

An Analysis of Two Albertan Anti-Domestic Violence Public Service Campaigns: Governance in Austere Times

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Abstract

This article compares two anti-domestic violence campaigns created by the Edmonton Police Services and the Government of Alberta. This paper argues that both campaigns rely on and reinforce gendered and racialized schema, legitimize each institution, and simultaneously call upon you, the viewer, to address domestic violence.

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Résumé

Cet article compare deux campagnes de lutte contre la violence familiale lancées par les services de police d'Edmonton et le gouvernement de l'Alberta. Cet article fait valoir que les deux campagnes s'appuient sur un schéma fondé sur le sexe et la race et le renforcent, légitiment ces deux institutions et, font simultanément appel à vous, l'auditeur, pour lutter contre la violence familiale.

Introduction

In response to what the police called “the worst mass murder in Edmonton’s history” (Dosser 2014, n.p.), the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) re-ran its 2012 anti-domestic violence television spot. It features three consecutive close-ups on battered and bruised women’s faces, silenced by duct tape, with 911 domestic violence calls playing in the background. This 15-second commercial is part of a larger public service announcement (PSA) campaign that also includes posters with those same women’s faces, along with three more women, battered and silenced by duct tape. This imagery is strikingly similar to the 2006 campaign developed for the Government of Alberta’s (GOA) Ministry of Children Services, entitled “Speak Up.” Seven posters feature a close-up of a victim, either a woman or man, with another person’s hand firmly grasping their mouth. This poster series accompanied an award-winning commercial, *Fight Circle*. The strikingly similar visual references drew my attention: what can one learn from comparing the similar visual representations of violence in two distinct campaigns? Approaching the texts as sites in which to study the “relations of power and ideology as they appertain to cultural processes and practices in the public sphere” (Lazar 2007, 156), this article employs anti-oppression feminist critical discourse analysis to specifically investigate: (1) Who are the subjects in each campaign? (2) What do these campaigns communicate about the relationships of power between the creating organization and the viewer and between the victims, perpetrators, and the viewer?

I argue that the pictorial and word choices in both campaigns activate gendered and racialized imagery to mark the subject of domestic violence; that is, those subjected to domestic violence and those who are responsible to end domestic violence. The GOA’s posters and television commercial also add a distinct feature: they locate violence in heteronormative, ethnically homogenous family units. The victims in both campaigns are visually marginalized by structures of

racism, colonialism, sexism, and economic inequality, but the campaigns fail to interrogate these structures. This conclusion seems rather obvious, as public agency-created PSAs are unlikely to be critical of the structures that those same public entities help to maintain. However, I further argue that studying how these PSAs define domestic violence and its solutions exposes the neoliberal rationalization underpinning both the Government of Alberta's and Edmonton Police Service's approach to managing domestic violence as well as the PSAs themselves as cost-effective tools of governance. Indeed, both campaigns hold the viewer responsible for addressing domestic violence while simultaneously justifying the minimal, but important, role of the respective public institutions.

Anti-Oppression Feminist CDA, PSAs, and Neoliberal Political Rationality

To make these arguments, this article is framed by a method and theoretical commitment to an anti-oppression feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA), which aims to not only deconstruct texts, but also to connect the representational to the material (Lazar 2007, 142). Through the critique of text, anti-oppression feminist CDA highlights the intimate interrelationships between images, ideology, and socio-political contexts. Indeed, the basic assumption behind CDA is that both discourses—social practices and communications—and the social “are mutually constitutive” (Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak 2011, 370). An anti-oppression feminist CDA further explores how multiple systems of domination (racism and sexism, for example) interlock to augment depictions of oppression (Lazar 2007). Here, I take up Michelle Lazar's (2007) specific understanding of anti-oppression feminist CDA as “a political perspective on gender, concerned with demystifying the interrelationships of gender, power, and ideology in discourse” (144). Thus, this article aims to elucidate the discursive construction of gender-based violence in the two public service campaigns with strikingly similar images and connect this to ideological commitments and material consequences.

Public service advertisements and announcements (PSA), as a type of discursive text, are well suited to an exploration of these interlocking relationships. A PSA is any educational or promotional material such as television commercial, poster, or radio spot that dis-

cusses social problems assumed to concern the general population (O'Keefe and Reid 1990, 67-68). As condensed, hyper-visual forms of political communication, PSAs reduce complex social problems into tiny, impactful morsels, often relying on stereotyping and exaggeration (Hernández Orellana and Kunert 2013) to visually support institutional definitions and solutions to social problems. Scholars often consider whether PSAs are effective (for example, Wray et al. 2004); however, I eschew questions of impact in favour of examining the texts as socially situated discourses. But first, I discuss the theoretical relationship between one ideological context—neoliberalism—and PSAs as discourses.

Neoliberalism is a political rationality (Brown 2006, 693). Borrowing from Michel Foucault, Wendy Brown (2006) states that “a political rationality is a specific form of normative political reason organizing the political sphere, governance practices, and citizenship” (693). To avoid a totalizing discourse, one must understand neoliberalism as a process, as incomplete, as inconsistent. This rationality emphasizes market rationality, privatization, commodification of social reproduction, and individualization of the public space (see Brodie 2008, 148; Koshan and Wieggers 2007, 147; Brown 2006, 693). Another salient feature is “austerity thinking,” referring to a government rhetoric that emphasizes reducing debt through cutting social services as well as the inverse—justifying the slashing of social services in order to reduce the debt. Indeed, a neoliberal political rationality seeks to justify—rationalize—political actions or inactions, highlighting the importance of studying political discourses.

While PSAs are not inherently neoliberal, they are inherently tools of political rationalization and are indeed important tools of neoliberal governance. Using the term ‘governance,’ I invoke Foucault's (1979) notion that power is productive rather than simply repressive. Here, public institutions discursively produce a way of understanding social problems and social norms by defining these social ills and expectations and by specifying modes of intervention and appropriate solutions (Lemke 2001, 191). In the case of domestic violence PSAs, it tells the viewer who may be a potential victim, what victimization looks like, who causes harm, and who is responsible for addressing the problem. By invoking Foucault and defining PSAs as discourses, I invite a tension—I will discuss some of the misrepre-

sentations of domestic violence in the campaigns while also refusing to settle on “truthful” representations of domestic violence. The point is to illuminate how two public institutions represent domestic violence and how these representations relate to ideological and socio-political contexts. More specifically, this article identifies how these PSAs, grounded in neoliberal political rationality, are tools of governance, discursively upholding systems of marginalization. Yet, the campaigns under review here are not disconnected from other forms of governance. Before engaging in a close examination of the texts, I will first briefly consider the recent shifting tools of governance around domestic violence in Canada and Alberta to contextualize the PSAs under review.

Regulating Domestic Violence in Austere Times

Domestic violence is regulated on several governmental levels and this regulation occurs within the context of socio-political, ideological, and economic shifts. The federal government in Canada is largely involved in the definition of domestic violence as a crime. While the federal government added wife abuse to the *Criminal Code* in 1909 (McLean 2002, 59), marital rape was not criminalized until the federal government passed Bill C-127 in 1983. Adding marital rape to the *Criminal Code* is generally viewed positively, but Gotell (1998) reminds us that the political context surrounding the criminalization is also important. In the 1980s, the Canadian state moved towards a neoliberal governance model, eroding many welfare services (Brodie 2002, 392). The neoliberal governance model took hold in the 1980s with the federal government cutting social funding (Strikwerda 2014). In 1995, it shifted towards providing block funding to the provinces, amalgamating health care, post-secondary education, and social assistance funding into one lump payment under the *Canadian Health and Social Transfer*. The reduction in social service funds was accompanied by a discursive shift away from naming oppressive institutions to focusing on individuals as the source and solution to social problems in what Janine Brodie (2002) refers to as the individualization of social problems (392).

Spending cuts trickled down to the provinces, intensifying the ‘austerity thinking’ in Alberta. With the election of Ralph Klein in 1992 on a platform of funding cuts to social spending and a strict deficit reduction program (Barrie 2004, 266), the province began

systematically dismantling welfare programs (Strikwerda 2014) while creating the so-called “Alberta advantage”—low taxes (see McMillan and Warrack 1995, 2; Patten 2015, 262). The consequences for domestic violence shelters were dire. In a mere 18 months following Klein’s election, the GOA cut social services by \$397 million or 19%; following the cuts, 4,000 women were turned away from Albertan shelters in 1994 (Morrow, Hankivsky, and Varcoe 2004, 366-367). Recent research in other political contexts on the impact of the recession on women’s experiences of violence suggests that austerity increases some women’s vulnerability (see Spillane 2015, 151). For example, many police departments and crisis lines in the United States received increased calls following the 2008 recession (Buzawa and Buzawa 2013) or dealt with more domestic violence homicides (Weissman 2013, 235). Further research would help to confirm whether these dire consequences also occurred in the wake of Alberta’s decline in social service spending.

Some evidence suggests that incidents of domestic violence in Alberta may have increased during that time and this increase reportedly generated new domestic violence regulations. Namely, in 1993, Statistics Canada reported that Alberta had one of the highest rates of domestic abuse in Canada, prompting politicians to draft new domestic violence legislation (Tutty et al. 2005, 1). The *Protection Against Family Violence Act* (PAFVA) passed in 1999 and it introduced new measures that authorized Emergency Protective Orders that removed alleged abusers from the home in an effort to prevent further victimization (Tutty et al. 2005, 1). The *Protection Against Family Violence Act* lumped all forms of family violence into the one category. However, this act did not cover same-sex couples until the *Adult Interdependent Relationship Act* passed in 2003 (Tutty et al. 2005, 31). The *Protection Against Family Violence Act* is explicitly gender-neutral (Koshan 2009, 850), prompting feminist ire critical of the “degendering” and “deracing” of family violence in Alberta (Lambert 2006, 42).

Despite the enactment of the *Protection Against Family Violence Act*, incidents of domestic violence in Alberta remained high in the 2000s and remain high in the 2010s. As a result of continued high rates of violence, in 2004, then Premier Klein and his wife, Colleen Klein, convened a roundtable on family violence and bullying. As noted by individuals I interviewed and by Ruth

Mann (2008), the roundtable responded to both public concern about schoolyard bullying and several domestic homicides. After over 3,000 Albertans participated in discussions, either online or in-person (62), the GOA published the gender-neutral *Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying* in 2004 (henceforth 2004 Strategy), requiring action from various ministries. The Ministry of Children Services (now under the umbrella of Human Services) was tasked with raising awareness. At the time, Iris Evans was the minister in charge of Children Services and championed anti-bullying and anti-family violence programs. Deborah Hurford, the team lead on the project, collaborated with Edmonton-based creative firm Calder-Bateman to develop a comprehensive campaign that included the “Speak Up” poster series and *Fight Circle* commercial under review here. The commercial aired on Alberta television networks and the posters were plastered in various public locations throughout the province and both are now archived on the Ministry of Human Service’s website. Of note, since the release of the 2004 Strategy, shelters and anti-violence efforts have not received substantially more funding until allocations in the 2014 budget increased province-wide shelter capacity by seventy beds; at the same time, the Government of Alberta also unfunded beds and outreach positions at provincially-funded shelters (ACWS 2014, 3). What remains relevant is the 2006 PSA campaign, a direct consequence of the 2004 Strategy, is still listed on the GOA website—labelled as “Hand Over Mouth” even though Hurford told me that the title was “Speak Up”—as one of the more recent and the most acclaimed campaigns.

Edmonton Police Service’s PSA campaign, developed five years after the release of the “Speak Up” poster series and *Fight Circle* commercial, also needs to be contextualized. The commercial also aired on Edmonton-based television channels and the posters were plastered in targeted public locations, such as the LRT and billboards near busy roads, in Edmonton. Leading up to their creation, I note three relevant trends. First, police forces are focusing more on their public image and have become more media savvy, including joining social media sites and hiring media advisors (Mawby 2010, 135). For example, EPS has a YouTube Channel that opened on July 31, 2008 and active Twitter and Facebook accounts opened in August 2010. Second, in September 2010, EPS created the Domestic Offender

Crimes Section to replace the Spousal Violence Intervention Team and to respond to provincial guidelines for investigation and growing statistics of domestic violence in Edmonton (Edmonton Police Service 2014). Thus, before the 2012 campaign was developed, EPS was starting to become more media savvy and was focusing on Edmonton’s seemingly constant domestic violence problem. Third, unlike domestic violence shelters, EPS has consistently received increased funding. In fact, between 2001 and 2012, EPS’s budget had increased by 144% (Rodrigues 2012). Some of these increases were not for operating costs. For example, in 2011, when the PSA was created, the increase largely went towards annualization of pension funds and collective agreement requirements (Edmonton City Council 2010, 20-22). In the following year, plans for developing another PSA were abandoned as the police’s media advisor cited lack of funding in our interview. However, the Edmonton Police Service has received increased funds every year, which fits into a longer trajectory of the securitization of the Canadian state through increasing police capacity (Murphy 2007, 7) and the growing criminalization and policing of sexual violence cases (Bumiller 2009, 134).

Securitization and criminalization are not gender, race, or class-neutral. Rather, increased spending on policing and decreased spending on social services fits with neoliberal and neoconservative political rationalizations—that is, the focus on heterosexual families, traditional authority, and law and order (Koshan and Wiegers 2007, 147; Brodie 2002). In the United States, for example, hyper-incarceration of both domestic violence perpetrators and victims follows the logic of neoliberal “disinvestment in communities, diminishment of the welfare state, and harsh criminalization of immigration policy” (Coker and Macquoid 2015, 587). While relying on both racist and gendered logics, increased incarceration legitimizes state policing of certain communities and decreased funding for community-based anti-violence initiatives. Increased funding for police is the neoliberal and neoconservative flipside of decreased funding for anti-violence initiatives, illustrating the pervasiveness of neoliberal and neoconservative political rationalizations in Alberta.

Analyzing the Texts

One of the goals of this analysis is to identify the relationship between the representational, the ideo-

logical, and the socio-political. How each PSA defines domestic violence and its solutions exposes the neoliberal rationalization underpinning the respective institutions' approaches to managing domestic violence and how each PSA is itself a tool of governance. It is worth noting that the GOA has created more recent anti-domestic violence campaigns that are more contemporaneous with the EPS's 2012 campaign. However, I created my corpus by identifying campaigns with starkly similar imagery in the same geographic area so that my analysis could consider the relationship between representation and place. Indeed, focusing on similar visuals allows for an exploration of the nuanced relationship between these images and political rationalizations. The temporal distance between the campaigns does not negate the impact of comparing the representational discourses. Instead, focusing on seemingly similar images builds a stronger case for the longevity and the pervasiveness of neoliberal political rationalization as visually manifested in the campaigns.

I now turn my attention to an analysis of the texts themselves. The texts under review are the two anti-domestic violence campaigns (including the posters and videos) as well as interviews with those involved in their creation and dissemination. From the Government of Alberta, I interviewed Iris Evans, the former Minister of Children Services, and Deborah Hurford, the project lead. From EPS, I interviewed Scott Pattison, the lead media advisor, and Jarad Robinson, the videographer. I also interviewed two members of an umbrella organization for women's shelters called Alberta's Council for Women's Shelters in order to add context to each campaign's development: Jan Reimer, the Executive Director; and Christie Lavan, the Communications and Partnerships Advisor. To analyze the texts, I followed four steps. First, I carefully examined the posters and interviews to identify themes. After identifying five themes: gender, racialization, victimization, perpetration, and responsibility, I re-examined how the posters and interviews relate to these themes and to the socio-political and ideological context. Third, I noted any discrepancies to ensure the reading is comprehensive. Finally, I shared various iterations of the analysis at conferences and with colleagues to receive feedback on my argumentation. Engaging in anti-oppression feminist CDA is often a solitary activity; yet, the evolution of my thinking is also the consequence of engagement with

several interlocutors to whom I am grateful. What follows is the close examination of two PSAs from Alberta, offering insight into the ways in which the messaging and the manifest content are themselves tools of neoliberal governance, espousing a gendered and racialized neoliberal political rationality.

Is victimization gendered?

The GOA's two campaign materials present two different gendered pictures of domestic violence victimization. The video shows one example of domestic violence: a White man verbally assaulting, yelling at, and aggressively grabbing a White woman. The victim is depicted as resigned and scared. After two seconds of being verbally berated, she loudly whispers: "Please just don't do this here ok?" An able-bodied 30-something White woman with neatly coiffed blonde hair, she is mostly silent aside from the whisper. Seeing this commercial, one could imagine the GOA communicating that women are the sole victims of domestic violence.

However, the GOA's seven "Speak Up" posters depict more than just women. The website labels are very instructive as they list the victims portrayed: "young female," "young male," "Aboriginal female," "Métis male," "adult female," "immigrant female," and "older male." Women and men are almost evenly presented as victims, suggesting that this violence is likely unrelated to gender. This gender-neutral depiction is an effective tool of neoliberal governance as it moves the discussion away from processes (such as sexism) or structures (such as patriarchy) to individuals and families (Berns 2001, 277). Notably, there is one glaring absence in this cast: no adult man is featured. All of the men depicted are modified by positions of vulnerability: youth, Métis, and old. The absence of an unencumbered adult man hints at the fact that marginalization likely increases one's chances at experiencing family violence. Nevertheless, the GOA's posters depict gender-neutral victims while the commercial only depicts a blonde woman.

In stark contrast, both mediums for EPS's campaign depict only women. EPS also instructively labels the victims in the poster for internal categorization: "Asian," "Black," "Caucasian," and "Indian." The two other posters, another Caucasian woman and an Indigenous woman, did not come attached with labels. The video shows three of the six women in the posters: first the "Caucasian" woman, second the "Indian" woman,

and third the “Black” woman. Depicting only women ignores men who potentially experience violence as well as gender non-conforming people. In our interview, Pattison, the lead media advisor, envisioned a second stage that would “introduce more of those demographics...including a male” (Interview 2013). While stage two has been postponed indefinitely due to budget cuts, Pattison indicated that, if unlimited funding were available, EPS would have represented “everyone” (Interview 2013). Both of the campaign materials and the creators’ understanding of domestic violence illustrate a view that women are the primary victims of domestic violence; however, the planned second stage complicates the answer to the question of who is subjected to domestic violence.

Is victimization racialized?

Each campaign also conveys a message about racialization and victimhood and each campaign itself can be understood as a form of racialization. Racialization refers to the process whereby certain people are classified racially (Gilchrist 2010, 374). A clear example of racialization is found when comparing the posters. Based on the labels for the posters, the GOA assumes all of the victims of domestic violence are white unless otherwise labelled while EPS uses labels to note both whiteness and non-whiteness. Here, the GOA racializes non-White people whereas EPS racializes everyone, including the “Caucasian” woman. A closer examination of the victims reveals an even more complicated story.

Aside from the “Immigrant Woman,” all the victims featured on the GOA’s posters and in the video are white or are so brightly lit they can pass as white. The GOA’s project lead noted how budget and medium challenges—notably limited money and space, may have led the consulting firm to choose ethnically ambiguous models to reach the largest demographic possible. Stated more strongly, they cast people who could pass as White. Passing can be defined as “the movement from one identity group to another, usually from margin to mainstream” (Moriel 2005, 167) and can be a survival strategy (Ginsberg 1996). However, by Whitewashing most of the so-labelled racialized victims, the posters advance the notion that these victims have escaped racialized oppression (see Ginsberg 1996, 3). The posters and video ignore racism while reinforcing Whiteness as the norm.

Along with passing, the depiction of Indigenous victims ignores colonialism. The posters depict one “Aboriginal female” and one “Metis male.” Hurford, the GOA’s project lead, noted that including Indigenous victims was a “conscious choice” (Interview 2014). Given that Indigenous women face higher rates of domestic violence than non-Indigenous women (Scrim 2015), the GOA’s campaigns commendably portray this reality. However, depicting two of seven victims as Indigenous could also be read as an over-representation of domestic violence in that context, which obscures both the colonial context that exacerbates experiences of such violence and the prevalence of violence against Indigenous women perpetrated by non-Indigenous people (see Delaney 2002, 8). Relating this campaign to the legislative context is also telling. The *Protection Against Family Violence Act* does not have jurisdiction on reserves while the posters locate family violence in Indigenous communities. The campaign can be read as largely focusing on problems within Indigenous communities without acknowledging the colonial or racist ideologies and structures that perpetuate intra-community violence.

How the GOA’s campaign depicts diversity pales in comparison to EPS’s understanding and visible depiction of non-White women. Robinson and Pattison indicated that EPS wanted to reach as many people as possible by presenting more diverse images. What the public saw was the less messy version of the campaign. One of the original ideas was to have all the posters written in the target audiences’ language. Pattison, a White man, posed this question: “did we want to speak to them predominately in our language or their languages?” (Interview 2013). Here, Pattison identified with the English-speaking, presumably White population. This idea was scrapped because of the issues associated with identifying and excluding groups, translation accuracy, cost, and possible accusations of racism for targeting certain people. Instead, the posters depict six victims from five communities (Indian, Indigenous, White, Somali, and Asian) who experience the highest rates of domestic violence in Edmonton as indicated by police statistics and are communicated to in English. The creators espoused a rationalization for obvious diversity that closely mirrors what Rogers Brubaker (2002) terms “groupism,” which is “the tendency to take discrete... internally homogenous and externally bounded groups

as basic constituents of social life” (164). Pattison stated: “this may be the epiphany [when] they see...the image of somebody in their own culture, maybe that would resonate...rather than...your stereotypical Caucasian” (Interview 2013). In this case, the women represent supposedly tightly bound cultures. In one sense, the ethnically ambiguous models in the GOA’s campaigns avoid a reification of cultural difference by assuming that one can identify with people with dissimilar skin color. However, the EPS posters and video do a better job of illustrating non-Whiteness.

What does victimization look like?

Both campaigns diverge and have common understandings of domestic violence victimization. Common to both campaigns is the importance of silence. In the video and posters, EPS depicts victims with duct tape firmly across their mouths, clearly unable to speak for themselves. In the GOA’s poster, a firm hand is clasped across the victim’s mouth, clearly also unable to speak for themselves. Victimization, thus, is largely characterized by a silent helplessness.

The audio in EPS’s video tells a slightly different story as it includes what sounds like real 911 calls where women plead for help. At first, the screen visibly displays a close-up of a battered and bruised middle age White woman’s face with blonde hair with duct tape across her mouth. In the background, a warbled woman’s voice says, “If he finds me...” The screen cuts to another woman’s face that appears to be of Southeast Asian descent, also clearly bruised, tears welling, a cut on her nose, and duct tape over her mouth. The screen cuts to a Black woman’s face, visibly bruised and glistening with sweat, also silenced by duct tape. A woman’s voice says, “My husband’s beating me...” The screen darkens with the Black woman shutting her eyes. Juxtaposing the audio of people, some victims asking for help, and the imagery of women who are silenced by large pieces of duct tape presents a paradoxical view of silence. Yet, silence dominates the story of victimization in both the EPS and GOA campaigns.

The campaigns also diverge in understandings of victimization. The models in both the EPS’s posters and television spot are visibly battered and physically abused. The victims in the GOA’s posters show little signs of bruises or cuts. This can be read as emphasizing the ways in which abuse is not simply physical and

could include emotional, spiritual, financial, and verbal abuse. In the GOA’s video, however, the man yells and berates the woman, and aggressively grabs the visibly shaken woman’s upper arms and shakes her. Here the differences between the two campaigns are subtle. The EPS’s video and posters depict graphic physical violence while the GOA’s posters do not portray physical violence and the video depicts physical and verbal abuse. These differences are likely indicative of the purpose of each agency. The police may be called in to calm a loud argument if called by the neighbours, but treat forms of physical violence more seriously. The Government of Alberta defined family violence broadly and this is reflected in the visual representation of violence.

Who causes harm?

The question becomes: who causes harm? The EPS’s posters and video do not explicitly represent the abuser aside from one woman’s voice stating: “My husband’s beating me...” in the video. Rather than focus on perpetrators, EPS concentrates on the women experiencing abuse. This leaves the question open as to who is causing harm, allowing for one to imagine it could be husbands, boyfriends, or even wives or girlfriends. In contrast, the GOA’s posters and video depict the abuser and, consequently, present a narrow picture of domestic violence.

In the posters, one can clearly see the neoconservative emphasis on the heteronormative family as each poster’s aggressor is a faceless hand of the opposite sex. This suggests that perpetrators are almost as likely to be women as they are men. The video similarly presents a heterosexual couple with a White man causing harm. The fact that the video depicts a man harming a woman suggests that the gender-neutral stance is lightened while reinforcing the understanding that family violence occurs in nuclear, heterosexual families. The Government of Alberta’s campaign also depicts the families as coming from similar ethnic communities. The video depicts a White couple and the posters depict faces and hands with noticeably similar skin colors. Comparing the hands of all the perpetrators reveals that the hand in the poster labelled “Immigrant Woman” is disproportionately larger than the other hands. Is there an implicit message that immigrant women are silenced more than non-immigrant women or that they are uniquely oppressed? Exploring gender perse-

cution cases brought before the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, Sherene Razack (1995) argues that women's claims for asylum are most likely to succeed when they present themselves as victims of dysfunctional and exceptionally patriarchal cultures (46). In addition to the large man's hand silencing the immigrant woman, the absence of an immigrant male victim does suggest that racialized immigrant communities are more patriarchal. As such, the GOA's posters and video not only presents domestic violence exclusively within ethnically homogenous families, but it also subtly ranks oppression by depicting the immigrant woman as more oppressed.

One can compare the "Immigrant Woman" with the "Indian Woman" in the EPS campaign. The label of "Indian Woman" influenced where the posters are showcased—in a neighbourhood in Edmonton that has a large population of South Asians (Pattison, Interview 2013). Similar to reading immigrant as more distinct, the "Indian Woman" seemed to experience a special type of domestic violence. For example, "in a lot of East Indian communities, the husband and wife live in the husband's family...so the wife comes over, arranged marriage...And the mothers, the grandmother tend to be abusive" (Pattison, Interview 2013). Here, Indians are equated to immigrants just as the Government of Alberta labelled a South Asian woman as immigrant. Taking Razack's insights seriously, this label suggests that Indian or South Asian culture is inherently more abusive than "Canadian" culture. Pattison also nuances the Edmonton Police Service's understanding of domestic violence to include other family members, especially the older women in the extended immigrant family. What these comparisons suggest is that both agencies understand perpetration in complex ways that often rely on notions of the heterosexual couple, the nuclear family, and the supposedly uniquely oppressed immigrant/South Asian woman.

Who is responsible for addressing the problem?

Each campaign includes a depiction or illusion of a third party. Most obviously, the Alberta Government's television spot depicts a crowd that witnesses violence. After the video introduces the fighting couple, the screen pans wider to reveal that the fighting couple are standing in a backyard at a social barbeque. The screen cuts to a frame that focuses on a White-pass-

ing middle age woman attending to an elderly White woman. As the audio cuts to the man's voice saying "so I'm the bad guy again," the White-passing middle age woman with brown hair looks up, presumably in the direction of the man's voice, cuing the viewer that she has heard the violence. The screen cuts to different groups of partygoers. As the abuser's voice gets louder, the screen cuts to a younger White woman with red hair and, as the man says "just wait until we get home," the young woman starts chanting "Fight!" The screen cuts to a group consisting of a Black man, a White man with a brown beard, and a White-passing woman with dark hair. The Black man joins in: "Fight." As the crowd starts chanting, the screen cuts back to the middle-aged White-passing woman and the elderly woman as the middle-aged woman whispers "fight." The screen pans out to focus on the crowd voyeuristically watching the violence. The camera angle is situated as though you, the viewer, are standing on the deck with the rest of the crowd. The video progresses from you, the viewer, watching the spectators and their reactions to the violence to placing you, the viewer, in the crowd. The GOA's video ends with a man's voice saying "family violence, when we are silent, we may as well be cheering it on." There are two notes here. One, the composition of the crowd reinforces Whiteness. Two, the framing implicates you, the viewer. The phrasing suggests that you, the viewer, are part of the royal "we" implicated in the perpetuation of domestic violence due to "our" silence. Without depicting spectators, the GOA's poster and the police campaign also responsabilize you, the viewer.

This responsabilization is most evident in the instructions. The GOA video ends: "You can help." The GOA's posters address the viewer: "Speak up for those who are silenced." Similarly, the police posters suggest the viewer is also responsible: "Speak Out. We need your help." After depicting victims' eyes focused on the viewer, pleading with the viewer to help, the police video cuts to the words: "Speak out. They need your help." It then cuts to a command: "Report Domestic Violence: 9-1-1." Similarly, both the GOA's video and posters direct the viewer to a 310 number, a specific family violence help line, where the viewer/helper will need to navigate several automated voices to receive information about domestic violence. Here, the Alberta state abdicates its responsibility and encourages citizens to help and police each other. These instructions and re-

sponsibilization of the viewer most distinctly illustrate the ways in which the campaigns become tools of governance—instructing viewers to police their neighbours and clearly suggesting that you, the viewer, are responsible for stopping domestic violence. These are neoliberal political rationalizations that look to individuals to solve complex social problems while, at the same time, legitimizing the somewhat limited efforts of public institutions to address the problem. These efforts include creating the domestic violence campaigns and the 310 help line. For the police, responsibility is slightly more nuanced. They will continue to respond to “domestics” as they cannot abdicate their position as community law enforcement. While these nuances are important, there is a striking similarity in focus on the viewer as a problem-solver that is consistent with a neoliberal political rationalization.

Concluding Thoughts

Connecting these discursive tools of governance to neoliberal political rationality in Alberta highlights how these glossy promotional materials offload the responsibility of addressing domestic violence to individual audience members and simultaneously shore up the legitimacy of two public institutions. In this article, I identify how the two campaigns represented victims, perpetrators, spectators, and problem solvers. The subjects varied slightly. The Alberta Government presented both men and women as victims, although each was augmented by positions of marginalization. The police only represented women, but my interview with the creators suggested that a second campaign would have depicted men as victims. The police do not explicitly represent perpetrators aside from one police call that suggests a woman’s husband is beating her. The Government of Alberta, on the other hand, depicts heterosexual couples with similar skin colors. Importantly, both campaigns call on you, the viewer, to address domestic violence. As such, these PSAs are cost-effective governance strategies that gender, de-gender, racialize, and de-racialize those subjected to domestic violence.

If one recalls the worst mass murder in recent Edmonton history, one can understand the material implications of these discursive tools of governance. Phu Lam murdered seven people on December 28, 2014, including his wife Thuy Tien Truong. There is ample evidence to suggest that Lam’s wife told police that her

husband intended to murder them, yet no one took her seriously (Drinkwater 2015). How did the police respond after the atrocity? They condemned the violence and reran their “Speak Out” advertising campaign. As this article has argued, this campaign asks the viewer to speak up for victims. While generating public awareness about domestic violence is an important aspect to addressing domestic violence, it does not address structural and institutional failures that contribute to experiences of marginalization, including the ways in which the police and the Alberta Government failed Thuy Tien Truong. As such, this article contributes to the critical literature on domestic violence discourses. In examining institutional discourses, it reveals how neoliberal political rationalizations rely on and reinforce gendered and racialized schema and focus on individual subject-viewers as the solution to the problem.

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