be informed by the inequality of the teacher-student-knowledge relation that exists when the school is a place of crime prevention? For education as emancipation to be possible, we need to work out ways to meet students based on an assumption of equality, rather than the inequality of the crime preventative school. I return to this idea in chapter 7, where I discuss *educational* work in relation to abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition.

Chapter 5 Educational possibilities in a school of police involvement

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the second part of the second research question—what is educationally possible in a school of police involvement? To do so, I draw upon the theorization of education as subjectification and abolitionist views of the police. These can be understood as capturing two different images of the school of police involvement. I view these images stereoscopically to flesh out the educational possibilities in a school of police involvement.

The chapter begins with a description of the theorizing of education as subjectification, followed by abolitionist views of the police. Through a stereoscopic approach, I argue that the socialization of police involvement can be understood as normalizing the threat of violence, as making the police inevitable, and as reinforcing an unequal racist and capitalist social order, which poses difficulties if the school is to be a place where education as subjectification is possible. The chapter also introduces ideas about how education as subjectification could be made possible through *educational work in* the school beyond police involvement.

Education as subjectification

Another way to theorize education is through what Biesta refers to as education's three domains of purpose: qualification, socialization, and subjectification (2009, 2010b, 2020, 2022). Biesta (2020) suggests that education is special in that it is not oriented toward a single purpose but rather toward all three domains. The work of qualification is to provide students with knowledge and skills that “make it possible for them to act in the world” (2022, p. 8). Socialization has the role of providing “the new generation with orientation into the traditions, cultures, and practices of past and present” (2022, pp.7–8). Subjectification is about bringing the “subject-ness of the child ‘into play’” (2022, p. 7).

While qualification, socialization, and subjectification cannot and should not be separated, Biesta (2020; 2022) suggests that there is a risk that the emphasis on qualification and socialization can overpower the concern for subjectification.

Biesta (2022) contends that the work of qualification and socialization is not only difficult because of the question of what knowledge, skills, traditions, etc. should be presented and passed on is difficult, but also because the work of qualification and socialization always runs the risk of “forgetting about the subject-ness of the child” (2022, p. 8).

However, Biesta’s theorizing of subjectification has faced various kinds of critique. One line of critique is that subjectification is elusive (MacAllister, 2016) and difficult for teacher students to relate to their own work (Ruitenbergh, 2020). Furthermore, Thompson (2024) criticizes Biesta for stepping “away from the responsibility of imagining the practical application of his theory” (p. 382). I agree with these critiques to an extent, and part of what I do in this chapter is to position subjectification within the real conditions of police involvement in schools, together with abolitionist views of the police.

Another line of critique concerns how Biesta theorizes subjectification in relation to qualification and socialization (Guillemin, 2024; MacAllister, 2016; Rømer, 2021). Guillemin (2024) offers a convincing argument for why educational situations should not only be viewed through the lens of subjectification through problematizing an example that Biesta (2022) uses in his writing, which he suggests captures the dynamics of subjectification. Guillemin (2024) argues that, in Biesta’s example, subjectification is separated from the institutional context that informs the dynamics within the example and disconnects subjectification from the other domains of educational purpose, notably socialization, that are at play in the situation described by Biesta (Guillemin, 2024). Coincidentally, Guillemin (2024) argues for stereoscopic optics to view Biesta’s example because the concept of subjectification alone is not enough to capture the complexity of educational situations. I agree with Guillemin (2024) that, at times, Biesta undertheorizes the ways in which specific socialization is relevant to the possibility for subjectification which is why I include socialization as part of my analysis of possibilities for subjectification. While a notion of socialization in relation to subjectification provides the language to explore how socialization informs possibilities for subjectification, it cannot account for the *specific* socialization of police involvement or why this socialization matters for the possibilities for education as subjectification. In conducting my analysis of possibilities for subjectification through a consideration of socialization later in this chapter, I am attempting to capture the complexity of how the specific socialization of police involvement informs possibilities for subjectification.

Another critique of theorizing the purposes of education through the concepts of qualification, socialization, and subjectification is that this framework is over-prescriptive (MacAllister, 2016). MacAllister (2016) notes that there is a vast variety of literature that addresses the purposes of education in ways extending beyond conceptualizations of qualification, socialization, and subjectification. While these three notions of qualification, socialization and subjectification might in fact be prescriptive in terms of defining the purposes of education, I nonetheless engage with them, as they provide part of my framework for conceptualizing what is educationally possible in a school of police involvement.

Relatedly, Todd (2023) complicates Biesta's notion of socialization and argues that in addition to socialization and subjectification, there needs to be a concept of enculturation in educational theorizing to account for how students take up traditions and values beyond just being inserted into a social order. Todd (2023) suggests that "although socialization acts as a powerful foil to subjectification, it does not fully get at what is educationally at stake in how legacies of thought, histories of custom, ceremony, and everyday routine become embodied for the singular subject" (p. 33). While I agree with Todd that educational theorizing could benefit from taking this notion of enculturation seriously, I do not engage with it in this current dissertation because, to my mind, engaging with abolition together with socialization and subjectification in a school with police involvement makes it possible to account for some aspects of enculturation. Drawing on both together, I argue, makes it possible to understand how legacies of thought, the history of customs, and everyday routine could become embodied in ways that matter for the possibility for education in schools with police involvement.

Educational philosopher Claudia Ruitenberg (2020) offers further ideas about how socialization¹⁶ can be understood through basic ways of relating to the world. These forms of relating include the epistemic, ethical, political, and physical (Ruitenberg, 2020)¹⁷. Drawing upon Miranda Fricker, Ruitenberg (2020) suggests that through *epistemic socialization*, students "learn to be more skeptical of some people's claims than of others, depending on the social location of the knower" (p. 135). *Ethical socialization* "involves the teaching of what a given society or community sees as 'proper' morality" (p. 136). *Political socialization* is the "cultivation of positive attitudes toward particular kinds of political systems, and the skills considered important in these systems" (p. 136). *Physical socialization*

¹⁶ Ruitenberg (2020) also discusses qualification and subjectification.

¹⁷ Ruitenberg (2020) also describes technical and aesthetic relations, but I do not engage with these concepts in my work.

involves “learning how to fit one’s body into a given society’s expectations, including where it is appropriate to move in certain ways, where it is acceptable to carry out certain bodily functions, and what are considered ‘normal’ food items” (p. 138). These more specific conceptualizations of socialization enable a closer consideration of the ways in which socialization informs possibilities for education as subjectification.

The theorization of education as subjectification provides ideas about what needs to be attended to for education as subjectification to be possible. To understand the possibilities for subjectification, it is helpful to discuss the concept in more depth. In this chapter, I draw upon a notion of subjectification that can be understood in two different, though interrelated ways: a focus on subject-ness and freedom to begin. While Biesta’s notion of subjectification can be “interpreted along multiple philosophical lineages, including the work of Levinas and Rancière...as well as that of Arendt” (Ruitenber, 2020, p. 140)¹⁸, in this chapter, I engage with Biesta’s notion of subjectification that is inspired by Hannah Arendt.

Subject-ness

Attention to and a concern for students’ subject-ness is central to subjectification and needs to be given priority (Biesta, 2020, 2022). For Biesta (2022), “education is concerned with the question of the ‘I’ and, more importantly with the question of how the ‘I’ exists as ‘I’” (p. 29, italics in original). In more recent publications (i.e., Biesta, 2022), Biesta highlights this “existential I” with the term *subject-ness* instead of *subjectivity* because subjectivity “runs the risk of being read as an epistemological category, not an existential one” (p. 39). For education to be educational, there needs to be a concern for the possibility for the student to exist as a subject, otherwise education “ceases to be educational and becomes the management of objects, effective or otherwise” (Biesta, 2022, p. 8). Without this concern for subjectification, Biesta (2022) suggests that we remain in the domain of training¹⁹. Subjectification is not about identity (Biesta 2020, 2022). According to Biesta, questions of identity concern the question of who I am and belong in the domain of socialization (Biesta, 2022). Subject-ness is not “an explanatory concept”, it does not explain who I am or why I am; rather, subject-ness “refers

18 See Ruitenber (2013, 2020) for a more developed discussion of the philosophical influences present in Biesta’s theorizing of education.

19 While Biesta distinguishes subjectification from training, similar distinctions between education and training have been made by others. For example, Giroux (2003) claims that “education is not training” (p. 9).

to how individuals exist—it refers to how *I* exist” (p. 52, italics in original). In this way, the potential for subjectification stems, in part, from whether or not there is a concern for students’ existence as subjects. Notably, subjectification is not about “the educational production of the subject... but about bringing the subject-ness of the child or young person ‘into play,’ so to speak; helping the child or young person not to forget the possibility of their existence as subject” (Biesta, 2022, p. 47). By exploring the socialization of police involvement in schools later in this chapter, I become able to discuss how this socialization can be understood as informing the possibilities for bringing the subject-ness of the student into play. I also explore possibilities for subjectification in terms of the freedom to begin, which I turn to now.

Freedom to begin

The concept of freedom inspired by Hannah Arendt is central to Biesta’s theorizing of subjectification. A notable aspect of Arendt’s concept of freedom that Biesta draws upon is “the freedom to call something into being which did not exist before” (Arendt, 1961, p. 151). The notion of freedom that is part of subjectification is not a neoliberal “freedom to do whatever you want” (Biesta, 2020, p. 95); rather, it is the freedom to begin and have our beginnings taken up by others (Biesta, 2013). For Biesta, freedom is an existential and first-person matter (Biesta, 2020). These ideas about freedom form aspects of Biesta’s theorizing of subjectification because being attentive to a student’s subject-ness is to be attentive to their ability to act in the world. To ensure the possibility of subjectification in this Arendtian sense, educators need to be careful to maintain a space where students can experience this freedom (Biesta, 2013). The goal of subjectification is not to produce students’ freedom but to call it forth (Biesta, 2020).

In Biesta’s theorizing of subjectification, freedom is about “how I exist as the subject of my own life, not as the object of what other people want from me” (Biesta, 2020, p. 93). This idea of freedom leads to an idea of education that is not about the “cultivation of an object... but can be better understood as a summoning, as encouragement, one might say, that speaks to the child or young person *as* subject”²⁰ (Biesta, 2020, p. 94, italics in original). Biesta (2013) draws upon Arendt to highlight how freedom to begin matters in educational terms and how this freedom depends upon a particular way of being together, “being-

20 Biesta draws upon Dietrich Bennet and the concept of “*Aufforderung zur Selbsttätigkeit*” here.

together-in-plurality” (Biesta, 2013, p. 104). Arendt (1958) describes plurality as follows: “plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live” (p. 8). Sameness, under this definition, is marked by inherent difference. Biesta (2013) describes plurality as “the otherness of others” (p. 106) and suggests the “event of subjectivity²¹ can only happen in a world of plurality and difference” (p. 144). The extent to which the space of the school can be a space where “freedom can appear” (Biesta, 2010b, p. 84), is tied to the extent to which school is a place of plurality. This connects to the idea that education cannot happen in isolation (Biesta, 2013).

Drawing upon Arendt to theorize what matters educationally speaking, Biesta discusses how, in order for us to begin, our beginnings must be taken up by others and, thus, our beginnings cannot come into the world if no one responds to them (Biesta, 2013). The ways in which others take up our beginnings, in school for example, conditions “our ‘capacity’ for action—and hence our freedom” (Biesta, 2013, p. 106). Freedom to begin can also be thought of in terms of hope for the renewal of the world. While Bergdahl and Langmann (2022) do not use the language of “freedom to begin,” they do draw upon Arendt to discuss hope in pedagogical spaces which, to my mind, can be understood in a similar way to freedom to begin. They argue that hope for renewal of the world stems from the hope that the old world can be renewed through the political actions of the adult generation, but that this hope for renewal “has its ontological roots in the potentiality for future action embodied in, and represented by, the new generation” (Bergdahl and Langmann, 2022, p. 415). I understand this in terms of freedom to begin, meaning that the possibility for hope between generations is based on having the freedom to begin.

This theorizing of education as subjectification enables us to understand how change and transformation are made possible through an appeal to students’ subject-ness and freedom, but it cannot provide an understanding of what is educationally possible in the particular conditions in which such an appeal is said to occur. That is, it cannot account for the educational possibilities in the particular conditions of police involvement in schools. For this, I draw upon abolitionist views of the police.

21 Here, I interpret the “event of subjectivity” to mean the same thing as subject-ness “coming into play.”

Abolitionist views of the police

In the next few sections, I describe abolitionist views of the police, and I detail how this informs my analysis in this chapter. It is important to note that I am not trying to present a single, unified description of what an abolitionist view *is*, nor am I suggesting that a single abolitionist view exists. Rather, I describe a variety of views that can be understood as abolitionist. Below, I describe abolitionist views on the violence of the police, the need for the police, and the role and work of the police. But before this, I briefly describe police in the Swedish context, followed by legal and philosophical justifications for the police more generally to situate how the police are viewed in ways that are both similar and dissimilar from abolitionism.

The police

Given that I draw upon abolitionist views of the police that stem from outside the Swedish context, it is helpful to first begin with noting how the police in Sweden describes themselves, followed by a critical view of the police in research in Sweden. According to the Swedish Police (n.d.) and the Police Act, the tasks and objectives of police are as follows:

The mission of the Swedish Police is to reduce crime and increase public safety. Through crime prevention, the police work to ensure that fewer crimes are committed. The aim is also for more crimes to be solved. (Swedish Police, n.d.)

As part of society's work to promote justice and security, the work of the police shall aim to maintain public order and security and otherwise ensure protection and other assistance to the public. (Swedish Code of Statutes 1984: 387, section 1, my translation)²²

This description can be understood as part of what underwrites police involvement in schools. Beyond this description offered by the Swedish Police and the Police Act, recent research has problematized these seemingly common understandings of the police and what it can mean for already marginalized populations in society. According to Schclarek Mulinari and Keskinen (2020), there is a general lack of critical attitudes towards the police and state authorities in Sweden and other

²² In Swedish: "Som ett led i samhällets verksamhet för att främja rättvisa och trygghet ska polisens arbete syfta till att upprätthålla allmän ordning och säkerhet samt att i övrigt tillförsäkra allmänheten skydd och annan hjälp."

Nordic countries. They describe this lack of critique is a crucial characteristic of the “racial welfare state” (p. 385), within which whiteness is equated with “nation-state belonging” (p. 391) and where “the continuum of white hegemony” is reproduced through law enforcement (Schclarek Mulinari & Keskinen, 2020, p. 391). The police in Nordic countries are, according to Schclarek Mulinari and Keskinen (2020) “pivotal, and have long since been, in the upholding of hierarchies, reproducing boundaries of belonging, and functioning as pillars of the racial welfare state” (p. 392). Perhaps then it is unsurprising that research suggests that “young people”²³ in Sweden from “ethnic minorities from migrant backgrounds” have negative experiences with the police and over-policing (Saarikomäki, Solhjell, & Wästerfors, 2023). Furthermore, research suggests there are concerns that students in areas with high police presence could more easily be labeled as criminals (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). This research problematizes aspects of the police that are also of concern within abolitionism, as developed below. Hence, it is not only in the US context that a further problematization of the institution of the police, along with a consideration of why this matters for students’ lives, is warranted.

Additionally, the institution of the police is discussed in a more overarching manner within the fields of law, criminology, and philosophy, to name a few. While the exact specificities and workings of the police are not the same across different countries, literature that describes the institution of the police in a broad sense helps us to further see some of that which abolitionism problematizes. Within the field of law, the police can be described as officials who have been given authority by the state to, among other things, arrest and detain people, promote public order, protect the public, and enforce laws (Miller, 2023). The police are an institution that are entitled to use physical violence to “enforce criminal laws and rules of civility” (Miller, 2023, p. 576). The police are understood to perform valuable societal functions (Fryer, 2023).

In addition to these powers, the police are also considered a crucial part of the criminal legal system (Galoob & Monaghan, 2023). Legal scholar Stephen Galoob and philosopher Jake Monaghan suggest that the police are “one of the key bridges between the criminal law on the books and the criminal law in action” (2023, p. 545). Philosopher Luke William Hunt (2023) notes the police’s role in terms of justice, which can be understood as relying upon the philosophical “rule of law” ideal (Bennet, 2024). According to philosophy scholar Christopher Bennett (2024),

23 The “young people” in this study were aged 15–26.

the main idea of the rule of law ideal is that “there are benefits to society and individuals when certain key decisions are made through the application of clear and determinate legal processes, rather than through the personal judgment of particular officials or private individuals” (p. 163). There is a relation between crime, the police, and prisons (Shelby, 2022), which can be understood as being a result of this ideal.

While this is by no means an exhaustive account of what the police are or do, it does reveal some fundamental motivations and assumptions that justify the institution of the police. These understandings and assumptions are widely held across societies and can be seen as the background to police involvement in schools. That is, when the police are understood in these ways, perhaps it is not so strange that there is police involvement in schools. However, these understandings and assumptions about the police are not shared by abolitionists, which is where I now turn.

The violence of the police

A central aspect of abolitionist problematizations of the police is an emphasis on understanding the police as an institution of violence. Differently from the above, which described the violence of the police as justified and perhaps somewhat rare, an abolitionist view of this violence is that it is problematic and central to police work (Akbar, 2020). Legal scholar Amna Akbar (2020) notes that structural critiques against the police argue that police violence “constitute[s] and produce[s] our political, economic, and social order” (pp. 1789–1790) and is “targeted along the dimensions of race, class, and gender” (p. 1789). An abolitionist view of the police is that they use both indirect and direct violence to create and maintain order (Correia & Wall, 2021; Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). The police²⁴ are understood to be embodiments of the state’s monopoly on violence (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022) and are considered to be “violence workers” (Huggins et al., 2002, as cited in Kaba & Ritchie, 2022, p. 43). From an abolitionist perspective, the police enact forms of violence that are used to justify their existence, such as assault, harassment, kidnapping, or even murder (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). Abolitionists argue that, throughout history, the police have played crucial roles in inflicting violence upon people who have fought for liberation (e.g., Ben-Moshe, 2020; Davis, 2003; Kaba,

²⁴ They also include border patrol, immigration, probation, and parole officers, and members of the military as being embodiments of the state’s monopoly on violence.

2021; Purnell, 2021; Rodríguez, 2019). Kaba and Ritchie (2022) suggest that policing cannot be reformed, because “violence is inherent to the institution itself” (p. 18). This view of the police highlights the violence that is inherent to the institution of the police.

Furthermore, abolitionists make connections between broader sexual and gender violence and the work of policing and prisons (Davis et al., 2022; Kaba, 2021; Purnell, 2021). For example, abolitionists consider things like patting down, strip searches, and other routine practices of the police and the prison as forms of sexual violence in themselves (Davis et al., 2022; Kaba, 2021; Purnell, 2021). Therefore, there is a view that the police do not offer protection from gender and sexual violence; instead, they are understood as contributing to such violence through the routine practices of their work. An abolitionist view of the police highlights how the police themselves contribute to more violence. This view of the violence of the police provides me with the language to understand the socialization of police involvement in schools. Another conceptualization of the police that further enables an understanding of the socialization of police involvement concerns the question of the need for police.

A need for police?

Instead of viewing the police as performing valuable societal functions, an abolitionist view contends that the entire institution of the police “must be disbanded” (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018, p. 379). An abolitionist view rejects the idea that more violence within a community calls for more police (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). Kaba and Ritchie (2022) argue that, when the options of responding to violence are presented as either more or fewer police, the logic fails to see that there are many other options to respond to violence. Kaba (2021) argues that “as a society, we have been so indoctrinated with the idea that we solve problems by policing and caging people that many cannot imagine anything other than prisons and the police as solutions to violence and harm” (p. 17). An abolitionist view sheds light on the idea that police are not the only option for responding to the issues they claim to address. Abolitionists work to build alternatives that “directly challenge the legitimacy of the police,” which is about “changing how we respond to harm, replacing banishment, policing, and criminalization with healing, transformative justice, and new understandings of safety” (McDowell & Fernandez, 2018, p. 386).

Furthermore, abolitionists do not view the police as a solution to interpersonal violence; rather they contribute to more violence (Davis et al., 2022). Relatedly, Purnell (2021) suggests that the violence of the police is connected to interpersonal violence. Hence, an abolitionist view of the police connects police violence to the interpersonal violence that people experience. For example, Kaba and Ritchie (2022) contend that the “police exercise control over communities and individuals in ways that mirror interpersonal domestic and sexual violence—and fuel, facilitate, and exacerbate other forms of violence” (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022, pp. 86–87). Similarly, Saleh-Hanna (2017) compares the work of the police to abusive relationships: both are controlling and maintain cycles of abuse through promises of better behavior. An abolitionist view emphasizes the similarities and connections between state and interpersonal violence and thus highlights the inadequacy of the logic that the police can address interpersonal violence (Kaba, 2021).

An abolitionist view not only looks beyond the police for solutions to various problems, but it also considers the police to be unable to alleviate the problems they are claimed to solve (Kaba, 2021; Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). Kaba and Ritchie (2022) argue that by naming policing as the problem, it draws attention to how many proposed solutions to problems only end up further legitimizing the police. Kaba (2021) suggests that abolition challenges us to ask why we do not have well-resourced options to respond to harm that are not the police. Asking these questions, and positing that the police will never solve the problems they claim to address, stems from the abolitionist belief that the police are an inadequate response to societal problems. According to Kaba and Ritchie (2022), the police perpetuate violence, in part, by “capturing the resources communities need to survive and thrive” (p. 17). Kaba and Ritchie (2022) contend that money spent on the police should be put directly into communities and that directing money and resources to the police instead of to the community, it makes it harder for people to live. An abolitionist view draws attention to the need for other alternatives beyond the police. The questioning and rejecting of the notion that the police are necessary enables an understanding of the socialization of police involvement. Beyond this questioning and rejecting, abolitionist views also raise problematizations around the role and work of the police.

The role and work of the police

Recognizing that the police are part of a carceral logic (Lopez, 2022), an abolitionist view of the police is that their role and work has never been about preventing violence, but instead has always been about controlling racialized and gendered populations in the interests of a capitalist, patriarchal, racist, imperialist order (e.g., Correia & Wall, 2021; Kaba & Ritchie, 2022; Rodríguez, 2019). For example, Murakawa (2021) argues that “police protect private property, enforce the color line, patrol the gender binary, and hold national borders for everyone except the corporations” (p. 168). Vitale (2017) contends that the specific forms taken by policing have changed over time, but that policing still functions as a way to manage “the poor, foreign, and non-white on behalf of a system of economic and political inequality remains” (p. 34). Drawing upon Ritchie (2017) and Williams (2015), Kaba and Ritchie (2022) note that the roots of policing can be found in “colonial militias, ‘Indian constables,’ slave patrols, and municipal police departments created to police gender, sexuality, poverty, and migration, quash labor organizing, and quell dissent” (p. 17). In this way, the police have a long history of using violence to control groups of people who have been considered problematic or undesirable in various ways. An abolitionist view of the police is that their role is to establish and uphold a racial capitalist, and colonial order that protects private property and upholds the demand for wage labor (Correia & Wall, 2021). An abolitionist understanding of the police is that they maintain social control through violence (Mingus, 2022) and that they are the “law’s violence workers” (Correia & Wall, 2021, p. 1).

Additionally, an abolitionist view is that the role and work of the police are rooted in carceral safety, which is “the use of state-organized banishment (via jail, prison, or deportation), mass criminalization, and law enforcement as the only legitimate form of protection from, and response to, harm and violence” (McDowell, 2019, p. 48). Relying upon the police veils the reality that the police are often a source of violence for people who “do not have the protection of whiteness, money, citizenship, gender conformity, and/or heteronormativity” (McDowell, 2019, p. 48). Once again, from an abolitionist perspective, the role and work of the police is understood in terms of oppression rather than protection or safety.

Abolitionist views of the police provide the language to understand the socialization of police involvement in schools. This offers one way to understand the specific conditions of police involvement in schools, but it does not explain

how this matters for the possibility for education. In the following two sections, I draw upon abolitionist views of the police, together with conceptualizations of education as subjectification, to explore what is educationally possible in a school of police involvement.

The police as a necessary and legitimate institution and problems for subjectification

I begin this section with an extended quote from an interview with the principal of a school who was providing reasons for using a police report to handle conflicts or problems in their school. This quote is an illustrative example of how the taken-for-granted necessity and legitimacy of the police as an institution is naturalized by school leaders and educators. The quote is from the principal from Water Lily School, which is described by the researchers as being in a “middle-class area” in a big city (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019). When describing reasons for filing a police report, the principal of Water Lily School said:

It is a balancing act, and there are hard decisions to take. What we try to communicate to the students is that a crime outside school is also a crime inside school. We have no special laws on school-related crime. If you hit someone in the school, it's as bad as hitting someone outside school. Then we have this policy the municipality has worked out about reporting to the police. We are instructed to use a form. However, you still have to make certain distinctions. The students aren't just here to learn subjects, they're also here so we can bring them up to be decent people. (2019, p. 80)

While one reading of this quote could focus on how the principal balances the tensions between dealing with violence in their school and helping to shape students into “decent people,” what I want to focus on here are the assumptions being made about the police as an institution and how this can be understood in terms of possibilities for education as subjectification. This quote contains the idea that the police are a necessary and legitimate institution. While the principal expresses ambivalence about reporting to the police, the necessity and the legitimacy of the police as an institution itself is assumed. Given the recognition of the pedagogical purpose of reporting to the police, I now discuss how the idea that the police are necessary and legitimate can be understood in terms of socialization. *The epistemic socialization* can be understood as socializing students into the belief that the knowledge the police have is needed and legitimate. The *ethical socialization* can be understood as socializing students into a culture that views the

institution of the police as ethically and morally acceptable. In terms of *political socialization*, it can be understood as socializing students into a political system that relies upon and legitimizes the police. This socialization can be interpreted as the cultivation of positive attitudes toward a particular kind of political system that requires the institution of the police. Finally, the *physical socialization* can be understood as socializing students into an acceptance of the physical aspects of police work as necessary and legitimate.

Understood in this way, I assert that the socialization of police involvement limits the possibility for education as subjectification because this socialization can be understood as the normalization of a threat of violence. I suggest that the socialization of police involvement can be understood in this way because when the police are necessary and legitimate, their use of violence can be interpreted as necessary and legitimate, which consequently involves an inherent threat of violence in police involvement. Berndtsson's (2019) research hints at an awareness of the potential violence of the police expressed by parents in a lower-working-class, segregated area, who do not want the school to report incidents to the police. The normalization of a threat of violence does not appeal to the subject-ness of a student, because this threat can be understood as being based on the objectification of the student. To my mind, a threat of violence, whether carried out or not, is not an appeal to the subject-ness of the student because a threat of violence makes students into objects to be controlled. This hinders the possibility for education as subjectification because a threat of violence does not address students as subjects who are capable of acting in the world; instead, a threat of violence addresses students as objects to be managed.

Furthermore, this socialization can be understood as limiting the freedom to begin for students because their possibility to exist in the world in new ways is restricted by the threat of violence. I argue that this threat of violence does not appeal to students' subject-ness and does not encourage them to act as subjects because this threat can be understood as an attempt to control students' beginnings, their ability to act in the world. One might argue that the threat of violence from the police is acceptable because this threat is at least limited to the institution of the police; not everyone is allowed to engage in the same kind of violence as the police, and this is a good thing. This could be seen as an acceptable condition of society. But, regardless of whether or not one agrees with this, the educational possibility in the threat of police violence remains. If the threat of violence is understood as limiting students' possibility for education as

subjectification, as I have just suggested, then *educational* work can be understood as work that cannot be practiced through the threat of violence.

Additionally, I contend that the socialization that I have described above is a problem for education as subjectification because this socialization can be interpreted as socializing students into the inevitability of both turning to the police to solve certain problems and the police existing as an institution. Turning to the police to address incidents in schools can be understood as socializing an acceptance that the police are the correct institution to deal with particular problems that arise within schools. But, more than this, it can be understood as socializing students into the belief that the police are the appropriate institution to deal with certain issues in society at large. This socialization, which can be understood as stemming from the idea that the police are necessary and legitimate, limits the possibility to imagine other ways to respond to the problems that the police are imagined solving both in schools and in society at large.

The inevitability of the police can also be seen in other research, where school professionals view police involvement as a way to show that, in Swedish society, the police are trusted (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). When the institution of the police is inevitable, students' subject-ness is not appealed to because there is no appeal to their existence outside the inevitability of the police. Specifically, what has already been determined is the students' existence *in relation* to a societal institution. For example, when the police are inevitable there is no intended opening for students to question this relation, or for the possibility for something beyond it. Here, there is limited freedom to begin, and students are made into objects who are expected to be a part of this inevitability.

Furthermore, when the institution of the police is inevitable, it can be understood as exhibiting a lack of hope for the renewal of the world made possible by the old generation because the adult generation is not being asked to change the conditions for why the police are said to exist. A world without police is unimaginable when the police are inevitable. There is also limited hope for any renewal of the world made possible by the younger generation because, when the institution of the police is inevitable, the younger generation is not invited to renew the world in ways that are not predetermined by the institution of the police. That is, the younger generation is not invited into a world beyond the police. The idea that the police are inevitable can also be seen in research where for example, police officers in Sweden view their involvement in schools as necessary and beneficial (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019).

One might wonder if I am suggesting that framing all societal institutions as necessary and legitimate within schools hinders the renewal of the world by the next generation. Generally speaking, I am not suggesting that framing all societal institutions as necessary and legitimate *has* to lead to the idea that they are inevitable. For example, I think schools could cooperate with societal institutions in a way that acknowledges that, while these institutions exist now and for these reasons, they themselves are not inevitable. This, I suggest, would be a different kind of socialization than the one I have outlined above, and it would require additional pedagogical interruptions that go beyond a form of socialization that starts from the point that any given societal institution is necessary and legitimate. The extent to which societal institutions are socialized as inevitable, as I argue is the case for the police here, does present problems for the younger generation's renewal of the world, and thus problems for education as subjectification. Speaking specifically about societal institutions that are understood as being rooted in violence and structures of oppression, their supposed inevitability is particularly problematic in terms of educational possibilities, but also beyond education. While I consider this socialization of police involvement to be problematic, possibilities for renewal could emerge if the police were not understood in this way, and here *educational* work could be work that appeals to students' ability to renew the world in ways that cannot be determined by the institution of the police.

A concern about not inviting the younger generation to renew the world—not inviting their freedom to begin—can be seen in research where school professionals face social dilemmas when reporting to the police (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019). School professionals express the concern that reporting to the police is a form of giving up on the student (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019). When the institution of the police is inevitable, the relation between the older and younger generation inherently involves inaction beyond those actions that have already been decided as legitimate for the police to take. This inaction can be understood as the foreclosing of beginnings for both generations; neither generation can make or take up the beginnings of the other. When there is a limited possibility to begin or take up the beginnings of the other, the possibility for education as subjectification is diminished. If taking up the beginnings of generations is central to education as subjectification, *educational* work could include taking action that does not *inevitalize* the police in classrooms today, where student and teacher beginnings can be taken up precisely because they stem from the kinds of actions that mutual hope between generations demands.

Lack of plurality in “matters for the police”

I begin this section with a description from Berndtsson (2019), who has conducted research in Swedish schools, in which she explains that police involvement means different things for parents, school professionals, and students depending on the school context. This description captures the inconsistency of police involvement and what are considered matters for the police. The first description comes from Daisy School, which is located in an “upper-middle-class area consisting of ethnic white inhabitants, living in a rural setting where the coast is the predominant geographical feature. The school’s catchment area is known for its high social status” (Berndtsson, 2019, p. 100). The second description comes from Dandelion School, which is in a “segregated urban lower-working-class area, in which unemployment is considered to be very high and the level of education is low” (Berndtsson, 2019, p. 104). Berndtsson (2019) notes that the principal and student health team describe this school as “a classical suburban school,” an “immigrant school” and a “non-Swedish school” (p. 104). When describing Daisy School, Berndtsson (2019) writes:

For students, a police report usually does not end up as a police matter, but typically with the social services handling the case, depending on the child’s age. Or at least the matter should be handled by the social services. But according to the principals and the student health team at Daisy School, they never have any contact with the social services. The explanation they give is that social services do not handle issues if the students have wealthy parents. Thus, at Daisy School, a police report is only a way to scare the students into obedience; it does not have any further consequences for the students. This may be one reason why parents do not worry about police notifications: There is no concern that the children will be treated as criminals, or that the family will be subjected to a social services investigation. (p. 104)

In contrast, when describing the police in Dandelion School, Berndtsson (2019) writes:

However, it is not just social services staff who are constantly present at Dandelion School, the police are too. The police often visit the school and patrol through the corridors and across the schoolyard. “Nothing has to happen” for the police to take the time to supervise the students, and “no one finds it strange that the police are here,” according to the special educator. The students must be used to the fact that their school day includes police supervision, which is a drastic form of surveillance of these children. It shows societal distrust of the students’ morality and the staff’s professionalism. Even so, the collaboration with the police is described as

“very good” by all school staff. The police even attend meetings the school has with parents, together with the social services. (p. 107)

In this description of the two contrasting schools, different issues are considered matters for the police (or not). In the school that is in a “upper-middle-class area constituting of ethnic white inhabitants”, what might be understood as a “common sense” matter for the police, for example a police report, does not actually become a matter for the police. In the school that is in a “segregated urban lower-working-class area” and is described as an “immigrant school”, what can be understood as not a “common sense” matter for the police, for example existing at school, does become something the police become involved with. In this way, there are different ideas about what constitutes a matter for the police, and while this determination is not necessarily made at the level of the school itself, the injustice of what is considered a matter for the police or not, informs educational possibilities in each school. Given that these different ideas about what should concern the police demonstrates how schools engage with different visions of the pedagogical purpose of police involvement, I now discuss how these different ideas can be understood in terms of socialization.

The *epistemic socialization* of the idea that matters at the school are not matters for the police at Daisy School can be understood as socializing students into the belief that the knowledge provided by the police is not valued when it comes to their behavior—that the behavior of those who are white and of higher-socioeconomic status need not concern themselves with the knowledge of the police because this knowledge will not be used on them. The *ethical socialization* can be understood as socializing students into a culture in which certain behaviors (like physical violence) might not be ethical or moral, but nonetheless this supposedly unethical and immoral behavior does not end up as a matter for the police if you are white and of higher-socioeconomic status. The *political socialization* can be understood as socializing students into a political system that marks certain behavior as undesirable but nonetheless does not actually make those behaviors into a matter for the police if those behaviors are done by someone who is white and of higher-socioeconomic status. That is, this socialization can be interpreted as the cultivation of positive attitudes toward a particular kind of political system that “allows” the behaviors of those who are white and of higher-socioeconomic status to not end up as a matter for the police, even if it “technically should be.” Finally, the physical socialization can be understood as socializing students into a culture where white and higher-socioeconomic-status bodies are not meant to be

surveilled, detained, etc., because their bodies are not considered a matter for the police.

The socialization into the idea that activities at the school are matters for the police at Dandelion School can be understood differently. The *epistemic socialization* can be understood as socializing students into a belief that the knowledge provided by the police is to be valued and utilized against them regardless of their behavior—that those who are racialized and of lower-socioeconomic status should concern themselves with the knowledge of the police because this knowledge will be used on them. The *ethical socialization* can be understood as socializing students to accept that police officers are there to surveil their behavior despite there being no specific “unethical” behavior. In this way, students’ day-to-day behavior at the school becomes classified as unacceptable, unethical, not moral. The *political socialization* can be understood as socializing students into a political system that makes the actions of people who are racialized and of lower-socioeconomic status a matter for the police. The *physical socialization* can be understood as socializing students into a culture in which people who are racialized and of lower-socioeconomic status-bodies are meant to be surveilled, detained, etc., because their bodies, by the mere fact of their existence, are treated as a matter for the police.

By understanding the socialization of police involvement in this way, I suggest that this socialization of police involvement is a problem for education as subjectification because it can be understood as reinforcing an unequal racist and capitalist social order, which stifles plurality. An unequal racist and capitalist social order is reinforced here in the ways that students at a school with majority white students with higher-socioeconomic status are not understood a concern for the police, whereas students that are racialized and have lower-socioeconomic status are understood as a concern for the police. The socialization of Dandelion School reinforces a racist and capitalist order because students who are racialized and marginalized along economic lines are inherently seen as deserving police intervention. Whereas the opposite is the case at Daisy School. This hinders possibilities for education as subjectification. The inequality that is reinforced by police involvement positions students within the same school into a relation to each other that is not a relation of plurality. That is, reinforcing an unequal social order, I contend, relies upon making students “the same.” This is not the sameness of plurality that Arendt (1958) describes, which is the way we are all the same as each other in that we are all different from one another. The sameness created through the socialization of different matters for the police is a sameness that

denies plurality. Students at Daisy School are made the same when their “matters for the police” do not become actual matters for the police. Students are made the same through their privilege of not having their police reports become an actual police matter. That is, when their reports do not become matters for the police, these students become flattened through their position of privilege, which reduces them to this privileged position. Therefore, the ways in which students are “other” from each other does not come to the fore. Alternatively, at Dandelion School, the students are made the same when their existence at the school does become a matter for the police. Students are made the same through their marginalization, which makes their non-police activities into matters for the police. Here, the students become flattened through their marginalization and become reduced to this marginalized position. This also ignores the ways in which students are “other” from one another.

Reducing students to positions of sameness through the reinforcement of an unequal order presents problems for education as subjectification because it erases plurality. This lack of plurality can be understood as limiting possibilities for transformation and change. The differences between how matters for the police are handled at the two schools is consistent with research suggesting that school professionals and the police put a greater emphasis on policing segregated areas (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). When students are made the same through the reinforcing of an unequal racist and capitalist social order, the possibility for freedom to begin is restricted, because freedom is conditioned by plurality. While education as subjectification is conditioned by plurality (Biesta, 2013), this is not to say that the problems for education presented above would be solved if everything were reported to the police. Simply taking away the sameness of privileged and marginalized positions would not result in plurality, because in making “everything a matter” for the police students would still be pushed into the unequal order that the police maintain, which would be to deny them their freedom from this unequal order altogether. To give students, the possibility to engage with “the otherness of others” (Biesta, 2013, p. 106), *educational work* could involve creating situations in which the sameness of the unequal order is transcended.

Summary

In this chapter, I have analyzed what is educationally possible in a school of police involvement through a stereoscopic approach. I have explored the socialization of

when the police are viewed as a necessary and legitimate institution and when different occurrences in school are considered a matter for the police (or not). To flesh out the educational possibilities resulting from this understanding of socialization, I used the idea of education as subjectification and abolitionist views of the police to analyze what is educationally possible in a school of police involvement.

I argue that the socialization of police involvement can be understood as the normalization of a threat of violence, as making the police inevitable, and as reinforcing an unequal racist and capitalist social order, which limits possibilities for education as subjectification. When there is a normalization of a threat of violence, no appeal is made to the student's subject-ness because in the threat of violence the student is addressed as an object. If the student is treated as an object to be controlled, there is no appeal to the student's freedom to begin. When there is an *inevitablization* of the institution of the police, there is no relation in which students are expected to exist beyond this determination—they are made objects through the police's inevitability. That is, when the police are inevitable there is no world in which the student is intended to exist without the police. Furthermore, there is an inherent lack of intergenerational hope for the renewal of the world and freedom to begin is not encouraged. When an unequal social order is reinforced, students are not in a relation of plurality, which limits the space for freedom to appear.

For all these reasons, I contend that possibilities for education as subjectification are severely diminished by police involvement in schools. However, just because the practices of police involvement in schools are not practices that open up space for change and transformation, this is not to say that *educational work in schools* beyond police involvement is impossible. *Educational work* could be to address students as subjects without a threat of violence. *Educational work* could be to create environments for students where a world containing the institution of the police is not inevitable, where they could have the possibility to renew the world. *Educational work* could be to create spaces of plurality in schools, where students' freedom has the possibility to appear in ways that cannot be determined by the police. *Educational work* could be that work that makes change and transformation in schools possible through an appeal to students' subject-ness and freedom beyond the threat of violence, inevitability, and inequality of police involvement.

This means that, as educators, we not only need to pause and reflect upon how police involvement matters for students, but we also need to question and be

cautious about other practices in schools that carry a threat of violence, that make the police inevitable, and that reinforces an unequal order. Police involvement in schools cannot be separated from the police as a societal institution. This matters for the possibility for education and *educational* work, but it also matters for which students are understood as being in need of police intervention. For education as subjectification to have a chance in school, we need to question the carceral logics that shape police involvement in schools and question the ways in which these logics inform practices in schools. This might mean asking questions such as: Have we considered the connection between police involvement in school and explicit or implicit threats of violence? In what ways might our work contribute to the inevitability of the police as an institution? In what ways might our work reinforce an unequal order where only certain things are matters for the police? For education as subjectification to be possible, we need to figure out ways to meet students based on an appeal to their subject-ness and freedom when addressing certain problems in schools beyond what is offered through police involvement. I return to this idea in chapter 8, where I discuss *educational* work in relation to abolitionist transformative justice praxis.

Chapter 6 Educational possibilities in responses to violence in schools

The purpose of this chapter is to further address the second part of the second research question—what is educationally possible in a school of police involvement? To do so, I engage with notions of education as becoming and abolitionist approaches to violence and harm. These can be understood as capturing two different images of the school of police involvement. I view these images stereoscopically to discuss the educational possibilities in responses to violence in schools.

The chapter begins with a description of education as becoming, followed by abolitionist approaches to violence and harm. Through a stereoscopic approach, I create an image of how the responses to violence in schools can be understood as encounters that do not lay the conditions for students' becoming to emerge and thus present problems for the possibilities for education. I also introduce how education could be made possible in ways that go beyond these responses.

Education as becoming

Over the past two decades, educational philosopher Sharon Todd has philosophized education through the notion of *becoming*. Notably, in Todd's scholarship, there is a focus on philosophizing education through sensual and aesthetic aspects, a certain understanding of the present, and a focus on living and leading a life well with others. Her work has drawn upon, but is not limited to the writings of Adriana Cavareo, Hannah Arendt, and Emmanuel Levinas. Her scholarship has also been inspired by feminist and post-structural thinking, and in her most recent book, where she writes about becoming, her work is informed by relational ontology (Brian Mussumi, Erin Manning, Bruno Latour, Rosi Braidotti), phenomenological ideas (Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, Sara Ahmed, David Abram), art theory and political philosophy (Nicolas Bourriaud and Jaques Rancière), psychoanalytic work (D.W. Winnicott and Mark Epstein), and Buddhist philosophy (Nagarjuna, Dōgen). I mention all of these not because I engage with these thinkers myself, but to give an indication of the complexity and diversity of

thought that enables not only Todd's educational thinking, but also educational thinking more generally. In Todd's case, this complexity enables a conceptualization of becoming, among other things. In my case, the complexities in discussions of becoming and uniqueness, abolition, and the context of responding to violence in schools enables my educational thinking in this chapter.

While Todd's notion of becoming has some similarities to Biesta's notion of subjectification (e.g., Todd 2020, 2021), through her notion of becoming she specifically accounts for senses and embodiment and engages in a discussion of temporality and how education is about living and leading a life well with others, in ways that Biesta's work does not (Todd, 2023). Todd (2023) specifically contends that, if education is to be oriented toward freedom and emancipation, then it must be recognized that "movement, sensation, and physicality are necessary for its enaction, its materialization, and its emergence" (p. 34). She continues that, if subjectification is to be something "that makes its appearance through education," it "cannot avoid the sheer physicality of becoming and the sensory elements so necessary to that becoming" (Todd, 2023, p. 34). It is through this thinking that Todd (2023) contends, that while subjectification is a central part of what concerns education, it "needs to incorporate a view of change rooted in the material, physical conditions of becoming itself" (p. 34).

The subject in Todd's work does not just exist; rather, he, she, or they is formed through relations to others. In my understanding of Biesta (2013,2022), he recognizes relational aspects of existing in the world, but perhaps under emphasizes the conditions that form this existence in the first place. For Todd (2023), "freedom can only be enacted through (not *by*) bodies in the present; becoming is not simply a way of 'being *in* the world' but is continually generated through, with, and of the world" (p. 34, italics in original). This recognition leads Todd (2023) to argue that subjectification and emancipation need to be supplemented with a concept of becoming.

Through the notion of becoming, Todd (2023) offers a way to understand how encounters form the possibility for education. That is, how encounters form the conditions under which change and transformation emerge *as* education. I draw upon this view of education in this chapter because it offers a focused understanding of *how* education unfolds. In addition to Todd's work on becoming, I also engage with the work of Biesta where he engages with Emmanuel Levinas and the notion of uniqueness. While Biesta does not use the language of

becoming²⁵ to describe education, I suggest that his engagement with the work of Emmanuel Levinas around uniqueness works well together with Todd's philosophizing of education as becoming because they both speak to how education emerges. Biesta (2010b, 2012c, 2013, 2022) engages with the concept of uniqueness as part of his theorization of subjectification and, while Todd has been critical of aspects of subjectification, I do not find the Levinasian aspects of Biesta's work around subjectification to conflict with Todd's philosophizing of education as becoming. So, while becoming and subjectification are not the same, I engage with aspects of both in the way in which they open up a discussion of how education emerges. Thus, I am drawing upon an aspect of Biesta's work that he himself would not classify as relating to becoming and, given that Todd has theorized becoming, in part, as a critique of subjectification, engaging with them both under the notion of education as becoming could be deemed problematic. I approach this delicately and only engage with Biesta's work in this chapter to the extent that I do not find it to conflict with Todd's philosophizing of becoming. The conceptualization of education as becoming helps us to explore what is educationally possible by providing the language to understand how education unfolds. To better understand the possibility for education as becoming, I now discuss becoming through encounters and becoming through uniqueness.

Becoming through encounters

As mentioned above, Todd's (Todd 2020, 2021) conceptualization of becoming has, in the past, used the language of both becoming and subjectification. In this section, I lay out what I understand to be her theorizing of becoming, albeit there is sometimes slippage between her own use of the terms becoming and subjectification. Todd (2020) describes encounters as "emergent events of subjectivity" (p. 69). Subjectivities are always becoming, they are always not yet, as opposed to identities (Todd, 2011). For this reason, Todd (2011) suggests that it is important to "create an appreciation of subjectivity that is not yet defined, not yet filled with content of substance" (p. 511). According to Todd, educationally speaking, this means:

25 In fact, Biesta (2022) suggests that subjectification is not to be understood "as a process of becoming, as a development *towards* being a subject. Subjectification is what always interrupts our becoming, so we might say. It is an event that always occurs in the here and now, not in some distant future" (p. 53, italics in original). But despite this language, I do not find this to be in conflict with Todd's theorizing, because, for Todd, becoming is of the here and now, not about some distant future.

Attending to the pedagogical space in a way that treats education neither as a means to an end, nor as an end in itself, but as an unpredictable site, where we cannot know with any certainty what the future holds and which subjects will unfold in its midst—subjects both unique and different, in relation. (2011, p. 511)

Todd highlights how encounters are educationally significant because they are where the change and transformation of education unfolds (Todd, 2023). Furthermore, Todd (2021) describes education as a “*process* through which one becomes a subject capable of both living and leading a life well with others” (Todd, 2021, p. 250, italics in original). Hence, education is dependent upon relationships and contacts with the world and, thus, it is “indelibly connected to *how* we encounter things and others and not solely to *what* we encounter” (Todd, 2021, p. 250, italics in original). She further theorizes that “education hinges on creating and staging such encounters between students and things, *between* students and others” (Todd, 2021, p. 250, italics in original). Todd (2020) argues that “encounters create the time and spaces of our educational practices and not the other way around. How we relate to each other creates unforetold potentialities of (mutual) becoming” (p. 67). This helps us to understand that the possibility for education is formed by the particularities of a given encounter.

According to Todd (2020), educational practices need to attend to the “possibilities of becoming *in and through our present encounters*” (p. 66, italics in original). For Todd (2020), the present is not reducible to a moment between the past and future, rather the present is “itself involved in a complex time of unfolding to what might come” (p. 69). This view of the present “allows us to think about what we *do* in education: how we touch, feel, experience both *with others* and *singularly* at the same time” (Todd, 2020, p. 69, italics in original). Relatedly, Todd (2014) suggests that “one’s becoming present is uniquely singular and occurs in context with others” (p. 166).

For Todd (2023), becoming emerges in the time of the present, but she discusses a specific understanding of the present. Todd (2023) argues that a linear sense of time as past-present-future does not fully capture how becoming unfolds, nor does it get at the essence of the transformational aspects of encounters that enable becoming. Instead, becoming emerges in the present, where the present is understood as an “unfolding of time” (Todd, 2023, p. 128). The present is where transformation occurs through an unfolding of the past and future in the present (Todd, 2023). Todd (2023) sees the present as “a complex enactment of *presencing*

that is divorced neither from past nor future, yet is not determined by them” (p. 14, italics in original).

Because becoming is a process of transformation whereby one becomes a singular subject through relations to the world and others, becoming is inherently relational (Todd, 2020, 2023). In Todd’s (2023) view, becoming cannot be predetermined; rather, it arises through relations in ways that make it possible for something new to emerge. For Todd (2023), education is:

about individuation and differentiation—not about individuals and fixed categories of social difference. Instead, it concerns a *process* whereby individuation (the becoming of the singular subject) occurs through the differentiation between students and things, ideas, and others. (Todd, 2023, p. 71, italics in original).

The change that becoming entails is the “freedom to become someone beyond socialization” (Todd, 2023, p. 42). Todd (2023) stresses that becoming a singular subject through relations cannot be reduced to, or captured in terms of, identity or social positionings. Importantly, Todd (2020) does not suggest that all encounters lead to what we might recognize as “socially desirable becomings” (p. 71). According to Todd (2020), there “can be no guarantee about the potentiality of generating new subjects, new bodies, precisely because it is its potentiality which cannot be defined” (p. 71). Becoming is not about becoming a specific kind of person in terms of identity, rather becoming is about “an unfolding in which one is fully present” (Todd, 2023, p. 192). In the same vein, Todd (2023) suggests that we need to attend to “what our encounters are *doing* and how their embodiment creates potential for becoming beyond the grid²⁶ entirely” (p. 23, italics in original). This idea of becoming provides the language to understand the educational potential of encounters and attending to the present in practices. I now turn to the aspect of Biesta’s work I engage with in this chapter.

Becoming through uniqueness

Biesta’s theorization of education through ideas of uniqueness is inspired by Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas describes subjectivity in terms of ethics and existence, and the concept of uniqueness provides a way to think about “why the subjectivity of each single subject who comes into the world might matter” (Biesta, 2012c, p.

²⁶ The “grid” that Todd refers to here is the way in which students are framed through social positioning along the lines of “class, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, gender, and combinations thereof” (2023, p. 23).

111). Levinas (1985) summarizes the idea of uniqueness as follows: “I am I in the sole measure that I am responsible, a non-interchangeable I. I can substitute myself for everyone, but no one can substitute himself [sic] for me” (p. 101). Biesta (2010b) draws upon the work of Levinas and makes the distinction between “uniqueness-as-difference” and “uniqueness-as-irreplaceability.” According to Biesta, Levinas approaches the question of uniqueness not through a consideration of “what *makes* each of us unique—which is a question of characteristics and possessions” (Biesta, 2010b, p. 86, italics in original), but from the perspective of “when it *matters* that I am unique, that I am and I and no one else” (2010b, p. 86, italics in original). Uniqueness-as-difference “focuses on our characteristics, on what we *have*, and articulates how each of us is in some respect different from everyone else” (Biesta, 2013, p. 144, italics in original). This is a question of what “*makes* me unique” (Biesta, 2013, p. 144, italics in original). Differently, uniqueness-as-irreplaceability asks, “*when does it matter* that I am?” (Biesta, 2013, p. 144, italics in original).

Drawing on Levinas, the answer to this question is that it matters “when I am being addressed, when someone appeals to me, when someone calls me” (Biesta, 2013, p. 144). Uniqueness-as-irreplaceability stems from “situations in which I am singled out by the other, so to speak” (Biesta, 2013, p. 144). In these situations, when “the other is after *me*, not after me in my social role (which would be my identity)—we are irreplaceable; or to be more precise, we are irreplaceable in our responsibilities for the other” (Biesta, 2013, p. 144, italics in original). It is this idea of uniqueness-as-irreplaceability that matters, educationally speaking (Biesta, 2013). This idea highlights how education can be understood as an experience where students emerge as unique subjects through the call from the other.

Importantly, Biesta (2012c) notes that the idea of uniqueness-as-irreplaceability does not tell us “what the subject *is*” (p. 111, italics in original). Rather, it tells us about “situations in which we are literally singled out and in which our uniqueness matters” (Biesta, 2012c, p. 111). In this way, “uniqueness is an event, not something the individual can possess or claim” (Biesta, 2012c, p. 112). Uniqueness is not something that can be produced, it is not some kind of educational outcome that can be generated through a particular intervention or particular pedagogy (Biesta, 2010b, 2012c). Biesta suggests that, while “uniqueness cannot be produced, it is rather easy to make sure that uniqueness will *not* appear, will have no chance at appearing” (2010b, p. 90, italics in original). This idea of uniqueness provides the language to understand the appearance of uniqueness as integral to the experience of education.

The idea of uniqueness also underscores the educationally significant point that socialization is “always about how we are part of wider, overarching ‘orders,’ whereas uniqueness expresses how we are different from those orders” (Biesta, 2010b, p. 81). In distinguishing uniqueness from socialization, Biesta highlights that the experience of education is one in which we are able to emerge beyond the socialization into identity categories or orders.

While Biesta engages with the work of Levinas to put forward his theorizing of education, there are critiques of this engagement. One such critique is that Biesta’s use of Levinas is normative in a way that contradicts Levinas’ non-normative ethics (Nordtug, 2013). But, because my engagement with Biesta is not based on whether or not his engagement with Levinas is consistent with Levinas’ own arguments, I do not consider this critique to alter my engagement with Biesta. That is, I draw upon *how* Biesta theorizes education through Levinas—and it is this educational translation that matters for what I am exploring in this chapter (and in the dissertation more generally).

A further critique of Biesta’s engagement with Levinas problematizes the suitedness of the concept of irreplaceability for education. Scholars writing in the field of philosophy of education, Noordegraaf-Eelens and Kloeg (2020), question the use of the concept of irreplaceability for education because, they argue, irreplaceability is formed through a “private environment, very close to specific individuals” (p. 554). They suggest that, because of this, it is clear who is being called, which they claim is not the case in the problems facing education; because, when facing complex issues in education, it is not always possible to distinguish who is being called and by whom (Noordegraaf-Eelens & Kloeg, 2020). While I agree that certain problems within educational institutions do entail a complexity that complicates the clarity of who is being called, I do not necessarily consider this to be problematic. It is not a problem educationally speaking because, in my understanding, the idea of irreplaceability as central to education in Biesta’s theorizing is not suggesting that all unique, irreplaceable subjects can be called forth at all times; rather, this theorizing is about when *one* is, and how this can be understood as an educational moment. Biesta’s theorizing of education through uniqueness and irreplaceability enables and understanding of the educational significance of the call and emergence of the unique other.

In this understanding of education as becoming, education emerges as the change and transformation that unfolds as a student becomes a singular and irreplaceable subject through encounters with others. Understanding education in these terms provides the language to describe how education unfolds through

encounters, but it cannot explain how to understand the specific encounters with responses to violence in schools. To understand this, I turn to abolitionist approaches to violence and harm.

Abolitionist approaches to violence and harm

Abolitionist approaches to violence and harm can be distinguished from a criminal justice approach that includes a carceral response. A criminal justice approach relies on carceral institutions like the police, courts and prisons, punishment and retribution, and carceral categorizations of victim and perpetrator binaries (Coyle, 2018; Kim, 2018, 2021; Mathiesen & Hjemdal, 2011). In a criminal justice system, the law, police, courts, and prisons, are considered “appropriate, useful, and just social institutions” (Coyle, 2018, p. 96). Turning to the criminal justice system is a widely embraced response to harm that largely remains unquestioned by the general public (Kim, 2021; McLeod, 2019). However, an abolitionist approach does not consider the legal and criminal justice system to be the only way, or even the preferred way, to deal with violence and harm (McLeod, 2019). Saleh-Hanna (2008) argues that “from an abolitionist perspective *criminal* justice is violent in structure, in ideology, in institutions, and in implementation” (pp. 427–428, italics in original). Ideas around punishment are part of what props up the criminal justice system (Coyle, 2018; Mathiesen & Hjemdal, 2011; McLeod, 2022).

The justification of punishment is a topic in philosophy, sociology, psychology, criminology, and theology, amongst other fields (Molander, 2009). Retributive theories of punishment contend that:

punishment serves the purpose of preventing offences in the future either by *deterrence* (i.e. serve the purpose of general crime prevention), and/or by *improvement* of criminals so that they do not commit offences in the future (i.e. serve the purpose of individual crime prevention. (Molander, 2009, p. 179, italics in original)

Molander (2009) notes that the motivations behind punishment have changed over time and argues that there are moral justifications for punishment that should not be dismissed. In Molander’s view, retribution, penance, atonement, and reconciliation are moral aspects of punishment that need to be maintained if it is to have a moral purpose (2009). Bülow (2024) also suggests there is morally justifiable punishment. Similarly, Ryberg (2024) suggests that the dominant motivations for punishment over the last two centuries have been “utilitarian thoughts of deterrence, reform, and incapacitation” (p. 4). Relatedly, Shelby (2022)

claims that “for centuries, communities have used some form of punishment to penalize those who wrong others” (p. 148). These ideas around punishment and the criminal justice system can be seen in responses to violence and harm that fall within a criminal justice approach.

Alternatively, in an abolitionist approach, policing, surveillance, and prisons are understood as all relying upon a problematic “one-size-fits-all model” (Kaba, 2021, p. 167). In part, this one-size-fits-all model can be understood as relying upon a certain idea of harm and violence and a certain idea of those who experience harm and violence. One way in which an abolitionist approach is different from this model is through troubling the dichotomies and binaries between victims and perpetrators, because, as Kaba (2021) puts it, “the world is more complex than that: in a particular situation we’re victimized, and in other situations we’re the people that perpetrate harm. We have to be able to hold all those things together” (p. 149). Furthermore, an abolitionist approach troubles concepts of innocence and guilt (Rodríguez, 2010; Whynacht et al., 2018). An abolitionist approach problematizes the carceral categorizations of victims and perpetrators and one-size-fits-all approaches to responding to violence that are present within a criminal justice approach. This problematization enables an understanding of carceral categorizations within responses to violence in schools.

Abolitionist approaches to violence and harm are not grounded in punishment and the criminal justice system. Instead, it is rooted in alternative notions of justice, such as restorative justice and transformative justice. Restorative justice differs from “the systems of justice and punishment that exist in modern, Western societies” (Bennett, 2024, p. 157). Abolitionist approaches to violence and harm reject how the criminal justice system addresses harm because these responses are considered to be “typically deeply inequitable, violent, and at odds with any conception of meaningful amends or principled accountability” (McLeod, 2019, p. 1638). McLeod (2019) argues that the punishment that is assigned by the criminal justice system is often unable to address harms that have been committed. Similarly, Mathiesen and Hjemdal (2011) argue that punishment should not lead responses to harm; rather, the response should be based on helping the person who has experienced harm.

In an abolitionist approach, justice is not something that stems from an authority within a legal or criminal justice system, made up of institutions like the police, courts, prisons, etc. (McLeod, 2019; Rodríguez, 2019). Said differently, an abolitionist approach pushes back against the idea that carceral institutions and systems are capable of adequately responding to violence and harm. This is not to

deny that there might be individuals who feel vindicated or feel seen precisely because they have a particular harm addressed through a court process; such a response is understandable. But abolitionists challenge the overall basis of addressing harm in this way and look to do so in other ways. Part of the reason an abolitionist approach to violence moves away from the criminal justice punishment framework is because an abolitionist approach takes a complex view of violence and harm. For example, within restorative justice, there is the acknowledgement that harm not only impacts individuals, but also wider communities (Kim, 2018). Furthermore, abolitionist approaches move away from binaries of victim and perpetrator because this binary does not sufficiently account for the complexities of social oppression (Nocella II, 2011). A problematization of the victim/perpetrator binary can be understood as, in part, stemming from this complex view of violence. Understanding the complexity of violence that carceral institutions cannot account for enables an understanding of carceral responses to violence.

In an abolitionist approach to violence and harm, there is the premise that “in order to stop violence, we must expand our understanding of violence beyond individualized disorder and the immediate scene of interpersonal harm” (McLeod, 2022, p. 527). In an abolitionist approach, violence is not only understood as something experienced through interpersonal harm, but also as something that is “produced by legal and policy choices—in housing policy, education policy, tax law, urban planning, military spending, economic planning, and environmental policy—that are made elsewhere, primarily in wealthy communities by powerful elites” (McLeod, 2022, p. 538). In an abolitionist approach, it is not possible to merely individualize or decontextualize violence and harm because harm is always connected to larger forms of violence (Davis et al., 2022; Kaba, 2021; McLeod, 2022; Purnell, 2021). Ending violence through an abolitionist approach includes addressing larger structures of oppression from which violence is connected (Mingus, 2022). An abolitionist approach to violence and harm helps us to understand that violence cannot be understood as an act that merely implicates certain individuals in a given moment of violence. That is, abolitionist approaches to violence and harm complicate a carceral categorization of violence that reduces it to individualistic, disconnected understandings of violence that forms the responses offered by the criminal justice system. This provides a way to understand the specific encounter of responses to violence in schools, but does not explain how these responses matter in terms of possibilities for education. In the following section, I draw upon abolitionist approaches, together with ideas of education as

becoming, to explore what is educationally possible in responses to violence in schools.

Encounters with carceral categorizations and carceral institutions

I begin this section with an extract from an interview with a principal who was discussing the complexity of violence, which becomes flattened in a criminal justice approach. This quote shows ways that responding to violence through a police report requires a carceral response that simplifies a much more complex relational dynamic. This extract brings to the fore how filing a police report requires carceral categorizations and relies upon carceral institutions to respond to violence. We can understand these responses as staging certain kinds of encounters and this incident offers a way to explore the possibilities for education as becoming in such encounters. The principal was recounting an event that became a violent altercation between two students on their way home from school. The background was that one of the students had repeatedly received negative remarks about his clothes from other students. The school is described as located in an upper-middle-class area in a small municipality that is part of a metropolitan area.

Principal, Daisy School: There was this boy. Finally, he felt he'd had enough. He felt, now I've heard those comments about my clothes so many times, now it's enough, and then when he was waiting for the school bus, and he heard remarks about his pants. ... Then there was no stopping him. He went for this guy. There was a reason for his behaviour, and I can understand that he got angry and reacted. We don't think about him as a violent and dangerous student. There was a reason and he felt he had been violated. However, he used violence and started the fight. So we filed a police report, where he is the offender. Of course, there is background to the incident, and that's part of the report. However, in my report, I didn't report how he'd been harassed, I reported his use of violence. (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019, p. 78)

In this quote, it is possible to see that the police report is based on an assumption that violence can be captured as an isolated occurrence with clear and unambiguous victims and offenders²⁷, and that the police can offer a response to

²⁷ I say "offender" here because that is what was used in the quote, but in the rest of the chapter I use "perpetrator," as it is also widely used in literature, and I think it is a better translation of the Swedish word *förövare*.

this. This is not to say that the principal did not express a tension, but what is being explored here are the possibilities for education in this response. Responding to violence through carceral categorizations and carceral institutions can be understood as staging a certain kind of encounter. When the violence that is being responded to is a kind of violence that can easily be captured on the form, students can be understood as encountering a response that is grounded in the disconnectedness of violence. Responding through a carceral categorization of violence means that “what” students encounter is a response that denies, or at least does not prioritize, the relational aspects of violence—it is a response that is inherently based on disconnecting violence and viewing it as an isolated event. “How” students encounter the response in carceral categorizations can be understood as an encounter that denies their existence in relation to violence. That is, the response to harm through carceral categorizations can be understood as a response that does not actually address how students live and experience violence. The response disregards how students are already in relation to each other and to violence. This response presents problems for education as becoming because, I suggest, an encounter based on a denial of how violence is relationally lived by students is not one during which students’ becoming emerge. I contend that denying how violence is relationally lived by students is to deny their possibility for what Todd (2023) describes as becoming in the following quote: “becoming is not simply a way of ‘being *in* the world’ but is continually generated through, with, and of the world” (p. 34, italics in original). To my mind, the possibility for education as becoming does not emerge out of an encounter that is based on the denial of how students live through and with their relations to violence and others. To enable education as becoming, *educational* work could be to address incidents of violence in a way that acknowledges students’ relation to violence and each other.

Furthermore, carceral categorizations of violence can be understood as forcing students into a position where the response to violence is actually conditioned upon ignoring the harm experienced outside of what can be captured through carceral categorizations of violence. Responding to violence through carceral categorizations means that any violence that cannot be captured through these categorizations could be left unaddressed. This can be seen in the quote above, but also in research suggesting that violence which is harder to capture and categorize often does not end up being reported to the police (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019). When the violence that cannot be captured through carceral categorizations of violence gets left out and remains unaddressed, the students

who experience this kind of violence are not addressed and thus do not have the opportunity to emerge as unique subjects in the harm they experience. If we return to the quote at the beginning of this section, the boy who was harassed about his clothes does not get the opportunity to be addressed and emerge as a unique subject in the harm he experienced. Likewise, students who commit the kinds of violence that cannot be captured by carceral categorizations of violence are also not presented with the opportunity to emerge as unique subjects in the harm they have done. In the quote that began this section, this would mean that the student who harassed the boy about his clothes also does not get the opportunity to be addressed and emerge as a unique subject in the harm he caused. In this way, neither the student who has caused harm nor the student who has had harm inflicted upon them are given the opportunity to encounter a response to these kinds of harm or violence. This means that responding to violence through carceral categorizations of violence does not make becoming possible for students who have experienced or committed certain kinds of violence or harm. This is not to say that it is the responsibility of educators to make infinite becomings possible for students, but it is worth noting the ways in which education as becoming is not enabled through responses to violence in schools.

Some people might argue that responding to violence in schools through filing a police report removes the problem from the school in a way that enables the education of other students because it allows the school to be a place that is protected and separated from what some might consider a hindrance to the education of other students. This idea is seen in Curren (2020), who suggests that punishment in schools can “only be justified when the interests of other students require that an offending student be removed, and no suitable alternative educational services can be provided” (p. 126). In one way, perhaps the case could be made that the removal of certain students could provide a framework within which other students’ becoming is made possible. However, I would contend that, in these cases, the desire to stage encounters in which certain students’ becoming is possible needs to be balanced with ethical questions of what it means to create encounters based on the exclusion of certain other students. Furthermore, I would question the idea that becoming is what is made possible through the removal of certain students, because once again this is based on a denial of how students are already in relation to each other. This would mean that to do *educational* work requires that we ask ourselves as educators: Who is included in the encounters we make possible for students and what does this mean in terms of the educational possibilities of such encounters? There is no easy answer to this, but in posing the

question, I think we draw closer to an aspect of what is required to do *educational* work.

Furthermore, I suggest that given that the response to violence in the above example is based on putting students into categories of victims and perpetrators, the response can be understood as based on a concern for the students' "uniqueness-as-difference," not on their "uniqueness-as-irreplaceability." It can be understood as being based on their uniqueness-as-difference in a couple ways. In a response to violence through the carceral categorization of victim and perpetrator, the response is seeking what makes students different from each other. In this case, one is a victim, and one is a perpetrator. Each student is who they are in this situation based on these differences, rather than being based on, for example, the harm that has been done. I am not suggesting that we should ignore the reality that one student has been harmed and that one has caused harm; rather, I am saying that the response to this violence when reporting to the police is based on these categories of victim and perpetrator. This quite literally establishes students into the social roles upon which the response is based. That is, in order to respond to violence in a report, there needs to be a victim and a perpetrator who can be captured in a concrete event—otherwise the response does not make sense. This response is not appealing to uniqueness-as-irreplaceability because, I argue, responding to violence through the categories of victim and perpetrator is to respond to violence through a framing of *who* students are in terms of identity (victims and perpetrators), rather than *how* they are (as someone who has harmed someone, as someone who has been harmed).

This is not to say that victim and perpetrator identities per se are always problematic. Papastephanou's (2020) thinking is helpful in distinguishing nuances around identity, which helps me to make my point here. Papastephanou (2020) problematizes Biesta's idea of going beyond the learner identity in his 2013 publication *Interrupting the Politics of Learning*. According to Papastephanou (2020), the learner identity is not always necessarily problematic in the way Biesta describes. Papastephanou (2020) suggests that the problem is not in the learner identity per se, rather it is found in a "specific *enactment* of the learner identity" (p. 288, italics in original). While I am not turning to a discussion of the learner, I bring this understanding into the language of this chapter in terms of the carceral categorization of victims and perpetrators. That is, the victim and perpetrator *identity*. I am not claiming that the victim and perpetrator identities are necessarily *always* problematic for becoming, rather I am suggesting that a certain *enactment* of them is. Therefore, what I am problematizing is not so much the identities, but

rather what these identities put into motion and what they require in certain manifestations. I contend that, when these categories are enacted in a way that encompasses a flattening of experienced harm, the response calls to an enactment of the victim and perpetrator identity that is not an enactment of uniqueness. In this way, students encounter categorizations of difference, rather than the possibility of emerging as unique subjects. Differing from this response to violence in schools, *educational* work could be to stage an encounter where the unique subject has the possibility to emerge through a response to violence that centers upon experienced harm.

Furthermore, putting students into categories of victim or perpetrator as the way to respond to violence in schools assumes a pre-given identity, and when students are framed as victims and perpetrators through carceral categorizations, there is no room in the response for them to be *both* victim and perpetrator in the response. The response is not based on the possibility that students could be both. This is a problem, because research notes that the victim and perpetrator categories are highly unstable in schools (Alexius, 2020), often unclear (Odenbring et al., 2019), and often students who are victims in one situation, become perpetrators in another, and vice versa (Lunneblad et al., 2016). Responding to violence through the carceral categorization of victims and perpetrators therefore not only establishes students into these identity categories and thus limits their possibilities to become beyond these categorizations in the response, but it also limits each student to only one of these supposed identities in the response. This is also to deny how students *live* violence, that is, how they sometimes inflict violence and sometimes have violence inflicted upon them. In ignoring the ways in which students can *both* inflict violence and have violence inflicted upon them, the response limits them to simplified identity categorizations and does not shape an encounter in which becoming is made possible because it ignores their lived relations. The categorization into victim and perpetrator becomes further complicated given that research indicates that some students, particularly boys, do not want to be classified as victims (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). This is an enforcement of an identity that is projected onto students, which is problematic for education as becoming because forcing students into identity categories which they do not choose themselves and ignores how they *live* harm can be understood as incompatible with what becoming entails. Alternatively, *educational* work could be to respond to harm in ways that hold space for these complexities.

In addition to responding to violence in schools through carceral categorizations, the above quote also shows how carceral institutions are relied

upon to respond to violence. In relying upon carceral institutions in this way, the response does not occur within a view of the present where transformation is possible because the response is based on a decontextualization of harm. In this way, the response can be understood as based on a separation from the complexities of the past, which hinders students' possibilities to transform in the present. Responding to violence through carceral institutions reduces students to being recipients of the response, which makes them objects of the response rather than subjects who are capable of creating a response through transformation. Research suggests that reporting to the police is seen as positive by police officers because it can help students take responsibility for their actions (Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019). However, in the language of "taking responsibility," when the response to violence is enacted through carceral institutions, the ways in which students can "take responsibility" are still framed within what has already been predetermined by the carceral institution. The possibility for change beyond socialization into the responses of carceral institutions is not staged in this encounter. In this way, the present is just a backdrop for the delivery of actions that have already been decided, as opposed to the present being a place where transformation is possible and becoming unfolds. Once understood in this way, being attentive to how responses to violence can create an encounter where the present can be such a place of transformation becomes an important aspect of doing *educational* work when responding to violence in schools.

Summary

In this chapter, I have further addressed what is educationally possible in a school of police involvement by fleshing out the possibilities for education as becoming in responses to violence in schools. To carry this out, I used education as becoming and abolitionist approaches to violence and harm to analyze what is educationally possible through a stereoscopic approach. I described how responses to violence the school through carceral categorizations and carceral institutions can be understood as not staging encounters where education as becoming arises for several reasons. These responses are based on a denial of how violence is relationally lived by students, and they ignore violence outside of forms that can easily be categorized. The carceral categorizations of victim and perpetrator place students into identity categories that limit their possibility to emerge as unique subjects. Finally, responding through carceral institutions makes students into objects that are the recipients of the response, rather than subjects who are capable

of creating a response through transformation. This reduces the present to a point in time between the past and future, rather than the present being a time when becoming unfolds.

For all these reasons, I argue that these responses present difficulties for education as becoming. However, education as becoming could be made possible beyond these responses to violence in schools through *educational* work. *Educational* work could be to create encounters that address violence in a way that acknowledges students' relation to violence and each other. *Educational* work could be staging encounters where students are able to become singular and unique subjects beyond the specific enactments of victim and perpetrator identities. *Educational* work could be treating students as subjects who can contribute to the response through transformation. *Educational* work could be a response to violence in schools that acknowledges the relations and complexities of violence so that the change and transformation that unfolds through becoming a singular and irreplaceable subject is possible.

This means that, as educators, we not only need to pause and reflect upon the ways in which practices in schools rely upon carceral categorizations and carceral institutions. We also need to question and be aware of the ways in which other practices in schools rely upon both a denial of the real lived experiences that students have with violence and forcing students into the enactment of identity categories of victims and perpetrators. Furthermore, we need to be aware of how other practices of the school might make students into objects of our responses to violence. Responses to violence in school cannot be separated from broader understandings of approaches to violence. This matters for the possibility of education and *educational* work, but it also matters for students' possibility to be addressed in a way that does not deny how they *live* violence. For education as becoming to have a chance in schools, we need to question the carceral logics that form these responses to violence and question the ways in which these logics inform practices in schools. This might mean asking questions such as: In what ways might our work deny or flatten students' lived experiences with violence? In what ways might our work assume that students can be placed into the categories of victims and perpetrators? In what ways might our work limit student transformation through responses to violence? For education as becoming to be possible, we need to find ways to meet students based on a concern for their possibility to live as unique subjects capable of transformation in responses to violence in schools. I return to this idea in chapter 8, where I explore new possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics.

Part III Beyond carceral logics through practices of abolition

My notions of *educational* work in Part II came as a response to problems for the possibility for education in carceral logics. In Part III, I theorize *educational* work from a place of possibilities for education beyond carceral logics. In chapter 7, I consider this *educational* work beyond the crime preventative school that was problematized in chapter 4. In chapter 8, I consider this *educational* work beyond the police involvement and responses to violence in schools that were problematized in chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 9 offers a concluding discussion.

Chapter 7 Possibilities for *educational* work in abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition

The purpose of this chapter is to address the third research question—how can imagining beyond carceral logics open up new possibilities for *educational* work? To do so, I engage with practices of abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition, together with the understanding of education as emancipation developed in chapter 4, to describe new possibilities for *educational* work when going beyond carceral logics in schools. I do not go into a description of the theorization of education as emancipation again in this chapter; instead, I move straight to exploring the educational possibilities of abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition in order to flesh out possibilities for *educational* work. The first and third sections of the chapter present a general theorizing of *educational* work beyond carceral logics and the second and fourth sections provide a more specific imagining of what this *educational* work could be in schools in Sweden beyond a school of crime prevention.

Abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition, together with ideas of education as emancipation, are engaged with stereoscopically to consider new possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics. The conceptualization of education as emancipation provides us with the language to understand aspects of abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition as educational. However, it does not make it possible to imagine beyond carceral logics in schools in general, nor does it, alone, make it possible to imagine *educational* work beyond carceral logics more specifically. The abolitionist educators I draw upon specifically challenge and imagine beyond the structural inequality of the carceral order in institutions of education. This is different than the educational philosophy I draw upon in this chapter which, to my mind, tends to undertheorize the educational potential of naming, resisting, and imagining beyond specific orders. The abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition that I focus on in this chapter make it possible to imagine, for example, what it could mean to “assume” or “verify” equality beyond these assumptions and verifications in the abstract.

I draw upon abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition from the US context, and while Sweden and the United States have different education systems and histories (and are therefore not directly comparable in themselves), the political, legal, and school contexts in both are influenced by carceral logics, as has been noted earlier in the dissertation. The literature from the US context is relevant for the exploration I undertake in this chapter because it provides a way to imagine beyond carceral logics in schools. This chapter offers both a theorization of *educational* work beyond carceral logics and specific examples of how this *educational* work could look in schools in Sweden. Ultimately, this chapter discusses the possibilities for conceiving of *educational* work beyond carceral logics in schools generally, and beyond the crime preventative school specifically. In this way, the chapter develops an understanding of the work that makes the change and transformation of education beyond carceral logics possible.

Abolitionist teaching and *educational* work

Abolitionist teaching can be understood as a commitment to freedom beyond carceral logics, action beyond carceral logics, and a teaching act that extends beyond carceral logics. Educational scholar and critical theorist Bettina Love, coined the term “abolitionist teaching,” in *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom* (2019). In this book, Love describes abolitionist teaching in several ways, including as:

the practice of working in solidarity with communities of color while drawing on the imagination, creativity, refusal, (re)membering, visionary thinking, healing, rebellious spirit, boldness, determination, and subversiveness of abolitionists to eradicate injustice in and outside of schools. (Love, 2019, p. 2)

While Love (2019) is discussing the educational system in the USA, her ideas about abolitionist teaching and her way of drawing upon abolitionists also offer points of relevance and importance for exploring educational possibilities beyond carceral logics in schools beyond the US context. Abolitionist teaching is “as much about tearing down old structures and ways of thinking as it is about forming new ideas,” (p. 88) and the “ultimate goal of abolitionist teaching is freedom” (Love, 2019 p. 89). In its commitment to freedom beyond carceral logics, abolitionist teaching can be understood as seeking to form new ideas and ways of being for students outside of carceral logics. This is a freedom to exist beyond the different oppressive structures that currently exist, including the carceral order. Through its

goal of freedom, abolitionist teaching can be understood as one way to make existing beyond the current order possible in schools and institutions of education. So, while a part of abolitionist teaching consists of naming inequality and challenging it, it is primarily in the ways in which, through this naming and challenging, abolitionist teaching is committed to students' freedom beyond carceral logics where we can see what is educationally possible.

Abolitionist teaching is not equivalent to critical pedagogy and “abolition is not a theme, an abstract idea, a slogan, or metaphor for all things social justice” (Education for Liberation Network & Critical Resistance Editorial Collective, 2021, p. 9). In a notable publication *Lessons in Liberation: An Abolitionist Toolkit for Educators*, abolitionist education is described as follows:

Though abolitionist education²⁸ is culturally sustaining, anti-racist, and committed to social justice, it is not to be used interchangeably with these terms because abolition is specific in its focus and demand; abolition is about the particular and urgent need to get rid of systems of policing, surveillance, and prisons, and to build alternatives that make us truly safe. As we move the work of abolition into school spaces, we worry about distancing it from organizing campaigns and struggles to end the prison industrial complex... Bridging abolition and education requires educational and other efforts that concretely dismantle the prison industrial complex, that change common “carceral” sense about how to deal with harm, and that build and sustain practices of safety based in love and care. (pp. 8–9)

The specific desires that motivate abolitionist teaching can be understood as opening up possibilities for education in the classroom beyond what is possible within carceral logics. Zembylas (2021) suggests that “abolition pedagogies differ from social justice, critical, or counterhegemonic pedagogies, because abolition pedagogies prioritize an abolitionist reorientation of teaching and learning” (p. 128). While I do not go into the language of learning here, I do suggest that abolitionist teaching opens up the possibility for education as emancipation because it is a practice that disrupts the carceral order. In a commitment to freedom beyond carceral logics, the *educational* work in abolitionist teaching can be found in the teacher's relation to the student where, through the teacher's commitment to the student's freedom beyond carceral logics, another world beyond the carceral order becomes possible for the student. *Educational* work, therefore, could be work that makes and transformation possible through a commitment to students' freedom beyond the carceral order.

²⁸ The authors do not elaborate upon what is specifically meant by “education.”

Furthermore, an abolitionist approach to the classroom tries out the “dispositions of abolition: collective care, systems of mutual aid, community accountability, restorative and transformative justice, well-being as safety, healing as liberation, and love as praxis” (Shalaby, 2021, p. 105). Activist, lawyer, and scholar Dean Spade describes mutual aid as the “collective coordination to meet each other’s needs, usually from an awareness that the systems we have in place are not going to meet them” (2020a, p. 7). Mutual aid “exposes the failures of the current system and shows an alternative” (Spade, 2020b, p. 137). Some examples of mutual aid include collective housing, free childcare provided by neighbors, community resource funds, neighborhood safety patrols, putting drinking water in the desert for migrants, raising money for medical procedures, and more (McDowell, 2019; Spade, 2020a). Mutual aid is grounded in solidarity, not charity (Spade, 2020b). It can also be a response to harm, when care is organized to support someone who has experienced harm (McDowell, 2019). Importantly, mutual aid is an approach to caring for people that recognizes social problems as systemic, not in terms of individual moral failings (Spade, 2020a). I suggest that engaging in mutual aid can be understood as acting upon an assumption of equality because it means to act in a way that has no place within the carceral order. *Educational* work could be work that makes change and transformation possible through a commitment to a relation to students that has no place in the carceral order.

Trying out practices of mutual aid in the classroom can be understood as a way to open up possibilities for education as emancipation because these practices make the world beyond carceral logics real inside the classroom. For example, abolitionist teaching that approaches classroom management through the idea that “the foundation of safe communities is relationships characterized by deep trust and care” (Shalaby, 2021, p. 108), rather than the idea that “like laws, rules are required to keep people safe” (Shalaby, 2021, p. 108), makes a world beyond carceral logics livable through classroom management. *Educational* work could be the practices that make another world beyond carceral logics livable in the classroom.

Another abolitionist educator scholar, who has been noted previously above is Dylan Rodríguez. Rodríguez (2010) asks: “what might happen to the disoriented teaching act if it were [sic] *re-oriented against* the assumptive necessity, integrity, and taken-for-grantedness of prisons, policing, and the normalized state violence they reproduce?” (p. 9, italics in original). To re-orient against these makes it possible to move beyond them. I assert that the emancipation of the teacher emerges

through these questions and the abolitionist teaching act, because by re-orienting the teaching act beyond carceral logics, the teacher can be understood as breaking away from an unequal order. In this way, the teacher assumes their own equality beyond the order while at the same time assuming the equality of their students beyond this order. This can be understood as educational because it is comparable to what Säfström (2021) describes as “establish[ing] a form in which anyone can emancipate themselves” (p. 63). *Educational* work could be work that makes change and transformation beyond the carceral order possible through the assumption of equality beyond such an order.

While purposefully not offering an overly prescriptive account of “how to teach within an abolitionist framework” (p. 14), Rodríguez (2010) argues for a concept of teaching that extends beyond carceral logics. When the teaching act is imagined beyond carceral logics, the teaching act itself can be understood as opening up possibilities for education as emancipation, because this teaching act can be understood as a verification of equality. Through a teaching act that extends beyond carceral logics, the teacher verifies that the student cannot be determined by the unequal carceral order. To my mind, in so doing, the teacher is doing what Biesta (2017), drawing upon Rancière, describes as “acting as if [equality] were true in order to see what follows from it” (p. 64). In reimagining the teaching act beyond carceral logics, the teacher is acting as if equality beyond carceral logics is true in order to see what follows from it. *Educational* work could be the teaching act that makes change and transformation possible through the verification of equality beyond the carceral order.

In the next section, I draw upon these ideas of *educational* work inspired by abolitionist teaching to explore possibilities for *educational* work beyond a school of crime prevention.

Educational work beyond a school of crime prevention school—abolitionist teaching

I return to the context of a school of crime prevention that was problematized in chapter 4 to explore new possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics in Swedish schools through abolitionist teaching. In the case of schools in Sweden, a commitment to students’ freedom beyond carceral logics could mean a commitment to students’ freedom beyond what can be defined in relation to the “criminal.” That is, *educational* work could mean to stand in a relationship to students such that they are not considered to be potential criminals in need of

“saving.” To be in this relation with students can be understood as educational because it is similar to what Säfström (2021) describes as a clash “with a social structure of inequality” (p. 51). That is, a commitment to students’ freedom beyond carceral logics can be understood as clashing with the criminal categorization of students. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, this criminal categorization is based on inequality. Therefore, a commitment to students’ freedom beyond the carceral order and structure that makes the category possible in the first place could constitute *educational* work in schools in Sweden. For example, this would mean basing relations with students not on the hope that they do not become criminals, but on the commitment to their freedom to exist beyond this categorization. A commitment to students’ freedom beyond criminal categorizations could look like a refusal to engage with a discourse that frames them as potential criminals and a refusal to view the criminalization of students as a solution to problems in the school or society. In their freedom to not be criminals, students also become free from the order that criminalizes them. This would be dissimilar to the ways in which crime preventative education makes students into agents of crime prevention based on their potential criminality, as seen in Dahlstedt and Foulter (2021). Creating the conditions for students to exist beyond criminal classifications through a commitment to their freedom could be *educational* work in schools in Sweden.

A commitment to a relation to students that had no place in the carceral order could mean taking actions in which no one in the class, including the teacher, can be defined through their connection to “the criminal.” This could manifest as creating a classroom environment that does not have a reference point to crime and criminality, meaning that what is done in the classroom is not framed (explicitly or implicitly) in relation to criminality. One way this could be practiced is to create a classroom that engages in practices of mutual aid, which makes no reference to the carceral order (Shalaby, 2021). For example, this could consist of working to find ways in which students’ diverse needs can be met collectively as a class. Or it could mean working together as a class to support each other through different course work, while also supporting each other through the struggles that are part of daily life in school. Through engaging in practices of mutual aid in the classroom, everyone in this classroom is implicated in everyone else’s classroom life. There would be no criminals, potential criminals, or non-criminals, there would only be students and educators in classrooms engaging in these practices. This can be understood as similar to educators’ work that goes beyond, for example, the cisheteropatriarchy by moving beyond the gender binary and

assumed heterosexuality (e.g., Meyer & Leonardi, 2018; Meyer et al., 2019; Reimers, 2020).

Making another world beyond carceral logics livable in the classroom could mean making a classroom that goes beyond criminal classifications. Without crime and criminality as a reference point, the classroom could be a place where students can be free from these classifications and the carceral order that forms them. This can be understood as what Säfström (2021) describes as education, that is, “education is always an interruption of inequality of the logic through which the neglected child is attached to their place in the social machine” (p. 37). When there is no reference point to crime or the criminal, the classroom can be something else. This could mean the creation of a classroom environment not only where students and teachers cannot be defined through a relation to crime and the criminal, but also where idea of crime and the criminal categorization have no place. This could look like pushing back on some of the ways that policy and other forces try to impose a relation to crime onto the activities of schools. Making a world beyond criminal classifications livable in the classroom can be understood in contrast to the classroom of crime preventative education, which Wahlgren (2014) describes as an education that gives students the responsibility for “preserving a local social order, an order threatened by crime” (p. 232).

Furthermore, acting on the assumption of equality beyond the carceral order in schools in Sweden could mean rejecting the common-sense ideas about what teaching is supposed to do in a school of crime prevention; that is, that teaching should help students be non-criminal. A teaching act that extends beyond carceral logics could be to resist or refuse the discourse that defines the work of schools in relation to criminal classifications and crime prevention. To do so could be to emancipate oneself from this order, which could also make it possible for students to become emancipated from this it, because, as Säfström (2021) suggests, it is through their own emancipation that the teacher creates a situation where they are equal to their students. This teaching act has a different starting point than the teaching act of carceral logics, where the teacher is separated from their students via the teachers position as a “non-criminal” who is supposed to “help” students be “non-criminal.”

Furthermore, verifying equality beyond the carceral order could mean separating teaching in schools in Sweden from the idea of crime prevention altogether. This could verify students’ equality in the sense that no one is definable through a relation to crime. When we as educators emancipate ourselves from the carceral order, we create the conditions for our students to do so as well because

it is through this act of teaching that there is a possibility for change and transformation, which is not found within the confines of carceral logics. To verify equality beyond criminal/non-criminal is to verify equality through rejecting and moving beyond the categorizations of the carceral order. The teaching act beyond carceral logics can be understood as contrasting with approaches that Sandahl (2021) notes, in which schools are crucial institutions for crime prevention. Disrupting the criminal categorization of students in schools in Sweden could in itself be *educational* work. There are additional possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics in schools beyond those I have discussed in these two sections. To explore these possibilities, I now turn to teaching abolition.

Teaching abolition and *educational* work

Some educators have attempted to bring abolition into the classroom through teaching it as subject matter. Some readings of teaching abolition as subject matter might find teaching abolition to be in opposition to the theorizing of education as emancipation, which emphasizes that the passing on of knowledge alone cannot capture education's emancipatory character (Biesta 2010a, 2017; Säfström, 2011). This might be the case in certain manifestations of teaching abolition but, in this section, I try to show that, while knowledge plays a role in teaching abolition, the emancipatory character of teaching abolition is not found in the knowledge as such.

In a (2010) article, Barraclough reflects upon teaching prison abolition as part of a university-level anthropology and sociology course. She describes how she uses a range of readings and documentaries to focus on the “social and cultural functions of prisons, and how they shape the quality of individual lives and are shaped by the dynamics of social structures” (Barraclough, 2010, p. 43). The course highlighted structural inequality, together with what Barraclough (2010) describes as an “equally strong emphasis upon the ways in which students themselves are implicated in the production of mass incarceration and cultures of punishment, as well as the multiple ways in which they can create change” (p. 43). Barraclough (2010) notes that few students “signed on to the vision of abolition in its entirety” (p. 51), but that students were able to acknowledge that part of their reluctance was to some extent grounded in their distance from people in prisons and in a culture of fear and punishment. The possibility for education in teaching abolition is not, however, found in whether or not students “signed on to the vision of abolition entirely.” Rather, the possibility for education can be found in the *relation*

to abolition as subject matter with which students are presented. That is, what is educational about teaching abolition is not whether or not students are “convinced” after being presented with more information about abolition.

According to Barraclough (2010), “students had the opportunity to reflect with depth and emotional investment on their own values about crime, safety, and imprisonment, as well as their larger engagement in democratic society” (p. 51). Teaching abolition as subject matter can be understood as opening up possibilities for education as emancipation because abolition as subject matter makes the classroom a place where there is the possibility for student to, what (Säfström, 2021) describes, as “emancipate themselves despite this order” (p. 40). This is somewhat different from my argument that abolitionist teaching through commitment, actions, and teaching acts that extend beyond carceral logics open up possibilities for education. Here, it is also specifically subject matter that has a role to play in making another world imaginable, in part, by pointing out the inequalities of the current order. Possibilities for education could be opened up not only through presenting students with knowledge about abolition (although this is an aspect of it), but also through asking and inviting students into a different relation to an unequal carceral order, which makes something beyond that order possible. *Educational* work could be work that makes change and transformation possible through an invitation beyond the carceral order.

Teaching abolition can also mean “putting on the table historic and current examples of communities and organizations that are actively working to address violence and reduce harm without animating the prison industrial complex” (Jackson & Meiners, 2010, p. 29). For example, this could consist of “bringing alternatives to the room by centering resources, organizations, and examples (that do not involve state agencies) that practice harm reduction and work to challenge violence” (Jackson & Meiners, 2010, p. 29). Jackson and Meiners (2010) also suggest that, rather than “setting aside one class as ‘abolition day’”, they work to include abolitionist ideas throughout readings and discussions, which allows “students time to notice and track their various emotional and intellectual responses to the concept” (p. 30). Engaging in activities like journaling, watching films, or reading abolitionist texts that question different aspects of crime, criminality, the police, prisons, and detention centers (e.g., Barraclough, 2010; Chartrand & Piché, 2019; Jackson & Meiners, 2010) could be understood as doing what Säfström (2021) describes as “point[ing] to obvious social tensions and direct[ing] attention to them, and assum[ing] equality with any other speaking being as a condition for those tensions” (Säfström, 2021, p. 45). This could open

up possibilities for education because the relation that students are invited to enter with this knowledge, is one within which they can attend to what carceral logics means for them. Educational possibilities could be opened up through staging readings and discussions in which students are asked to explore and notice, emotionally and intellectually, how carceral logics matter for their own unique experiences in ways that make a disruption of the carceral order possible.

According to Säfström (2021), being educated is different from being properly schooled because to be properly schooled “means to accept the social hierarchies as a necessary and natural construction of the social and one’s place within such²⁹ an order” (Säfström, 2021, p. 52). Asking students to consider how carceral logics matter for their own lives invites a disruption of the carceral order by encouraging students to question the order in relation to their own lives. In questioning the carceral order, there lies the possibility to disrupt the order more generally. Zembylas (2021) notes that “abolition pedagogy can be understood as a broader pedagogical approach that is committed to exposing and addressing the connections among racism, racial capitalism, and White supremacy” (p. 127), so the disruption of the carceral order that teaching abolition invites also needs to be understood as a disruption of the racist and capitalist structures of which the carceral order is a part of. Of course, there is no guarantee that this disruption will occur, but the *educational* work is not found in whether or not the disruption takes place, it is found in the way in which that teaching abolition opens up space for this possibility. *Educational* work could be the work that makes change and transformation possible through creating the conditions under which disruption of the carceral order is possible.

Teaching abolition as subject matter can be understood as exposing the carceral order while simultaneously abolitionists’ alternatives become a possibility. This can be understood as opening up possibilities for emancipation because, in teaching about abolition, students are not only able to meet carceral logics, but they are also able to meet visions of abolition. Teaching abolition pushes back against what Rodríguez (2010) describes as a “deep and broad epistemological and cultural *disciplining of the political imagination* that makes liberationist dreams unspeakable” (p. 16, italics in original). In teaching abolition as subject matter, there is the possibility for students to not only meet visions of abolition, but to decide what it means for them. The possibility for education is not conditioned on the students needing to “know” more per se; rather, the possibility comes from the ways in which students

29 Säfström (2021) is referring to a “social order of inequality” (p. 52).

are brought into a relation with this vision where they can meet themselves. In this way, by teaching abolition as subject matter, the teacher is doing what Biesta (2010a), drawing upon Rancière, describes as acting on an authority “that is not based on a difference of knowledge or insight or understanding” (p. 58), which is to assume equality. What is educational about teaching abolition as subject matter is not a transfer of knowledge; rather, it is that, in exposing students to visions of abolition, they are not only invited into a relation with knowledge beyond carceral logics, but they are also invited into a relation where emancipation from the carceral order can be acted upon in the classroom, right now. *Educational* work could be the work that makes another world possible in classrooms through exploring visions of other worlds.

In the next section, I draw upon these ideas of *educational* work inspired by teaching abolition to explore possibilities for *educational* work beyond a school of crime prevention.

Educational work beyond a school of crime prevention—teaching abolition

I return once again to the context of a school of crime prevention that was problematized in chapter 4 to explore the possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics in schools in Sweden through teaching abolition. Teaching abolition as subject matter could be an invitation to go beyond the carceral order of the crime preventative school. Drawing upon Rancière, Säfström (2021) argues that education and teaching “both basically either confirm an order that already exists, or change how we understand the world as orderly, or do both in a complex and intricate fashion” (p. 45). In the case of schools in Sweden this means that teaching abolition as subject matter has the potential to both confirm the carceral order that already exists and to change how this order is understood. Teaching abolition as subject matter could be achieved through school subjects that already exist in Swedish schools; for example, history or math. Making the carceral order visible through these subjects could open up possibilities for education. For example, a history lesson about certain kings of Sweden could also discuss which people were considered criminals at the time and who decided this, and could compare this to the situation today. Discussions of labor movements in Sweden could also include an exploration of the kind of labor organizing that was criminalized during that time, and could compare this to what kind of organizing is criminalized today. In math, teaching abolition as subject matter could involve calculating budgets for

prisons and police throughout time. This would be different from practices in schools that only confirm the carceral order through crime preventative education (cf. Dahlstedt & Foutier, 2021; Sandahl, 2016, 2021; Wahlgren, 2014). Säfström (2021) argues that education “is the very shared capacity among us all to think differently about the order from which the reality appears as such, and also the responsibility to do so for the possibility of emancipation and freedom to emerge in the present” (Säfström, 2021, p. 2). *Educational* work in Swedish schools could be teaching subject matter where students are asked to come into a relation to the unequal carceral order in the classroom by not taking it for granted. This could make it possible for students to think differently about the order and thus emancipation from this order could become possible.

Creating the conditions under which disruption of the carceral order that forms crime prevention is possible could include pointing out aspects and manifestations of carceral logics. In Swedish schools, this could mean staging discussions for students where they are asked to discuss different ways in which carceral logics inform their day-to-day lives. For example, students could discuss in groups the ways in which crime, criminality, the police, prisons, and detention centers, are present, or not, in their daily lives. These kinds of discussions could be conducted in relation to, for example, a “police day,” which is a day when students meet with police officers and have the opportunity to ask police questions, look in police cars, and discuss and try out police equipment, while also discussing criminality and the recruiting of young people into gangs³⁰. *Educational* work could be staging discussions that point out to students the tensions of carceral logics within their own lives, which could make it possible for students to assume equality beyond the carceral order and emancipate themselves. This is not to say that this *educational* work would be easy or straightforward. As Whynacht et al. (2018) observe, abolitionist approaches in classrooms can be met with discomfort and pushback. This *educational* work would have a different point of departure from the idea that can be seen in research, in which part of the mission of the school is to pass on knowledge about crime and punishment, laws, and socially desirable norms (Lunneblad, 2022). In a school of crime prevention, it does not make sense to stage discussions about how carceral logics inform students’ lives, because in such a school these logics are made invisible. In questioning and going beyond the

30 As can be seen in Swedish Television News (Ferm & Svensson, 2024) <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/stockholm/har-rollspelar-stockholmsseverna-som-narkotikasaljare>.

carceral logics that inform the crime preventative school, it could be possible for students to emancipate themselves from the school of crime prevention itself.

Teaching about visions of possible worlds beyond the world that is possible in the crime preventative school could make another world possible in the classroom. In schools in Sweden, this could mean teaching in ways that highlight, and are honest about, the ways in which other institutions and structures of inequality have been challenged and dismantled throughout history, but also currently. But it could also mean allowing students have the space to dream up other worlds. It could involve asking questions like: What would a world look like where “crime” does not exist? What would the world look like for there to be no need for police and prisons? This kind of questioning is different from presenting the world in terms of crime prevention within carceral logics, as seen in the idea that the school is seen to play an important role in socializing students for crime preventative purposes (Vainik & Kassman, 2018). The encouragement to imagine a world without and beyond carceral logics in the school comes from a different place. In a school of crime prevention, there is no need to imagine a world beyond carceral logics. The *educational* work could be making it possible to dream up worlds beyond crime prevention in the classroom.

Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed new possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics. I have explored the educational possibilities of abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition, together with educational philosophy, to flesh out possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics through a stereoscopic approach. I suggest *educational* work could be work that makes change and transformation possible through a commitment to students’ freedom beyond the carceral order. *Educational* work could be work that makes change and transformation possible through a commitment to a relation to students that has no place in the carceral order. *Educational* work could be the practices that make another world beyond carceral logics livable in the classroom. *Educational* work could be the work that makes change and transformation possible for students beyond the carceral order through the assumption of a form of equality that is distinct from the carceral order. *Educational* work could consist of teaching acts that makes change and transformation possible through the verification of equality from the carceral order. I have also offered ideas about possibilities for *educational* work in schools in Sweden beyond the school of crime prevention. I have

suggested that *educational* work in schools could consist of basing relations with students not on the hope that they do not become criminals, but on the commitment to their freedom to exist beyond this categorization; to take actions where no one in the class, including the teacher, can be defined through their relation to “the criminal.”; to create classrooms and schools that go beyond criminal classifications; to reject the idea that teaching should help students be non-criminal; and to separate teaching in schools in Sweden from the idea of crime prevention altogether.

I have further suggested that *educational* work in schools in Sweden could consist of teaching subject matter that could form an invitation to reach beyond the carceral order of the crime preventative school, could be to make possible the disruption of the carceral order that forms crime prevention, and could mean teaching about visions of the world beyond the world that is possible in the crime preventative school. I have offered practical ideas for how *educational* work could be practiced through the relations between teachers and students, through pushing back on some of the ways in which policy and other forces try to impose a relation to crime onto the activities of schools, through creating a certain classroom environment, through the rejection of commonsense ideas about what teaching is supposed to do in relation to crime prevention, through school subjects, in relation to activities like police days, and through questions that could be asked in classrooms.

This means that, as educators, we can be inspired by abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition because they open up possibilities for *educational* work and encourage us to think about our practices beyond carceral logics. This might mean asking questions such as: In what ways might my work already imagine beyond carceral logics? In what ways could I be inspired by abolitionist practices that go beyond carceral logics? In what new ways could I imagine my work as an educator beyond carceral logics? Ultimately, imagining beyond carceral logics through abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition offers new possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics.

Chapter 8 Possibilities for *educational* work in abolitionist transformative justice praxis

The purpose of this chapter is to further address the third research question—how can imagining beyond carceral logics open up new possibilities for *educational* work? To consider this, I engage with abolitionist transformative justice praxis, together with understandings of education as subjectification and becoming developed in chapters 5 and 6. I engage with these stereoscopically to describe new possibilities for *educational* work when imagining beyond carceral logics in schools.

Specifically, I discuss the educational possibilities that emerge from the practices of creating safety, a focus on addressing harm, and transforming the conditions under which harm occurs to suggest that these practices can be understood *as educational* work. The abolitionist transformative justice praxis that I describe in this chapter is a set of practices that is not limited to schools; but, in this chapter, I draw upon these practices to the extent that I relate them to *educational* work in schools. The conceptualizations of education as subjectification³¹ and becoming provide the language to understand aspects of abolitionist practices as creating possibilities for education, but do not make it possible to imagine beyond carceral logics in schools in general. Moreover, the educational philosophy alone does not make it possible to imagine *educational* work beyond carceral logics more specifically. On the other hand, the abolitionist practices of creating safety, a focus on addressing harm, and transforming the conditions under which harm occurs provide ways to imagine practices beyond carceral logics but on their own do not account for the educational potential of these practices. Together, these two approaches make the new possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics visible through a stereoscopic approach.

31 In this chapter, I draw on Biesta's notion of subjectification that is inspired both by Hannah Arendt (1958, 1961) and Emmanuel Levinas (1985), so the possibility for education as subjectification is sometimes described in terms of subject-ness and freedom to begin, while at other times it is in terms of uniqueness-as-irreplaceability.

After theorizing the practice of creating safety, a focus on addressing harm, and transforming the conditions under which harm occurs as *educational* work, I turn to how these practices are taken up by abolitionist educators to offer ideas about *educational* work in schools in Sweden beyond police involvement and in the responses to violence in schools that were problematized in chapters 5 and 6. This chapter offers both theoretical and practical implications of imagining beyond carceral logics in schools and offers further ideas about the work that enables the change and transformation of education beyond carceral logics. Some of the ideas in this chapter have been developed in O’Neill (2025).

Transformative justice

Before moving on to the analysis sections of this chapter, I want to briefly discuss educational scholarship that engages with concepts of restorative justice that are similar to transformative justice. I mention this and then describe how restorative justice is different from transformative justice in order to better focus on the educational potential of transformative justice. This is not to say that I am drawing strict lines between what counts as restorative justice and what counts as transformative justice; rather, I seek to highlight aspects of transformative justice that set an educational trajectory into motion. Educational research on violence and the school in relation to restorative justice highlights a focus on addressing harm (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2012; Morrison, 2015), which is similar to transformative justice. Restorative justice can be understood as a practice in schools that moves away from a one-size-fits-all model (Morrison & Vaandring, 2012; Morrison, 2015) and instead focuses on restoring relationships through building community (Hasbullah, 2022). Another similarity between restorative justice and transformative justice that can be seen in educational research is treating both victims and perpetrators with dignity in ways that cannot be solely determined through criminal justice (Duncan, 2016; Gellin, 2018). Finally, as Hasbullah (2022) notes, restorative justice is a voluntary process that cannot be based on coercion, which is also similar to transformative justice.

While there are notable similarities between restorative and transformative justice, there are also differences. One such difference between restorative justice and transformative justice is that transformative justice does not have a relationship with the criminal legal system, which is not always the case in restorative justice practices (Kim, 2021). Furthermore, transformative justice is based in practices that seek to dismantle what (Kim, 2021) calls the “retributive

carceral state” (p. 170), which once again is not necessarily the case for restorative justice. Kaba (2021) notes that restorative justice and transformative justice have overlaps but have emerged from different communities and from different places. Transformative justice has been developed by “anti-violence activists of color” (Kaba, 2021, p. 59) and has been practiced for generations by, for example, “undocumented immigrant women in domestic violence relationships, disabled people who are being abused by their caretakers and attendants, sex workers who experience sexual assault or abuse, or poor children and youth of color who are surviving child sexual abuse” (Mingus, 2022, p. 18). Transformative justice strives to address larger issues of oppression, social inequities, and injustices within conflicts (Nocella II, 2011).

There is no single definition of transformative justice, and, in this dissertation, I largely draw upon the work of Black women whose work is based in the settler-colonial-nation-state, the United States. To a large extent, I draw upon the work of organizer, educator, and abolitionist Mariame Kaba and those who also refer to her work in their own writings. In the US context, the praxis of transformative justice has been led by Black, Indigenous, and people of color survivors who seek to end violence and transform their communities in ways that cannot be achieved by structures and institutions like the police, courts, and prisons (Kaba, 2021). Transformative justice takes a liberatory approach to violence, which “seeks safety and accountability without relying on alienation, punishment, or State or systemic violence, including incarceration and policing” (Generation FIVE, 2007, p. 5). Furthermore, transformative justice seeks to provide immediate safety and long-term care to those who experience violence (Generation FIVE, 2007). The practice of creating safety can be understood as a part of the praxis of transformative justice.

Transformative justice works to “address the harm that happened while transforming the conditions that created the harm in the first place” (Matthews, 2020, p. 20). Kaba and Ritchie (2022) suggest that:

transformative justice is a framework to prevent, interrupt, and redress harm through nonpunitive accountability. It prioritizes relationship building, developing our skills, and uprooting structural oppression. It seeks to address violence without using more violence. It is not an “alternative to prison” as it is often framed. We’re not interested in replacing a rigid set of rules (or laws) with another rigid set of rules applied to every single harm in the same ways. (p. 255)

Through prioritizing the addressing of harm in various ways, although this should not be understood as a “one-to-one replacement for criminal legal punishment” (Kaba, 2021, p. 136), transformative justice is a “framework that can only be applied responsibly in relationship to the specific context in which it is being practiced” (Kaba, 2021, p. 136). The practices of creating safety, a focus on addressing harm, and transforming the conditions under which harm occurs are all practices that overlap and cannot really be separated from each other, but I do so in this chapter in order to lay out my theorizing of *educational* work. Importantly, transformative justice itself is not a kind of therapy³², and I am not suggesting transformative justice should be considered as a kind of therapy in schools. Instead, I am highlighting the ways in which aspects of transformative justice can be understood in terms of *educational* work. This brief general description of transformative justice serves as a point of departure for the rest of the chapter. The discussion presented in this chapter can be understood as imagining beyond the carceral logics that form police involvement and responses to violence in schools in Sweden.

The practice of creating safety as *educational* work

In this section, I discuss how the practice of creating safety opens up possibilities for education because it lays the conditions under which it is possible for education to emerge. The abolitionist practice of creating safety can be understood as, stemming, in part, from the desire for more safety (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). As Erin Miles Cloud notes, “everybody wants safety for someone, somewhere. Abolitionists want safety for everyone, everywhere” (as cited in Kaba & Ritchie, 2022, p. 17). Creating safety in abolitionist terms is based on a rejection of the idea that people are disposable and a commitment to “reimagining safety in ways that ‘push beyond’ the harmful and harm-inducing affects, ethics, and practices of the carceral state” (McDowell, 2019, p. 56). An abolitionist notion of safety is distinctly different from the idea of safety that can be offered through institutions like the police, prisons, the military, courts, etc. For abolitionists, the police do not offer safety, they prevent it (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). A part of the abolitionist practice of creating safety entails “rejecting the carceral and militarized visions of safety that we have been conditioned to believe are the only path forward” (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022, p. 192). Consequently, a “key component of creating greater safety is

32 Mariame Kaba (2021) notes that transformative justice is not some kind of therapy. Todd (2023) also notes that educational encounters should not be therapeutic.

challenging the visions of safety we have been fed by the carceral state” (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022, p. 248). In this way, the practice of creating safety begins with the idea that safety is not something that can be bestowed by carceral institutions—it is created through relationships to each other. The idea that safety is something that is created by those involved, rather than being provided or bestowed by an institution like the police or other criminal justice institutions, sets an educational trajectory in motion. The practice of creating safety can be understood as having an alternative starting point than the police involvement discussed in chapter 5.

I assert that creating safety it is to call forth an “I,” a singular and irreplaceable subject because it requires an “I” to step forward. It requires that *you* step forward. A relational view of creating safety can be understood as asking students to step forward into their “I” in the classroom in the ways and moments when they create safety. It is not possible for “you” to create safety without “your I” stepping forward. The practice of creating safety is not a practice that calls forth an identity or a social role—creating safety does not stem from social categories, it is something that is created by the calling forth and stepping up. It matters that it is *you*—no one else can create safety *through* you. Understood in this way, it is the singular and irreplaceable subject, “I” who creates safety.

This is different from an idea of safety in which safety is created through a “control approach,” which is an approach that “builds physical or virtual walls around perceived challengers to that safety” (Jackson & Meiners, 2011, p. 278). A control approach to safety is based on absence rather than presence (Jackson & Meiners, 2011). When safety is viewed in this way, it often requires carceral responses like the police and prisons to offer safety by eliminating potential perceived threats but, as Jackson and Meiners (2011) note, safety is created through relationships. I contend that a control approach to safety does not require that *you* step forward to create safety. A control approach to safety actually relies on the stepping back or a removal of an “I.” For example, if we think about creating safety in a classroom under the control approach, safety would be created through removing certain students from the classroom or keeping certain students away from the classroom. In this, the “I” of these students would not be present in the classroom because safety is formed on the basis of their removal. Alternatively, those students who are in the classroom would not have their “I” appealed to, because there is no “I” called forth in this approach to safety. “You” do not need to create safety when safety is something that is created by the absence of others.

For Biesta (2012c), “uniqueness is an event, not something the individual can possess or claim” (p. 112). In this way, to be attentive to subject-ness is to be

attentive to how uniqueness can come into the world (Biesta, 2012c). The practice of creating safety opens up possibilities for education as subjectification because it can be understood as a call and a demand from the other; it is the path by which a subject's irreplaceable uniqueness can come into the world. The recognition that safety is "both constructed in and compromised by relationships" (Jackson & Meiners, 2011, p. 280) invites irreplaceable uniqueness through its creation. Of course, it is possible not to "step up" to the demand, but the demand is there nonetheless. In this way, the practice of creating safety can be understood as *educational* work because it lays out the conditions under which an irreplaceable "I" is called forth and can emerge. Creating safety is work that contributes to the possibility for education as subjectification because it is not necessarily about teaching or learning about what safety is in schools or classrooms (although this could be part of it), which would be a question of knowing. Rather, creating safety is a question of being and doing. Creating safety is not about the production of a certain kind of person who can give us safety, it is about calling forth an "I" in its creation.

Furthermore, the practice of creating safety is not about "replacing police with policing and criminalization in different forms... the goal is not to find Someone Else, if not police, to put people Somewhere Else, if not jails, prisons, and detention centers" (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022, p. 18). The abolitionist practice of creating safety moves away from an approach to safety that controls "bodies that are identified as sources of danger" (Jackson & Meiners, 2011, p. 284). To create safety, Kaba and Ritchie (2022) suggest that it is not necessary to have all the answers beforehand. In this way, the practice of creating safety is not about establishing set alternatives, or waiting for futures alternatives to already be in place. Creating safety without a known single replacement and without having to have all the answers, I maintain, creates a similar temporal space as the space of becoming and transformation. By challenging carceral conceptions of safety, and in not waiting for some kind of finished picture as the basis for creating safety, the practice of creating safety can be understood as occurring during the present, as what Todd (2023) describes as "presencing the future," which means bringing the future "into the present in a way that allows it to *exist*" (p. 142, italics in original). Becoming happens in the time of this presencing and the practice of creating safety can be understood as acting as a form of presencing where becoming can emerge. Todd (2023) suggests that "the time of education occurs at a convergence of temporalities, a flow of moments, through which one's becoming unfolds" (p. 124). Through the presencing that occurs in the practice of creating safety, new

forms of education as becoming are enabled because the creation of safety *presences* a future where this safety already exists. In this way, the practice of creating safety can be understood as *educational* work because, through its inherent presencing it sets the temporal conditions under which becoming can emerge.

Additionally, the abolitionist practice of creating safety “requires us to unpack the notion of safety itself” (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022, p. 189). There is no universal definition of safety, nor is safety a “stable category” (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022, p. 189). Kaba and Ritchie (2022) suggest that safety shifts “in relation to conditions and to other people. No individual or society can be ‘perfectly safe’ at all times and under all conditions” (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022, p. 189). Safety can be understood as both an illusion and as a real concern (Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). In this understanding, because safety itself is always in flux, the praxis of creating safety is thus always emergent, always changing, given specific conditions. I argue that, in creating safety, there is the possibility for becoming because becoming always unfolds in relation to the given conditions and can never be fully determined prior to it happening. Possibilities for education as becoming are therefore inherent to the practice of creating safety in the way in which the creation of safety materializes through a similar kind of emergent conditions from which becoming appears. For example, there is no safety that can emerge *before* the act of creating safety happens. There is no becoming *before* becoming happens. Because creating safety works within this temporality of emergence, creating safety can be understood as *educational* work in that it creates encounters where transformation and becoming are possible.

Finally, Kaba and Ritchie (2022) suggest that:

We also need to let go of the idea that safety is a state of being that can be personally or permanently achieved. Safety isn’t a commodity that can be manufactured and sold to us by the carceral state or private corporations. Nor is safety a static state of being. Safety is dependent on social relations and operates relative to conditions: we are more or less safe depending on our relationship to others and our access to the resources we need to survive. (p. 190)

I posit that the practice of creating safety brings how people exist into focus because it is not attentive to some predetermined idea, category, or identity of what it means to be safe; rather, the practice of creating safety is an encounter whereby students can *live* safety. Students live safety because safety’s creation is conditioned upon its enactment. In this way, the practice of creating safety can be understood as *educational* work because it is a practice that makes it possible for the subject to

take up and live their subject-ness. Furthermore, because safety can never be fully predetermined and changes in relation to others, I assert that the act of creating safety is to “begin something new, to bring something new to the world” (Biesta, 2013, p. 105), and in this way it opens up the possibility for education.

The practice of focusing on addressing harm and violence as *educational* work

In the paragraphs that follow, I discuss how the practice of focusing on addressing harm and violence opens up possibilities for education. It does so because it can be understood as a practice that appeals and attends to the conditions under which education is possible. In discussing an abolitionist focus on addressing harm and violence, I do not go into discussions about what harm or violence are per se and, thus, I am not offering an abolitionist conceptualization of harm and violence. Importantly, I am not suggesting that addressing harm and violence *needs* to be educational at all times, or in every case. Rather, I am describing the ways in which it can be understood as *educational* work.

The abolitionist practice of focusing on addressing harm begins with a recognition that “no one enters violence for the first time by committing it” (Danielle Sered as cited in Kaba, 2021, p. 146). Often it is hurt people who hurt other people, and this recognition means that the clear distinction made in the binary and dichotomy of victim and perpetrator falls apart (Kaba, 2021). The focus is not on these binaries or dichotomies; instead, it shifts to supporting those who have been harmed and those who have caused harm, with the central aspect being to address the harm (Kaba, 2021). In this way, addressing harm can be understood as a response to violence and harm that maintains harm as the focus. Because the focus on addressing harm is not based on responding to violence and harm on the basis of identities, something else is opened up in the response. The response is not based on identifying (making identities) and then addressing the situation from there; rather, identifying and addressing harm is the starting point.

This focus on harm is unlike a focus on the *who* (victims and perpetrators). I contend that approaching a situation by asking “who is the victim here, who is the perpetrator here?” and then addressing the situation from the position of acknowledging these identities, is different from approaching a situation by asking “what harm has been done here?” and then addressing the situation from acknowledging and working with the harm. The problems inherent in approaching situations through victim and perpetrator categorizations have been

discussed in chapter 6, but here I emphasize how the practice of a focus on harm and violence addresses a subject.

Addressing harm rather than identities can be understood as *educational* work because this practice is attentive to how students exist. This opens up space for educational possibilities because in addressing harm, students are invited to come into a relation to the harm that has occurred rather than into a relation with an identity relation to said harm. When students are asked to confront the harm that has occurred, they are addressed by *how* they are in relation to the harm, not *who* they are in terms of identity categories related to the harm. Addressing students in relation to their existence, in their “how” they are, is crucial for subjectification (Biesta, 2022).

With its focus on addressing harm, the practice is not about assigning and clarifying identities (although students might be referred to as victims and perpetrators and some even might like to call themselves a victim); rather it focuses on addressing harm. To my mind, addressing harm is not something that is done to someone, it is something that someone must do themselves, and the practice of focusing on addressing harm and violence opens up possibilities for education because it encourages the taking up of one’s subject-ness. It is an encouragement to step into one’s subject-ness because in order to address the harm that *you* have done, *you* have to do it. It does not make sense for someone to address harm for someone else, for someone to address harm *they have done* they have to address it, otherwise they are not addressing *their* harm, someone else is. Alternatively, addressing harm also appeals to the subject-ness of the person who has experienced harm. No one else can address the harm that was experienced by someone *for* that someone. In this way, a focus on addressing harm can be understood as contributing to what Biesta (2022) describes as the work of education, that is, being attentive to and creating possibilities for students to exist as subjects which can only be done by each student *themselves*.

That being said, this is not to claim that others should not be involved in addressing harm. Transformative justice praxis is grounded in the understanding that there is a collective responsibility when it comes to violence and an understanding that “violence is collectively enabled, has a collective impact, and requires a collective response” (Mingus, 2022, p. 19). Jackson and Meiners (2011) argue for the need to create relationships in which people are also responsible for the harm they witness. This is a relational approach that complicates the perpetrator and victim dichotomy by “reinstating a third actor—the ‘innocent bystander’—and demanding that witnesses are not ‘innocent’ and that all of us

have a responsibility to respond to others' pain" (Jackson & Meiners, 2011, p. 280). This means that addressing harm in a classroom could create a situation in which more students' subject-ness could be addressed. The point is not to create situations where more students' subject-ness can be addressed in terms of simply increasing the number of students as though that itself were the goal. Rather, in addressing harm in this way, it could be so that more students are addressed as subjects, and this is worth reflecting upon in terms of what it means to do *educational* work.

Relatedly, the abolitionist practice of focusing on addressing harm without systems of punishment and policing is grounded in nonpunitive accountability (Kaba, 2021; Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). Kaba (2021) emphasizes that it is not possible to actually force someone to take accountability. It must be a voluntary process through which someone decides that they want to be accountable, where they choose to take accountability (Kaba, 2021; Kaba & Ritchie, 2022). People can never be "made" or "held" accountable, according to Kaba (2021). I propose that to be accountable is to step into one's singular and irreplaceable subject-ness. A focus on addressing harm through accountability addresses the subject-ness of the student who has done the harm because to be accountable is to step into your "I." It is to say "Hey, it is me here." According to Biesta (2022), the educational work of education takes place as an interruption—in the question "Hey, you there, where are you?" (p. 75). Addressing harm through accountability is to ask this question. It is to ask: "Hey, you there, where are you?" and in this way, the abolitionist practice of a focus on addressing harm and violence can be understood as *educational* work.

Furthermore, the practice of focusing on addressing harm and violence can be understood in terms of becoming because to take accountability means to go beyond—become beyond—the identity category that has been used to define someone. That is, in taking accountability, it becomes possible to move beyond the "perpetrator" category that one has been assigned and to become a different, un-predefinable subject precisely through accountability. When harm is the focus, students can be understood as being brought into a relation to each other *through their relation to harm* and, in addressing this harm, it becomes possible to transform this relation to harm and to each other, which opens up a possibility for education as becoming. In this way, the abolitionist practice of focusing on harm adds to discussions in educational philosophy that are critical of identity categories in terms of education, because it highlights how the identity categorizations of carceral logics can be imagined beyond in a way that opens up the possibility for

education. That is, the identity category has a role to play in educational possibilities in the way in which its transcendence can be understood as part of what opens up the possibility for education. The abolitionist focus on harm makes it possible to see the educational potential stemming from the ways in which these categories are surpassed precisely through relations that defy them.

Additionally, abolitionist practice addresses harm, in part, by “centering on the concerns and experience of the person who was harmed” (Kaba, 2021, p. 59). Similarly to how I suggest that accountability addresses the subject-ness of the person who has done the harm, I propose that centering the concerns and experience of the person who has been harmed is also an appeal their subject-ness. By focusing on the concerns and experience of the person who was harmed, the response takes its point of departure in an existential and relational place. That is, this response also addresses their “I.” In so doing, it also makes possible their becoming beyond the victim identity category that has been assigned to them. When there is a practice of focusing on addressing harm, it also becomes possible for people who have both experienced harm and who have done harm to exist as both. When we are not bound to identity categories of victims and perpetrators as the basis for addressing harm, it is possible to exist as someone who has both done and experienced harm. This matters educationally speaking, because this approach appeals to how students encounter harm. That is, it is an encounter where their becoming through harm is opened up. That said, although the encounter with harm can be understood as a place of becoming, this is not to romanticize students’ encounters with harm, but to point out that, in the encounter with harm that occurs when a student can be a person who has both done and experienced harm, there can be an educational possibility. The practice of addressing harm can be understood as *educational* work because it appeals the subject-ness and opens up space for becoming beyond identity categorizations.

The practice of transforming the conditions under which harm occurs as *educational* work

In this final section of describing abolitionist practices as *educational* work, I discuss how the practice of transforming the conditions under which harm occurs opens up possibilities for education because it can be understood as a practice where education can be experienced, where education can be lived in the moment. The practice of transforming the conditions under which harm occurs can be understood as having an alternative starting point from the responses to violence

discussed in chapter 6, but also different from restorative justice. Transformative justice specifically takes the structural conditions of systemic forms of violence like racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, and ableism into account when responding to interpersonal violence (Generation Five, 2007; Kim, 2018). As Kim (2018) notes, transformation is not the same thing as restoration, because while “restoration implies the desire to return to such conditions, transformation requires moving beyond” (Kim, 2018, p. 227). This moving beyond can open up the possibility for education because it is through this beyondness of transforming the conditions that transformation for students can emerge. Notably, transformative justice is “not simply the absence of the state and violence, but the presence of the values, practices, relationships and world that we want” (Mingus, 2022, p. 18). Attempts to create a classroom beyond the conditions where harm and violence take place, that is towards a world where this violence does not happen, can be understood as *educational* work because these attempts invoke transformation.

The abolitionist practice of transforming the conditions under which harm occurs has been developed by anti-violence activists of color and stems from, in part, from the desire to “figure out how the broader context was set up for this harm to happen, and how the context can be changed so that this harm is less likely to happen again” (Kaba, 2021, p. 59). Because this does not look the same in different contexts, the justice that comes with transforming the conditions cannot be applied as a universal to all contexts and all occasions (Kaba, 2021). Justice here cannot be understood as something that simply “exists out there”, beyond us, waiting to be “applied” at the “right time” in the “right way.” Instead, justice is what happens when conditions are transformed (Kaba, 2021). In this way, the practice of changing the conditions under which harm occurs opens up the possibility for education because, through transforming the conditions rather than just maintaining them, there is the possibility to move beyond the socialization into the “justice” offered by the carceral order (i.e., criminal justice). This can be understood as what Todd (2023) describes as the “freedom to become someone beyond socialization” (Todd, 2023, p. 42). I propose that, in transforming the conditions under which harm occurs, there is the freedom to become someone else—not just someone who is receiving justice for a harm done by you or to you—but to become someone else beyond through the transformation of conditions. The practices that contribute to changing the conditions in ways that make possible the freedom to become someone beyond the socialization imposed by the carceral order possible can be understood as *educational* work.

The abolitionist practice of transforming the conditions under which harm occurs is grounded in the idea that the criminal punishment system is not capable of addressing harm because it does nothing to change the cultures within which the harm and violence have occurred (Kaba, 2021). This practice can be understood as a practice that is rooted in a consideration for how people exist in relation to the harm or violence they have done, where justice derives from transforming the conditions within which our existence takes place. The practice of transforming the conditions under which harm occurs opens up possibilities for education because it is similar to what Todd (2023) describes as education as becoming, that is, “education concerns becoming as a process of transformation through which one emerges as a subject capable of living life well with others” (p. 70). In changing the conditions, one is becoming a subject who is living life well with others. In this way, the practices that contribute to changing the conditions in ways that make possible this living a life well with others can be understood as *educational* work.

In the practice of transforming the conditions under which harm occurs, justice is something that is unfinished, incomplete, open to change, creative, experimental, and evolving (Davis et al., 2022; Kaba, 2021; Kaba & Ritchie, 2022; McLeod, 2019; Purnell, 2021). Abolitionist justice remains in a perpetual state of openness to “change in response to changing needs and changing times” (McLeod, 2019, p. 1647). In this way, justice only becomes what it is as it unfolds. There is no justice before there is justice. This can be understood as opening up possibilities for education because transformative justice entails a kind of merging of the past, present, and future. This is similar to what Todd (2023) describes as the present—the time of education—as “the time when the past *comes into being as the past* and also thereby shifts the directionality of the future from one which is bound to repeat the past...to one that is open to other possibilities from the position of the present” (p. 139, italics in original). We can understand transformative justice in this presencing way because, in changing the conditions under which harm occurs, the past, present, and future are *presenced*. To change the conditions under which harm occurs is to connect the past to the current moment, while also imagining another possible future. It is a view of the future that is *presenced* because it is the act of imagining a future where this violence does not happen again that sets the course for a response. This is not definite, as in “how can this response to this violence get us to our desired future?” Instead, it is a particular desired future that makes it possible for justice to be *presenced* in the first place. Because there is no justice that already exists and can simply just be applied in transformative justice,

transformative justice can be understood as inherently *presenced*. This is not a flow from injustice towards justice, rather the justice is the transformation.

The presencing of this justice opens up the possibility for education because it happens through transformation in the moment. Transformative justice enables becoming and stepping into subject-ness because it cannot be forced on someone or predicted ahead of time. Through transformative justice, students are addressed as subjects who are capable of transformation. There are possibilities for students to exist in new and unpredictable ways precisely because there is no one single way to approach a situation of violence and harm within a transformative justice approach. Here, the students would be transformed as the conditions are transformed, as the justice is transformed—which is inherently emergent and enables new ways of being in the world. In this way, transformative justice is educational. This is similar to how Todd (2023) argues that “becoming a subject means that what I will become cannot be categorized beforehand; it is not an identity position that is waiting for me to jump into” (p. 143). In transformative justice there is no justice waiting for students to jump into, it only unfolds through the transformation in relation to others. Thus, becoming a subject through transformative justice can never be categorized beforehand. This transformation is a moment where education is lived and, in this way, the practices that makes this presencing of justice possible can be understood as *educational* work.

Furthermore, we can see the practice of changing the conditions under which harm occurs as making education possible because, in transformative justice, the future is not something that we are merely working toward or against—the change that transformative justice begets is not a change towards an ideal, but it is a change that is already part of the beyond in that the future is *presenced* in this change. This is similar to how Todd (2018) discusses education as a cultural practice committed to “emancipation and transformation in reframing and reengaging conventional modes of being” (p. 977). Transforming the conditions under which harm occurs can be understood as *educational* work because it enables other modes of being in the present.

Educational work beyond police involvement and carceral responses to violence

I now turn to the practices of abolitionist educators to specifically explore new possibilities for *educational* work in schools in Sweden beyond carceral logics. The practices I draw upon come from the publication *Lessons in Liberation: An*

Abolitionist Toolkit for Educators (Education for Liberation Network and Critical Resistance Editorial Collective, 2021). This book is a notable publication that discusses different aspects of abolition in relation to educational institutions through the work of abolitionist educators. I offer ideas about *educational* work in Swedish schools beyond carceral logics through the practices of abolitionist educators in terms of creating safety, focusing on addressing harm and violence, and transforming the conditions under which harm occurs.

Creating safety in the Swedish school could begin with the question: “What would safety look like in schools beyond carceral logics?” This question will be answered differently depending on the school, because what is needed to create safety in a given setting is always in flux and does not look the same for everyone in every situation. Abolitionist educator Stephanie Cariaga (2021) offers one way of nurturing safety in classrooms, called a *Collective Needs Activity*. In this activity, students discuss what it means for them to feel safe, and the class makes a list of *Class Community Needs*, where student needs are listed. This list includes needs that students can give to themselves, needs that students request from their classmates, and needs that students request from their teacher. In an example of a *Class Community Needs List*, needs that students listed in all three categories include space, respect, support, trust, joy, and humor (p. 242). The ways that students and teachers are asked to show up for each other when these collective needs are asked for and met can be understood as calling forth an “I” through their relationships to each other. Creating safety without carceral logics in schools in Sweden by asking students to contribute to the safety of their classroom and school could mean to call forth their “I” through their relationships to others in the classroom. This could be done through attempting to create a classroom environment where safety emerges through strong relationships rather than rules that are enforced by punishment or a threat of the police. This focus on strong relationships rather than the threat of punishment or the police is in alignment with Lunneblad et al.’s (2016) research, which highlights that school officials are concerned with the long-term relationships and well-being of students and have concerns about how involving the police complicates relationships in the school. In this way, the *educational* work here not only opens up possibilities for education, but also has the possibility to lead to better relations between students and educators in school.

There are potential hindrances to creating safety in the classroom, in terms both of whether or not students will step into their subject-ness and of the reality that all kinds of things happen in classrooms and schools, and problems have to be addressed. Furthermore, creating safety in this way could be met with similar

critiques to those directed against restorative justice in education in the US context, which is the critique that restorative practices make it difficult for teachers to “maintain order” (Warnick & Scribner, 2020, p. 110). Although I do not prescribe to a desire to “maintain order,” I do not want to suggest that creating safety in classrooms would necessarily be easy or without setbacks. But trying to create classroom environments where students can experience safety is to engage in *educational* work because it sets conditions enabling students to both meet themselves and the other. Because, as Biesta (2022) puts forward, the work of education is to encourage and remind the student of their subject-ness, there is also a risk that “our intentions as educators will fail” (p. 55). However, this risk cannot and should not be avoided because to avoid it is to shut down the possibility to for the student to appear as a subject (Biesta, 2022). In the case of schools in Sweden, this means that, while that we cannot guarantee that our attempts to create safety in classrooms and schools will always be successful, it is through our attempts to do so that it becomes possible for the student to appear as a subject. But it is not only that our attempts to create safety in schools and classrooms make it possible for the student to appear as a subject. In creating safety beyond carceral logics through a focus on attending to students’ experiences of safety beyond the “safety” that is offered by the police, students who are already marginalized could benefit from this potentially reduced police involvement. This is because, for example, as in Berndtsson’s (2019) research on a school in a socio-economically marginalized area, which is described as an “immigrant” school, police involvement is seen as something positive and necessary. In creating safety in ways that do not include the police, not only is there an educational possibility, but through this *educational* work, educators could have an opportunity to materially change the school and classrooms for their students, at least to some extent.

Additionally, the educator’s work to create safety could form the conditions from which becoming emerges. Through students asking for what they need for their needs to be met, and in giving what is asked of them for others needs to be met in order to contribute to safety, students are positioned into encounters where their becoming can happen. Todd (2023) argues that becoming is “occasioned by our touching and being touched by elements of our environment, the perceptions, sensations, and feelings that are generated through contact, through which a subject becomes distinct and singular” (2023, p. 70). Because students have to meet each other’s needs in order to meet each other’s needs, this is an encounter through which the student becomes distinct and singular. Creating safety through cultivating strong relationships in the classroom puts students into a situation

where education has the possibility to emerge. But, more than this, meeting each other's collective needs, can be understood as an attempt to try to take the best interests of the student into consideration, which, as seen in Lunneblad et al. (2016), is not always the case when there is police involvement. Creating safety beyond carceral logics makes education possible in a way that is not found in carceral logics. As educators, we can be inspired by the abolitionist practice of creating safety, not only because students deserve to experience safety at school and within institutions of education, but also because working to create safety in classrooms is in itself to practice *educational* work.

In addition, addressing harm in schools in Sweden could start with the question: "What would it look like to address harm in school beyond carceral logics?" One way that abolitionist educators do this is by addressing harm through a transformative framework, which is consent-based and not informed by control, punishment, or the threat of violence (Atom Fire Arts, 2021). This way of addressing harm proceeds via a process through which all parties consent to being a part of. Addressing harm in this way is a "method of dealing with impactful behavior that seek[s] to transform our situations in response to harm" (Atom Fire Arts, 2021, p. 64). Addressing harm through consent can be understood as appealing to students' freedom to begin; in part, because there is no threat of violence or punishment. But it is not only that there is no threat of violence or punishment in a consent-based transformative framework in schools (which is unlike the threat of violence that, in chapter 5, I contend exists a school of police involvement), it is also that, within this framework, students have the opportunity to not be defined by victim and perpetrator categories. Because it is based in consent with harm as the focus, students would not be forced into perpetrator and victim categorizations in this approach, which could open up possibilities for education in schools. Ultimately, when this freedom is attended to by addressing harm within a transformative framework, possibilities open up for students to emerge as irreplaceable and beyond identities of victim and perpetrator.

Biesta (2022) suggests that the role of the educator is both to "encourage the student to "take up" their subject-ness" and to help them "not forget the possibilities of existing as subject of their own life" (p. 7). By dealing with harm through a transformative framework based on consent, the educator is doing the *educational* work of encouraging students to take up their subject-ness and the *educational* work of helping students to not forget how they can exist as a subject in their own lives. Furthermore, Biesta suggests that it is the task of the educator to work "on the conditions" under which a student's subject-ness "remains a real

possibility” (2022, p. 7). Addressing harm within a transformative framework can be understood as contributing to what Biesta describes as the educational work of education because, through addressing harm, the educator contributes to creating the conditions under which students’ subject-ness is a possibility; that is, the conditions without a threat of violence and the conditions where subject-ness is appealed to. Addressing harm in these ways in schools in Sweden would be different from reporting harm to the police based on the idea that reporting to the police has the “pedagogical effect of teaching the students consequences of violating school rules” (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019, p. 81).

Addressing harm within the school in a transformative framework puts students into a situation where their freedom is at stake, and therefore they are put into a situation where their education is possible. This is not to say that the goal of addressing harm is to be educational. When working to address harm through a transformative framework, the educator engages in the *educational* work of attending to students’ freedom. Engaging in this *educational* work as educators is valuable not only because it opens up possibilities for education, but also because students deserve to have the harm they experience—and cause—addressed.

Finally, transforming conditions where harm occurs in Swedish schools could start with the question: “What would it take for this harm to not happen again?” One way in which abolitionist educators try to do this is by attempting to address the “underlying issues, struggles, and power imbalance” (Atom Fire Arts, 2021, p. 64) inherent in different kinds of harm. This could vary across contexts and types of harm. In the Swedish school, it would mean to start by asking a student why they committed some kind of harm and then going from there. For example, if we turn back to the example in chapter 6, where a student physically attacked another student after having been repeatedly teased about his clothes, a transformative approach would be to start by asking this student why he physically attacked the other student and then going from there. If the student became physical because he was sick of being harassed, then one way forward could be to talk to the class as a group to try to change the culture of harassment in which they are implicated. This could also include asking: “What support would the boy have needed to prevent this situation from escalating? How could the class as a whole contribute to ensuring it so that this harm does not happen again?” Of course, this is not easy to handle, as schools are under pressure to accomplish a lot of other work, but it nonetheless does not change that this approach is rooted in an idea of justice with educational possibilities. It is of course likely that teachers and school professionals already engage in this kind of work, but it is not something that fits

within the carceral logics that are increasingly present in Swedish schools. This approach would be dissimilar to an approach that involves reporting to the police, where incidents can end up in “court-like situations” without the issue being resolved for students (Lindgren et al., 2021, p. 1061). The ways in which the conditions under which harm occurs could be transformed are endless and context specific, but the educational significance is found in the transformation of the conditions itself.

In doing the work that attempts to change the underlying issues, struggles, and power imbalances in the classroom or school, educators are engaging in *educational* work because they are laying the conditions for something otherwise to unfold—thus enabling education to be experienced. Todd (2023) describes an educational response as “to offer opportunities for becoming otherwise, always understanding that our implication in living a life means that we are relationally interdependent with the lives of others” (p. 189). In the case of changing the conditions under which harm occurs in schools, students’ becoming otherwise is made possible precisely because who³³ the student will become through this transformation of the conditions cannot be known or categorized beforehand, it can only emerge. Focusing on transforming the conditions under which harm occurs in schools is different from the approach taken by some school professionals in Lunneblad and Johansson’s (2019) study, where reporting to the police is intended to show that they are taking matters seriously and to serve as “a kind of rehabilitation for the victimized students” (p. 81). It is different because in transforming the conditions under which harm occurs the “rehabilitation” (although I would prefer the word healing) takes place through changing the conditions so that the harm is less likely to happen again—for the victimized student, but also for everyone. Drawing inspiration for *educational* work from the practice of transforming the conditions under which harm occurs in schools can give students the opportunity to experience conditions in which they are not harmed at school. This is what students deserve both in terms of not experiencing harm, and in terms of opening up possibilities for education.

Summary

In this chapter, I have further addressed new possibilities for *educational* work by using abolitionist transformative justice praxis, together with educational

33 This is not a “who” in terms of identity. It is a “who” in terms of living with others.

philosophy, to flesh out possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics through a stereoscopic approach. I described how the practice of creating safety can be understood as *educational* work because it creates conditions in which a singular and irreplaceable subject and transformation can emerge, and because it is a practice that makes it possible for the subject to take up and live their subject-ness and bring something new into the world. I asserted that a focus on addressing harm can be understood as *educational* work because it attends to students' subject-ness, encourages the taking up of subject-ness, and it opens up space for becoming beyond identity categorizations. Furthermore, I suggested that transforming the conditions under which harm occurs can be understood as *educational* work because it creates the possibility to become someone beyond the socialization of the carceral order, it creates an opportunity to live a life well with others, it enables a moment where education can be lived, and it enables other modes of being in the present.

I have also drawn upon the practices of abolitionist educators to offer ideas about new possibilities for *educational* work in schools in Sweden beyond police involvement and responses to violence in schools problematized in chapters 5 and 6. Namely, through creating safety through relationships in the classroom; addressing harm through a consent-based transformative framework; and trying to address underlying power imbalances, problems, and struggles in the classroom or school. There are already a lot of commonalities between abolitionist approaches to the school and classroom and the everyday concerns of teachers and teacher educators. Creating environments where students and educators have strong relationships, where students' needs are attended to, where educators try not to harm students, and where the classroom and school can be a place where less harm occurs are concerns for all educators, not only those who would identify as abolitionist educators. Taking this *educational* work seriously could mean that we ask ourselves questions such as: In what ways could we create safety in the classroom that focuses on relations that transcend carceral logics? In what ways could we address harm that more fully acknowledges students' lived experiences? In what ways could we transform the school or classroom into a place that makes it less likely for certain kinds of harms to occur? Ultimately, imagining beyond carceral logics through an abolitionist transformative justice praxis opens up new possibilities for *educational* work beyond carceral logics.

Chapter 9 Concluding discussion

This dissertation has explored the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools and has addressed the following research questions: How can educational philosophy and abolitionism be used stereoscopically to analyze what is educationally at stake in and beyond carceral logics? What is educationally possible in a school of crime prevention and police involvement? How can imagining beyond carceral logics open up new possibilities for *educational* work? Through this exploration, I have enabled a deeper understanding of the educational possibilities in a school marked by its relation to crime and the police. In so doing, I also theorized *educational* work beyond carceral logics. In the remainder of this chapter, I summarize the main conclusions, discuss the contributions to educational research, and elaborate on the implications for practices in schools and educational philosophy. Additionally, I describe how this dissertation moves toward educational abolitionism, and finally, offer ideas for future research.

Educational work beyond carceral logics

In Part I, I laid the foundations for the dissertation's exploration and addressed the first research question. In chapter 1, I argued that current policy embodies carceral logics and current research does not problematize them as such. Following this, I suggested that if we are concerned about the educational potential of schools, we need to be attentive to the conditions under which education may or may not happen in and beyond carceral logics. To address the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools, I engaged with educational philosophy and abolitionism. In chapter 2, I further positioned the dissertation within the field of Educational Work by highlighting both the history and research within the field to draw attention to how my dissertation contributes to Educational Work in new ways through its educational-philosophical exploration. I also described previous research that addresses different aspects of the crime preventative school, police involvement, and responses to violence in schools. In chapter 3, I addressed the first research question: "How can educational

philosophy and abolitionism be used stereoscopically to analyze what is educationally at stake in and beyond carceral logics?” I explained the orientation of the dissertation in relation to discussions within critical pedagogy, educational philosophy, and abolition. It was necessary to develop these further to show justifications for engaging with the discussions within educational philosophy, while at the same time making connections between abolition, critical pedagogy, and my own work. I laid out my analytical approach of engaging with abolitionism and educational philosophy through stereoscopic optics that makes visible the possibilities for education and *educational* work. The educational philosophy provided the language to understand educational possibilities, but it was unable to provide the language to understand the educational possibilities of and beyond the *specific* conditions of carceral logics and beyond. Abolitionism provided the theoretical tools to problematize and imagine beyond carceral logics but was limited in providing language to discuss the ethical and relational aspects that make education possible. Although not without tension, due to their different focuses on freedom and openness through the relational and ethical aspects of education within educational philosophy, and a focus on justice in and beyond structures within abolitionism, educational philosophy and abolitionism work productively together through a stereoscopic approach, and I used this approach to explore educational implications of and beyond carceral logics in schools. By engaging with the relational, existential, and weak instrumental aspects of education from educational philosophy, together with the problematizations of and imagining beyond carceral logics from abolitionism, it became possible to analyze possibilities for education and *educational* work.

Part II consists of three chapters that addressed the second research question “What is educationally possible in a school of crime prevention and police involvement?” In chapter 4, I argued that the possibility for education as emancipation in a school of crime prevention is limited because students’ place within the carceral order is established as real, students are made into objects of intervention through an instrumentalization of knowledge, and inequality between teachers and students and amongst students is established. This means that practices based on the school’s crime preventative role—that is, a school *of* crime prevention, as seen in research that describes different aspects of the school in relation to crime prevention (e.g., Lunneblad, 2022; Sandahl, 2016, 2021; Vainik & Kassman, 2018; Wahlgren, 2014)—limit the possibility for the school to be a place where education as emancipation is possible. I also suggested that education could be made possible *in* the school beyond crime prevention. I proposed that *educational*

work *in* the school beyond crime prevention could be the work that encourages change and transformation by treating students as though they cannot be determined through a relation to criminal categorizations and their supposed place within the carceral order.

In chapter 5, I contended that the possibility for education as subjectification in a school of police involvement is restricted because there is not an appeal to students' subject-ness or freedom to begin, and there is a lack of plurality. This means that, when there is police involvement in schools, as seen in research (e.g., Berndtsson, 2019; Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019; Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019; Vainik & Kassman, 2018), the possibility for the school to be a place where education as subjectification is possible is constrained. I also suggested that education could be made possible *in* school beyond police involvement. I asserted that *educational* work could be the work that makes change and transformation possible in schools through the appeal to students' subject-ness and freedom beyond the threat of violence, inevitability, and inequality in police involvement.

In the final chapter of Part II, chapter 6, I asserted that responses to violence at a school of police involvement hinders the possibility for education as becoming because carceral categorizations and carceral institutions do not stage encounters that provide the conditions for students' becoming. This means that when police reports are used as a response to violence in schools, as seen in research (e.g., Lunneblad et al., 2016; Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019; Odenbring et al., 2019; Vainik & Kassman, 2018), the possibility for school to be a place where education as becoming is possible is limited. I proposed that education could be made possible in responses to violence beyond these carceral responses. I suggested that *educational* work could be responses to violence in schools that acknowledge the relations and complexities of violence so that the change and transformation that unfolds through becoming a singular and irreplaceable subject is possible.

In Part III, I answered the third research question: "How can imagining beyond carceral logics open up new possibilities for *educational* work?" In chapter 7, I explored the educational possibilities of abolitionist teaching and teaching abolition and developed what *educational* work beyond carceral logics could be. While I do not repeat all of the conceptualizations of *educational* work presented in chapter 7 again here, I suggested that *educational* work could be the practices that make another world beyond carceral logics livable in the classroom and school through assuming and verifying equality beyond the carceral order. I also offered ideas about possibilities for *educational* work in schools in Sweden beyond a school of crime prevention.

Finally, in chapter 8, I presented an argument for how abolitionist transformative justice praxis can be understood as *educational* work in the ways in which it opens up possibilities for education. Specifically, I argued that the practice of creating safety, focusing on addressing harm and violence, and transforming the conditions under which harm occurs, can be understood as *educational* work. I theorized these practices as *educational* work in the sense that they lay the conditions from which a singular and irreplaceable subjects can emerge, attend to and encourage students' subject-ness, and create encounters where the change and transformation through relationships to others can be lived in the now. I also drew upon the practices of abolitionist educators to offer ideas about possibilities for *educational* work in schools in Sweden beyond police involvement. In both chapter 7 and 8, imagining beyond carceral logics through abolitionist practices contributed to new possibilities for *educational* work through the ways in these practices enable new ways to conceive of and do *educational* work beyond carceral logics.

Contributions to research

Taken as a whole, this dissertation contributes to the field of research in Sweden that explores different aspects of the school when it is considered in relation to crime, and to the field of Educational Work. The analysis developed in this dissertation contributes new knowledge to the field of research concerned with crime, the school, and the police (e.g., Hammarén et al., 2015; Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019; Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019; Vainik & Kassman, 2018) through an analysis that does not leave carceral logics as such unaddressed or unproblematized. By highlighting how carceral logics themselves are logics of inequality and how these logics inform possibilities for education and *educational* work, this dissertation also provides an analysis that contributes to current research highlighting differences between how schools handle crime and the police according to the demographics of schools (Berndtsson, 2019; Vainik & Kassman, 2018). This dissertation further elaborates on how the tensions, complexities, ambiguity, and inequality identified in previous research (e.g., Alexius, 2020; Lunneblad et al., 2016; Odenbring et al., 2019; Wahlgren, 2014) matter in terms of possibilities for education and *educational* work.

In addition to not leaving carceral logics unaddressed or unproblematized, this dissertation proposes new possibilities for *educational* work beyond the school of crime prevention which contributes knowledge to research considering aspects of

school in relation to crime prevention (e.g., Lunneblad, 2022; Sandahl, 2016, 2021; Vainik & Kassman, 2018; Wahlgren, 2014). Through elaborating on possibilities for *educational* work beyond police involvement, this dissertation also introduces new knowledge to the current research that discusses aspects of the police in relation to schools (e.g., Berndtsson, 2019; Lunneblad et al., 2016; Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019; Odenbring et al., 2019; Vainik & Kassman, 2018). Specifically, this dissertation contributes to the literature by offering ways to think about and undertake practices in schools beyond carceral logics, something that is currently underexplored in the literature. But more than this dissertation only problematizing and imagining beyond carceral logics, this dissertation also offers an analysis that accounts for the specific *educational* implications of and beyond these logics. In this way, this dissertation contributes a specific educational analysis which is underdeveloped in current literature addressing crime prevention and police involvement in Swedish schools.

Additionally, this dissertation furthers knowledge in the field of Educational Work, in two main ways: by developing and conducting educational-philosophical inquiry into *educational* work, and by offering ideas about practices in schools in terms of what might need to be problematized and imagined beyond to further possibilities for education in schools. This dissertation contributes new knowledge in the subject of Educational Work and builds upon other dissertations that problematize and explore different practices in and around schools.

For example, in Harling's (2017) research, it is suggested that market logics are an almost unquestionable reality that places student subjects into different positions. This dissertation has elaborated on how we can understand the educational implications of when students are placed into the different positions of potential criminal, non-criminal, victim, and perpetrators. This means that not only do certain logics form student subjects into different positions (Harling, 2017), but that logics have implications for what becomes educationally possible for students in schools.

While I also focus on ethical aspects of the relation between teachers and students from which education emerges, as does Holmgren (2006), I particularly highlight how abolitionist practices offer ways to do *educational* work that is grounded in an ethical concern for students' singularity and uniqueness. My dissertation also contributes to the line of thought put forward in Bodén's (2016) dissertation, which does not take digital technologies in schools for absenteeism as neutral and asserts that the use of digital technologies in relation to school absenteeism is not only related to the control and surveillance of students but is

itself a phenomenon that produces student absences and presences. In a related way, I do not take carceral logics as neutral and my study offers a way to understand how carceral logics (which, in part, are logics of control and surveillance) make certain positions for students possible and why this matters in terms of educational possibilities.

Furthermore, in suggesting that *educational* work beyond carceral logics is to be attentive to creating situations where students are able to emerge and become beyond the given, my study also recognizes the importance of the unexpected and unpredictable as being a central aspect of work in schools (Bengtsson, 2013). Similarly, Strandler (2017) shows that teachers consider relational aspects of their work with students to be central to their practice, but that these aspects, which include risk, uncertainty, and unpredictability, do not fit well with the increased emphasis on performance in schools. My dissertation highlights how a focus on crime prevention and police involvement does not fit well with the relational work that enables education in schools.

By engaging with discussions within educational philosophy, together with abolitionism, this dissertation furthers research in the field that concerns teachers' work and practices by emphasizing that logics and practices in schools do not and cannot only concern questions of didactics, examinations, and administrative tasks. This dissertation has offered a theorization of *educational* work beyond carceral logics that enables further understandings of what it means to do *educational* work, at the same time as it has expanded what it means to do research in the field of Educational Work. This dissertation firmly positions *educational* work as rooted in an attentiveness to vulnerabilities, conflicts, disagreements, and the effects of social injustices that are part of everyday school life that inform possibilities for students' change and transformation.

Implications for practices in schools

In the most general sense, this dissertation helps us to question, pause, and perhaps challenge the taken-for-granted ways in which carceral logics show up in everyday practices in schools when schools are framed in relation to crime. This could mean engaging in practices that trouble the ways in which schools are instructed to prevent crime through seemingly taken-for-granted ideas about crime and criminal behavior. For example, the formulation offered by the report *Schools Against Crime* states that schools have an important role in “preventing future crime, that is, helping to prevent children and young people from developing criminal

behaviour’ (Swedish Government Official Report 2024:17, p. 31) and should base their practices on this role. Instead, practices in schools could be rooted in the assumption that students cannot be determined by the societal imposition of not only what is criminal, but also of how to prevent said criminality. To create possibilities for education in schools, we need to be aware of how practices in schools operate in relation to crime so that we can separate practices that follow a carceral logic of crime, which reinforces inequality, from the kinds of practices that enables education through the practicing of equality.

Furthermore, questioning, pausing and challenging the taken-for-granted ways in which carceral logics show up in everyday practices in schools could mean being sensitive to the ways in which these might entail an explicit or implicit threat of violence, and could involve engaging in practices in schools that destabilize the inevitability of the police through alternative responses to the problems they are said to address in schools. For example, instead of assuming that involving the police in school-related matters serves the purpose of showing societal trust in the police, as expressed by school professional in (Lunneblad et al., 2019), an alternative positioning could be to question what it is the police are said to solve and why it is that they are the ones who are imagined to be capable of addressing it. Rather than following practices that reinforce an unequal carceral order, practices in schools could instead strive to find ways to meet students in ways that cannot be determined by this order. To further develop possibilities for education in schools, we not only need to pause and reflect upon how police involvement matters for students, but we also need to question and be cautious about other practices in schools that might contain a threat of violence, make the police seem inevitable, and reinforce an unequal racist and capitalist order.

Additionally, practices in the school could be grounded in a cautiousness about the ways in which simplistic categorizations of victim and perpetrators have the potential to flatten students’ lived experiences with violence. Instead of basing practices in schools on a reliance upon the unstable categorizations of victims and perpetrators, for example as seen in (Alexius, 2020), these practices could focus on making transformation possible for students through responses to violence. To expand the possibilities for education in schools, we not only need to pause and reflect upon the ways in which some practices in schools rely upon carceral categorizations and carceral institutions, but we also need to question and be aware of the ways in which other practices in schools might rely upon a denial of students real lived experiences with violence and might rely upon boxing students into the specific enactment of identity categories of victims and perpetrators. While

perhaps it is not the role of educators to challenge and end carceral logics in society at large, it is within our responsibility to reflect upon the ways that our practices in classrooms, schools, and other so-called institutions of education obstruct possibilities for education.

Additionally, this dissertation opens up ways to imagine beyond carceral logics in practices in schools. This could mean further reflecting upon the ways in which practices in schools perhaps already do reach beyond carceral logics. It could also include envisioning alternative ways to create safety in schools and classrooms in ways that focus on relationships that transcend carceral logics. Some examples of these practices have been discussed in chapters 7 and 8, but I refer to a couple of them again here. They include a refusal to engage in a discourse that frames students as potential criminals and a refusal to view the criminalization of students as a solution to problems that occur in schools or as a solution to problems in society. This could consist of pushing back on some of the ways that policy and other forces that try to impose a relation to crime onto the activities of the school. It could mean trying to find ways in the classroom where students' needs can be met collectively as a class. It could be creating safety in classrooms through strong relationships that are not defined by carceral categorizations or carceral institutions, and could be about addressing harm through consent-based frameworks, and in work that tries to transform the underlying conditions that enable harm to occur in schools.

As educators, we can be inspired to imagine beyond carceral logics, as this can help us to envision new ways of being, thinking, and doing in classrooms, schools, and other institutions of education in ways that make education possible. Imagining beyond carceral logics can help us to find new ways of being in relation to students that are educational.

Implications for educational philosophy

The discussion that has been developed in this dissertation also contributes to discussions within educational philosophy. I have made visible the potential for a further exploration of abolition within the philosophy of education. That is, in drawing upon abolitionism to explore possibilities for education and *educational* work in schools, this analysis also shows how abolition can be a source of educational thinking in ways that are not present in the educational philosophy I have considered. I contend that there is an underexplored educational potential stemming from the desire to go beyond specific orders and grids. The discussions

of education as emancipation, subjectification, and becoming that I have engaged with could benefit from conceiving of education not only as something that cannot be determined by general orders and grids, but as the change and transformation that is made possible through ethical and relational practices that derive from an abolitionist desire to move beyond specific orders and grids. In this way, I suggest that abolition offers further ways to explore what Hällander (2020) describes as “the pedagogical,” which are “moments of transformation where existential and emancipatory (ethical, political and aesthetic) becomings can take place” (p. 22). The educational philosophy (e.g., Biesta, 2022; Säfström, 2021; Todd, 2023) I have drawn upon has a justifiable concern about conceptualizing education as something that can never be based in the over determination of the subject in strictly instrumental ways. But what I have shown in this dissertation is that, with abolition, it is possible to have this concern without disregarding the educational significance of structures of oppression and injustice. In this way, the educational philosophy could benefit from conceiving of education in a way that holds the space for both.

Furthermore, the discussions within educational philosophy I have drawn upon could benefit from exploring the educational significance of the abolitionist practices that extend beyond certain identity categories through the relations that defy them. This could provide further ways to conceptualize education because, by engaging with these practices in an educational-philosophical way, we could open up new ways to understand how change and transformation are made possible. Finally, a further consideration of abolitionist practices as sites of transformation in themselves could also open up more ways to understand the change and transformation that concern education.

Educational abolitionism and future research

Before suggesting ideas for future research, I want to describe how this work contributes to educational abolitionism. Cabral (2024) suggests that educational³⁴ abolitionism praxis “fundamentally shifts what is made possible through a focus on abolition and its offerings” (p. 289). Educational abolitionism is in “tension and contradistinction to educational carcerality” (p. 290) and leads to a “different set of questions, strategies, and modes of engagement that equip teachers, staff, and

³⁴ Cabral (2024) does not expand upon what is specifically meant by educational in this term and he writes more in relation to school abolition in the USA, so I am not using the term in exactly the same way as he does.

educators to be anti-carceral” (Cabral, 2024, p. 300). In agreement with Cabral’s (2024) assertion that abolition shifts what is made possible, this dissertation has shown the different ways in which abolitionism makes it possible to think differently and in ways that are anti-carceral. But, beyond the educational abolitionism that Cabral (2024) describes, this dissertation particularly contributes to educational abolitionism through taking seriously both the *educational* and the *abolitionism* in educational abolitionism. This dissertation contributes to educational abolitionism both by arguing that educational research needs to be able to account for the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics and theorizing *educational* work beyond carceral logics. Through my stereoscopic engagement, I expand on Cabral’s (2024) introduction of educational abolitionism by asking questions, engaging in an analysis, and offering conclusions that are held together by the synergy that emerges through a dedication to change and transformation present both in education and abolition.

My work offers several potent empirical directions for future research. There is an urgent need for research conducted together with teachers, teacher students, and students themselves to engage in action research that could alter praxis in schools throughout Sweden, and internationally. I have argued that practices in a school of crime prevention and police involvement hinder possibilities for education, so one point of future research could be to explore how the practices of educators and school professionals resist or challenge carceral logics in schools. This could include questions like: In what ways do practices in the school resist or challenge carceral logics? What possibilities for education emerge from these practices? Research into how students resist or challenge carceral logics could offer insights into how possibilities for education could be opened up despite carceral logics. This could include questions such as: In what ways do students resist or challenge carceral logics in schools and how can this be understood in terms of educational possibilities? This research could provide important insights into how (or if) teachers and students make education possible despite or beyond carceral logics.

Furthermore, the potential of the kind of work I have engaged with here, which brings together both critical theories and ethical educational theories, is vast and suggests questions about how we can understand the statistics, numbers, and graphs generated by quantitative research examining systemic forms of inequality between schools and the unique transformative possibilities that lie dormant in every student relation.

Additionally, given my argument that imagining beyond carceral logics can open up possibilities for education, it would be important to research the different ways in which people are imagining beyond carceral logics, whether this be teachers and school professionals or the students themselves. This could include questions such as: In what ways do teachers and students imagine beyond carceral logics in school and how can this be understood in terms of enabling possibilities for education and *educational* work? This kind of research could generate insights into the ways in which education is made possible in schools despite the current emphasis on schools being considered through a relation to crime. Finally, it is also important for policy makers in the educational field to consider this kind of work, as a pushback against the current criminalization of young people in schools and as an alternative justice-informed, but also ethically informed, path forward.

I end where this dissertation began, which is the current tendency in Sweden to frame schools in relation to crime and the need to be able to account for the educational implications of such developments. This dissertation has offered one way to understand these developments, while simultaneously imagining beyond them. Given the current situation in Sweden and elsewhere, I invite others to start from a slightly different place than the immediately given—to be attentive to the potentiality for change that comes with going beyond carceral logics. But perhaps more than this, the following question arises: What is at stake if we do not?

Svensk sammanfattning

Lägga grunden för att utforska (och föreställa sig något bortom) karcerala logiker i svenska skolor

Skolan tillskrivs ofta uppgiften att lösa samhällsproblem. Hur problemen definieras i samhället påverkar de tillvägagångssätt som används för att ta itu med problemen och villkorar också hur skolans arbete och syfte förstås. I Sverige är kriminalitet ett problem som har fått ökad uppmärksamhet under de senaste åren vilket också gjort avtryck på skolans arbete. Denna avhandling tar sig an pedagogiska implikationer av en sådan utveckling. Under de senaste åren har det kommit en rad olika rapporter och regeringsförslag som berör skolan i relation till brottslighet. I en färsk rapport från *Skolverket* betonas skolans roll i det brottsförebyggande arbetet (Skolverket, 2023). Även i andra rapporter görs kopplingar mellan skolan och brottslighet (Brå, 2024; Socialstyrelsen, 2022). I en nyligen publicerad SOU *Skolan mot brott* (SOU 2024:17) betonas ytterligare skolans roll för att både förebygga och anmäla brott. Akademisk forskning har problematiserat hur skolan alltmer ses som en viktig institution för brottsförebyggande arbete i Sverige (Sandahl, 2016, 2021; Vainik & Kassman, 2018; Wahlgren, 2014).

Även om forskning (t.ex. Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019; Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019; Odenbring et al., 2019) indikerar att det finns pedagogiska implikationer när skolan betraktas i relation till brottslighet, menar jag att analysen av de pedagogiska implikationerna i denna forskning är begränsad eftersom den inte problematiserar karcerala logiker³⁵ som sådana. Karceral logik är ett tankesätt som bygger på bestraffning och kontroll och “antyder att kriminalisering är det bästa paradigmet för att organisera mänskligt liv och lösa sociala problem” (Coyle & Nagel, 2022, s., min översättning). Även om skolans relation till brottslighet och polis kritiserats, så problematiseras inte dessa logiker som sådana. Följaktligen finns det inte heller någon möjlighet att föreställa sig något annat bortom dessa logiker.

35 Kan också kallas fängelselogik.

För att kunna redogöra för de pedagogiska implikationerna av att skolan utformas i relation till brott, måste de sätt på vilka karcerala logiker påverkar de pedagogiska möjligheterna problematiseras ytterligare.

I denna avhandling kan karceral logik förstås som de sätt att tänka som tar för givet att kriminalisering, polis och straffrätt är rimliga lösningar på samhällsproblem. Dessa logiker kan förstås som det som möjliggör en inramning av skolan genom sin relation till brott och som till följd av detta gör vissa praktiker i skolan möjliga genom att motivera och anta att en sådan inramning krävs. Det vill säga, karcerala logiker är det som gör det möjligt att placera skolans arbete inom den karcerala ordningen. Med karceral ordning menar jag en organisering av samhället genom kriminalisering, en tilltro till polisen och straffrättskipning. Eftersom den tidigare beskrivna forskningen i Sverige inte problematiserar till exempel idén om brott eller polisen som sådan, menar jag att dess frågor och slutsatser verkar inom karcerala logiker och därför inte kan redogöra för de pedagogiska implikationerna av denna logik och inte heller gå bortom logiken. Ett sätt att redogöra för dessa karcerala logiker är att problematisera dem och skapa möjligheter att föreställa sig något bortom dem genom abolitionism.

Även om abolitionistisk teori och praktik utgör en stor mångfald (Shelby, 2022), kan den "abolitionism" jag använder mig av i denna avhandling förstås som de tillvägagångssätt som problematiserar, utmanar och föreställer sig något bortom en karceral logik och dess manifestationer i samhället. Abolitionism problematiserar kriminalisering, beroendet av straffrättsliga institutioner (som polisen, det straffrättsliga systemet och fängelser) samt de föreställningar om rättvisa som utgör den karcerala ordningen (Coyle, 2018; Davis et al., 2022; Kaba & Ritchie, 2022; McDowell & Fernandez, 2018; Rodríguez, 2019). Abolitionism handlar inte bara om att problematisera den rådande karcerala ordningen, utan snarare om att gå bortom vad som är möjligt inom karcerala logiker. Abolitionism synliggör att förtryckets strukturer alltid redan är inbäddade i den karcerala ordningen, samtidigt som den erbjuder ett sätt att tänka bortom denna ordning. Jag använder mig av abolitionism för att både problematisera och föreställa mig något bortom karcerala logiker i skolan. Dock är inte en problematisering av, samt försök att föreställa sig något bortom, dessa logiker i sig en undersökning av de *pedagogiska* implikationerna av (och bortom) dessa logiker. Att utforska de *pedagogiska* implikationerna av och bortom karcerala logiker i skolan kräver en förståelse av pedagogik som fenomen. För detta vänder jag mig till pedagogisk filosofi.

I den här avhandlingen bygger jag till stor del på forskarna i fältet relationell pedagogisk filosofi Sharon Todd, Gert Biesta och Carl Anders Säfström. En betydande del av deras forskning handlar om ökad förståelse för vad som gör pedagogik just *pedagogisk*. På en allmän nivå hävdar Todd, Biesta och Säfström att för att det ska finnas pedagogik måste eleven behandlas som ett subjekt kapabelt till förändring och transformation, inte som ett objekt i behov av intervention (Biesta & Säfström, 2011; Biesta, 2022; Säfström, 2021; Todd, 2023). Jag använder mig av de normativa filosofiska argumenten om pedagogik som frigörelse (Säfström, 2010, 2011, 2021), subjektifiering (Biesta, 2010b, 2013, 2020, 2022) och tillblivelse (Todd, 2011, 2020, 2023) eftersom de tillhandahåller ett språk för att utforska pedagogiska möjligheter. Jag anser att *pedagogiskt* arbete är det arbete som gör förändring och transformation möjligt för studenter. En del av behovet av att redogöra för de pedagogiska implikationerna av karceral logik samt att gå bortom denna logik innebär därför att utforska det arbete som skulle kunna göra pedagogik möjlig i och bortom dessa logiker. I avhandlingen utgår jag både från abolitionism och diskussioner inom pedagogisk filosofi för att utforska de pedagogiska implikationerna av (och bortom) karcerala logiker i skolan.

Att interagera med både abolitionism och pedagogisk filosofi tillsammans för att synliggöra vad som har tidigare varit osynligt är inspirerat av Marianna Papastephanous (2021a, 2021b) arbete inom pedagogisk filosofi genom vilket hon utvecklat det hon kallar för en stereoskopisk metod. Ett stereoskop är "ett optiskt instrument med två okular som hjälper betraktaren att kombinera bilderna av två fotografier tagna från synvinklar en bit ifrån varandra och på så sätt få en effekt av soliditet eller djup" (Merriam-Webster, u.å., min översättning). Jag arbetar med både abolition och pedagogisk filosofi för att utforska de pedagogiska implikationerna av och bortom karcerala logiker i skolor vilka visar olika bilder av skolan från två skilda vinklar.

Syfte och forskningsfrågor

Syftet med avhandlingen är att utforska de pedagogiska implikationerna av karcerala logiker i skolor_såväl som av att gå bortom dessa logiker.

1. Hur kan pedagogisk filosofi och abolitionism aktiveras genom en stereoskopisk metod för att analysera vad som pedagogiskt står på spel i (och bortom) karcerala logiker?
2. Vad är pedagogiskt möjligt i en brottsförebyggande skola med polisiär inblandning?
3. Hur kan föreställningar bortom karcerala logiker öppna upp nya möjligheter för pedagogiskt arbete?

Denna avhandling genomförs inom Pedagogiskt Arbete³⁶ som forskningsområde och ämne på forskarnivå. Genom att inte ta pedagogiska praktiker som för givet pedagogiska bidrar jag till området Pedagogiskt Arbete med en pedagogisk-filosofisk analys genom att ägna särskild uppmärksamhet åt pedagogiska praktiker i termer av deras pedagogiska aspekter. Jag utgår från pedagogiska teorier som lyfter fram pedagogikens existentiella, svagt instrumentella³⁷ och relationella kvaliteter, på ett sätt som fokuserar vad som gör pedagogik möjlig. Denna syn på pedagogik leder till en teoretisering av pedagogik som frigörelse (Säfström, 2010, 2011, 2021), subjektifiering (Biesta, 2010b, 2013, 2020, 2022) och tillblivelse (Todd, 2011, 2020, 2023). Även om denna pedagogiska filosofi kan tillhandahålla språk och begrepp för att tänka kring pedagogiska möjligheter, redogör den till stor del för pedagogik i termer av idealiska, etiska och relationella aspekter. Den kan inte tillhandahålla ett språk som gör det möjligt att förstå de pedagogiska möjligheter som finns i och bortom de specifika villkor som gäller för karcerala logiker i skolan. Karceral logik har studerats av abolitionistiska forskare och pedagoger vilket ytterligare erbjuder sätt att förstå dessa logiker i relation till skolor (t.ex. Love, 2019; Meiners, 2013; Rodríguez, 2010; Shalaby, 2021). Forskare och lärare som arbetar med abolitionism sätter detta i direkt relation till arbetet i skolan,

³⁶ I avhandlingen står stor bokstav i Pedagogiskt Arbete för en hänvisning till fältet, disciplinen och ämnet på forskarnivå.

³⁷ Stark instrumentalism fungerar politiskt genom att positionera utbildning som ett verktyg som kombinerar nationell utbildningspolitik med ekonomiska intressen, medan svag instrumentalism “är också målmedveten i sin öppenhet för att förändra det som *är* genom att skapa förutsättningar för det oförutsägbara och oväntade att uppstå” (Todd, 2022, s. 346, kursivering i originalet, min översättning).

både genom att engagera sig i abolitionistiska praktiker i klassrummet (vilket jag definierar som abolitionistisk undervisning) och genom att undervisa om abolitionism som ett slags ämnesinnehåll. Detta hjälper oss att förstå hur den karcerala ordningen kan föreställas bortom rådande praktiker i skolan, men mindre om den pedagogiska potentialen i sådana praktiker.

Jag använder en stereoskopisk metod för att utforska karcerala logiker i skolan och hur vi kan nå bortom dem. En skola med karceral logik är en skola som präglas av brottsförebyggande åtgärder och samverkan med polis, medan en skola bortom karcerala logiker är en skola bortom brottsförebyggande åtgärder och sådana samarbeten. Genom att utforska ”bilderna” av skolan genom en stereoskopisk optik blir det möjligt att förstå möjligheter för pedagogik och pedagogiskt arbete genom den nya bild som de tillsammans skapar.

Problematisering av (och att föreställa sig bortom) karcerala logiker i skolor

I kapitel 4–6 använder jag en stereoskopisk ansats för att analysera vad som är pedagogiskt möjligt i den brottsförebyggande skolan där polisiärt engagemang är ständigt förekommande. Jag hävdar att möjligheten till pedagogik som frigörelse i den brottsförebyggande skolan är begränsad eftersom elevernas plats i den karcerala ordningen är fastställd som sann. Eleverna görs till föremål för intervention genom etablerandet av instrumentaliserad kunskap och ojämlikhet, såväl mellan lärare och elever som mellan olika elevgrupper. Jag hävdar att möjligheten till pedagogik som subjektivering i en skola med polisens inblandning är begränsad eftersom elevernas subjektivitet eller frihet inte uppmuntras att ta form, och det saknas mångfald. Jag menar vidare att reaktioner på våld i en skola där polisen är inblandad hindrar möjligheten till pedagogik som tillblivelse, eftersom karcerala kategoriseringar och karcerala institutioner inte skapar möten som lägger en grund för elevernas tillblivelse. Detta betyder dock inte att *pedagogiskt* arbete, det arbete som möjliggör förändring och transformation, inte är möjligt i en skola bortom brottsförebyggande och polisens inblandning.

I kapitel 7–8 föreställer jag mig en värld bortom karcerala logiker genom abolitionistiska praktiker för att erbjuda nya möjligheter för *pedagogiskt* arbete. Jag utforskar de pedagogiska möjligheterna med abolitionistisk undervisning och att undervisa abolitionism, tillsammans med pedagogisk filosofi, för att genom ett stereoskopiskt angreppssätt konkretisera möjligheterna till *pedagogiskt* arbete bortom karceral logik. Jag föreslår att *pedagogiskt* arbete skulle kunna vara det arbete

som möjliggör förändring och transformation genom att verka för elevernas frihet bortom den karcerala ordningen. Jag föreslår att *pedagogiskt* arbete i skolan i Sverige skulle kunna vara något annat än att basera relationer med elever på hoppet om att de inte blir kriminella och istället verka för deras frihet att existera bortom denna kategorisering; att vidta åtgärder där alla i klassen, inklusive läraren, inte definieras genom sin relation till "den kriminelle"; att skapa klassrum och skolor som går bortom kriminella klassificeringar; att förkasta idén att undervisning ska hjälpa elever att bli icke-kriminella; och att helt skilja undervisning i skolor i Sverige från idén om brottsförebyggande arbete.

Jag föreslår vidare att det *pedagogiska* arbetet i skolor i Sverige skulle kunna handla om att undervisa i ämnen som kan fungera som en inbjudan bortom den brottsförebyggande skolans karcerala ordning, som skulle kunna göra det möjligt att störa den karcerala ordning som utgör brottsförebyggande arbete och som skulle kunna undervisa om visioner av världen bortom den värld som är möjlig i den brottsförebyggande skolan. Jag beskriver hur den trygghetskapande praktiken kan förstås som *pedagogiskt* arbete eftersom den skapar förutsättningar för att ett unikt och oersättligt subjekt samt en transformation ska kunna växa fram, och eftersom det är en praktik som gör det möjligt för subjektet att omfamna och leva sitt subjektskap och tillföra något nytt till världen. Jag föreslår att ett fokus på att hantera skada kan förstås som *pedagogiskt* arbete eftersom det uppmärksammar elevernas subjektskap, uppmuntrar till att omfamna subjektskapet och öppnar upp för att bli till bortom identitetskategoriseringar. Vidare menar jag att en förändring av de förhållanden under vilka skada uppstår kan förstås som *pedagogiskt* arbete eftersom det skapar möjlighet att bli någon bortom den karcerala ordningens socialisering. Det skapar en möjlighet att leva ett bra liv tillsammans med andra. Det möjliggör ett sammanhang där pedagogik kan levas och det möjliggör andra sätt att vara i nuet.

Slutsats

Denna avhandling undersöker de pedagogiska implikationerna av karcerala logiker och vad det innebär att röra sig bortom denna logik. Jag visar hur pedagogisk filosofi och abolitionism kan användas stereoskopiskt för att analysera vad som står på spel pedagogiskt både inom och bortom karcerala logiker. Genom att interagera med de relationella, existentiella och svagt instrumentella aspekterna av pedagogik med utgångspunkt i pedagogisk filosofi, tillsammans med en problematisering av (och föreställningar bortom) karcerala logiker utifrån ett

abolitionistiskt perspektiv, blir det möjligt att analysera möjligheterna till pedagogik och *pedagogiskt* arbete. Jag argumenterar för att de pedagogiska möjligheterna i en skola som bygger på brottsförebyggande och polisengagemang är begränsade men kan möjliggöras genom *pedagogiskt* arbete. Föreställningar bortom karcerala logiker genom abolitionistiska praktiker bidrar till nya möjligheter för *pedagogiskt* arbete genom att dessa praktiker möjliggör nya sätt att bedriva *pedagogiskt* arbete bortom karcerala logiker.

Genom denna analys växer en teoribildning om *pedagogiskt* arbete bortom karcerala logiker fram. Jag menar att *pedagogiskt* arbete i skolan bortom brottsförebyggande arbete skulle kunna vara det arbete som uppmuntrar till förändring och transformation genom att behandla elever som om de inte kan definieras genom en relation till kriminella kategoriseringar och deras förmodade plats i den karcerala ordningen. *Pedagogiskt* arbete skulle kunna vara det arbete som gör förändring och transformation möjlig i skolan genom att uppmuntra till elevernas subjektskap och frihet bortom hotet om våld, oundvikligheten och ojämlikheten i polisens inblandning. *Pedagogiskt* arbete skulle därmed kunna vara svar på våld i skolan som erkänner våldets relationer och komplexitet på ett sätt som möjliggör den förändring och transformation som sker när eleven kan bli till som ett unikt och oersättligt subjekt. Abolitionistiska praktiker ses här som *pedagogiskt* arbete på så sätt att de skapar förutsättningar för att ett unikt och oersättligt subjekt ska kunna växa fram, uppmärksammar och uppmuntrar elevernas subjektskap och skapar möten där förändringen och transformationen genom relationer till andra kan bli möjliga i nuet. Slutsatserna i denna avhandling bidrar till pedagogisk forskning och har betydelse för pedagogisk filosofi, och praktiker i skolor.

Genom att vända oss till pedagogisk filosofi, och abolitionismens problematisering av rådande strukturer, bidrar denna avhandling forskning inom området Pedagogiskt Arbete (t.ex. Bengtsson, 2013; Bodén, 2016; Harling, 2017; Holmgren, 2006; Strandler, 2017) som rör lärares arbete och praxis i skolan genom att betona att logik och praxis i skolan inte enbart handlar om didaktik, prov och administrativa uppgifter. Avhandlingen erbjuder därmed en teoretisering av *pedagogiskt* arbete bortom karceral logik som öppnar upp för ytterligare förståelser av vad det innebär att utföra *pedagogiskt* arbete samtidigt som den breddar vad det innebär att bedriva forskning inom området Pedagogiskt Arbete. Avhandlingen positionerar *pedagogiskt* arbete som rotat i ett synliggörande av sårbarheter, konflikter, meningsskiljaktigheter och effekter av sociala orättvisor vilka är en del av det dagliga skollivet och som påverkar elevernas möjligheter till förändring och

transformation. Dessutom pekar avhandlingen också på implikationer för praxis i skolan.

Avhandlingen bidrar också till tidigare forskning i Sverige som behandlar olika aspekter av skolan och brottsförebyggande arbete, polisen och våld. Denna litteratur bidrar med kunskap om de sociologiska implikationerna av olika aspekter av när skolan ramar in i relation till brottslighet (t.ex. Hammarén et al., 2015; Johansson & Lunneblad, 2019; Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019; Vainik & Kassman, 2018, Wahlgren, 2014). Vidare utmanar denna avhandling karcerala logiker som sådana och skapar utrymme att föreställa sig något bortom dessa logiker på sätt som är underutvecklade i den aktuella litteraturen.

För att skapa möjligheter för pedagogik i skolan måste vi vara medvetna om hur skolans praxis fungerar i relation till brottslighet, så att vi kan skilja mellan praxis som följer en karceral logik som förstärker ojämlikhet och praxis som möjliggör pedagogik genom jämlikhetspraktik. För att främja möjligheterna till pedagogik i skolan behöver vi inte bara stanna upp och reflektera över hur polisens inblandning påverkar eleverna, utan vi måste också ifrågasätta och vara försiktiga vad gäller andra praktiker i skolan som innebär hot om våld, gör polisen oundviklig och som förstärker en ojämlik ordning. För att utvidga möjligheterna till pedagogik i skolan behöver vi inte bara stanna upp och reflektera över hur skolans praxis bygger på karcerala kategoriseringar och karcerala institutioner, utan vi måste också ifrågasätta och vara medvetna om hur annan praxis i skolan bygger på en förnekelse av elevernas verkliga erfarenheter av våld och på att eleverna placeras i specifika identitetskategorier så som offer och förövare.

Dessutom öppnar denna avhandling upp för att tänka bortom karcerala logiker i skolans praxis. Detta kan innebära att ytterligare reflektera över hur skolans kanske redan går bortom en karceral logik. Det kan också innebära att föreställa sig alternativa sätt att skapa trygghet i skolor och klassrum på ett sätt som fokuserar på relationer som överskrider en karceral logik. Som pedagoger kan vi inspireras att tänka bortom karcerala logiker, eftersom det kan hjälpa oss att föreställa oss nya sätt att vara, tänka och agera i klassrum, skolor och andra så kallade utbildningsinstitutioner på sätt som möjliggör pedagogik.

Denna avhandling bidrar till pedagogisk abolitionism genom att ta både det *pedagogiska* och det *abolitionistiska* i pedagogisk abolitionism på allvar. Denna avhandling bidrar till pedagogisk abolitionism genom att argumentera för att pedagogisk forskning måste kunna redogöra för de pedagogiska implikationerna av och bortom karcerala logiker samt teoretisera pedagogiskt arbete bortom karcerala logiker. Genom att stereoskopiskt engagera mig i pedagogisk filosofi och

abolitionism utvidgar jag Cabrals (2024) introduktion av pedagogisk abolitionism genom att ställa frågor, göra analyser och dra slutsatser som hålls samman genom den synergi som uppstår genom ett engagemang för förändring och transformation som finns både i pedagogik och abolitionism.

Slutligen finns det flera potentiella empiriska riktningar för framtida forskning som öppnar sig genom mitt arbete. Det finns ett akut behov av forskning tillsammans med lärare, lärarstudenter och eleverna själva för att bedriva aktionsforskning som kan förändra praxis i skolor i hela Sverige och internationellt. Dessutom är potentialen som öppnas upp med den typ av arbete jag har ägnat mig åt här rik. Det är ett arbete som förenar både kritiska teorier och etiska pedagogiska teorier, och som väcker ytterligare frågor om hur vi kan förstå statistik, siffror och grafer som genereras från kvantitativ forskning om systemiska former av ojämlikhet mellan skolor och de unika transformativa möjligheter som ligger slumrande i varje elevrelation.

Jag avslutar där denna avhandling började, nämligen med den nuvarande tendensen i Sverige att sätta skolan i relation till brott och behovet av att kunna redogöra för de pedagogiska implikationerna av en sådan utveckling. Denna avhandling erbjuder ett sätt att redogöra för denna utveckling, samtidigt som den föreställer sig något bortom den. Med tanke på den aktuella situationen i Sverige och på andra håll inbjuder jag andra att utgå från en annan plats än den som omedelbart ges—att vara uppmärksamma på den potential för förändring som kommer med att inte följa karcerala logiker utan gå bortom dem. Därigenom synliggörs en fråga som kanske är ännu mer central: Vad står på spel om vi inte gör det?

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Schools are often burdened with solving societal problems. The way in which these problems are defined by society influences the approaches taken to address them and informs how the work and purpose of schools is understood. In Sweden, one such problem that has received increasing attention in recent years is crime. This dissertation addresses the educational implications of such developments.

Framing schools in relation to crime is made possible through carceral logics, which are the taken-for-granted ways of thinking that criminalization, the police, and criminal justice offer solutions to societal issues. This dissertation takes its starting point in the assumption that, if we are concerned about the educational potential of schools, we need to be able to account for the educational implications of and beyond carceral logics within schools.

The overall contribution of this dissertation offers an argument for what might be educationally lost when the school is framed in relation to crime and imagines beyond the societal demands such a framing imposes. Ultimately, the arguments in this dissertation are discussed through a theorization of educational work beyond carceral logics.



Maggie Beth O'Neill has a background working in different educational contexts. Her research interests concern educational change and transformation.

