Research

Sexualized Violence is a Citizenly Issue: Neoliberalism, the Affective Economy of Fear and Fighting Approaches to Sexualized Violence Prevention

Kascindra Ida Sadie Shewan is a PhD Candidate in the Department of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University, Ontario.

Abstract: This paper investigates how Western forms of citizenship, formed and informed by (neo)liberal ideologies of governance, mediate strategies for sexualized violence prevention. Focusing on one sexualized violence prevention strategy, what I term "the fighting approach," I argue that the successes and failures of sexualized violence prevention are contingent upon their commensurability with, and amenability to, the goals of broader sociopolitical systems and discourses of belonging: namely, classical liberal and neoliberal ideals of the citizen.

Keywords: affective economy of fear; citizenship; neoliberalism; sexualized violence

Sexualized violence is a citizenly[1] issue. It is a sociopolitical ill that affects, and is perpetuated by, individual citizens of a sociopolitical community. Yet, citizens' experiences of sexualized violence represent only part of the interrelation between sexualized violence and community. To be sure, sexualized violence and citizenship inform each other on an epistemological, definitional basis; their relation is foundational to conceptualizations of what these phenomena "are." As scholars have demonstrated, citizenship shapes and regulates sexual conduct (Foucault 1990; Berlant 1997; Phelan 2001; Plummer 2003). The formal and informal rules and regulations of a sociopolitical community work to produce understandings of certain sexual practices and behaviours as normative and (re)productive, beneficial to the maintenance of the nation-state, or as abnormal and deviant, potentially threatening to a community (Cossman 2007; Puar 2007; Richardson 2000).

However, just as citizenship depends upon and shapes understandings of acceptable and unacceptable sexual practices, discourses regarding sex and sexuality also inform the creation and maintenance of the sociopolitical body to which citizens belong. For example, scholars like Melissa Matthes (2000) and Tanya Horeck (2004) demonstrate how foundational myths of several modern republics rest upon stories of sexualized violence to explain or justify their formation or reformation. Relatedly, but in a more material sense, Sunera Thobani (2007) and Andrea Smith (2005) discuss how sexualized violence was and is used in Canada and the United States as a strategy of settler-colonial domination, "critical to the success of economic, cultural, and political colonization" (Smith 2005, 15). Therefore, citizenship and

sexualized violence should be understood in a relation of contingency, for the ways we understand citizenship and sexualized violence rest upon how each phenomenon regulates and is regulated by the other.

Sexualized violence is thus more than just another kind of violence threatening the body politic and the bodies that form that "politic." Although often framed as an abhorrent crime diminishing the integrity of the nation-state and the safety of its citizens, sexualized violence also aids in the symbolical and material creation of the very communities it threatens. Yet, precisely because sexualized violence does not just inform, but is also informed by citizenship, it is crucial to consider how discourses of citizenly belonging contribute to the perpetuation of sexualized violence, and, therefore, might also be an important site to consider strategies for its prevention. The postulation that "sexualized violence is a citizenly issue" is thus taken up in this paper to argue that sexualized violence is a sociopolitical problem exacerbated by the very ideals of citizenship that also purport to protect one from such instances of violence. Bearing out of this claim, the central argument of this paper is that in order to make sexualized violence no longer a possibility, there must be a consideration of how Western (read: Canadian and American) ideals of citizenship, formed and informed by ideologies of governance, mediate ways of imagining sexualized violence prevention strategies and the efficacy of such strategies.

To work through this connection between sexualized violence and citizenship, in this paper I investigate how one strategy of sexualized violence prevention, what I term "the fighting approach," (re)produces some particularly concerning aspects of neoliberal ideology and governmentality, whether or not this is intentional. Specifically, it attempts to disrupt normative understandings of who threatens others, and who is threatened by sexualized violence. Fighting approaches inadvertently mobilize the neoliberal assumption of one's fellow citizen as primarily self-interested, and thus always already threatening one's autonomy. This amenability of neoliberal ideologies and governmentality to sexualized violence prevention is especially problematic because, as I will suggest, perpetrators are already responding to a perceived threat in the form of the feminine other. In this sense, prevention strategies that aim to prevent sexualized violence through producing threats could function to exacerbate instances of sexualized violence. I thus argue that it is necessary to rethink sexualized violence prevention strategies by considering how they might be premised upon Butlerian notions of the self that modify neoliberal understandings of the citizen to include how one is constituted in and through their relations with others. Put differently, to truly prevent sexualized violence, strategies must not only critique and re-imagine current approaches, but radically rethink notions of the "citizen" and the premises that underpin "belonging" in sociopolitical communities.

A Fighting Approach

The fighting approach to sexualized violence prevention, popularized in 1960s early 1970s second-wave feminist movement, bore out of the theory that sexualized violence is caused by the gendered, racialized, and classed discourses that position certain persons as always already vulnerable to experiencing, and others as always already capable of perpetrating, sexualized violence. A reactionary phenomenon, the fighting approach responds not only to the prevalence of sexualized violence in Western sociopolitical communities, but to other sexualized violence prevention strategies understood by fighting-approach proponents, such as Sharon Marcus, to merely "persuade men not to rape" (1992, 388, emphasis original).[2] Indeed, from the fighting approach perspective, other prevention strategies, such as enforcing the importance of consent or creating stricter legislation for sexual offences, actually function to uphold rather than challenge the idea of sexualized violence as a "fact of life," problematically positioning sexualized violence as a disagreeable "choice," and always already a possibility. The fighting

approach thus posits that "women," under a system of white-supremacist, capitalist, hetero-patriarchy, "will be waiting a very long time […] for men to decide not to rape" (Marcus 1992, 400). Rather than seeking the cooperation of would-be perpetrators (mostly men) in an effort to end sexualized violence, fighting approach advocates therefore propose that persons vulnerable to sexualized violence (mostly women-identifying persons) must fight sexualized violence themselves. That is, in order to reclaim their sociocultural and embodied power towards the goal of making sexualized violence no longer a possibility, vulnerable persons must fight sexualized violence both in a literal physical and a metaphoric symbolic sense. Although competing with other prevention theories and discourses, such as consent discourse and contemporary bystander prevention theories, the fighting approach to sexualized violence continues to be taken up as a subversive, but purportedly effective, means of preventing sexualized violence.

The term "fighting approach" thus signifies a kind of anti-sexualized violence prevention strategy that takes the fear of injury, or injury itself, as a crucial factor in ending sexualized violence. However, there are important differences among the individual strategies that form the general discourse of the fighting approach. Specifically, there are two distinct but related fighting strategies that work on two interrelated but distinguishable levels.

The first of these strategies involves teaching persons vulnerable to sexualized violence self-defence techniques, such as Wen-Do, to physically fend-off would-be attackers. A unique tactic within the larger category of the fighting approach, the self-defence strategy is the only strategy that operates on the material level of sexualized violence prevention. The self-defence strategy attempts to alter the embodied relation between would-be victims and perpetrators. However, the self-defence approach is not just invested in a literal physical prevention, but also aims to modify a symbolic economy that situates men as active, aggressive, and violent, and women as passive, weak, and peacekeeping. Here, proponents of the fighting approach argue that women-identifying folks who learn self-defence also perform an ideological function by (re)situating women as aggressive/active subjects/citizens.[3] In other words, proponents of the self-defence approach believe that if would-be perpetrators knew that an attempted sexualized assault were likely to result in their own injury, persons would be less likely to engage in sexually violent acts. Significantly, then, the self-defence strategy operates on both levels of sexualized violence prevention: the material and the symbolic.

The idea of fighting sexualized violence on the symbolic or discursive level informs another strategy of sexualized violence prevention, that of cultural production. This strategy involves the production of cultural objects that portray persons vulnerable to sexualized violence as using violence towards its prevention. Rather than advocating a kind of material violence (or threat of violence) directly, the cultural production fighting approach works to disseminate what J. Halberstam terms "an imagined violence" occurring on the level of representation. Here, representations of women-identifying folks "fighting" their abusers work to counter dominant discourses and stereotypes regarding who enacts and who experiences various kinds of violence (1993, 187). In such cultural representations, potential victims are portrayed as fighting or killing those responsible for their sexualized abuse, as in a variety of "rape-revenge" films such as *I Spit on Your Grave* (2010), *Ms. 45* (1981), *Teeth* (2007), *The Woman* (2011) and *American Mary* (2012). Although not all such productions were created with the purposes of prevention, the influx[4] of representations of women-identifying folks harming their abusers function to alter the cultural imagination by creating the possibility that persons who harm women-identifying subjects could themselves be harmed. Cultural approaches to fighting sexualized violence thus work to re-write what Marcus calls the "gendered grammar of violence," where potential victims are represented as subjects to be feared rather than as fearful subjects, or subjects of violence rather than objects of violence (1996, 400).

From this summary, I recognize that these two fighting strategies might seem quite diverse, perhaps even oppositional. Most significant are the seemingly differing ideas of fighting imbued in the cultural production approach, as opposed to the idea self-defence. Specifically, considering that self-defence strategies most often aim to stop a conflict, whereas fighting aims to defeat an opponent, it is questionable as to whether the self-defence strategy can truly be called a *fighting* approach if the intention is one of conflict de-escalation, as opposed to one of injury or harm. Moreover, there are significant differences amongst self-defence prevention strategies where some approaches take up a more militaristic approach to physical training, emphasizing the inevitability of sexualized assault (McCaughey 1997, xi, 96), whereas others focus upon embodied empowerment where the possibility of assault, although prevalent, is not eminent (Rentschler 1999, 160). Further, it is doubtful that *all* cultural productions that portray "fighting women" are created with the intention of sexualized violence prevention, thus making it questionable as to why one would include it as a prevention strategy if certain cultural productions were never intended to act as such.

While the approaches and uses of "violence" in these two understandings of "fighting" are different and important to acknowledge, this paper is not focused on debating or espousing a moral or ethical rhetoric of violence from a feminist perspective (i.e. Are there ethical forms of violence from a feminist perspective? Is self-defence an ethical form of violence?).[5] Nor am I interested in rehashing debates regarding the import—or lack thereof—of author's/creator's intentions in relation to the cultural-political effects and reception of their works. Instead, I am interested in the way these phenomena, although inciting or encouraging injury of fear of injury differently, use the production of threat to induce fear as a means to alter the material realities and sociocultural imagination surrounding sexualized violence. Specifically, what I argue allows the cultural production and self-defence approaches to be considered together within a fighting approach. They similarly adhere to the idea of using the threat of injury to produce fear in an effort to end sexualized violence. To be sure, I will suggest that both approaches' analogous reliance upon the production of threat and fear results in similar problems.

Fighting Issues with Fighting Sexualized Violence

In recent years, fighting approach strategies have been increasingly mobilized to prevent sexualized violence and to acknowledge its existence as a sociopolitical ill. Canadian and American universities are increasingly offering free self-defence classes to students (Senn 2015); rape crisis centres continue to offer self-defence classes framed as a means to heal from sexualized abuse and to prevent future abuse (Toronto Rape Crisis Centre); and the rape-revenge narrative has been revitalized with the popularity of films such as *Return to Sender* (2015) and *Even Lambs Have Teeth* (2015) and television programs such as *Jessica Jones* (2015). Considering, however, the numerous critiques of fighting approaches, often made and/or recognized by fighting-approach advocates themselves, its current popularity as a sexualized violence prevention strategy is concerning. For instance, Ann Cahill, a feminist theorist that advocates the self-defence approach, acknowledges that self-defence can only ever do part of the work of changing a dualistic and toxic gendered binary that upholds the possibility of sexualized violence (2001, 207). Such a criticism arises from the acknowledgment that fighting approaches disproportionately rest the responsibility for sexualized violence prevention upon potential victims by suggesting prevention is dependent (largely) upon their actions and (re)actions (Cahill 2001, 206-7; Gavey 2009, 115; Marcus 1992, 400). Relatedly, scholars have also acknowledged that the fighting approach, although potentially addressing would-be perpetrators, does not do enough to directly acknowledge their role in perpetuating sexualized violence (Cahill 2001, 207; Gavey 2009, 114; Marcus 1992, 400). Finally, scholars such as Rachel Hall censure fighting approaches for their tendency to

articulate sexualized violence "as an impossible problem" which often deflects the question of how we might stop it from flipping "back onto individual women as vulnerable subjects" (2004, 6). For these reasons, Cahill, Marcus, Hall and Gavey assert that fighting approaches only provide short-term solutions in relation to the larger project of ending sexualized violence. However, in the absence of other strategies that challenge gendered hierarchies that cause sexualized violence in the first instance, the fighting approach figures as an important stepping-stone in the journey towards a society without sexualized violence (Cahill 2001, 207; Gavey 2009, 115; Marcus 1992, 400).

Building upon aforementioned critiques, I am interested in a specific problematic of the fighting approach: the tendency of fighting strategies to herald the productive potential of fear towards ending sexualized violence, an idea imbued in fighting-approach strategies. Proponents support these strategies partially based upon their potential ability to cause perpetrators to fear potential retaliation from would-be victims, (potentially) preventing them from committing acts of sexualized violence. For example, in her discussion of the self-defence approach, Cahill states that "self-defence training challenges the discourses of a rape culture by giving would-be rapists good reason to fear women" (2001, 204). Similarly, through the production of cultural representations of fighting sexualized violence, Marcus argues that "we can begin to imagine the female body as a subject of change, as a potential object of fear and agent of violence" (1992, 400). Part of the goals of both the self-defence and cultural production strategies of the fighting approach, then, is an affective transformation whereby the fearful "object" of sexualized violence (traditionally women-identifying folk) becomes the feared "subject" of sexualized violence prevention.

To be clear, however, my interrogation of the use of and/or threat of violence in the fighting approach does not aim to question the efficacy of the fighting approach in quantitatively reducing instances of sexualized violence.[6] Nor is it my intention to pass judgement upon individuals who engage in violence to prevent sexualized violence, or to (re)present a kind of maternal feminine/feminist ideal that ignores or denies the capacity or righteousness for women and women-identifying persons to (ever) act violently or aggressively. Rather, this critical interrogation of the fighting approach focuses upon the conceptual contradiction of using fear of injury to prevent other subjects from feeling fear and/or experiencing injury. Towards this kind of analysis, I thus posit that there is theoretical value in pursuing the question of what, exactly, enables feminist thinkers dedicated to a project of ending sexualized violence (and fear of sexualized violence) to turn to the promotion of fear through the threat of violence as a potential prevention strategy?

To answer this question, I turn now to a consideration of how broader sociopolitical factors and conditions that structure the ways in which persons relate to one another—concepts of citizenship—might render the fighting approach to sexualized violence prevention palatable in Western sociopolitical communities, and to its proponents. I suggest that to begin addressing the question of the use of fear and violence in fighting strategies, it is important to take into consideration how ideals of citizenship, and the modes of governance that mediate such ideals, influence the creation and continual mobilization of the fighting approach, despite its limitations.

Neoliberalism and the Affective Economy of Fear

A significant consideration regarding how citizenship mediates what can be conceptualized as a successful sexualized violence prevention strategy is how the popularization of fighting strategies roughly coincide with the rise of neoliberal forms of governance. Emerging in the late 1970s and early 1980s in Western sociopolitical communities, neoliberalism provides a new perspective on older liberal ideologies

of governance that stress the importance of freedom, autonomy, and limited government towards the maintenance of a successful sociopolitical community. Such liberal and neoliberal ideologies thus conceive of its ideal citizen as rational, self-interested, and, above all, autonomous. Although couched in seemingly neutral adjectives, this ideal liberal and neoliberal citizen notably caters to the white, male, straight, cis, able-bodied, middle-upper-class citizen: one who is able to enact (or at least convincingly perform) an individualistic, self-interested autonomy. Significantly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the heralded qualities of the classical liberal citizen are epitomized in the ideal of the *homo economicus*, a figure that Michel Foucault describes as a "man of exchange or a man the consumer; he [sic] is the man of enterprise and production" (2010, 147). The new approach, however, that neoliberalism brings to classical ideals of the citizen and, relatedly, the *homo economicus*, is the idea of the responsible citizen who engages in risk-averting behaviours in order to promote a kind of self-care that contributes to the greater good of the community. Neoliberalism therefore distinguishes itself from classical liberalism in extending market-rationale to all domains of life and responsibilizing the subject by, in the words of Anne-Marie Fortier, "centr[ing] on individual agency rather than structures of inequality as the primary mechanism for overcoming social problems" (2010, 19). It is this over-burdened, responsibilized, rational, and calculating figure that has come to represent the ideal neoliberal citizen.

In relation to sexualized violence prevention, it is unclear if fighting approaches appeal to or aim to produce this rational, responsibilized, neoliberal citizen that is unencumbered by various kinds of systemic oppression. Although fighting approaches might (re)produce neoliberal ideals, such as rational, calculating pre-emption or responsible risk-aversion, fighting approaches are not only attentive to identity politics, but also work from and appeal to feelings, such as anger, outrage, fear and anxiety. As such, although fighting strategies might (re)produce some neoliberal ideologies of governance, it is questionable as to whether it functions as or with neoliberal forms of governmentality that seemingly focus on management of material conditions, and the promotion / production of the "neutral" individual. Aiming to pre-emptively stop sexualized violence prior to its occurrence and create a discourse of responsibility surrounding would-be victims' role in preventing sexualized violence, I ask: Do fighting approaches work to regulate the behaviours (which undoubtedly are linked to feelings) of citizenly subjects? How can fighting approaches employ a neoliberal rationale when their theoretical basis is a fundamental challenging of systemic oppression?

In considering these questions, it is important to acknowledge that scholars working on ideas of neoliberal citizenship and governance have recently recognized that neoliberalism does not only address and produce the rational, calculating, and responsible subject, but what Engin Isin calls "the neurotic citizen." For Isin, the neurotic citizen is one whose conduct arises from and responds to fears, anxieties, and insecurities that are addressed and managed by systems of governance, rather than remedied (2004, 217). Perceptible in Isin's understanding of the affective neoliberal citizen as "neurotic," and important to the connection between fighting approaches and neoliberalism, is a specific kind of affect often targeted by neoliberal forms of governance: fear. Significantly, the role of fear in constructing and maintaining sociopolitical communities is quite well established (Ahmed 2004; Bauman 2006; Glowacka 2009). Although not necessarily disagreeing with this proposition, Sara Ahmed challenges the assumption of the role of fear in government as a technology, suggesting instead that fear functions more like an economy, not residing "positively in the sign or commodity" but rather arising as a product "of its circulation" (2004, 45). Fear, however, is not something that can necessarily be wielded to control or produce a citizenly body but is an effect of certain practices imbued in the citizenly body.

For Ahmed, what makes fear so conducive to liberal, and now neoliberal, forms of governance, is how such forms of governance establish and maintain themselves through a process of identifying potential sources of fear, better known as threats. Importantly, however, neoliberal governance does not necessarily seek to eradicate the threats that work to produce fear. Indeed, if the aim of neoliberalism was to destroy the threats that produce fear, such a project would undoubtedly work to unravel the nation-state that is dependent upon the threatening other for a binaristic conception of itself as "unique" and "good." Instead, neoliberal forms of government aim to manage threats, limiting but not erasing the perceived harm threats may cause to the community. In this sense, fear does not "create" neoliberal communities but is *an effect of* neoliberalism as an ideology of governance and form of governmentality that posits the primary relation between citizens as one based upon the threat of the citizen and non-citizen other.

From such an understanding of neoliberal governance as affective as well as rational, fighting approaches to sexualized violence prevention now seem more consistent with neoliberal ideas of belonging and forms of governmentality. Due to their calculated incitement of fear through an identification of various threats (patriarchy, racism, colonialism, capitalism, and perpetrators), followed by proposals to remedy sources of fear (specifically, sexualized violence), fighting approaches work to regulate the conduct of subjects through both rational calculation and affective management. Significantly, in working with neoliberal ideologies, fighting approaches are able to articulate a radical claim, that sexualized violence bears out of the very (oppressive) structures that maintain a community, in a language comprehensible to a broader sociopolitical community—the language of threat. Yet, despite this collusion with a neoliberal affective economy of fear, fighting strategies often prove limited. Whilst speaking the language of threat, their suggestions to alter gendered hierarchies are appropriated to reinforce the neoliberal status quo of producing self-efficient, rational, and responsible citizens, causing the strategies to operate in a way different from their feminist inceptors' intentions.

Troublingly, such a derailing of challenges to systemic forms of oppression is evident in many recent deployments of fighting strategies. In regard to the cultural fighting strategy, the initial goal of demonstrating the prevalence of sexualized violence in (and due to) a patriarchal society actually functioned to "provoke deep-seated animosities and stimulate incomprehensibility" about sexualized violence (Bumiller 2008, 16). Here, rather than challenging gendered, classed, and raced stereotypes regarding who perpetuates sexualized violence (systems of oppression that are in fact vital to the reproduction of the neoliberal citizenly body), cultural fighting strategies are re-interpreted in media representations and in anti-crime governmental campaigns. These fighting strategies locate a different origin of sexualized violence: in the behaviours of those deemed less-than-ideal citizens, namely racialized and lower-class citizens. Such transformative appropriations of fighting strategies can be perceived, for example, in media attention given to stories of sexualized violence where the perpetrator is a person of colour or where the victim is white (Moorti 2002; Projansky 2001). Moreover, cultural productions adhering to the fighting approach most often portray the heroine killing or injuring a perpetrator who struggles with mental wellness issues (*Jessica Jones* 2015) or is of a lower socioeconomic position (*I Spit on Your Grave* 2010; *Avenged* 2013).[7]

Relatedly, such a de-radicalization of fighting approaches also appears in current mobilizations of the self-defence strategy. Here, fighting sexualized violence through self-defence is appropriated to reinforce neoliberal ideals through institutionalization. Rather than mobilizing self-defence approaches to challenge a gendered grammar of violence that situates women as vulnerable and passive, self-defence strategies are reinterpreted as a neoliberal practice of self-protection. For example, the self-defence training program created and analyzed by

Charlene Y. Senn et al. to discern the efficacy of rape-prevention technique, two out of four units focussed upon helping women to assess "the risk of sexual assault," "develop problem-solving strategies to reduce perpetrator advantages" (Unit 1), and assist "women to more quickly acknowledge the danger in situation that have turned coercive" (Unit 2) (2015, 2328). Only Unit 3 provided Wen-Do self-defence training, and its relation to gendered norms were only discussed in terms of overcoming "emotional barriers to forceful physical defence against male acquaintances when the threat demands it" (2013, 7). Articulated through the neoliberal rhetoric of threat, the underlying goal of the fighting approach to alter gendered sociopolitical norms is transformed into a project that reinforces the ideal citizenly subject.

The use of a language of fear and threat characteristic of the fighting approach might disseminate a message of anti-sexualized violence on a broad scale. Fighting approaches, precisely because of their amenability to neoliberal ideologies of governance and governmentality, cannot do enough to challenge the gendered, classed, and racialized hierarchies that make sexualized violence a possibility in the first place. To be sure, the aspects of the fighting approach that challenge the ideals upholding neoliberal sociopolitical communities (for example, gender norms of active masculinity and passive femininity) are incommensurable with a broader neoliberal project that seeks to manage and control systems of domination, rather than eliminate them. In using the language of fear, threat, and crisis characteristic of neoliberal logic, fighting strategies to sexualized violence prevention are more readily appropriated by a state-project that is less interested in changing the fundamental structure of citizenship as a mode of belonging. Rather, such a project is more concerned with merely managing sexualized violence in a way that maintains current ideals and modes of belonging—one that understands the citizen as primarily autonomous, related to other citizens through a relation of threat and fear.

Threatening Citizenly Ideals

Fighting strategies not only continue to be popular but also are also effective because they arise from, and are received within, a broader sociopolitical context that positions a citizen's relation to other citizens as one primarily based upon threat. Although conceptually paradoxical in their proposal to prevent violence with violence or threats of violence, fighting strategies may then seem effective and even justifiable because of the neoliberal political climate in which they are created. A good question, however, that arises from such observations is why, exactly, do neoliberal ideologies of governance promote relations of threat?

To answer this question, one needs to return to the liberal origins of neoliberal ideology. Significantly, many neoliberal ideologies of citizenship derive from liberal ideas regarding the inherent nature of the human as presented in social contract theory. Popularized during the sixteenth to eighteenth century in Western Europe by theorists such as Hobbes, social contract theory attempts to explain why forms of rule and governance are justifiable despite political postulations that "individuals" within a body politic are "free and equal." As feminist political scholar Carole Pateman notes, many social contract theories rely upon the construction of a fictitious, pre-political "state of nature" to imagine how persons came together to form political communities (1988, 39-40). In these political thought experiments, the human-citizen is regarded as inherently self-interested, more specifically, interested in physically sustaining oneself and protecting one's autonomy. This autonomy, also termed property-in-person, is identified as that which is constantly threatened with violation through one's interaction with other self-interested beings. The function of a socio-political community, at least from the social contract perspective, is to mitigate the threat that others pose to one's autonomy by contracting together to form a society where a system of law and governance protects one's property-in-person (Pateman 1988, 55-6).[8]

Borrowing their understanding of the citizen from early liberal theories of contract, neoliberal ideologies of governance thus promote relations of threat because they are built upon a fundamental understanding in liberal theory of the human as always already threatened by other humans in respect to one's happiness, autonomy, and survival. Combined with a neoliberal impetus that renders the citizen as human capital, the foundational premise of citizenly relations as based upon threat functions to justify kinds of protectionist ideologies. Such ideologies mobilize to mitigate that which is threatening to the individual but an "individual-as-idealized-subject" rendered crucial to the maintenance of the neoliberal nation-state.

Acknowledging a tendency towards self-interest and a desire for autonomy, however, is not what causes the problematic of threat characteristic of liberal and neoliberal political communities; rather, it is the understanding of humans as primarily self-interested and autonomous that fosters a community based upon relations of threat. For feminist theorist Judith Butler, the problem with the liberal conception of the human is twofold. In the first instance, the understanding of the subject as inherently under threat impedes the possibility of that subject understanding its relation to others as anything other than threatening. As Butler explains:

> If a particular subject considers her- or himself to be by definition injured or indeed persecuted, then whatever acts of violence such a subject commits cannot register as 'doing injury,' since the subject who does them is, by definition, precluded from doing anything but suffering injury. As a result, the production of the subject on the basis of its injured status then produces a permanent ground for legitimating (and disavowing) its own violent actions. (2010, 179)

Butler's first critique of the primacy of ideas of autonomy in liberal and neoliberal conceptions of the human thus rest on the idea that positioning humans as always already under threat creates a moral ground for justifying one's own threatening or violent reactions. Second, however, Butler notes that such liberal and neoliberal conceptions of the human also fail to account for the ways in which the other does not just threaten life but helps sustain life. Better known in her work as a theory of precarity, this idea posits that there is a fundamental sociality about humans that is intimately linked to survival. This sociality helps sustain one physically but also forms the very notion of the self as subject within a given sociopolitical community (2004, 26-7).

Taken together, Butler's critiques reveal the subordinating ways in which persons within a sociopolitical community are fundamentally dependent upon each other in order to "live" (in terms of providing the material conditions necessary to keep one alive: food, water, shelter, and social supports such as rights) and to "be" (in terms of subjectification). In viewing the citizen as always already threatened by the other (fellow citizen), neoliberal doctrine works to produce a sociopolitical community where injury and harm are cyclically disseminated due to a conception of violence as an always already (threatening) possibility. Choosing to understand citizenly relations based upon the capacity for persons to lose something (their autonomy, their freedom) as opposed to gain something (a better quality of life, social support), neoliberal forms of governmentality function to produce the conditions upon which fighting approaches can be interpreted as rational and just. Thus, these forms of governmentality contribute to their continual mobilizations of fighting approaches, despite their limitations. However, it is not just the fact that neoliberalism produces the conditions upon which potentially ill-advised sexualized violence prevention strategies are conceived that such an analysis of neoliberalism reveals, but it also gestures towards how neoliberalism and its investment in producing an affective economy of fear might actually contribute to the perpetuation of sexualized violence.

In her 2009 essay, "Rethinking the Social Contract: Masochism and Masculinist Violence," feminist theorist Renée Heberle argues that, contrary to traditional understandings of sexualized violence as a result of entitlement or domination, "sexualized violence can be interpreted as a reactive response to the radical decentering of the subject of power in modernity" (2009, 125). Surveying recent scholarship that documents the rationales most commonly given by men for their sexually violent actions, Heberle posits that perpetrators are acting out their failure to uphold the tenets of masculinity, an important tenet being the "having" of one's (feminine) object of desire. Men attempting to perform an idealized masculinity who also commit acts of sexualized violence understand their acts as reactions responding to the feminine figure who threatens their subjectivity through a "masculine" performance. Such a performance signals "her" unwillingness to be "had," but she is also necessary for the constitution of the masculine self as its binary pair. Thus, for the would-be perpetrator, "the feminine threat must be punished" through sexualized violence (Heberle 2009, 143). However, this punishment does "not necessarily [bear] out of a righteous sense of dominance . . . but out of a reactive and persistent fear of self-dissolution" (Heberle 2009, 143). Although there must be some care taken here to avoid excusing sexualized violence, or positioning perpetrators as victims, Heberle's work is important for understanding the limitations of fighting strategies and as a general sociopolitical discourse that posits a conception of the human as inherently threatening. Specifically, Heberle's study demonstrates that fear and threat are not just the results of, or strategies towards, preventing sexualized violence but are also potential motivations for engaging in sexualized violence. If sexualized violence is, at least in some cases, the result of fear produced through binaristic understandings of the other, and the other as primarily threatening, it would seem that overly general attempts to prevent sexualized violence with further threats aimed to incite fears are not only conceptually but potentially quite dangerous.

From this analysis, I thus venture to argue that the resilience of a proponent's adherence to fighting strategies, despite awareness of their flaws, can be attributed to the way in which forms of governance (specifically, neoliberal forms of governance) mediate perceptions of the conditions of possibility regarding the kind and type of effective citizenly relations. Specifically, I argue that it is difficult to imagine remedies to sexualized violence that do not, in some way, work within an affective economy of fear based upon the creation of threats when one of the broadest relational structures, citizenship, is premised upon an understanding of the citizen as inherently threatened by their fellow compatriot. This is not to say, however, that fighting approach advocates should escape accountability for promoting a strategy that may function to create fear and potentially violent relations. Rather, I suggest that there needs to be consideration of how strategies for remedying sexualized violence, and the persons that create them, are always already implicated in the broader sociopolitical discourses. These discourses frame the terms upon which relations between citizens can be imagined, and by extension, how problems regarding citizenly relations can be effectively addressed. In this sense, sexualized violence should not only be theorized amongst anti-sexualized violence proponents but also discussed amongst those working on and with larger sociopolitical discourses regarding belonging. Such a broadening of the conversation regarding sexualized violence is imperative in order to consider the ways in which the very terms of citizenly belonging impinge upon strategies to promote more ethical and safer inter-citizenly relations.

Conclusion: The Possibility of Non-Violence

In conclusion, it is extremely pertinent to re-iterate that although this analysis is critical of the fighting approach, by no means do I wish to suggest that anti-sexualized violence scholars and activists should completely abandon such strategies. Writing first drafts of this paper before the 2016 American

election, I truly feel that it is perhaps more important than ever to have strategies to help persons vulnerable to sexualized violence prevent harm and/or injury. Indeed, considering the efficacy of fighting strategies for some persons and communities, it would be foolish not to take a closer look at how and why these approaches work, and work for whom. In this sense, I understand the above analysis as functioning not so much as a critique of fighting approaches but as a questioning of their long-term efficacy: How, especially in our most desperate moments, do the strategies we employ as anti-sexualized violence prevention function to (re)produce – albeit, inadvertently – the very conditions that allow sexualized violence to exist in the first instance?

Answering this question, this paper has suggested that in order to imagine different sexualized violence prevention strategies, there must be a jamming of the affective economy of fear by challenging the primacy of the notion of the autonomous, self-interested individual at the heart of neoliberal conceptions of the citizen. As a sexualized violence prevention strategy, such a call might involve continuing to recognize and address instances of sexualized violence and doing so in a way that renders other subjects as not just threats to one's autonomy but as beings that are fundamental to a sense of who one is as citizen. Such a rethinking plays an important role (but a role that one might not be immediately aware of) in fostering the conditions that contribute to one's survival specifically by creating and maintaining a robust sociopolitical community. Instead of rendering perpetrators as extraneous to sociopolitical community, as violent threats to be expelled or immobilized through the threat of violence, it is, therefore, crucial to recognize that it is their actions, and not their being, that is threatening to others, and that their violent actions are made possible through the very sociopolitical systems to which activists and scholars appeal for protection, retribution and prevention strategies. Long-term sexualized violence prevention strategies must therefore work against the urge to "fight" sexualized violence, and work on the dichotomizing subjectivities that position the citizenly other as a threatening source of fear.

Endnotes

1. I use the adjective "citizenly" here, as opposed to other words (e.g., the noun "citizenry") to gesture towards how the individual citizen of Canada and the U.S is implicated in the perpetuation of sexualized violence by virtue of living (read: working, loving, producing, (re)producing, etc.) in the sociocultural and political conditions that allow for the continuation of sexualized violence. In using an adjective that describes the issue of sexualized violence as inherently related to the citizen (i.e. sexualized violence is a citizenly issue), I attempt to complicate an understanding of sexualized violence as a problem of "the body politic" (i.e. citizenry—a noun describing a collective). To be sure, the term citizenry potentially glosses over the individual implicated in the reproduction of sexualized violence by attributing the problem of sexualized violence to "the collective" as an entity in and of itself.

2. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer who reminded me here that Marcus' understanding of "non-fighting" strategies of sexualized violence prevention as working only to "persuade men not to rape" is reminiscent of current prevention strategies, such as "Man Up," and the prevention theories of Jackson Katz. From my definition of fighting strategies, proponents of this approach would undoubtedly regard these aforementioned examples as Band-aid solutions that ultimately work to reinforce, rather than tear down, the white supremacist hetero-patriarchal ideologies that allow sexualized violence to continue.

3. It is important to note here that the stereotype of "women as passive" is an overgeneralization that is inattentive to race and class politics. As scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw argue, some women of colour—such as black women and indigenous

women—are stereotyped as aggressive and overly assertive (Crenshaw 1989, 155-6). I would also argue that poor women, and potentially women of the working class, are similarly attributed a kind of "unfeminine" aggressiveness that goes against the truism of "women as passive." Through an intersectional lens, then, the argument that self-defence lessons function to subvert gendered ideologies is perhaps only a truism for some women. Thus, another problem with theories regarding the possibilities of self-defence for preventing sexualized violence is the way they tend to gloss over the ways "women" experience gendered stereotypes alongside those of race and class.

4. For some, the discussion of the "rape-revenge" narrative might seem obscure, given the way it is commonly linked with amateur horror films. However, as film theorists Jacinda Read and Claire Henry acknowledge, rape revenge can be considered as not just a (sub)genre of horror but a kind of narrative structure that appears in a wide variety of cinematic genres (action, thriller, western, drama) and also literary cultural productions (Henry 2014, 1-2; Read 2000, 6-8). Understood in this broad sense, rape-revenge is a term that describes the narrative structure of a cultural production where sexualized violence is integral, rather than incidental, to the narrative progression of the work in question. As per the cultural examples I cite, this definition of rape-revenge encompasses a broad range of popular (i.e. mass-screened) and niche visual works.

5. For further discussion on the feminist ethics of violence, see Hutchings, 2007.

6. A recent sociological study by Senn et al. (2015) surveys the impact of self-defence classes in reducing instances of sexualized assault and attempted sexual assault. Results demonstrated a significant decrease in likelihood of experiencing sexualized violence for the self-defence group as compared to the control group. This paper does not aim to challenge such findings but rather the larger sociopolitical environment that allows or fosters an advocacy of such fighting strategies.

7. Importantly, the "villains" of fighting-approach cultural productions are rarely persons of colour. Instead, such villains—who are often white—are racialized through other signifiers (e.g., markers of low-class status, different kinds of illness).

8. Important to understanding the problem of the liberal, and now neoliberal, conception of the human-citizen, is that subjects are regarded as equal only insofar as they are endowed with the same right to contract their property-in-person. As scholars critical of the ideals imbedded in liberal social contract theory have demonstrated (Mills 1997; Nichols 2014; Pateman 1988), the notion of the self-interested, autonomous human-citizen functions to conceal how not all "property-in-person" is regarded as equally valuable in gendered, racialized, and classed discourses. Moreover, such scholars also acknowledge how contracts, although perhaps entered into "freely" in some cases, are not necessarily void of coercion based on pre-existing relations of domination. In conjunction with an idea that persons are inherently threatening to one another, it becomes perceptible how certain persons and bodies, always already disadvantaged by a system of contract based upon pre-existing gender, racial, and class hierarchies, are more readily identified as "threats" to a neoliberal community.

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