

# Eleven

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*“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways;  
the point, however, is to change it.”*

–Karl Marx, “XI” from “Theses on Feuerbach”

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

We are delighted to release the fifth volume of *Eleven: The Undergraduate Journal of Sociology*. This showcase of the extraordinary abilities of undergraduate scholars would not have been possible without the generous support of the Sociology Department of the University of California, Berkeley.

*Eleven's* fifth volume wholeheartedly engages the twin missions of the journal: to provide a venue for excellent undergraduate sociological work, and to grapple with the implications of Karl Marx's "Eleventh Thesis." This volume represents the pinnacle of both undergraduate scholarship and undergraduate effort. *Eleven* has gathered the best of Berkeley's undergraduate sociological community into a publication team that revels in every aspect of producing a high caliber scholarly journal. Likewise, our fifth volume gathers together sociological work that is as diverse as it is excellent. This volume includes outstanding scholarship from two nations, four universities, and five fields outside of sociology.

Each piece included in our fifth volume grapples with the charge of our namesake: Marx's call for scholarly work to not merely interpret the world, but change it. We begin this volume with Jessie Tougas' exploration and problematization of the narratives of childbirth pain. Tougas calls for a reorientation within the field to recognize inequality and engage with the lived realities of underprivileged women. Erin Ward inspects the interactions of the carceral, neoliberal state and nonprofit organizations designed to assist South Asian women and calls upon such organizations to alter the ways they engage with intertwined gender, race, and economic violence to promote justice. Cayla Clemens and Madison Martens engage with existing theoretical explanations for the overrepresentation of the Canadian Aboriginal population in intimate partner violence, and demand a shift in interpretation of the issue in order to change the issue itself. Finally, Riley Russell challenges existing framing theory through her analysis of the Brazilian Esculachos movement. Her work holds critical implications for movements of social change.

The authors of *Eleven's* fifth volume interpret the world through careful, methodical scholarship and use that scholarship as a launching point for change. We urge you to do the same. Read this volume critically, interpret the views of the world it reveals, and use what you learn to reshape the world. Go on, make Marx proud.

Emily Cramer  
Eleven Editor-in-Chief

# Ancient Wisdom and Modern Medicine: An Intersectional Assessment of Pain in Childbirth

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## Abstract

Reproductive rights activism has recently addressed women's right to give birth how, where, and with whom they desire, lending weight to the legitimacy and viability of unmedicated birth, homebirth, and unassisted childbirth as alternatives to "mainstream" hospital births involving medication and medical attention. Embedded in this discourse are competing perceptions of childbirth pain accompanied by different sources of empowerment. When childbirth pain is viewed as undesirable, the relief of pain through medication is seen as empowering, and thus those without access to medication are disempowered. When childbirth pain is viewed as empowering, women who do not or cannot "choose" this pain are disempowered. When childbirth pain is viewed as abnormal, empowerment is derived from a painless birthing experience, while those who experience pain are disempowered. In each case, empowerment is more readily available to privileged women than to marginalized women. However, the two latter perspectives, which are prevalent in the discourse promoting alternative childbirth, often fail to recognize this inequality. The discourse implies that women's bodies are socially and biologically equal in their birthing abilities. Therefore, alternative childbirth advocates may need to increase their awareness of how their conceptions of pain entail unequal access to empowerment, and reconsider their ideologies of birth accordingly.

## Keywords

*reproductive rights, childbirth, alternative childbirth, empowerment*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past century, the options women have for where, how, and under whose care they give birth have increased dramatically, at least for relatively privileged women. Today, middle-class American women can give birth not only at hospitals with pain medication and obstetricians, but also in their backyard hot tub "under the stars," or at a freestanding birth center with a midwife administering acupuncture, or at home without anyone else in attendance besides two sleeping children (Menelli 2005:41-44, 57-62, 69-72). During the 19th century, birthing at home with a midwife was the norm (Beckett 2005:252). The rise of hospitals, medication, and obstetrics during the 20th century created a new norm for middle-class American women, as first-wave feminists advocated successfully for "medicalized" reproductive options, including the right to use pain-relieving medication in childbirth (Beckett 2005:252-3). However, this new norm was challenged in the 1960s, then again in the 2000s, by "alternative birth" activists who called for a revival of more "natural" methods (Beckett 2005:253-4). Their demands for "alternative" reproductive options have helped re-establish unmedicated birth, homebirth, and unassisted childbirth as legitimate and viable alternatives to "mainstream" hospital births involving medication and medical attention. These "alternative" birthing methods have since gained popularity, particularly among privileged women, and have begun to re-enter the mainstream themselves.

As discourses develop about the desirability of different birthing methods, they involve competing perceptions of what pain can and should mean for laboring mothers, as well as what can and should empower them during birth. An analysis of three perspectives of childbirth pain—as undesirable, as empowering, and as abnormal—reveals that in each case, empowerment is more readily available to privileged women than to marginalized women. I also demonstrate how the two latter perspectives, which are prevalent in the discourse promoting alternative childbirth, may be less cognizant of this inequality. While the first perspective recognizes the privilege of accessing pain relief, the two latter perspectives fail to acknowledge how and why their versions of empowerment are less accessible to marginalized women.

### **PAIN AS UNDESIRABLE**

The fact that first-wave feminists fought for the right to use pain-relieving medication during labor indicates that they viewed childbirth pain as undesirable (Beckett 2005:253). According to Beckett, historical scholarship reveals that women expressed fear of childbirth pain long before birth was “relocated” from the home to the hospital (2005:253). Today, this fear may be present in marginalized women more often than in privileged women. In fact, marginalized women may even be more justified in their fear, since studies have linked several possible complications in pregnancy, labor, and delivery to various marginalized groups. For example, Guendelman et al. (2006) found that in California hospitals, Black women had a higher prevalence of complications in delivery than other ethnic groups, even after adjusting for covariates. Shiao, Andrews, and Helmreich report that in the U.S., women of color and women of low socioeconomic status were more likely to have infants with a low or very low birth weight (2005:56). Johnston-Robledo (1998) found that lower-income women reported higher levels of pain in labor even when the birth outcomes were similar to higher-income women. Dyck et al. (2002) demonstrate how Canadian Aboriginal ethnicity is an independent predictor for gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM). The World Health Organization (2014) states that maternal morbidity is more frequent among low-income women and rural women, with 99% of maternal deaths occurring in developing countries, and most of these deaths being preventable. Women who receive assisted conception, including some disabled women and queer women, may also be at greater risk for complication: Marino et al. (2014) found that infants born from assisted conception are more likely to suffer from stillbirth, low or very low birth weight, dangerously preterm birth, and neonatal death.

According to the view that sees childbirth pain as undesirable, women are empowered when they use the medical establishment to prevent or reduce this pain (Davis-Floyd 1994:1128). Likewise, women are disempowered when they cannot access pain relief, such as rural Canadian Aboriginal women without nearby hospital access, or the American underclass who cannot afford a hospital birth. Thus, as long as maternal health care is provided unequally, this view of childbirth pain conceives of a kind of empowerment that is more accessible to privileged women than to marginalized women.

### **PAIN AS EMPOWERING**

Others have conceptualized childbirth pain as empowering in itself; hence, some women may want to experience pain during labor (Davis and Davis-Floyd 1996:239). Advocates claim that many parts of a painful,

unmedicated birth are empowering: the discovery of one’s own strength, the joy of reward after suffering, the freedom of surrendering one’s will to the body, the attainment of “the true wisdom and power” of birth, the experience of orgasm during childbirth, and the completion of a rite of passage into motherhood (Beckett 2005:257–8; Gaskin 2008:xiii, 163; Malacrida and Boulton 2012:767).

One might infer that this view of childbirth pain is more egalitarian than the former, since it is generally understood that pain is easily available to all childbearing mothers. However, this kind of empowerment comes from choosing pain in labor, not having it forced upon oneself—and neither elective pain nor compulsory pain is distributed equally. Women may be subject to compulsory pain when they experience pre-existing disease, illness in pregnancy, complications during labor and delivery, and barriers to hospital access. As shown above, these complications manifest themselves disproportionately more often among marginalized women. Meanwhile, privileged women often have the opportunity to choose pain in childbirth from a relatively safe standpoint: having a “normal” pregnancy, being in good maternal health, and enjoying easy access to prenatal and emergency care. Marginalized women are less likely to be able to “choose” pain from that same standpoint, and therefore remain vulnerable to involuntary pain.

Additionally, unmedicated birth advocates often advise women suffering from complications to receive pain medication because their pain is not “normal” childbirth pain (e.g. Dick-Read 2013:134; Gaskin 2008:233). Here, not only are marginalized women denied empowerment from unmedicated birth, but their birth experiences are rendered abnormal in comparison to the “normal,” relatively safe and comfortable birth experiences of privileged women. Moreover, these advocates ignore the fact that, for women who do not have access to pain medication (such as those who are poor, rural-living, non-citizens, or living in “developing” countries), having an unmedicated birth is not a choice, but an obligation. For women who can access pain medication, the ability to reject it reveals the privileged woman’s confidence in her ability to give birth in safety and comfort (Phipps 2014:121). She has better access to prenatal and emergency care, as well as the financial liberty to acquire special equipment (e.g. birthing pools, birthing stools, TENS machines), special training (e.g. Lamaze classes, Hypnobirthing classes, Bradley Method classes), professional doulas, and ample free time for their birth partners.

Hence, if experiencing “normal,” elective childbirth pain is empowering, that empowerment is disproportionately afforded to women who are white, wealthy, heterosexual, able-bodied, urban, and citizens of

“developed” countries. While unmedicated birth activism can help change perceptions of the female body from weak to powerful, this same discourse can “be disempowering for women who are unable to achieve the ideal,” unmedicated birth (Phipps 2014:121).

### **PAIN AS ABNORMAL**

Unlike the views discussed so far (which expect pain as a part of the physiology of childbirth), there is another concept of pain that suggests it should not be expected in “normal” childbirth. In the mid-20th century, obstetrician Grantly Dick-Read famously proposed the “Fear-Tension-Pain Syndrome” in his magnum opus on natural childbirth, which has greatly influenced the alternative childbirth movement. This theory states that fear is both a source and product of pain: fear causes tension, which causes pain, which increases fear, and so on (Dick-Read 2013:20). But a laboring woman need not be afraid, he argues, since “the absence of fear means the absence of unbearable discomfort” (Dick-Read 2013:130). According to him, most women would be able to eliminate pain from their labors if only they and their attendants were adequately educated and prepared for fearless childbirth (Dick-Read 2013:133, 148–9).

This perception of pain leads women to prepare birth plans that focus on fear prevention. Homebirth advocates point to the isolated hospital room—with its sterile, inhuman technological equipment—as a justifiable source of fear in laboring women (Beckett 2005:264). In contrast, the intimacy, comfort and safety of the home have the potential to eliminate fear and thus pain as well. Ina May Gaskin (2008:152), a prominent American midwife openly inspired by Dick-Read, advocates for homebirth as a safe and less painful alternative to hospital birth, particularly in the U.S.

However, a closer look at the idealized home in homebirth advocacy reveals markers of privilege: it is big, clean, quiet and safe—a refuge from the harshness of the outside world, but comfortably close to the hospital should an emergency arise. It is easy to see how some women could approach birth fearlessly in these kinds of homes. Yet homes that are impoverished, rural, temporary, or abusive may be sites of fear in the context of bearing children, thus preventing homebirth from being an empowering choice. For less privileged women, homebirth is obligatory for a variety of reasons, including insufficient or overburdened hospitals, expensive or unavailable transportation, and costly medical fees. Social circumstances can likewise prohibit a positive homebirth experience; for example, “home might be an especially fraught term for a teenage unwed mother trying to hide her pregnancy from her family by delivering in the bathroom” (Michie 1998:264).

In countries where most women give birth at home, activists often petition for more medical intervention to reduce the high mortality rates that are often the result of medically preventable complications (Phipps 2014:122, 129; World Health Organization 2014). For women marginalized by various systems of oppression, choosing a homebirth over a hospital birth is neither a privilege they have nor a choice they can afford to make.

One of the most radical expressions of the alternative birth movement is unassisted childbirth (also called “do-it-yourself birth” or “freebirth”), which is distinguished by its purposeful lack of medical attendants, including certified midwives (Hickman 2010:1652). For these women, avoiding medication, obstetricians and hospitals is not enough to eliminate fear; they must also remove anyone who may subject them to procedures they do not want, or who may manipulate them into agreeing with unnecessary procedures (Bonnette, Broom, and Homer 2011; Dahlen, Jackson, and Stevens 2011; Hickman 2010; Lynch 2007; Vogel 2011). They trust in their bodies’ abilities to safely deliver a baby and they do not trust medical attendants to respect their wishes (Hickman 2010:1655–6; Lynch 2007:22). In short, the fear of losing control motivates them to plan for unassisted childbirth, while the autonomy experienced in such births empowers them (Bonnette et al. 2011; Hickman 2010:1656).

The privilege involved in the unassisted childbirth movement is perhaps even more obvious than the other approaches to birth discussed above. In order to meaningfully reject a physician’s or midwife’s attendance at homebirths, women must first have access to this option—this is simply not a reality for many women since most countries lack a publicly-funded homebirth program. Furthermore, the notion that the lack of medical attention in childbirth would eliminate rather than elicit fear largely favours the ultra-healthy, ultra-safe body. For poor women, racialized women, and others faced with higher perinatal complications and mortality rates, the fear of attempting delivery without medical attention may understandably outweigh the fear of unnecessary obstetric intervention. Even those who plan for unassisted childbirth have expressed that if they developed any doubt about the safety of their baby or themselves, they would immediately seek medical attention (Lynch 2007:23). But to be able to begin making birth plans without doubting the safety of the upcoming birth process is a privilege in itself. Therefore, the ability to choose unassisted childbirth—and face it fearlessly—is chiefly limited to privileged women.

This analysis of homebirth and unassisted childbirth demonstrates how the capacity of using such methods to eliminate fear (and thus pain) is not distributed equally among women. When advocates claim that these

potentially painless childbirth methods are actually natural and normal in “savage” societies (Gaskin 2008:153; Phipps 2014:121), they imply that these experiences are easy to reproduce; however, the factors required in these idealized births are less likely to align themselves sufficiently for marginalized women. Therefore, privileged women are more likely than marginalized women to be beneficiaries of the empowerment that comes from a fearless, painless labor in the contexts of homebirth and unassisted childbirth.

### **AWARENESS OF INEQUALITY**

While these three views of childbirth pain differ in what they perceive as promoters and preventers of the empowerment of childbearing women, none offers empowerment equally to all childbearing women—the ability to go through chosen, idealized birth experiences favors the privileged. However, awareness of this inequality differs among the competing discourses.

According to the view of pain as undesirable, empowerment comes from the use of medication to eliminate pain from childbirth. When first-wave feminists were petitioning for the right to use pain-relieving medication during labor, they were aware of the privilege involved in medication use; this is precisely why they fought to transform that privilege into a right (Beckett 2005). Because this right is still unattainable for many women, present-day activists continue to fight for equalized access to pain relief.

Meanwhile, the views of pain as empowering and pain as abnormal are simultaneously informed by the “alternative childbirth” discourse that governs the unmedicated birth, homebirth, and unassisted childbirth movements. This discourse frames these birth methods as alternative to the alleged “technocratic model” (Davis-Floyd 1994) of contemporary industrialized societies, yet in alignment with the traditional methods of societies “uncorrupted by scientific culture” (Phipps 2014:121). Moreover, these discourses appeal to the birthing abilities of primates and other animals to demonstrate that it is civilization, not biology, that inhibits women’s capacity to cope with childbirth (Gaskin 2008:142, 245). Indeed, women are told that childbirth can be successful without medication, intervention, or hospitalization because of the “ancient wisdom” of their bodies (Gaskin 2008:243). Likewise, women who plan for unassisted homebirths can “trust the same intelligence that knows how to grow the baby from an egg and a sperm into a human being also knows how to complete the process” (Vogel 2011).

These combined beliefs work to portray women’s bodies as biologically

equal in their birthing abilities, while they attribute medical interventions to a lack of faith in women’s reproductive systems (Gaskin 2008:141). This essentializes women’s bodies by erasing the myriad ways in which women’s birthing processes and outcomes differ due to biological or social factors, rather than due to differences in medical treatment. For childbearing women living on the margins, the simple advice to stay home, reject medicalization, and trust in one’s body may not help foster an empowering birth when a host of other factors—which are taken for granted in the privileged woman’s life—are unsupportive. Therefore, if alternative childbirth advocates wish to offer equal access to empowerment in childbirth, they may need to re-evaluate their opinions and discourse on childbirth pain.

### **CONCLUSION**

Women have been demanding more reproductive options for at least a century. Recently, the alternative childbirth movement has shifted the focus from equalized access to medical care to decreased intervention from the medical establishment. These advocates’ ideologies of birth often conceive of childbirth pain as either empowering or abnormal, thus remaining consistent with the goal of an empowering, unmedicated homebirth. This contrasts strikingly with first-wave feminists, who saw childbirth pain as undesirable and thus advocated for the right to pain relief in labor. Contemporary activists who hold this view continue to seek increased access to medical care, which they consider a source of empowerment, for all childbearing women. As I have shown, all of these views of childbirth pain involve a kind of empowerment that is more readily available to privileged women than to marginalized women. However, advocates of the alternative childbirth movement may be less aware of the inequality embedded in their views of childbirth pain, and thus should reconsider those aspects of their ideologies of birth.

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# South Asian Women's Organizations: Contesting the Carceral State and Striving for Self-Sufficiency

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## Abstract

Drawing on research of South Asian women's non-profit organizations in the contemporary United States, this essay situates the work of organizations to respond to domestic violence in the lives of South Asian women within its broader economic and political context. Specifically, it asks how the emergence and command of neoliberal governance has shaped the work to assist and advocate on behalf of South Asian women who have suffered experiences of domestic violence in the United States. In what ways is this work implicated in the neoliberal project and in what ways does it challenge it? This paper finds that though South Asian women's organizations contest the neoliberal paradigm of criminal justice as their solution to the violence their clients face, emphasis upon transforming their clients into primary wage earners reveals an important role these organizations play in maintaining neoliberal ideals of self-reliance.

## Keywords

*south Asian women's organizations, domestic violence, anti-violence, neoliberalism*

## INTRODUCTION

On my first day of research at a South Asian women's organization (SAWO), I was handed a thick client folder that contained photocopies of legal documents for immigration and divorce cases, a domestic violence police incident report, a receipt for the reimbursement of an air-conditioning unit, and an application for public housing. I did not realize it at the time, but this client's folder painted a picture of the wide range of challenges South Asian women in situations of domestic violence face when they approach SAWOs for assistance—establishing citizenship, navigating an unfamiliar criminal justice system, and surviving with very few financial resources. In retrospect, this was probably the reason this folder was given to me in the first place.

The documents in this folder also touch on what I will argue in this paper are the primary modes of recourse made available through SAWOs to South Asian women in situations of domestic violence in the contemporary US. This is the question this paper takes up, asking what are the primary modes of recourse through which South Asian women's organizations assist women in situations of domestic violence, and how these modes are structured by the state. I situate their work within the context of neoliberalism, which Lisa Duggan (2000) summarizes as the "new vision of national and world order, a vision of competition, inequality, market 'discipline,' public austerity, and 'law and order'" that emerged in the 1970s.

Anti-violence scholars and activists have focused on the neoliberal state as a carceral state—a state which has intensified its law and order efforts such that it depends on law-enforcement to respond to domestic violence. These scholars argue that increased criminalization of domestic violence has not yielded fewer instances of domestic violence but more state violence, particularly for women and communities of color (Richie 2012; INCITE 2006; Smith 2005). Scholars of neoliberalism more broadly observe that neoliberalism requires state subjects to become entrepreneurial managers of their own lives or 'leaves them to die' (Rose 1992; Brown 2005). This paper argues that SAWOs play an important role in this particular function of neoliberalism, finding that a major method by which they assist South Asian women in situations of domestic violence is to help them to become self-sufficient. The role of SAWOs in the neoliberal shift from state welfare to capital gain, then, is transforming abused South Asian immigrant women from state dependents into self-sufficient capital earners. This role has gone unaddressed not only by organizations, but also in prevalent scholarly and activist conversations about the impacts of neoliberalism on anti-violence work. Such a discussion, then, is a critical intervention this paper offers.

In the following sections, I will show how the work of South Asian women's organizations is mediated by its historical relationship to neoliberalism. I first give a brief background on SAWOs in the US. Next, I review the scholarly literature on neoliberalism, outlining the major paradigms of neoliberalism addressed by scholars and specifying their implications for anti-violence work. I then briefly summarize the methods used to research SAWOs, and organize the findings that came out of this research along the lines of social inquiry addressed in my review of the literature. Locating my observations within this context, I find that though SAWOs contest the neoliberal paradigm of criminal justice as their solution to the violence their clients face, they embrace the neoliberal valorization of the market to make state subjects responsible for themselves.

## BACKGROUND

### *South Asian Women's Organizations in the US*

There are currently close to thirty South Asian women's organizations in the US, with one in nearly every metropolis. Margaret Abraham (2000) was the first to use the abbreviation SAWO to refer to the South Asian women's organizations that exist in the US to address domestic violence in South Asian communities, and the first to comprehensively study them. Abraham's explanation for the emergence of SAWOs in the US is two-fold—(1) they filled a gap in the landscape of domestic violence organizations wanting for culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services for South Asian immigrant women, and (2) they broke a silence within South Asian communities in the US about the problem of domestic violence. The founding SAWOs were created for South Asian women by South Asian women, with the understanding that women are most at risk.

Today, South Asian women's organizations continue to serve women who are from or who trace their heritage to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the South Asian Diaspora. They vary in size and capacity, but many work actively to inform, engage, and mobilize community support to eradicate domestic violence in addition to offering a range of culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services. These services typically include safety planning, referrals and connections to legal resources and public benefits, translation assistance and advocacy in court and at public benefits agencies. Many SAWOs also offer professional development services, such as ESL classes, computer and financial literacy courses, resume writing assistance, and referrals to job placement programs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Neoliberalism and the Anti-Violence Movement*

"Neoliberalism" is a term used by contemporary scholars to describe the political and economic landscape of the last four decades and the variety of related changes that have occurred during this time. These changes can be grouped into three main schools of thought whose focus range from the upward redistribution of resources from the poor to the economic elite, to the hyper-incarceration of the poor and people of color, and the embodiment of new market rationalities (Bernstein and Jakobsen 2012). Anti-violence scholars have interrogated the landscape of neoliberalism to describe the important implications these changes have had for the feminist movement against domestic and sexual violence. In the following paragraphs I outline these three main theoretical approaches to neoliberalism, specifying the implications of each for anti-violence work as documented by specialists on the movement.

Marxist scholars such as David Harvey (2005) have focused on neoliberalism as a project of capitalist profit that shifts financial resources from the poor to the economic elite. These scholars associate this upward redistribution of wealth with policy imperatives—market deregulation, property and industry privatization, and dismantling of the social safety net—that took hold during the Reagan administration. As commentators such as Linda Gordon (2012) have noted, the dismantling of the social safety net has had a gendered effect to the detriment of poor women, women of color, and immigrant women who disproportionately make up the populations supported by social welfare. By abandoning its responsibility for social service provision, the state has in effect contracted it out to the private sector, with non-profit organizations emerging and proliferating to take on unmet needs for human support (Grewal 2005; INCITE! 2007).

Anti-violence activists have also criticized this system of social service delivery. In a prominent example, it is described in an anthology of essays by over 25 scholars and activists as "the Non-Profit Industrial Complex" (NPIC), which Dylan Rodríguez defines as "a set of symbiotic relationships that link political and financial technologies of state and owning class control with surveillance over public political ideology, including and especially emergent progressive and leftist social movements" (INCITE! 2007). Like Rodríguez, contributors to the this anthology argue that the NPIC functions as an "institutionalization of a relation of dominance" that actually reinstates the social injustices that non-profit organizations seek to manage and undo.

Similarly, emerging feminist analyses of anti-violence work have questioned its fundamental relationship to the state. Charting the history

of the feminist campaign against sexual violence from its grassroots origins to its institutional and professionalized character of today, Kristin Bumiller (2009) shows how the neoliberal state co-opted the anti-violence movement. Concerns about the development of the movement within the neoliberal state range from the use of non-profit organizations as a proxy for the state (Durazo 2009) to the focus on professionalization and service-provision that diverts attention from a socially transformative vision. Kivel (2009) brings these critiques together, seeing the increased focus on professionalization and social-service provision as a direct result of increased state and federal funding. Situating SAWOs in the landscape of neoliberal policies in her own work, Munshi (2013) examines the impact of funding and professionalization on SAWOs, arguing that the NPIC has led to specialization and expertise that isolates domestic violence from a more rounded understanding of gendered violence.

Another outgrowth of neoliberalism under consideration, which Rodríguez and Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007) argue is corollary to the non-profit industrial complex, is the prison-industrial complex. Known in literature by many names, including “American gulag” (Gilmore 2007), “prison nation” (Richie 2012), “mass incarceration” (Garland 2001), “the New Jim Crow” (Alexander 2010), and “carceral archipelago” (Foucault 1975), the prison industrial complex is of particular interest to scholars whose work theorizes neoliberalism as a new mode of governance. This line of thought understands the incredible expansion of the contemporary US prison system and attendant surge in incarceration that primarily affects the poor (Wacquant 2009; Richie 2012) and people of color (Gilmore 2007; Alexander 2010; Richie 2012) as a contemporary form of economic regulation and racial domination.

Scholars focusing on anti-violence work have traced the development of the anti-violence movement within an increasingly carceral neoliberal US state (see Richie 2012 for a prominent example). The anti-violence movement emerged in the late 1960s as a grassroots campaign that made the experiences of sexual assault and battering of women by men, which had previously been personal, public. Women began to speak out about their experiences with violence and the movement recast these experiences as instances of a broader political and social problem. But as awareness of the problem of violence against women heightened, so did indignation at the inadequacy of the state and its institutions to address the problem, and the anti-violence movement began to call for state intervention. These calls were met in 1994 with the passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

Though hailed in mainstream feminism as the greatest achievement of the anti-violence movement, critics have considered VAWA a harbinger of the solidified and problematic relationship between anti-violence work and the carceral state (Richie 2012; Munshi 2013). These detractors argue that it caused anti-violence organizations to rely on a criminal liberal-legal approach in assisting women in situations of domestic violence (the government funding provided by VAWA went in large part toward increasing law enforcement and prosecution efforts and was allocated through the Department of Justice, and as Munshi (2013) notes, the legislation was part of the Violent Crime Control and Enforcement Act that funded the expansion of prison construction and added a mandate for life imprisonment after three federal violent offenses).

Anti-violence scholars like Munshi raise concerns about relying on the criminal justice system to address domestic violence, arguing that it has had particularly harmful effects for women of color and their communities (Richie 2012; Smith 2005). INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence formed out of this understanding and released the statement “Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex” in 2001, expressing dissent within the anti-violence movement about the criminalization of domestic violence. Published in conjunction with the prison abolitionist organization, Critical Resistance, this statement insists that the criminal justice approach has not decreased the instance of sexual assault or domestic violence, but instead exposes women who are marginalized by race, sexuality, and socioeconomic and immigration status to new forms of institutional violence. INCITE’s 2006 anthology, *Color of Violence*, puts these women at the center of their analyses to demand a response that addresses the violence they have experienced in all forms, including institutional, and suggests community-based responses as an alternative.

Munshi (2013) takes up this criticism of the carceral state, addressing the particular concerns South Asian immigrant women have about using the criminal justice system as recourse to their situations of domestic violence, all related to forms of institutional violence that include the threat of deportation, institutionalized racism, and anti-Muslim sentiment and surveillance. She argues that SAWO advocates engage in a strategy she calls “flexible ambivalence,” whereby they express concern and hesitation about relying on the criminal justice system to assist South Asian immigrant women for the reasons stated above, and mitigate this concern by framing legal and criminal response as a matter of “choice.” Munshi sees this notion of choice as ignorant of the predominance of criminal and legal recourse that surrounds them and makes up the carceral state.

The final school of thought on neoliberalism considers it a project in which individuals come to embody and subjectively incorporate logics of the free market (Bernstein and Jakobsen 2012). This paradigm is associated with scholars such as Nikolas Rose (1992 and 1999) and Wendy Brown (2005), who demonstrate how people come to govern themselves as self-responsible “enterprising” neoliberal subjects. Their framework comes out of the work of philosopher Michel Foucault, who argued that the neoliberal state makes use of the free market and its command for self-responsibility as tools or “technologies” of governance. Sociologist Ulrich Beck (2000) has shown how the state uses the free market and concomitant ideal of the autonomous self to achieve its goals for efficiency and profitability by exhorting people to manage themselves according to these market logics.

Discussions about the market and self-responsibility as a means of assisting women in situations of domestic violence have remained largely absent from critical analyses of anti-violence work within neoliberalism. For example, Munshi (2013) addresses the impact of the neoliberal paradigms of the non-profit industrial complex and the corresponding involvement in the prison industrial complex on SAWOs, but not that of self-responsible neoliberal subjectivity. This paper elaborates on Munshi’s work, drawing from the neo-Foucaultian analysis of neoliberalism to show how in addition to working through the non-profit industrial complex and engaging with carceral logics, SAWOs make use of these tools of neoliberal governance to assist South Asian immigrant women in situations of domestic violence. Inspired by an issue in the *Scholar & Feminist Online* journal (Bedford and Jakobsen 2009) devoted to articulating “a Vision of Sexual and Economic Justice,” it finds important connections to be made between the struggle to end gendered violence and the economic sensibilities promoted by a neoliberal state.

## METHODS

This paper is the product of three semesters of research at a South Asian women’s organization in New York City. It began with a semester-long participatory action project, in which I conducted research on behalf of a SAWO to assess the “state-of-the-field” of SAWOs in the US. This entailed creating and distributing a survey to the other twenty-six SAWOs and conducting more in-depth semi-structured phone interviews with four of their Executive Directors. This research later helped me to generalize observations I made through participant observation at one South Asian women’s organization to SAWOs more broadly. The following fall semester I conducted weekly participant observation at this SAWO for approximately

six hours of the workday up to twice a week.

My previous experience of working with the organization and my established relationship with the Executive Director made my entry to the organization possible and helped in gaining the trust of staff members as I observed and interviewed them at work, especially at first when they were unfamiliar with me and undoubtedly wary, or at the very least, curious, about the nature of my presence. I felt it important to emphasize that I was conducting research at this organization because of my previously established relationship with the director, and not due to an interest in establishing South Asian women as “third-world” women in need of saving (Lughod 2013; Mohanty 1991; Mahmood 2005). My contact with staff members consisted of attending staff meetings and conducting individual conversational interviews. I also input client documents into their online database, which provided me opportunities to approach the two case managers with questions about clients and their work with them. Their responses helped me to round out observations that were previously limited to the perspectives of higher management.

Although I conducted research on site, I was not able to directly observe or interview clients due to language barriers and the highly personal and sensitive nature of their work with the organization. I was able, however, to glean clients’ perspectives through transcripts of interviews conducted by an outside research team hired by the organization to evaluate the effectiveness of its work with clients (Global Insight 2014). Learning about clients and their interactions with the organization indirectly in this manner helped me to minimize the intrusiveness of this research and to eliminate the potential for causing clients emotional distress. Keeping client identities confidential also ensured this. Furthermore, this research was primarily interested in the organized work around domestic violence, so an extensive review of client experiences with domestic violence would exceed the scope of this project.

The final method used for evaluating the organization was content analysis; themes that I had identified as salient in my observations and appurtenant to the literature on neoliberalism and anti-violence work were magnified in institutional discourse in material published in print and online, and expressed in various panels on activism in New York City. These sources helped me to understand how SAWOs both articulate and promote the work I observed from afar in my state-of-the-field analysis, and closer to the ground through on-site fieldwork.

## DATA

*South Asian Women’s Organizations, the NPIC & the Carceral State*

When asked by a researcher doing a programmatic evaluation of a South Asian women's organization what she would do if her husband were to threaten her safety, a client of that organization responded: "All I know in these situations is to call 911. I don't know what to do." Later asked if a friend were sexually abused what she would recommend they do to receive help, she responded similarly: "In this country, all I know is that you just dial 911, in these situations. I don't know what else one would do." These responses illustrate that recourse to domestic and sexual abuse in the United States is predominantly legal and criminal. Yet investigation into the work done by SAWOs yields complicated conclusions about its relationship to the "carceral state."

On the one hand, much of the work of South Asian women's organizations is done through the criminal justice system. All of the nearly thirty SAWOs offer culturally aware and linguistically specific services, most of which are linked to the legal and social service systems—translation assistance and advocacy in court and at public benefit agencies, and connections to pro-bono legal representation, public benefits, and shelter and housing are common examples. Individuals applying to receive social services may be eligible for waivers from some welfare requirements if they can demonstrate that they have been affected by domestic violence, with hospital records, police reports, and Orders of Protection (OOP) being the most effective forms of such proof. Thus it is necessary for clients to make contact with law-enforcement in order to receive due assistance from the state and for the SAWO to be of substantial help. For this reason, an Order of Protection is often encouraged by SAWOs when official documentation of domestic violence does not already exist.

Despite its important function in receiving public benefits, interestingly, the OOP is more typically explained in terms of safety than resources: "An Order of Protection is basically the first safety step they need to take..." This SAWO advocate goes on to make a significant distinction, saying that an OOP is a necessary safety step taken "...in order to ensure that the abuser or the perpetrator is held accountable if the individual decides to make any contact with the victim, or violates the Order of Protection." This service provider's explanation of the OOP touches on the difference between the actual workings of an OOP and its purported purpose—though designated a measure of safety, an Order of Protection does not ensure the safety of the person who has filed it but that the violator is held accountable to the law.

As the advocate next explains, it is for this reason that her clients are often reluctant to file one—"they don't want to get them in trouble."

Therefore, she is reluctant to rely on an Order of Protection, and the legal-system more generally, as a method of assisting them. Clients are not pressured to go the police or file an OOP: "But an Order of Protection is only provided if she's ready for it, right? A lot of times in our culture they're not ready to take the necessary legal steps, because they don't want to get them in trouble, you know?" Reasons SAWO clients fear the involvement of law-enforcement range from the generalized—e.g. the desire to protect a partner, fear of retribution—to the culturally-specific and situational—e.g. desire to protect a partner from racialized violence of law-enforcement, fear of deportation, and loss of income, shelter, or other resources provided by a partner. SAWOs, which first came about to respond to the culturally-specific needs of South Asian women in the US experiencing domestic violence, today exercise an incisive sensitivity (what Munshi refers to as "flexible ambivalence") to the vexed relationship their clients have with law and law-enforcement.

In spite of their reluctance and critical self-reflection, though, SAWOs have an extremely limited ability to help clients who do not have legal documentation of their experience with domestic violence. We can attribute this to the context of the carceral state in which they, and domestic violence work more broadly, find themselves. The Executive Director of one SAWO does, citing the relationship of the anti-violence movement to the criminal justice system as the principal culprit:

The domestic violence movement has colluded with law and order in such a way that your only recourse if you call me and you say 'I need help,' my help will be 'well, let's get you a lawyer and let's get you an order of protection and let's get your partner into jail.'

The director's words ring familiar with those of the client who was perplexed as to whether any alternatives to calling the police even exist. They also resonate with the broader conviction held by anti-violence activists and scholars alike that communities of color cannot rely on the state to address domestic violence. In March of 2015 five employees of one SAWO attended the INCITE! Color of Violence 4 Conference in Chicago dedicated to this topic, which speaks to the convergence of scholarly thought and organization-based action against the carceral state occurring in anti-violence work.

Such forums often focus on institutionalized racism when engaging in conversations about anti-violence work and the criminal justice system.

The observations of SAWO staff members often follow suit, like those of the director who above addressed the limited options SAWOs have to offer their clients beyond legal recourse: “that’s not resonant for the women I work with, and that’s not resonant for any community of color, because the criminal justice, the criminal system, it’s not the justice system, sorry, is so racist.” On one SAWO’s website, several organizational updates can be found that engage with this topic. In one, South Asian scholar and activist Soniya Munshi, who addresses neoliberalism in her research on SAWOs discusses her previous experience working for a SAWO and specifies racial profiling as a reason the criminal justice system does not work for South Asian people in the US:

I enjoyed my work, and spent most of my time advocating for women, offering support and helping them maneuver the legal system. Then 9/11 happened. That was a turning point for me in the way I did and thought about my work. Because of the perceived racial and ethnic similarities to the hijackers, South Asian families were beginning to be severely racially profiled. Many Muslim and some non-Muslim South Asian people were suddenly disappearing and being picked up by ICE (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement).

What Munshi’s witness to institutionalized racism made clear, as she does here, is that the legal system is not a form of safety for many South Asians in the US, but quite the opposite.

However, Munshi’s experience also brings to light the paradox that relying on the criminal justice system to address domestic violence creates for SAWOs and their clients:

I really began to feel conflicted and felt I was having a split-experience. During the day I advocated for women to get what they needed from the legal system, and in the evenings, I was working to support people who were being abused by the state and the legal system.

That is, though the legal system often subjects South Asian women and their communities to institutional violence, it is also the only path of recourse to receive much needed social services. The racism embedded in the legal system is thus a roadblock to this path and the assurance of safety

it purports—indeed, SAWOs saw a decline following 9/11 in the comfort and willingness of their clients to discuss intimate partner violence much less contact law enforcement for help (Munshi 2013).

Situating their work within an increasingly carceral state, one SAWO has criticized the Violence Against Women Act at length for bolstering this tendency. For example, the organization features various anti-violence activists and their critiques of the VAWA bill in an update online:

The VAWA reauthorization bill provides critical funding for services, expands protections for immigrant and Native American victims, and expands non-discrimination practices. For these reasons we should urge Congress to pass the bill. But the bill, like its predecessors, continues to focus on criminal justice responses...

We are compelled to ask questions about the effectiveness of a system that relies so heavily on individual services and criminal justice interventions. Especially as the number of people, in particular men of color are put behind bars.

These advocates raise concerns about the very legislation that makes much of their work possible because they are keenly aware of the role it too plays in the institutionalization of racism and violence against the South Asian communities they serve.

Advocates at South Asian women’s organizations are critical of the governing effects of VAWA in this way and of neoliberal funding more broadly. At a panel held at Barnard College in which activists addressed the impacts of the neoliberal funding structure on their work in New York City, the Executive Director of one SAWO explains its leverage over domestic violence work:

So the domestic violence movement is so like, entrenched, right, it’s strong. You have the Violence Against Women Act, ‘wouldn’t you all love a law dedicated to supporting your issue and wouldn’t you love the government giving you six figure grants’...the potential for resources is huge, but you have to buy into a model, and regardless of who the funder is, whether it’s the government or institutional funders, I really think there is this really unholy alliance between business and philanthropy...which is everything

you do must be translated into a metric, a quantifiable metric, a deliverable...So yeah...if you're an organization and you need the money, and we all need the money, you're going to find a way to quantify the outcome and shift your weight, you do your work into a service orientation and the activism is unquantifiable, right?

Her concern that in the current funding structure "deliverables" take precedence over social change resonates with concerns of activists and scholars in attendance at a 2013 conference held by the Columbia Center for Gender and Sexuality. Participants in the conference were critical of the current institutional non-profit structure that has taken on the state's forgone role of social service delivery and replaced grassroots organizing around issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. In the panel on anti-violence work, Soniya Munshi asked, "How do non-profits themselves resist this non-profitization?"

As I have sought to show in this section, SAWOs have "resisted non-profitization" through their awareness of the carceral state, its corresponding funding structure, and its impacts on the South Asian communities they serve. Furthermore, SAWOs have engaged this awareness in a project of "alternative justice" that as the director explains, works outside of the law-and-order paradigm that they are largely confined to:

when I have to talk to people that want me to quantify my outcomes, I will quantify the hell out of everything that can be quantified, but it's on me and my team to keep our activist and our transformative work, and speaking of transformative, we're doing transformative justice work which is upstream for the DV movement, right, because this is outside of the law-and-order approach.

Transformative justice is an anti-violence practice that circumvents the criminal justice system by holding violent doers accountable instead to their communities. It is used not only to respond to individual instances of violence, but also engages communities in prevention efforts. Alternative justice projects such as this are the result of decades of anti-violence work done by women of color and queer activists, meaning that scholars and SAWOs are not alone in contesting the carceral state, however predominant it may be.

*South Asian Women's Organizations & the Entrepreneurial Spirit*

"My husband pays the rent and bills but he does not want to spend any money on my education."

This was one of the realities Surekha faced during the course of her marriage. Aside from being suppressed by her husband from advancing in her education, Surekha frequently suffered verbal and emotional abuse. He was very controlling, often physically holding her down and shaking her to prevent her from leaving the home.

Tina's greatest ambition was to become independent and strong so that she could provide for herself and her daughter.

Through [SAWO name]'s ongoing support services, legal referrals, and Economic Empowerment Program, Tina built the courage and resilience to leave her husband.

These excerpts from one SAWO's report on its Economic Empowerment Program tell a collective success story about clients at a South Asian women's organization who, in the face of financial manipulation, were able to become emotionally and physically independent from their abusive partners by becoming financially independent. In this section, I show that SAWO's representations of and responses to financial manipulation by abusive partners are telling only part of a larger story about economic injustice and its compounding effect on situations of domestic violence in South Asian immigrant communities.

At the organization where I conducted participant observation, services are organized into two main programs, the Domestic Violence Program and the Economic Empowerment Program. Through its Economic Empowerment Program, the SAWO offers a variety of services aimed at helping women to become financially independent, including financial and computer literacy workshops, ESL classes, resume writing assistance, referrals to job placement programs and credit repair agencies, and educational and professional development scholarships of up to \$1500. According to an evaluation of this programming, there was a 27% decrease (from 84% to 57%) in the number of clients making under \$9,000 a year after they worked with the organization (Global Insight 2014). This SAWO

is just one of seven that offers an Economic Empowerment Program with the aims of helping their clients to increase their income.

These “economic empowerment” programs and services come out of the understanding of South Asian women’s organizations that their clients are made to be financially dependent on their partners. This can be due to a variety of factors, including immigration status, language barriers, and/or credentials obtained in their home countries that do not permit employment in the US, but SAWOs see that often, as in the example of Surekha above, it is their partner’s manipulation of control over the household income that makes them financially dependent and therefore unable to leave situations of domestic violence.

Research has shown that economic dependence is a major factor in preventing battered women from leaving their abusers or causing them to return. Therefore, programs that help women accumulate assets and learn to save are critical in helping survivors break the cycle of violence.

This is expressed in a report produced by a SAWO in conjunction with the Office of Manhattan Borough and the Worker Institute at Cornell, entitled “Economic Abuse: the Untold Cost of Domestic Violence.”

The report is inspired by the SAWO’s observation of widespread economic abuse among their clients, and based on surveys of fifty-four domestic violence organizations in New York City, it seeks to assess the prevalence and effects of this form of abuse on women in the area more broadly. The US Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women defines economic abuse as “making or attempting to make an individual financially dependent by maintaining one’s access to money, or forbidding one’s attendance at school or employment.” The report elaborates on this definition to include accumulation of debt, saying “research has shown how abusers exert control by coercing their victims into accumulating consumer debt” (Economic Abuse 2012).

The research found that economic abuse is indeed prevalent among women who seek the help of domestic violence organizations in New York City and that it does hinder their financial viability:

More than half of survey respondents had at least one in four clients who had an abusive partner steal, withhold access to personal documents, or exert control over spending. Likewise, one quarter was saddled with debt by

abusers.

For nearly one in four respondents, more than half of their clients had lost their homes, been unable to obtain employment, or had childcare arrangements disrupted as a result of economic abuse. And, for over 50 percent of respondents, one in two clients was unable to meet basic household expenses as a result of this abuse.

The report in this way attributes the inability of many clients to provide for themselves and their families to the finding that many experience economic abuse. It does so ignoring the conditions of extreme poverty that clients of these organizations endure (“an overwhelming majority”—82 percent—of the organizations surveyed “serve survivors, who on average, lived in households with annual incomes below \$25,000, and 33 percent of providers report that the average client household lived on less than \$10,000 a year. Seventy percent reported that at least half the clients lived below the poverty line.” Furthermore, “over 70 percent of respondents serve clients who, on average, had a high school education or less, with 23 percent of providers saying that their average client had only completed middle school” (Economic Abuse 2012)).

Curiously, the report provides all of this glaring demographic information but does not address it as the instance of financial hardship it investigates or as cause for concern.

In New York City, domestic violence agencies work with immensely diverse populations, many of whom are recent immigrants, low-income and have limited education. By and large, there is a dearth of effective systems in place to remedy the impacts of economic abuse. Instead, service-providers are left to cobble together piece-meal solutions in hopes of helping their clients to achieve self-sufficiency.

This statement from the report, if unintentionally, highlights this oversight, identifying the prevalence of poverty yet treating it as a given and decrying only the “dearth” of systems to remedy economic abuse, when they have shown the dearth in the financial resources of clients, frustrated by the limited the ability of nonprofits to support them, to be much more gaping. The statement is also a precise description of what under-resourced SAWOs hope to help their clients achieve through their Economic Empowerment

programs in the face of these various shortages—self-sufficiency.

This rhetoric of “self-sufficiency” is remarkably pervasive in the work to help South Asian survivors become financially independent (the word can be found on 25 out of 26 websites), as just a few excerpts from the mission statements of various SAWOs and their Economic Empowerment Programs illustrate:

We currently provide case management, workshops and trainings, and scholarships to women so that they can access public benefits, jobs, credit, banking and other forms of support so that they can reach their goals of self-sufficiency and safety.

We promote the self-reliance and empowerment of South Asian women & men who are in crisis through outreach, peer support, and referrals in a confidential manner.

Through advocacy, collaboration and awareness activities, [we] will help to educate the greater community and connect victims with the resources they need to achieve self-reliance.

In the effort to help their clients establish financial independence in order to become independent from their abusers, ‘independence’ has warped into its neoliberal counterpart, self-sufficiency, and the work of helping South Asian women affected by domestic violence has become the work of helping them to help themselves. The motto of one SAWO is in fact, “helping women to help themselves.”

Indeed, just in the title of the Economic Abuse Report, “Economic Abuse: the Untold Cost of Domestic Violence,” domestic violence is framed in terms of its cost to society: “It is a crime that exacts a devastating toll not just on victims and their families, but on the health and well-being of society at large,” evidently costing employers in the US three to five billion dollars “in lost time and productivity” and 31 billion dollars in medical costs annually (Economic Abuse 2012). An excerpt from an interview with a client of a SAWO illustrates how the state works through public services to combat that cost by promoting self-sufficiency:

I need a job for surviving. I need money. Because government help me, but those are not enough right now.

Whatever they give it's fine, it's tight budget, it's limited, very limited, very tight, but it's OK. I appreciate the help, they help people. But they don't wanna understand. She is one old woman, she doesn't have anybody to help her, she has three kids, she has a divorce pending in the supreme court, other family court, visitation, those, they need to understand. They need to understand I need to spend the time with my kids. I'm mentally tortured, mentally, physically, sexually, financially, all over I'm tortured. For 14 years now. In total it's 14 years now, I'm tortured. And on top of this, now they also mentally torture people. A woman now also gave them people hard time because they need attendance, you cannot stay home, you need to find a job, this is the problem.

This client, seeking the help of the state for her survival, explains that self-sufficiency is neither a feasible nor a desirable outcome for her. This view is expressed in several other client interviews, suggesting that the goal to achieve self-sufficiency is not their own in the way that SAWOs intimate (the evaluation praises the fact that while only 26% of those surveyed sought employment as a means of financial assistance, 50% are employed (Global Insight 2014)).

South Asian women in situations of domestic violence turn to SAWOs for support and subsistence. Though organizations can assist their clients by helping them to find employment, there are myriad reasons South Asian immigrant women in the US cannot and would not want to achieve the expectation of complete self-reliance that comes with it, reasons that the neoliberal state, in the words of this client, “doesn't want to understand.” Examples include their responsibility for childcare, lack of English fluency, wanting for marketable job skills, and dearth of jobs that would provide women facing these challenges a livable wage. While SAWOs provide services to mitigate these challenges, the broader conditions of poverty that most constrain clients go unexamined.

## DISCUSSION

### *Neoliberalism & South Asian Women's Organizations*

SAWOs, like other domestic violence organizations in the US, have solidified a relationship with the neoliberal carceral state. However, the organization under study is engaging with anti-violence activists and scholars in a critique of this relationship. In particular, the organization raises

concerns about the impact of a criminal justice approach to anti-violence work on their client base of mostly immigrant women of color. Advocates understand that their clients are reluctant to rely on the criminal justice system for a variety of reasons that range from fear of deportation and not wanting to subject themselves or their partners to the racial prejudice of legal authorities, to reasons of practicality and intimacy—if they file an order of protection and/or their partner is incarcerated, they may forcibly lose contact that is often necessary to maintain child care and finances.

These concerns echo those of scholars who put women of color at the center of analysis to show that criminalizing domestic violence is an inadequate response to their needs and has the adverse effect of exposing them to institutional violence (Richie 2012; INCITE! 2006; Smith 2005). Munshi (2013) applies this criticism of the carceral state to her research on community-based South Asian organizations, showing how prevalent fears of deportation, institutionalized racism, and anti-Muslim surveillance were heightened post-9/11, making the criminal justice system an even less desirable approach to domestic violence in South Asian immigrant communities. Though the SAWO has a limited ability to assist their clients in ways other than criminal and legal, it is with this awareness that the organization has criticized its own relationship to the criminal justice system and undertaken its Transformative Justice Project, which offers an alternative community-based response.

As the then Executive Director explained in a panel on activism and neoliberalism at Barnard College in March 2014, non-criminal and legal response lies outside of the expectations and infrastructure of funding for South Asian women's organizations and domestic violence organizations more generally. Her statements contextualize the relationship of the SAWO to the carceral state within the current non-profit funding structure. As discussed in my prior review of the literature, many scholars have raised concerns about this structure and the neoliberal shift of responsibility for social welfare from the state to the non-profit realm (Bumiller 2008). Though these political and economic conditions have helped to grow anti-violence work, the idea that “the revolution will not be funded” is a growing concern within the movement (INCITE! 2007).

As my research shows, SAWOs have mixed views on this question. On the one hand they have limited capacity to perform even their designated role of social welfare provider—half of the SAWOs surveyed cited funding as their organization's most pressing need. On the other hand, like other gender-based organizations represented at the Queer Dreams & Non-Profit Blues Conference, they have raised concerns about the ways in

which receiving foundation and government funding shapes and restricts their ability to do transformative social justice work. In particular, domestic violence organizations and SAWOs have focused on the predominant criminal and legal approach as a problem of this funding structure.

Another, less-examined consequence of working within this neoliberal funding structure is the promotion of self-sufficiency among clients. Helping their clients to become self-sufficient constitutes a considerable portion of SAWOs' efforts; one SAWO divides their direct services into two programs, the Domestic Violence Program and the Economic Empowerment Program and several, at least seven of the nearly 30, SAWOs offer similar programs or related services. Scholars have shown how neoliberal governmentality has not only shifted the responsibility of meeting human needs of support from the state into non-profit organizations, but also how these organizations then end up shifting this responsibility onto the marginalized populations they care for by ‘helping them to help themselves’ (Sharma 2006; Karim 2010). This research shows that SAWOs participate in this shift, helping their clients to become self-sufficient. Interviews with clients make it clear that though becoming financially independent can allow them to leave abusive situations, the responsibility of complete self-sufficiency is often more burdensome than empowering.

Economic empowerment programs come out of the understanding that many of the South Asian women they assist are unable to leave situations of domestic violence for financial reasons. SAWOs see that often, their clients have been made financially dependent on their partner by that partner. But these programs also service women for whom limited financial resources more generally create a barrier to leaving situations of domestic violence. In both cases, financial independence can make possible physical, emotional, and other forms of independence from an abusive partner.

A major way that the SAWO can help women in situations of domestic violence then (and the context of neoliberal governance that shifts the responsibility into the private sector and the individual), is to offer services that help them to enter the labor market and secure financial resources. We see this notion of independence coopted and transformed in neoliberal discourse, inducing South Asian women who utilize public resources to become self-sufficient, enterprising individuals who are no longer reliant on abusive partners or the welfare state. Scholars drawing on Foucault's analysis of the market as a tool or “technology” of governance have shown how individuals are induced to become “enterprising individuals” with notions of freedom and independence in this way (Rose 1998).

The work of making South Asian women who have been affected by

domestic violence into entrepreneurial managers of their own lives involves the well-documented technologies of the market and of the self to do so (Beck 2000). In particular, notions of the good parental role model and the responsible mother are invoked as clients are expected to set a good example for their children by becoming self-sufficient and no longer relying on the state to provide for them. Deploying these technologies of governance, the state seeks to remake dependents of a feminized welfare state in its move toward a more masculinized, hyper-efficient neoliberal version of itself.

## CONCLUSION

This research suggests that the anti-violence work done by SAWOs has taken on a new role in neoliberal governmentality: that of transforming South Asian women who have been affected by domestic violence and who rely on the assistance of non-profit organizations and associated benefits into self-sufficient entrepreneurial subjects. Though the South Asian women's organization I focused on for this research has a critical awareness of its relationship to the carceral state, this particular role in the neoliberal project has gone unexamined by SAWOs and by critical scholars of non-profit organizations and anti-violence work more generally. This paper recommends, therefore, that while conversations around the criminalization of domestic violence continue, the entrepreneurial-ization of women who have experienced domestic violence and its adverse impacts on their situations should also be considered. Analysis of governmentality also suggests that our understandings of gendered violence can be expanded to forms outside of domestic violence—to practices of violence that are enacted by both the state and the market.

The experiences of South Asian immigrant women in situations of domestic violence call for an intervention into these multiple and simultaneous forms of violence. At the level of the organization, this would mean rethinking the well-intentioned but ill-conceived goal of economic empowerment, such that women are not merely expected to achieve self-sufficiency but become part of an activist effort to level the economic playing field. This would likely require joining forces with living wage campaigns—although SAWOs have made strides to improve the financial standings of their clients, the current minimum wage has proven insufficient for South Asian women leaving abusive partners to meet their and their children's needs. Additionally, increased access to affordable childcare, public housing and benefits, and the more progressive taxation that would allow for this, would help to meet these needs. Broadly speaking, the articulation of a vision for gender and racial justice that is intertwined with a vision

for economic justice would help those concurrently marginalized by gender, race, class, and immigration status to rid their lives of gendered violence in its many intersecting forms.

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# Applying Postcolonial Feminist and Symbolic Interactionist Theories to Understand Intimate Partner Violence Against Aboriginal Women In Canada

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## Abstract

The increased risk of intimate partner violence among Aboriginal women is considered to be a major public health issue in Canada. Although Aboriginal peoples comprise only 3.3% of the Canadian population, they are massively overrepresented in cases of violence. This paper examines the phenomenon of intimate partner violence through application of the feminist and symbolic interactionist theories. First, feminist theory is used to analyze intimate partner violence as a gendered phenomenon influenced by structural factors. Further, feminism is considered intersectionally with a postcolonial historical perspective in order to understand how historical circumstances have served to place Aboriginal women in positions of vulnerability to violence. For example, postcolonial feminism provides unique insight into how colonization introduced violence into Aboriginal communities and how the Canadian criminal justice system continues to perpetuate violence against Aboriginal women. In contrast, symbolic interactionism focuses on how interactions between partners create meanings that influence their future behaviour. For example, meanings associated with culturally constructed notions of masculinity and femininity may contribute to violent interactions between partners. Symbolic interactionism provides insight into potential solutions to this issue, including the specific mechanism by which social support interventions can change the meanings associated with violence and empower women to flee abuse. The paper concludes by utilizing the sociological imagination to explore the connections between the structural and relational perspectives previously applied, suggesting a holistic approach to understanding and addressing this issue.

## Keywords

*intimate partner violence, feminist theory, postcolonialism, symbolic interactionism*

## INTRODUCTION

In comparison to the general population, Aboriginal women are at an increased risk of experiencing violence at the hand of their romantic partners. Traditionally, these forms of violence were considered a problem to be addressed within the home, but recent discourse has shifted to recognize the importance of also addressing this issue at a societal level through actions such as public health interventions (Lawson 2012). However, although a public health perspective is generally useful in examining this issue, the application of various sociological theories provides further insights into the root causes of, and potential solutions to, the issue of intimate partner violence in the Aboriginal population. Feminist theory is fundamental to any analysis of this issue because it posits that intimate partner violence is a gendered phenomenon influenced by structural factors. Further, when examined intersectionally with an historical, postcolonial perspective, feminism helps to explain how historical circumstances have served to place Aboriginal women in positions of vulnerability to violence.

In contrast to this postcolonial feminist approach, symbolic interactionism offers an alternative perspective by focusing on how interactions between partners create meanings that influence their future behavior, including violent or abusive acts. In this way, the symbolic interactionist paradigm offers insight into the design of interventions which could address the issue of intimate partner violence among Aboriginal peoples. Although the application of two seemingly disparate theories to a single issue may seem contradictory, the sociological imagination reveals the extensive intersection between the social and the individual, and the necessity of employing both structural and relational theories in the discussion of issues of this magnitude (Knoblock 2008). In this paper we provide an overview of intimate partner violence against Aboriginal women through descriptions of different types of violence, provision of pertinent statistics, and a general discussion of risk factors for violence. We then apply postcolonial feminist theory in order to better understand the gendered and historically rooted nature of vulnerability to intimate partner violence. Finally, we utilize the symbolic interactionist paradigm in proposing potential solutions to this issue.

## ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence is a broad term used to describe any incidence of violence between partners in intimate relationships, such as marriages or common-law unions (Lawson 2012). Within this broad category, several types and severities of violence exist, and they are generally classified based

on three factors: the aggressor, the victim, and the violent act (Winstok 2013). For example, the Conflict Tactics Scale is commonly used in research and includes physical assault, physical threat, and sexual assault (Brownridge 2008). Other researchers also recognize verbal, psychological, and spiritual abuse as important forms of violence occurring between partners (Winstok 2013). Despite differing features, all of these types of violence share a common trait: they go above and beyond everyday relationship conflict to endanger individuals and compromise the health of populations.

Despite comprising only 3.3% of the Canadian population, Aboriginal individuals are massively overrepresented in cases of violence in Canada (Brownridge 2008). Specifically, Aboriginal women are three-and-a-half times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to experience intimate partner violence (Canadian Women's Foundation 2014). In addition to experiencing violence more frequently, Aboriginal women tend to experience more extreme forms of abuse than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (Balfour 2008). This violence is by no means limited to interactions between partners, as the majority of these couples have children who will inevitably be negatively impacted by their violent interactions (Bosch and Bergen 2006).

### **RISK FACTORS FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AMONG ABORIGINAL WOMEN**

Researchers have identified several risk factors that make Aboriginal women susceptible to victimization. For example, Daoud et al. (2013) describe the many ways in which a low socioeconomic status can lead to violence, including financial stress, lack of social support, and reduced collective efficacy. This is especially problematic considering that 36% of Aboriginal women currently live in poverty (Canadian Women's Foundation 2014). In addition to low socioeconomic status, Brownridge (2008) asserts that living in rural areas and having larger family sizes are other notable risk factors for violence in this population. Furthermore, Aboriginal women who have had previous marriages or common-law unions are at an increased risk of violence from their current partner; this risk is further multiplied by factors such as caring for children from these previous relationships (Romans et al. 2007). Finally, alcohol abuse represents another significant risk factor for violence. For example, a recent study found that 75% of their sample of battered Aboriginal women had been admitted to a shelter following an assault during which their abuser had been drinking (Brownridge 2008).

Studies have found, however, that significant disparities in the rates of intimate partner violence between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations cannot be completely attributed to low socioeconomic status,

rural residence, large families, multiple marriages, childcare, and alcoholism (Daoud et al. 2013). In addition, some scholars assert that for Aboriginal women, "[living] under colonization ... [has resulted in] a legacy of oppression that adds another level of threat to their health," with violence being just one of many ways that this threat is manifest (Bourassa et al. 2004: 24). The effects of colonial processes on violence against Aboriginal women are diverse. Colonization is a risk factor for violence in-and-of-itself, which is significant as this factor is unique to the Aboriginal population (Brownridge 2008; Pedersen et al. 2013). However, the impact of colonization on this issue becomes much more complex when one considers its effect as a precursor to several other established risk factors for violence.

The colonial experience impacted the Aboriginal population by introducing "new forms of violence" into Indigenous communities (Daoud et al. 2013: 278). In particular, colonial policies that resulted in the "disruption of traditional economies and appropriation of Indigenous lands" (Daoud et al. 2013: 281) caused considerable harm by creating widespread poverty amongst Aboriginal peoples. For example, in the 20th century, Aboriginal peoples were prohibited from engaging in traditional methods of subsistence such as hunting, trapping, and fishing, which resulted in hunger and a sense of dislocation from their traditional lands (Loppie-Reading 2009).

Notably, the effects of these colonial policies are not relegated to those people living a century ago. Today, the high level of poverty in this population is closely linked to the elevated unemployment rate, which can be attributed to the lack of job opportunities on reserves as well as job market discrimination; both of these factors, in turn, directly result from physical and social marginalization brought about through colonization (Kendall 2001). Further, some scholars argue that lower educational attainment and loss of land and sovereignty imposed by colonization also contribute to Aboriginal joblessness, creating a vicious cycle of deprivation from which it is difficult to escape (Adelson 2005). In this way, Aboriginal women may become caught in a network of risk factors that interact to produce vulnerability to intimate partner violence.

Colonial policies directly impacted violence in Aboriginal communities even further through the destruction of Aboriginal families that occurred when their children were forcibly removed from their homes to attend residential schools. First and foremost, by separating children from their parents, residential schools removed opportunities for Aboriginal children to acquire healthy interpersonal skills and knowledge of their culture (Loppie-Reading 2009). Further, as the curriculum in these schools was explicitly designed to assimilate Aboriginal children into the dominant Canadian

society, survivors of residential schools emerged with a feeling of contempt for their communities, their culture, and themselves (Smith et al. 2005). Finally, as many as 90% of students attending these schools experienced at least one form of abuse, such as physical, emotional, sexual, or spiritual abuse (Smith et al. 2005). For many, these traumatic experiences were internalized, becoming woven into their personal and cultural identities and creating a generation of children unable to properly cope with or express the adversities they had endured (Denham 2008; Smith et al. 2005).

Understandably, without proper coping or interpersonal skills, many survivors have fallen into a pattern of violent interaction and risky coping behavior. Furthermore, the negative consequences of residential schools are not limited to a single generation of survivors – in fact, several authors have described an intergenerational effect whereby survivors' behaviors subsequently impact their children's and grandchildren's mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being (Partridge 2010; Denham 2008). For example, Smith et al. (2005) describe the intergenerational impact of residential schools as the root cause of a “downward spiral of addiction, violence, and poverty” in many Aboriginal communities. Moreover, the internalization of the traumas of the residential school experience also resulted in the adoption of alcohol abuse as a coping strategy for some Aboriginal individuals, which has already been established as a significant risk factor for intimate partner violence in this population (Brownridge 2008).

Although these findings are compelling, postcolonial theory alone does not fully explain why some Aboriginal women find themselves victims of violence while others do not (Brownridge 2008). Thus, it is imperative to recognize the complexity of this issue and holistically examine the ways in which many risk factors interact to produce vulnerability.

### **THROUGH THE LENS OF POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST THEORY**

Some scholars argue that a feminist perspective “provides the most solid and empirically grounded multilevel theoretical account” (Reingardiene 2004: 15-16) for understanding intimate partner violence. Feminist theory frames intimate partner violence as a gendered experience based in the patriarchal domination of males over females. According to this perspective, violence results when women attempt to defy traditional feminine gender roles of passivity and submission by expressing independence and exercising autonomy (Bosch and Bergen 2006). While there are many ways in which men in patriarchal societies exercise control over women,

violence represents the most effective—and most dangerous—method of social control (Reingardiene 2004). In their seminal work, *Violence Against Wives: A Case Against the Patriarchy*, Dobash and Dobash (1979) argue that the issue of intimate partner violence should be addressed by highlighting the long history of gender inequality often considered fundamental to the institution of marriage. The authors suggest that this process can be initiated by employing a feminist perspective to recognize the gendered nature of violence, particularly by abolishing the use of gender-neutral terms such as “spousal abuse” in describing this issue. The following paragraphs present examples of how a specifically postcolonial feminist perspective assists in understanding several facets of intimate partner violence, including the ways in which the historical circumstances of colonization impacted gender relations in Aboriginal communities, the differences in gendered violence against men and women, and the ways in which the Canadian justice system may systematically disadvantage Aboriginal women involved in situations of violence.

First of all, a postcolonial feminist analysis reveals the main ways in which gender hierarchies imposed by colonists introduced violence into Aboriginal communities. Historically, many Aboriginal cultures were based on matriarchal and matrilineal social structures that respected women as important community figures. However, upon the arrival of European settlers, Aboriginal Canadians were forced to comply with patriarchal structures rooted in the Christian religion. These social relations were originally introduced when European treaty-makers refused to negotiate with female Aboriginal leaders. Additionally, European influence strongly shaped the political process of creating band council structures, which essentially eliminated female leadership roles (Daoud et al. 2013). As a result, these forces of patriarchal dominance became “deeply interwoven in the social, political, and economic fabric of [Aboriginal] society” (Pedersen et al. 2013: 1036), resulting in a dramatic reduction in the social standing of women in Aboriginal and Canadian societies. European men further contributed to the subjugation of Aboriginal women by sexualizing their bodies through “dehumanizing images of the ‘squaw’” (Daoud et al. 2013: 281), portraying women as immoral, which contributed to normalizing the violence perpetrated against them. These forces of subjugation and dehumanization continued into the 20th century, when policy makers and physicians targeted Aboriginal women for involuntary sterilization. In fact, it is estimated that in the 1960s and 1970s, between 3,400 and 70,000 Aboriginal women were forcibly subjected to permanent sterilization via government-sponsored programs (Ralstin-Lewis 2005). In addition to oppressing women directly,

European colonial policies violated Aboriginal principles of egalitarianism and self-determination, forcing Aboriginal men to either comply with patriarchal social structures or experience subordination at the hands of the European colonists; ultimately, the internal conflict associated with these difficult decisions resulted in social frustration often expressed through violence (Brownridge 2008).

Despite the large volumes of empirical evidence that posit Aboriginal women as being at an increased risk for intimate partner violence (Tjaden and Theonnes 2000), some scholars claim that Aboriginal men are just as likely as women to be victims of abuse by their partners (see e.g. Archer 2000). However, Ansara and Hindin (2010) contend that arguments of gender symmetry in intimate partner violence are flawed due to the narrow definitions of violence and large, population-based samples these studies use, which fail to properly contextualize the violent acts. For this reason, it is useful to apply feminist theory to examine this issue because it frames intimate partner violence as a gendered experience (Lawson 2012). In response to arguments for gender symmetry in intimate partner violence, feminist scholar Michael Johnson (2010) asserts that different types of violence impact males and females, with females being much more likely to experience more extreme forms of violence. Intimate partner violence can be classified according to a typology of four qualitatively different types of violence: situational couple violence, intimate terrorism, violent resistance, and mutual violent control (Ansara and Hindin 2010; Johnson 2010). The common thread amongst all of these forms of violence is that they all impact economic, physiological, psychological, and relationship health, albeit to varying degrees (Johnson 2010).

According to this typology of violence, situational couple violence represents everyday situations of conflict where both men and women are active players in the interaction. This includes relatively minor disturbances that are an expected aspect of many relationships, such as a single argument that escalates into one partner pushing the other, immediately apologizing, and ensuring that the act never happens again. The critical point defining situational couple violence is that the acts of violence arise out of a particular situation, such as a disagreement, rather than being rooted in an ongoing attempt to control the other partner. In contrast, intimate terrorism involves the ongoing exercise of coercive control by the male partner over the female partner and is fundamentally defined by the use of male privilege to justify this control. Such coercion can be exercised in several ways, including controlling the female partner's access to finances, isolating her, blaming her for the abuse exacted against her, and threatening her (Johnson 2010).

Notably, the issue of economic control may be exacerbated among the Aboriginal population, where more than one third of women live in poverty (Canadian Women's Foundation 2014). These forms of control serve to emphasize and legitimate violence against the female partner and her children, which can include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse (Johnson 2010). For example, 41.3% of women have reported injury due to severe sexual or physical abuse, in comparison to only 13.5% of men (Romans et al. 2007), which demonstrates that women are more likely to be victims of severe abuse that can be classified as intimate terrorism.

Additionally, this typology recognizes violent resistance, in which women use violence to defend themselves against their partners' acts of intimate terrorism. This violence may be motivated by a variety of factors, including retaliation, communicating that the violence they experience is not acceptable, and incapacitating their partners to the point of being able to escape the home. A common example of violent resistance is when a female kills her male partner in reaction to years of abuse and control at his hands (Johnson 2010). But violent resistance is not only influenced by chronic interpersonal conflict; it is also a function of the institutional disadvantages Aboriginal women face within the Canadian criminal justice system, which ultimately perpetuate violence against them.

Two changes made to Canadian sentencing procedures in the late 20th century created a juridical environment that exposes Aboriginal women to the kinds of persistent abuse that can lead to violent resistance. In 1982, the Federal Government began to take the issue of domestic violence more seriously by encouraging police departments to operate under a mandatory charging policy in all cases. However, in 1996, the Government introduced reforms to sentencing law in an attempt to slow the rate of incarceration of Aboriginal people. By taking into account the specific living conditions of Aboriginal populations, such as poverty, substance abuse, and the legacy of colonization, judges were encouraged to consider alternatives to incarceration in the sentencing process. Ultimately, the loosening of restrictions increased the occurrence of domestic violence in Aboriginal communities because the lesser penalties were not a strong enough disincentive to prevent Aboriginal men from committing these crimes against women (Balfour 2008). Thus, this tension between retributive and restorative justice has resulted in patterns of sentencing by which male perpetrators of ongoing violence experience lenient consequences while Aboriginal women who perpetrate more extreme forms of violence in self-defense receive harsh convictions and jail time (Balfour 2008).

In summary, the postcolonial feminist perspective is absolutely

essential to understanding the historically rooted and gendered nature of intimate partner violence. First and foremost, this sociological paradigm highlights the ways in which the historical circumstances of colonization served to disrupt traditional Aboriginal gender relations and place women in positions of subordination and vulnerability. Further, this perspective offers a strong rebuttal to arguments of gender symmetry in intimate partner violence, emphasizing that the forms of violence experienced by Aboriginal women are more frequent and more severe than those experienced by men, as well that they are rooted in male attempts at coercion and control that are absent from most cases of violence against men. Finally, the feminist historical perspective emphasizes the faults of the Canadian criminal justice system, which institutionally disadvantages Aboriginal women and serves to perpetuate violence against them. In this way, postcolonial feminist theory provides invaluable insight into the phenomenon of intimate partner violence among the Aboriginal population, providing a foundation of understanding for proposing interventions to address this issue.

### **THROUGH THE LENS OF THE SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONIST PARADIGM**

The symbolic interactionist paradigm, which is founded on Herbert Blumer's theory of meaning, can offer additional insight into the issue of intimate partner violence and assist in developing interventions to address this issue. According to Blumer, as interpreted by Puddephatt (2009), the three tenets of symbolic interactionism include the following: that human action depends on meaning, that people ascribe meaning to objects based on interaction, and that these meanings can change over time. In the case of intimate partner violence, symbolic interactionists focus on trying to understand both the meanings of violent acts and how those meanings are formed through interaction between partners (Bosch and Bergen 2006). Although the symbolic interactionist paradigm states that all meaning is consciously constructed through social interaction, it is important to note that the "implicit meaning of social acts cannot always be equated with the conscious meaning of those acts" (Puddephatt 2009: 96). Thus, the symbolic interactionist paradigm highlights the ways in which violent situations could be interpreted differently by the victim and perpetrator based on their own intimate interactions as well as their relationships with others in the community. The following examples demonstrate how the symbolic interactionist perspective can assist in preventing intimate partner violence, such as the ways in which social support interventions help to redefine meanings of violence to foster healing, and how interactions with

friends and family may encourage women to leave abusive situations.

In working with victims of intimate partner violence, the intergenerational recurrence of abuse is often conceptualized as a wheel in order to demonstrate how issues of power and control are at the root of abusive relationships (Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs 2011). This model demonstrates the importance of power and control by positioning these constructs at the center of the wheel and presenting several ways in which power and control can be exercised through violent means. According to this model, males feel the need to exercise control over their female partners because of the meanings of masculinity that they have encountered throughout their lives via interaction and socialization (Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs 2011). Thus, in a society where manhood is equated with dominance and aggression, violence can be viewed as an expected expression of masculinity—albeit one that is socially vilified in the public sphere (Knoblock 2008). Additionally, while femininity is traditionally judged based on a woman's homemaking and parenting skills, a man's appearance in the public sphere is typically related to his ability to control his wife and children (Eckstein 2011). In extreme cases, where the power and control of the patriarch is challenged, the male right and responsibility to control may be manifested in the form of violence. Through consideration of these traditional gender roles, one gains insight into the social meanings that inform the actions of male and female partners in violent relationships.

In addition to providing insight into how the meanings of violent acts are created and shaped through interaction, the symbolic interactionist paradigm highlights the actual mechanism by which social support interventions operate (Allen-Collinson 2009). According to symbolic interactionism, the individual behaviors of victim and perpetrator are based on interpersonal meanings constructed through interaction. Thus, in order to break the cycle of abuse, these meanings must be changed through further interaction, a principle that forms the basis of many interventions to encourage healing from abuse. For example, the Community Holistic Circle Healing program carried out in the Anishnabe community of Hollow Water, Manitoba in the 1980s and 1990s was based on the premise of encouraging victims and perpetrators of violence to participate in a series of healing circles. These healing circles had therapeutic benefits because they provided a safe space for male and female partners to discuss previous violent interactions with important members of their families and community. By offering opportunities for constructive interaction between victim and perpetrator, this program created environments in which the meanings of violent interactions could be redefined to encourage healing (Cripps and

McGlade 2008).

Similarly, changes to these interpersonal meanings could explain the ways in which a strong social support network can increase the likelihood that an Aboriginal woman would feel able to flee an abusive situation. In many situations of intimate partner violence, male partners enforce total isolation of the women and their children, which eliminates opportunities for interaction that could change her perspective on her circumstance (Bosch and Bergen 2006). Social support networks are a major factor in helping Aboriginal women become free from abuse because they serve to reduce this isolation (Bosch and Bergen 2006). For example, Aboriginal women living on reservations generally face greater physical and social isolation than women living in urban centers (Pedersen et al. 2013). This isolation is further compounded when abusive partners forbid women from leaving the house, censoring their interactions with friends and family, and decreasing the likelihood that they will be able to leave the relationship. On the other hand, unsupportive social interaction can also serve to trap Aboriginal women in abusive circumstances by denying them the resources to flee abuse. Due to intense social stigma surrounding situations of domestic violence, female victims may encounter discomfort, shame, and dismissal when they approach friends and family for help. Ultimately, these responses are rooted in compliance with patriarchal social structures such as male domination, which lead friends and families of victims to feel reluctant to challenge the authority of the violent male partner. Interactions with such non-supportive friends and family only serve to reinforce the victim's original understandings of violence and perpetuate the cycle of abuse (Bosch and Bergen 2006).

## CONCLUSION

Scholars have employed a variety of theoretical paradigms to examine the phenomenon of intimate partner violence. Prior to the 1970s, this issue was overwhelmingly understood as a personal struggle to be contained within the private sphere (Lawson 2012). However, over time, understandings of intimate partner violence have evolved from a predominantly relational approach toward an approach that examines the structural factors that influence individual interaction. Although postcolonial feminist and symbolic interactionist theories provide unique insights into this issue, it is impossible to fully understand intimate partner violence through the lens of a single paradigm. While structural theories such as feminism allow one to understand intimate partner violence as a widespread social issue, relational theories such as symbolic interactionism emphasize the need to address this issue within the context of individual lives in order to affect social change on

a broader scale. To reconcile these two seemingly contradictory approaches, it is essential to employ the sociological imagination to reveal the extensive intersection between the social and the individual (Knoblock 2008).

Ultimately, these sociological perspectives are absolutely imperative to gaining a holistic understanding of intimate partner violence, because they provide important insights that will enable political leaders and the general public to initiate empowering and supportive action in the face of domestic violence. Postcolonial feminist theory, which frames violence as a gendered experience, highlights the influence of social structural factors and historic events in producing violent behavior against women within the Aboriginal population. Alternatively, the symbolic interactionist paradigm incorporates a micro-level focus on meanings produced through intimate interaction, which provides direction for interventions to end violence and encourage healing. Taken together, these paradigms offer critical perspectives that will contribute to progress in addressing this issue and, eventually, eliminating intimate partner violence altogether.

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# Frame Consistency in the Esculachos Movement in Brazil: A Call for Categorization

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## Abstract

Sociological framing theory has proven itself an influential aspect of social movement literature that examines how collective actors generate meaning within their movements. Scholarly studies have developed understandings of many various manifestations of framing in collective action, but have focused on theoretical subsets like frame alignment and frame amplification to the exclusion of other subsets, such as frame consistency. I use content analysis to examine frame consistency in the emerging esculachos movement in Brazil. My study reveals that esculachos have aligned their goals and actions in a way that suggests a gap in our sociological understanding of frame consistency. I argue that prior research on frame consistency has focused exclusively on inconsistencies between frames that organizations promote through actions and frames they promote through stated goals or intentions. I classify this as “inconsistency between frames” to distinguish it from a more nuanced, though equally important, variation of frame consistency that I call “inconsistency within frames”. The latter term addresses inconsistencies arising out of discrepancies in the extent to which organizations emphasize the same frames but to different degrees, a type of inconsistency that I found to be present in the esculachos movement.

## Keywords

*social movements, framing theory, brazil, esculachos*

## INTRODUCTION

Framing theory has developed as one of the most salient and influential aspects of the emerging social movement literature in the last several decades. Framing is defined as the process by which collective actors create specific, intentional meaning within their movements in order to shape their cause and gain followers (Benford and Snow 2000). It involves controlling the way that a social movement’s purposes, actions and beliefs are perceived or interpreted, just as a literal frame or lens can determine the way a work of art is viewed. For each social movement, certain frames are likely to resonate with the public by evoking powerful emotional responses, and in doing so inspire and mobilize followers of the movement.

Research suggests that the process of creating and manipulating frames that resonate with public discourses forms a facet of framing theory known as “frame alignment”, a phenomena necessary for successful mobilization (Benford and Snow 2000). However, just as collective actors must align their frames with potential participants external to the movement, organizations must also exercise frame alignment within the movement; in order to attract followers, they must ensure that all internal facets of framing are compatible with one another.

Though it could rightly be called “internal frame alignment” due to its essential similarity to the existing theory of frame alignment, scholarship has conceptualized this topic using the term “frame consistency” (Benford and Snow 2000). This internal “congruency between an SMO’s (Social Movement Organization’s) articulated beliefs, claims and actions” is one of the criteria of frame credibility and, thus, of frame resonance (Benford and Snow 2000). Frames that are not “logically complementary in their different aspects: tactics, diagnosis, prognosis, core values and beliefs, etc.” (Noakes and Johnston 2005), will lose resonance, meaning they are less likely to evoke beliefs, emotions or grievances that will turn passive observers into active participants. In other words, a social movement is likely to lose followers if its frames are not consistent.

Previous studies of framing in social movements have addressed or alluded to the concept of frame consistency, but only as a factor in the resonance of the movement (Benford and Snow 2000; Ellingson 1995; Noakes and Johnston 2005; Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford 1986; Zuo and Benford 1995). Furthermore, much of the framing theory literature has only discussed frame consistency in a historical context after the social movement has succeeded or failed (Ellingson 1995; Zuo and Benford 1995). As an under-studied area of sociological theory, therefore, frame consistency is a theoretical field that clearly calls for direct empirical exploration.

My analysis of frame consistency within two organizations currently participating in the *esculachos* reveals that social movement literature has thus far failed to recognize an important distinction between types of consistency and, moreover, has focused heavily on only one of two forms of inconsistency that I identify. Surfacing in Brazil only within the last two years, the *esculacho*, or act of public shaming, consists most often of a group of demonstrators publicly gathered around homes and workplaces of men known to have been torturers during the military regime. The present study will support frame consistency as important to the overall discussion of social movement framing, attempting to contribute to a broader theoretical base for consistency by presenting the necessity to distinguish inconsistency between frames, as seen in studies conducted by Ellingson (1995) and Zuo and Benford (1995), from inconsistency within frames, unobserved in previous scholarship<sup>1</sup>.

In conducting this research, I sought to understand the extent to which framing of beliefs and goals in organizational texts aligns with frames projected by actual *esculacho* events – or, put simply, the extent to which frames in the *esculachos* movement are consistent. To accomplish this purpose, I conducted case studies of two organizations currently performing *esculachos*, Frente de *Esculacho* Popular (FEP) and Levante Popular de Juventude (LPJ), in order to analyze variables that may contribute to or hinder frame consistency. I used content analysis to contrast frames promoted in goals with frames promoted in protest events and operationalized these two concepts using mission statements (representing frames promoted in goals) and photographs (representing frames promoted in protest events) from each organization.

FEP is a movement dedicated solely to the performance of *esculachos* as its only social activity, whereas LPJ is a social movement organization of youth with broad goals of social justice, and performs *esculachos* as only one facet of its activity. I hypothesized that, because of the specific nature of its goals, FEP would demonstrate frame consistency between texts and *esculacho* events, while I predicted that LPJ's framing activity in *esculachos* would be inconsistent with its very broad goals.

Four rounds of content analysis revealed that both organizations were

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<sup>1</sup> Ellingson's analysis of anti-abolitionist movements in Cincinnati found that the collective actors undermined their primary frame, preservation of the political and economic order, by protesting in mobs; this discredited the movement by acting in ways inconsistent with the group's discourse (Ellingson 1995). Similarly, Zuo and Bedford found that frames used in the 1989 student-led Chinese democracy movement emphasizing values of selflessness, Confucianism, and nationalism were resonant and successful in mobilizing the public because of their consistency with the self-sacrificing tactics the movement employed (Zuo and Bedford 1995).

inconsistent in their framing; however, the nature of the inconsistencies were different. LPJ's framing activity was found to be highly inconsistent between goals and actual *esculachos*. I classified this as inconsistency between frames. Examination of FEP, on the other hand, demonstrated relatively similar frames between its goals and its actions, but the apparent importance or prominence of those goals was vastly different. I call this variation in emphasis of the same frames inconsistency within frames. This categorization is necessary for an accurate understanding of frame consistency in social movements, and it is therefore a vital addition to sociological theory.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE EMERGENCE OF ESCULACHOS IN BRAZIL**

The wave of military dictatorships and subsequent re-democratization that swept Latin America in the latter part of the 20th century created a regional culture of memory, often accompanied by a Truth Commission, in an attempt to officially reveal, recognize, and reconcile a series of human rights violations. In Argentina and Chile, reports from Truth Commissions were published in 1984 and 2001, respectively, both within a decade of the end of the military regime. In each of the two countries, protesters performed acts of public shaming that are widely believed to have contributed to the government's formation of Truth Commissions<sup>2</sup>.

In Brazil, however, the Comissão Nacional da Verdade (CNV), or National Truth Commission, was not formed until 2009, the beginning of a five-year process that culminated in a report released in December of 2014. Its approval and establishment came 30 years after the first direct vote marked the end of the dictatorship in Brazil.

Scholars attribute this delay in State recognition to the façade of democracy maintained throughout the military regime and to the unusually gradual transition from dictatorship to true democracy, both of which worked to form a national “policy of silence” rather than a “policy of memory” (Schneider 2011). Furthermore, the 1979 Amnesty Law offered a bilateral amnesty to both military officials and opponents of the regime, providing those responsible for torture with judicial protection. Only recently have sectors of the state and social movements begun to advocate for a collective recognition of the past dictatorship, a public cry that ultimately led to the 2009 creation of the Truth Commission. However, due to conservative protests from ex-military officials and supporters who feared revocation of

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<sup>2</sup> In Argentina, this type of protest (act of public shaming) is known as *escrache*; in Chile, *funa*.

the 1979 amnesty, the commission was signed with a series of amendments that limited the scope of its investigation.

It was this threat to and subsequent revision of the Truth Commission, along with national momentum following the June 2013 wave of social action, that inspired the initiation and growth of *esculachos*. These social movements borrowed from a protest model that originated in Argentina in the 1980s after the democratic election of Alfonsín. Designed to form a spectacle that attracts popular attention, organizers of *esculachos* march with accusatory signs, adorn the houses with pictures of their victims, chant incriminating claims, reenact torture episodes, and play music – all under the banner of their forcefully declared slogan, “Se não há justiça, há *esculacho* popular!” best translated as, “If there is no justice, there is *esculacho*.” Since its origin, the movement has evolved beyond the scope of mere support for the Truth Commission, calling broadly for renewed efforts to confront the historical events and human rights violations of the dictatorship.

### THEORIZING ESCULACHOS

Social movement scholars have long recognized that collective action is a form of performance, a concept formalized by Charles Tilly in his study of contentious performances and repertoires of contention (Tilly 2008). Collective actors select tactics, or repertoires, that will most adequately accentuate and contribute to the framing of their contentious performance (Franklin 2013). Though not through the lens of social movement theory, performance study resembling Tilly’s scholarship has been applied to the study of *escraches*, the Argentine equivalent of *esculachos*. In the absence of scholarly literature approaching *esculachos* due to the remarkable novelty of their development, the present study will examine *escraches* as a theoretical base for *esculachos*, considering their similarity adequate reason for direct comparison.

Developed in 1995 by the organization HIJOS (Daughters and Sons for Identity and Justice against Forgetting and Silence), *escraches* surfaced in denouncement of the impunity of torturers and officials of the 1970s dictatorship, spreading later to countries such as Chile and Spain. In her study of the movement, Taylor coined the concept of the “DNA of Performance,” highly similar to sociology’s theory of “repertoires of contention,” to approach *escraches* as a trauma performance inherited from the Madres and Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo (Taylor 2002). Activists build a DNA that shapes their tactics and performances and is then passed down among generations of collective actors as a vehicle to transmit memory. In the specific case of the HIJOS, *escraches* confront the shock of the military

dictatorship and seek social change through collective memory.

Like Taylor, several scholars outside the realm of sociology have sought to understand the *escraches* in Argentina, though often departing from the performance perspective. Kaiser theorizes *escraches* as a communication tactic aimed at challenging a discourse of denial and eliminating the predominant culture of impunity for torturers, military officials, and others involved in the disappearances and deaths of victims during the dictatorship through public awareness. Thus, they disrupt the normalized discourse in an effort to promote an informative and truthful commentary in post-dictatorial Argentina (Kaiser 2002). Benegas, on the other hand, proposes that *escraches* are not only trauma-based performances, but also formative events that shape the way the public experiences trauma and identity. The loud, public nature of the *escraches* breaks the post-dictatorial silence and affects trauma by leading the public in overcoming fear and adopting a collective identity of agency and action (Benegas 2011).

However, as mentioned above, *esculachos* and *escraches* have been scarcely studied from a social movement perspective. Taylor’s theory of the DNA of Performance confirms the conceptualization of *escraches* as a contentious performance, therefore mandating the necessity of framing theory as a crucial element of their examination. Snow and Benford explain the essential link between performances and framing, proposing that, “Movement tactics are not solely a function of environmental constraints and adaptations, but are also constrained by anchoring master frames” (Snow and Benford 1992). Framing, therefore, is present in both goals and beliefs, and in tactics. It is this theoretical connection that so clearly calls for study of *esculachos* within framing theory and, particularly, within the concept of frame consistency. As Taylor’s study indicates and Snow and Benford confirm, performance protests such as *esculachos* are dynamic processes that require agency from activists. In other words, *esculacho* activists are engaging in framing processes that shape the way they approach their performances.

An examination of frame consistency will reveal the extent to which organizational framing is realized in these performance events, engaging both theories of collective action frames and performances. Thus, the study of *esculachos* through the lens of frame consistency provides an opportunity for multifaceted theoretical development. On the one hand, the growing movement offers a window to observe the presence or absence of frame consistency. The examination of *esculachos* builds upon the existing foundations of frame consistency by revealing more nuanced categories and neglected facets of the theory; furthermore, as *esculachos* continue to

develop, their consistency (or lack thereof) will deepen our understanding of the effects of frame consistency on a movement's resonance and credibility. On the other hand, however, *esculachos* also forge necessary links between existing theory of performance and theory of framing within social movement literature. By examining a heavily performative movement using frame consistency theory, this study attempts to open pathways for future scholars to understand the ways in which performance theory may inform framing theory and, more broadly, social movement theory as a whole.

## DATA AND METHODS

In order to analyze frame consistency within FEP and LPJ, I collected data directly from each organization. The two sources used were photographs of *esculacho* events and written mission statements from each FEP and LPJ, both of which were collected using convenience sampling. I obtained pictures depicting various *esculacho* events that have occurred in Brazil over the last two years from the organizations' websites and Facebook pages. The texts used in the study were the FEP Manifest and two "Who We Are" statements from LPJ, all of which I retrieved from the organizations' respective web pages. Coding these variables allowed me to operationalize the two framing concepts – that is, frames promoted through goals and frames promoted through protest events – while taking into account the desired self-representations of each organization. I used all available data in the content analysis, with the exception of pictures that depicted the same scene with no variation, as they would have produced sample bias. Collection of further data was restricted by the novelty of *esculacho* events in Brazil and the limited scope of this research project. Because the social movement is new and not yet widespread, the number of photographs and texts available remains small.

I used visual content analysis of photographs depicting protest events to operationalize framing occurring in *esculachos* themselves, while textual content analysis of mission statements revealed framing of goals and beliefs in both organizations. I pulled FEP images from the organization's website and represented 2-3 distinct *esculacho* events, with a total of 20 photographs. Included among the 20 were detailed copies of signs carried by protest participants, which were then classified as manifest content and used in the coding process. The mission statement used for FEP was the organization's "Manifest," taken directly from their website; the document offers a lengthy and detailed explanation of motivations and grievances that stimulate *esculachos*, providing a perfect opportunity to examine framing of goals and beliefs (FEP 2013). Data used to analyze LPJ consisted of

45 photographs taken from the organization's Facebook page, depicting approximately four different *esculachos*, and two broad mission statements: a "Who We Are" section of their website and their "Carta Compromisso," also from the website; both of these statements broadly outline the goals and grievances of the organization, omitting explanations of how these grievances are addressed in specific types of protests (LPJ 2013). Additionally, I contacted both organizations directly to ensure that no other photographs or texts could be made available, and both responded with assurances that all possible data was already published online.

It is essential to note that the small data pool, the restricted nature of photographs, and particular lack of data for LPJ introduce the possibility of sample bias. Despite the use of convenience sampling to maximize data, the research was limited by overall scarcity of photographs and mission statements, which could cause bias in the research findings; it must be recognized that photographs and mission statements may not be a complete depiction of the *esculacho* events. Content analysis of photos limited results to visual observations only; audible or verbal data was unavailable, excluding framing occurring through chanting, song or conversation. Similarly, the mission statement texts were used to approach the goals of the *esculachos*, but it cannot be guaranteed that they represent a complete and accurate generalization of all possible goals.

Finally, LPJ presented a particularly difficult data insufficiency. Though the use of their general mission statements in comparison to *esculacho* events demonstrated important results, thorough study would also consider the organization's specific goals in performing *esculachos*. This data was not included in the present research because it does not exist, but it must be noted that comparison of LPJ mission statements does not allow the opportunity to consider consistency between their goals regarding only *esculachos*.

For the purpose of the present research, frame consistency is defined as uniformity between all manifestations of a social movement's activity, including textual statement of beliefs/goals and active framing occurring during protest events. Thus, the use of content analysis lends itself perfectly to the investigation of frame consistency; examination of the documents written by the organizations reveals their desired framing, while the photos of actual events demonstrate the extent to which this framing is represented in their actions, offering an objective way to analyze multiple aspects of framing activity. I performed content analysis individually on each of the four data sets (photographs and texts from FEP, photographs and texts from LPJ), combining for a total of four rounds of analysis. This facilitated

direct comparison between framing of texts and framing in photographs for both organizations. After I completed data collection, I used coding to operationalize the concepts of framing through stated goals and framing through protest events, allowing me to examine frame consistency. All photographs were coded both inductively and deductively; some codes, such as reference to the “National Truth Commission” and “Amnesty Law,” were suggested by historical literature, while others were created in a preliminary round of open coding. Additionally, coding of photographs utilized both manifest content, primarily signage carried by participants, and latent content, including my interpretation of facial expressions and apparent emotions. The resulting codes (52 total codes for FEP and 92 for LPJ) were classified into categories, which were then used for the content analysis.

I conducted open coding individually for each of the texts due to the large variation between the goals of FEP and the goals of LPJ. Textual coding was primarily inductive and focused largely on manifest content, relying on latent content only when required for the purpose of clarification. It was necessary, for example, to clarify between the use of “torturer” in a purely revelatory manner and “torturer” as an accusatory term calling for punishment; the former was coded as “Public awareness” while the latter was “Punitive action.” Unlike visual coding, in which the picture as a whole was the unit of analysis, textual coding considered words to be the unit of analysis and counted each time a code appeared in a given text as compared to the overall count of codes. As with coding of photographs, I divided the textual codes into categories for the purpose of clear quantitative analysis<sup>3</sup>.

After coding, I compared the relative frequencies of the codes from each organization, dividing the number of codes from each category by the total number of codes from the data set. I was then able to calculate the proportion of codes that fell into each category. I completed this process for codes of FEP photographs, FEP mission statements, LPJ photographs, and LPJ mission statements, allowing me to approach frame consistency by examining the prominent categories in the mission statements with those in the photographs.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

*Analysis of FEP:* I predicted that, because the organization defined its goals only in relation to esculachos, FEP would show consistent framing across its mission statements and esculacho events. However, comparison of visual and textual content analysis revealed a clear lack of consistency between goals stated in the manifest and frames produced by the protests

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix I for a complete list of codes and categories for all texts and photographs.

themselves, noted primarily in variations in emphasis. Though FEP demonstrated relative similarity between texts and pictures regarding the overall presence or absence of frames, categories found to be most frequent in the textual analysis, and therefore most important in the process of framing the goals of the organization, were not consistent with the codes emphasized by the esculachos as depicted by the photographs.

Analysis of the FEP Manifest pointed to “Punishment” as the most prominent category, at 31.09 percent of total codes, indicating this to be the organization’s most important goal as declared by their mission statement (See Figure 1). This category included any effort in the Manifest to highlight and affect change upon the impunity of military officials known to have been torturers during the dictatorship, including open calls for judicial action, references to justice through punishment, and condemnation of the Amnesty Law.

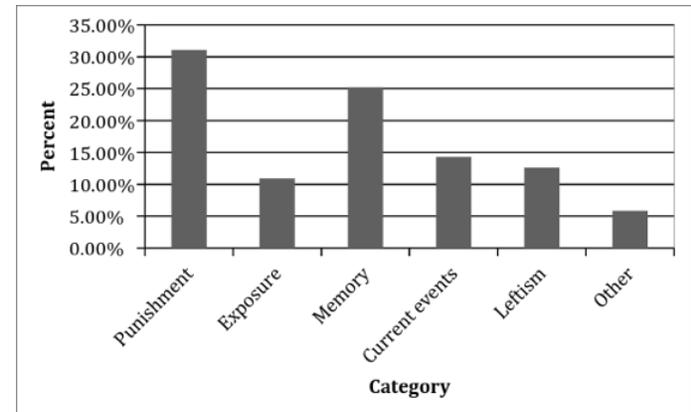


Figure 1: Frequency of codes in FEP Manifest (N=119)

Though less prominent than “Punishment,” “Memory” was also shown to be a significant category in the framing of goals seen in the FEP Manifest. Any code referencing the need for or lack of collective memory of the military dictatorship was classified under this category, including use of the words *esquecimiento* (forgetting), *amnesia* (amnesia), and *homenagear* (pay homage). The category represents 25.2 percent of total codes in the text, indicating a moderate but definitely present emphasis on collective memory as a stated goal of esculachos performed by FEP.

“Current events” followed “Memory” at 14.3 percent of total codes found in the Manifest. These codes were condemning references made in the text to the prevalence of police brutality, crime, and continued use of

torture in modern Brazilian society. The “Leftism” category, at 12.6 percent of total codes, consisted of leftist sentiments urging for militancy and mobilization. Codes classified as “Exposure” were frames intended solely to alert the public of the presence of ex-torturers and military officials, without prescriptive reference their impunity, and totaled at 10.9 percent of codes. Finally, the “Other” category, at 5.88 percent of total codes, included the codes “trauma,” “poverty,” and “National Truth Commission,” whose distinct nature did not classify them under any of the other categories.

In contrast to the heavy emphasis on “punishment” as a primary goal indicated by the Manifest, visual analysis of FEP photographs revealed “Memory” to be the most prevalent category noted in actual esculacho events. Figure 2 highlights the prominence of “Memory”; this category represented 36.6 percent of all codes in the content analysis, observed primarily in the use of signage containing pictures and names of victims of torture or disappearance. “Exposure” also appears to be more frequently present in esculacho events than in the mission statement, at 30.8 percent of codes in the photographs. “Punishment,” on the other hand, represented only 17.3% of the total codes, a significant departure from the 31.09% frequency of this category in the text and a clear indication of frame inconsistency. There was also inconsistency within the “Punishment” category, as mention of the Amnesty Law was not noted at all in the FEP photographs. Finally, trauma was much more prevalent in photographs than in the Manifest, meriting a category of its own and further highlighting inconsistency between framing of goals and framing occurring during esculachos. Figure 3 demonstrates the discrepancies in emphasis of these categories between the text and the photographs.

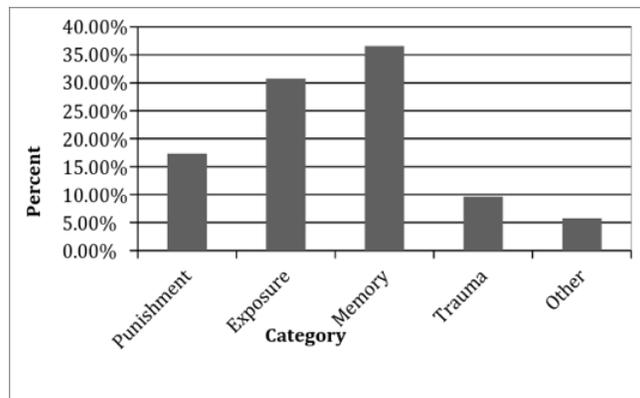


Figure 2: Frequency of codes in FEP photographs (N=52)

Therefore, quantitative content analysis reveals a significant possibility of frame inconsistency between the FEP Manifest and their performance of esculacho events. Most strikingly, the strong emphasis on punishment of torturers as a primary goal of the organization was not represented in esculachos themselves. Additionally, while photographs showed that esculacho events focus largely on inspiring collective memory of victims and public exposure of torturers, these goals, though present in the Manifest, are secondary to “Punishment” and clearly not as important to framing of FEP’s goals as the photographs would suggest.

Further comparison of Figure 1 and Figure 2 reveals the presence of some goals in the Manifest that were not at all present in the esculachos, namely the significant textual emphasis on “Current events” and “Leftism” as goals of the organization. Though indicative of variance across frames, this apparent inconsistency is alleviated by a brief qualitative analysis of the FEP Manifest. Momentary departure from a purely quantitative examination reveals the interconnected nature of the categories in the text, as exemplified by the following excerpt:

We know that the impunity of torturers is the machine that systematizes and intensifies the continuity of the brutal practices of the police and the army in Brazil... Even though the dictatorship has officially ended, Brazilian institutions are generally reminiscent of an authoritarian structure, especially in the police, its methods of violence, social coercion control, and in the torture and executions. This is a direct fruit of impunity and of forgetting. (FEP 2012, emphasis and translation of the researcher)

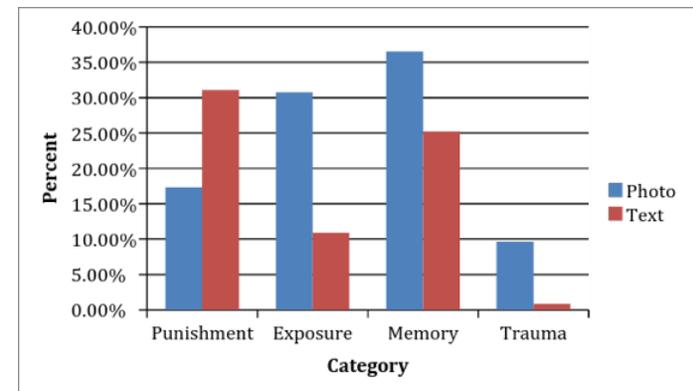


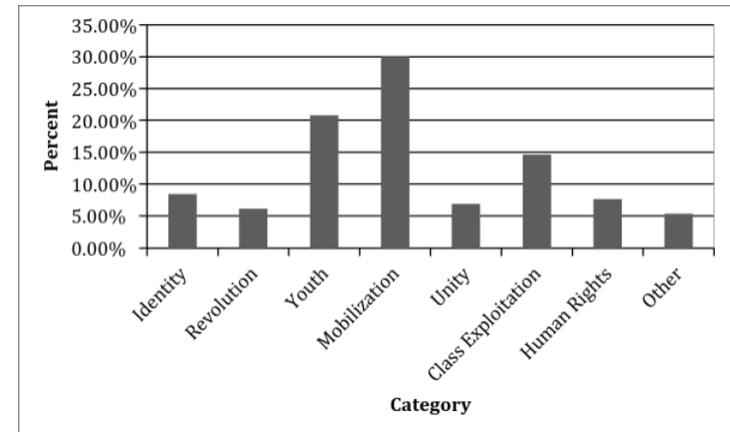
Figure 3: Bar Graph Comparing Categories in FEP Photographs and Text

Thus, the Manifest clearly connects the presence of police brutality with both the impunity of torturers and the lack of collective memory in Brazil, suggesting that violence today is perpetuated by failure to punish officials and remember victims. This textual link is supported by the quantitative analysis, which revealed that 23.5 percent of the codes within the “Current events” category were references to police brutality or violence as a direct result of impunity. Similarly, the Manifest repeatedly refers to memory as “combative” or “militant,” further connecting the goal of collective memory with anti-police or anti-government sentiments typically associated with leftism. The frames of “Punishment” and “Memory” are therefore directly connected to “Current events” and “Leftism,” indicating greater consistency between texts and photographs than initially suggested by the quantitative results. Though “Current events” and “Leftism” were not present in photographs of the esculacho events (see Figure 1), the interconnected nature of the categories in the Manifest suggests that references to impunity (“Punishment”) and forgetting (“Memory”) may be considered inclusive of continued police brutality and leftist sentiments.

In sum, though qualitative analysis confirms the presence of similar codes across texts and photographs, thus indicating the same general frames in both textual and visual manifestations of the organization, quantitative analysis supports the claim of overall inconsistency by revealing variation in prominence of certain frames over others. As a social movement formed solely for the purpose of performance and organization of esculachos, meaning all facets of framing activity are centered on one specific type of protest event, FEP demonstrated inconsistency in emphasis of frames between goals and esculacho events. Analysis of the FEP Manifest revealed their primary goal to be punishment of military officials, while the most prominent frame in the photographs of actual esculacho events was clearly memory of victims.

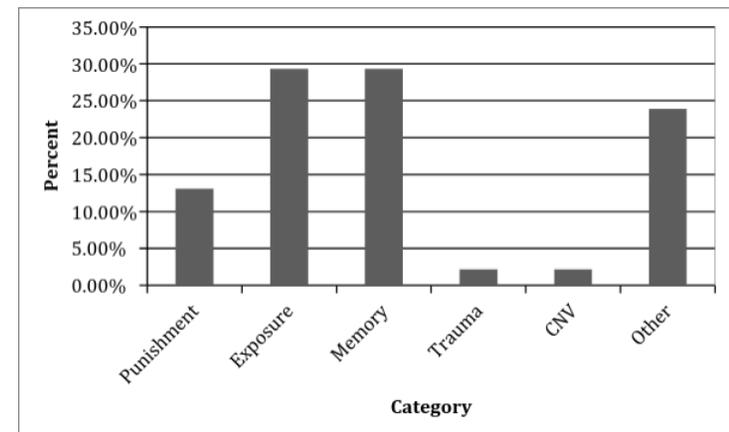
*Analysis of LPJ:* Comparison of LPJ mission statements and photographs shows definite inconsistency between framing of goals and framing occurring in esculachos themselves. Figure 4 details the results of textual content analysis, revealing the broad and scattered nature of the goals stated by the organization. The most prominent category noted in the two mission statements was “Mobilization,” at 30 percent of total codes, classified as a general call to action using words such as *massificação* (mass expansion) and *luta* (battle). References to youth and young people also represented a significant portion of the textual codes, with “Youth” at 20.8 percent of total codes. Otherwise, the distribution of codes was relatively even across all categories, pointing to the organization’s wide-ranging goals.

Esculachos were not mentioned in the texts.



**Figure 4:** Frequency of codes in LPJ mission statements (N=130)

The visual content analysis revealed framing occurring in esculacho events to be similar to frames noted in FEP photographs, but highly inconsistent with goals and beliefs observed in the LPJ mission statements. Figure 5 (below) demonstrates that “Exposure” and “Memory” were the most frequent categories, emphasized almost equally at 29.4 percent and 29.3 percent, respectively.



**Figure 5:** Frequency of codes in LPJ photographs (N=92)

None of the categories present in the mission statements were observed in the photographs, suggesting that LPJ's primary goals are not specifically reflected in their performance of *esculachos*. It could be argued that some consistency is noted in the repeated appearance of the LPJ slogan in photographs, classified above in the "Other" category. This refrain, coded as any variation of the phrase, "Levante popular de juventude," could be reflective of the emphasized values of youth and mobilization noted in the mission statements, as it expresses a general urge for young activists to "rise up." However, this is a minor and largely inferential consistency that cannot be empirically confirmed, thus leading to the conclusion that there is no consistency between framing of goals and framing of *esculachos* in LPJ. This finding could reasonably be explained by the general nature of the organization in comparison to the specificity of *esculachos*; because LPJ aims to address a wide range of grievances, their goals are too broad to be reflected in *esculachos*.

*Discussion:* Though content analysis revealed both FEP and LPJ to be inconsistent in framing of beliefs and framing occurring in *esculacho* events, examination of the two case studies against one another indicates a clear difference between the nature of the inconsistencies found in each respective organization. FEP demonstrated relative consistency regarding inclusion of frames in both its protest events and its goals; both texts and photographs revealed the presence of memory, punishment, exposure, and trauma as important frames. The inconsistency, therefore, was found in the emphasis of one category over another, particularly in the prominence of punishment as a primary goal in the Manifest and its decreased importance in the actual *esculacho* events as evidenced in the photographs.

Contrastingly, LPJ demonstrated inconsistency between the frames included in texts and those demonstrated in photographs; none of their goals, as communicated by their mission statements, were present in *esculacho* events. This frame inconsistency more closely resembles the conclusions of previous research than the inconsistency of emphasis demonstrated by FEP. In his study of the anti-abolitionist movement in Cincinnati, Ellingson reported that lack of consistency was found in the total variation between framing of goals and frames promoted by protest events. The movement's primary goals were stated to be restoration of political order, but the frames promoted by their mob protests were primarily violent (Ellingson 1995). The frame of peace seen in their goals, therefore, was completely different from the frame of violence observed in their activity. Similarly, the broad frames of social change and human rights noted in LPJ's mission statements were not specifically reflected in *esculacho* events.

It is this apparent variation revealed by the two case studies that leads to the need for recognition of multiple types of inconsistency. The present study proposes distinction between inconsistency within frames and inconsistency between frames as essential to the overall understanding and importance of frame consistency theory. Inconsistency within frames, observed in FEP, can be defined as variation in emphasis or communication of relatively similar frames between goals and actions. Inconsistency between frames, contrastingly, is variation in the presence or absence of frames across goals and actions, noted in LPJ and in the anti-abolitionist movement studied by Ellingson. In other words, if frames of goals and beliefs of a social movement are not the same as frames of protest events, it can be classified as inconsistent between frames. If frames of its goals and beliefs are the same as frames of protest events, varying only in the frequency of appearance or degree of emphasis, a social movement is considered to be inconsistent within frames.

This distinction is not only essential to the understanding of existing frame consistency theory, but also reveals an unspecified variation of inconsistency. As noted above, previous studies have referred only to consistency between frames, failing to approach consistency within frames as a valid type of frame consistency. While LPJ's inconsistency between frames was both predicted and quickly noticeable, the inconsistency within frames found in FEP was subtle, observed only through detailed examination of content analysis. Perhaps overlooked due to its nuanced nature, consideration of this form of consistency carries implications for resonance and credibility within social movements such as FEP whose goals and beliefs are specific to their protest events. The results of the FEP case study suggest that frame inconsistency can be manifest in understated yet significant ways, reinforcing the need for a categorization.

## CONCLUSIONS

Visual and textual content analysis exposed different forms of frame inconsistency in each organization examined in the case study, revealing the need for categorization. FEP, a social movement organization that performs only *esculachos* and therefore centers all goals and beliefs on one type of protest, was found to be inconsistent within frames. Textual and visual analyses demonstrated generally similar frames that were stressed at varying degrees in statement of goals versus *esculacho* events, creating inconsistency in the emphasis of some goals over others. LPJ, an organization with a broad range of goals performing *esculachos* as one manifest of social movement activity, demonstrated inconsistency between frames. None of the goals

cited in their mission statements were represented in framing occurring in *esculacho* events. This type of inconsistency is identified in previous research conducted by Ellingson and Zuo and Benford.

These data scarcities reinforce the need for continued study of *esculachos*. As performances, *esculachos* exemplify the inevitable framing that occurs during social movement activity and call for research that considers performances as agents of framing. Frame consistency (or lack thereof) is present, therefore, in every such performance, and merits intentional investigation. Moreover, because it is a new and emerging form of protest in Brazil, *esculachos* provide an important opportunity to monitor the growth of a social movement over time. With the present study as a base for comparison, future research can continue to approach *esculachos* and other performances of contention in order to observe advances in frame consistency as the movement matures, as well as further confirm the findings noted here.

The distinction of terms proposed in this study reveals the previously unexamined facet of consistency within frames, underscoring the necessity of categorization in this area of social movement theory. The specification of inconsistency within frames opens the possibility of subtle inconsistencies within social movements that have been thus far unnoticed by social movement literature, clearly warranting further establishment of types of consistency. Additionally, the present study stresses the importance of close and direct analysis of frame consistency within social movements, revealing the complexity and merit of a generally neglected field of framing theory.

The establishment of types of consistency also calls for deeper investigation to establish empirical correlations between consistency and resonance. Literature suggests that inconsistency between frames is damaging to social movement credibility and resonance (Benford and Snow 2000), but the distinction of inconsistency within frames as a separate area of frame consistency theory merits further exploration of resonance that will consider both types. Furthermore, because frame consistency has a positive effect on resonance, the distinction presented here has real life implications for social movements who seek to gain followers. Organizers of *esculachos* and other collective actors must understand that consistent frames are more resonant, and therefore more likely to support the credibility of the movement. The undeniable existence of various types of inconsistency and the inevitable occurrence of framing in any social movement performance has vast implications for the sociological fields of framing and resonance, and for the success of social movement actors. Frame consistency theory, therefore, is highly relevant to social movements and vastly critical in the

continued development of framing theory overall.

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## Appendix I: Codebook

### Categories:

Organization	Photographs	Texts
FEP	1.Punishment for Torturers 2.Exposure of Torturers (for the purpose of public knowledge) 3.CollectiveMemory 4. Trauma 5. Other	1.Punishment for Torturers 2. Exposure of Torturers 3. Collective Memory 4. Current Events 5. Leftist/militant echoes 6. Other
LPJ	1.Punishment for torturers 2. Exposure of torturers/ public knowledge 3. Collective memory 4. Dealing with trauma 5. Truth Commission 6. Other	1. Identity 2. Revolution 3. Youth 4. Mobilization 5. Unity 6. Class exploitation 7. Human Rights 8. Other

### Examples of Codes for FEP Photographs

1. Punishment for Torturers
  - Signage mentions torturers in relation to lack of punishment
2. Exposure of Torturers (for the purpose of public knowledge)
  - Graffiti of public places, including posters and art
3. Collective Memory
  - Protesters reenact torture
4. Trauma
  - Facial expressions of sadness, sorrow, etc.
5. Other
  - Use of costume

### Examples of Codes for FEP Manifesto

1. Punishment for Torturers
  - Punishment (impunidade, punidade, punicao, julgamento)
  - Crime (criminoso/ crime)
2. Exposure of Torturers
  - Name of torturer
3. Collective Memory
  - Forgetting (esquecimento, amnesia)
4. Current Events
  - Police (policia, policial)

5. Leftist/militant echoes
  - Anti-capitalist (anticapitalista)
6. Other
  - National Truth Commission (Comissão Nacional da Verdade)

### **Examples of Codes for LPJ Photographs**

1. Punishment for torturers
  - Signage uses word “justice”
2. Exposure of torturers/public knowledge
  - Use of noise-makers (instruments, megaphones) purposed to draw attention
3. Collective memory
  - Signage contains photos and/or names of victims
4. Dealing with trauma
  - Makeshift graves
5. Truth Commission
  - Signage mentions National Truth Commission
- Other
  - Use of LPJ slogan and/or symbol on signage\*

### **Examples of Codes for LPJ Texts**

1. Identity
  - feminismo/ machismo
2. Revolution
  - Conquest (conquista)
3. Youth
  - Juventude/ jovem/ jovens
4. Mobilization
  - Battle (luta)
5. Unity
  - Collective – noun or adjective (coletivo)
6. Class exploitation
  - Worker (trabalhador)
7. Human rights
  - Better conditions (melhores condições)
8. Other:
  - Democracia popular
  - Projeto Popular
  - Environment (meio ambiente)

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Jessie Tougas** graduated from the University of British Columbia in May 2015 with a Bachelor of Arts in Honours Anthropology in the Socio-Cultural Anthropology stream. She is a member of the Golden Key Society and currently works at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at UBC. She has two children, Beau and Lou.

Jessie is grateful to Dr. Tamar Scoggin McKee, Dr. Chris Shelley and Dr. Charles Menzies for their academic guidance, and is indebted to her partner Jesse Orrego for making this project possible.

**Erin Ward** graduated from Barnard College, Columbia University in 2015 with a degree in Sociology and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies. While at Barnard, she worked in the Department of Sociology and has continued this work since graduating, employed as a research assistant to Dr. Elizabeth Bernstein as she completes her forthcoming book on contemporary global policies around sex trafficking. Erin would like to thank Professor Bernstein for her guidance on this paper and as she prepares to apply to graduate school.

**Cayla Clemens** holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Lethbridge. During her studies, she had a specific interest in human development, special population support, and disability affairs. At present, Cayla is working as a Learning Specialist with the Accommodated Learning Centre at the University of Lethbridge, supporting students with disabilities. In the future, she hopes to pursue her Masters of Counseling.

**Madison Martens** is a fourth year Public Health student at the University of Lethbridge. Madison has completed extensive study in the Health Sciences, but this was her first time examining a public health issue from a sociological perspective. Upon her graduation in June 2016, Madison intends to continue her education by pursuing a Nursing degree, eventually beginning a career in public health nursing with a focus on vulnerable populations.

This article was the authors' first collaboration and their first to be published in an academic journal. The authors wish to thank Sharon Yanicki of the University of Lethbridge and the editorial staff at Eleven for their support and guidance throughout the publication process.

**Riley Russell** completed her undergraduate degree at Tulane University, graduating summa cum laude in 2014 with a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and Sociology, and a minor in Portuguese. She focused much of her academic research on Brazil, combining her fields of study to examine social movements and political change through literature, culture, and history. Riley has since moved to New York City and continued to pursue her passion for linguistics through work in the translation industry.

She would like to express sincere gratitude to Professor David Ortiz, whose powerful teaching led to the publication of this paper, and to Professor Rebecca Atencio for introducing her to the *esculachos* movement and encouraging her study of Brazil throughout her undergraduate career. Furthermore, she is thankful for the guidance and patience of John Towey and Yuchen Yang throughout the editing process. She must also acknowledge the participants in the *esculachos* movement, who responded to queries with kindness and assistance. Finally, she owes her deepest gratitude to Rob, the source of support without which this paper would not exist.

## GUIDE FOR FUTURE CONTRIBUTORS

### General

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All manuscripts must be typed and double-spaced with 1-inch margins on all sides. The submission must include numbered pages. All text (including titles, headings, and footnotes) should be in Times New Roman, 12-point font.

In general, we recommend submissions not to have too complex a hierarchy of sections and subsections. In the case of a heading, the title should be separated from the preceding paragraph by two (2) lines and one (1) line from the preceding paragraph. The heading should appear in 10-point boldface type, left justified. In the case of a sub-heading, the title should be separated from both preceding and proceeding paragraphs by a single (1) line. The sub-heading should appear in 12-point italicized type,