

The Potential of Government Intervention in Violence Against Women: Lessons from Newfoundland and Labrador

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Susan M. Manning is a Master of Arts candidate in Women and Gender Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax. She has a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Gender and Women's Studies and International Development Studies from Trent University, where she conducted the first round of research for this article.

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Abstract

While an increasingly neoliberal and neoconservative state has created challenges for Canadian feminists, Newfoundland and Labrador's Purple Ribbon Campaign, launched in 2009, illustrates how feminist analyses of gender-based violence can be incorporated into a government-sponsored anti-violence campaign. This article examines the successes and limitations of the Purple Ribbon Campaign's anti-violence analyses.

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Résumé

Alors qu'une situation de plus en plus néolibérale et néoconservatrice pose des défis aux féministes canadiens, la campagne du ruban violet à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, lancée en 2009, illustre la façon dont les analyses féministes de la violence à caractère sexiste peuvent être intégrées dans une campagne antiviolence appuyée par le gouvernement. Cet article examine les succès et les limites des analyses antiviolence de la campagne du ruban violet.

Gender-based violence became an issue of central importance for feminist scholars and activists in Canada beginning in the late 1970s. In the years since, feminists have debated how and to what extent to involve the state in efforts to combat gender-based violence. There is a strand of radical feminist theory that significantly shaped the Canadian feminist anti-violence movement, which identifies the roots of gender-based violence in patriarchy and sees the state as an institution that works to uphold patriarchy (Bevacqua 2000). Many feminist organizations, such as shelters, rape crisis centres, and counselling services, however, came to and continue to rely on the state for funding and charitable status, and in the current era of neoliberalism and neoconservatism, they are pressured to accept restrictions on their advocacy work to maintain this support (Beres, Crow, and Gottell 2009; Bonisteel and Green 2005; Janovicek 2007; Rebick 2005). Many Canadian feminists in the 1980s also began to frame violence against women as a human rights issue and a crime, encouraging women experiencing violence to access state services, such as the police and criminal justice system, after Canadian law was changed to recognize physical and sexual violence in intimate relationships as crimes (Janovicek 2007; Johnson 1996). The question of whether the state can or should be an effective feminist ally in efforts to address gender-based violence is one that has not yet been resolved.

Canadian feminists working at the government level have been somewhat successful in making gender-based violence an area of policy importance, as is shown by the government-sponsored anti-violence campaigns, laws, and policies that exist federally and provincially. In this paper, I examine one of these campaigns in light of the tensions that feminists who have worked with and within the state have confronted. In 2009, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) launched the Purple Ribbon Campaign as part of its six year, provincially-funded Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI) action plan (Executive Council 2009).

The VPI built on the earlier Provincial Strategy Against Violence, which was introduced in 1995 (VPI 2002; VPI 2006). The Purple Ribbon Campaign aims to increase public awareness about male violence against women and to facilitate its prevention in the province. The campaign's dominant message is that gender-based violence is unacceptable in Newfoundland and Labrador, and it encourages residents to wear a purple ribbon to symbolize their commitment to ending violence against women. The campaign's major social marketing tools are directed at parents with young male children and include a TV commercial and a series of print ads, which share the same takeaway message: "I will show him how to respect women." In effect, it is telling parents that they have a responsibility to teach their sons that violence against women is never okay (VPI 2013a).

The Purple Ribbon Campaign is worthy of examination through the lens of feminist scholarship because its message is explicitly gendered. The NL Government, via this campaign, names the issue 'male violence against women' and calls for men and boys to acknowledge that they have an obligation to respect women (Executive Council 2009). Thus, it places violence within a larger social framework of unequal gendered power relations in society. This sets the campaign apart from violence prevention campaigns sponsored by the governments of other Atlantic provinces, in that it closely resembles feminist framing of violence (Girard 2009). Its message is also surprising because the campaign emerged during a period when provincial governments embraced neoliberalism and neoconservatism, a context in which the state has tended to fail to recognize the gendered contexts of social issues, and typically creates or funds gender-neutral analyses of violence, rather than programs and services that are women-centered (Morrow, Hankivsky, and Varcoe 2004). I argue that the Purple Ribbon Campaign shows some important successes in incorporating a feminist analysis and message about gender-based violence, which can serve as an example for feminists working in other Atlantic provinces who are collaborating with their governments to create campaigns to combat violence. At the same time, the ways in which the Purple Ribbon Campaign has conformed to neoliberal and neoconservative discourses illustrate the constraints associated with doing feminist activism within the context of the current state.

My interest in the Purple Ribbon Campaign comes from my personal connection with this issue and the province. I was raised in a tiny outport in rural Newfoundland. There was violence in my home when I was growing up and I was aware, as a child, of several other homes in my community where gender-based violence was also occurring. Violence was quite normalized in our community; it was a both a public issue, in that everyone in the community knew about it, and a private one, as it was seen as the responsibility of individual households and families to manage and solve. The Purple Ribbon Campaign has been successful in changing such attitudes in my community and many like it. I also acknowledge that I hold a position of relative privilege, being a white, settler, middle-class, and university-educated woman. Thus, my experience of violence may be very different than the experiences of other diverse groups of women in the province, particularly Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and women living with poverty.

More than One View: Feminist Analyses of Gender-Based Violence

Just as there is no one 'feminism,' there is no one 'feminist analysis of violence.' Feminist analyses of violence against women that have developed over the last four decades can be loosely characterized as radical, liberal, and intersectional, while recognizing that there is significant diversity within each of these analyses and points of commonality among them. As Wini Breines and Linda Gordon (1983), for example, have stated, "all flow from a concern with women's rights and freedoms" (493). All hold that women experience disproportionate harm from gender-based violence and advocate for actions that focus on the perpetrator and the social structures that enable or condone violence, rather than on the victim (Bevacqua 2000; Johnson and Colpitts 2013; Walker 1992). While the preferred terminology for violence differs by perspective and time period, all feminist analyses advocate for terminology that shows that violence is a result of unequal gendered power relations in society. While the favoured term in many policy circles and within the fields of sociology and psychology is often 'family violence,' Mary Ellsberg and Lori Heise (2005) write that, "feminist researchers find the assumption of gender neutrality in the term 'family violence' problematic because it fails to high-

light that violence in the family is mostly perpetrated by men against women and children” (11). Other terms favoured by many government and professional services, such as ‘spousal,’ ‘couple,’ ‘intimate partner,’ or ‘domestic’ violence, are not considered congruent with a feminist analysis (Walker 1992; Morris 2002).

Most radical feminist analyses of violence hold that violence is the vehicle of men’s domination that works to perpetuate women’s oppression in all areas of society (Walker 1992). Discussions within second wave radical feminist consciousness-raising groups showed that many women experienced male violence in their lives. Presented with evidence of such a high prevalence of violence among women and with commonalities in experience, radical feminists saw gender-based violence as not just a personal issue, but one that was also political in nature and needed a political response (Bevacqua 2000). Consciousness-raising served multiple purposes: it provided a space for women to share their experiences of violence, created spaces for action and self-organizing among survivors, and allowed for organized state lobbying and awareness raising on the issue of violence against women (Beres, Crow, and Gottell 2009; Bevacqua 2000). The first shelters, rape crisis centres, support groups, and activist campaigns were political responses that came out of radical feminist organizing, with women who had experienced violence at the forefront of service provision and advocacy efforts (Clark and Lewis 1977; Kelly 2003; Mardorossian 2002). Radical feminists also maintained that violence against women is a structural problem, rooted in how masculinity has been constructed under patriarchy. Patricia Yancey Martin and Robert A. Hummer (2009) argue that this construction, in its most narrow and extreme form, endorses sexual violence against women. Ending gender-based violence, in their view, would require social transformation and the elimination of patriarchy (Bevacqua 2000; Nelson and Robinson 1999). Early radical feminist perspectives on gender-based violence, however, did not account for differences or systems of power other than sexism; their position was that all women who experienced violence did so because they were women and that violence took the same forms among all groups of women (Kelly 2003).

A central achievement of liberal feminist activism in Canada has been to move violence against women into the public sphere and bring it to government

attention (Bohmer et al. 2002). Seeing gender-based violence as originating in the unequal division of labour within the family and the wider society, and as preventing women from achieving their full potential, liberal feminist actions have focused on ensuring that violence against women is recognized as a crime under Canada’s legal system and that there is funding for victim services (Bevacqua 2000; Walker 1992). Liberal feminists did experience some successes in their dealings with the state. The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women argued successfully for the criminalization of wife battering in 1980 and sexual assault within marriage in 1983 (Levan 1996). Given their primary focus on criminalization and service provision, however, liberal feminists have been criticized for their reformist politics. Marina Morrow, Olena Hankivsky, and Colleen Varcoe (2004) write that, “Some feminists have argued [that] the hegemony of certain forms of feminism (liberal reformism) meant that the anti-violence movement favoured institutional reforms and professionalized responses over more socially transformative strategies to end violence” (369). Kristin A. Kelly (2003) further points out that liberal feminist approaches to gender-based violence have also been critiqued for their failure to take into account the many reasons why women might not want to seek help from the police or state agencies when seeking to escape violent situations.

Building on the challenges voiced by women of colour and other women who did not see themselves represented in the largely white and middle-class radical and liberal feminist analyses and political campaigns, the most recent shift in feminist theorizing has been to adopt an intersectional analysis of women’s experiences of violence (Morrow, Hankivsky, and Varcoe 2004). This feminist approach is more nuanced than radical and liberal feminist analyses; it holds that gender-based violence is rooted in more complex systems of power than simply patriarchy (George and Stith 2014). Intersectional perspectives look at how women’s experiences of violence are shaped by multiple systems of power, including colonization, racism, classism, and ableism (Johnson and Colpitts 2013). Michelle Bograd (2005) describes the value of an intersectional approach as follows: “Intersectionalities color the meaning and nature of domestic violence, how it is experienced by self and responded to by others, how personal and social con-

sequences are represented, and how and whether escape and safety can be obtained” (27). An intersectional analysis also acknowledges that, while women from all backgrounds and walks of life experience violence, some women are more vulnerable to violence than others. In Canada, the highest rates of gender-based violence in personal relationships as a percentage of the population can be found among Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and women living in poverty (Bograd 2005; Morris 2002). Intersectionality also exposes the ways in which violence is embedded in many social structures, including the state, which rely on these oppressive systems of power to dispossess diverse women of resources and push them to the margins of society (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). Action designed to address gender-based violence cannot be separated from efforts to combat all other sources of oppression.

Shaping the Purple Ribbon Campaign

Feminists in Newfoundland and Labrador have been lobbying for government action on gender-based violence for the last twenty-five years. While Kate McInturff’s (2013) report for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that the province has lower overall reported rates of intimate partner violence and sexual assault as compared to other Canadian provinces, she points out that still, “On any given day, nearly 50 women will seek protection from a shelter or transition home in Newfoundland and Labrador” (18). In 1988, the Newfoundland Status of Women Council (now called the St. John’s Status of Women Council) began to tackle the issue of sexual violence and fought to raise community awareness and for the establishment of a Rape Crisis Center (Hartery 2006). In 1993, the first Provincial Strategy Against Violence began a series of public consultations, during which feminists enjoyed some modest success in introducing a gender-based analysis into the strategy. The grassroots feminist community networks that exist in many regions in NL assisted in evaluating the strategy and ensured that voices from around the province were heard. George (2000) maintains, however, that the NL government’s approach to gender-based violence via the strategy was limited:

On the one hand, it has expanded its attention to violence and the experience of vulnerable populations, in its plan to

create ‘safe, caring’ communities. On the other, the structural changes it has developed and the fiscal restraint it exercises has made these initiatives difficult to realize in a meaningful way. (181)

The language of ‘safe and caring communities’ invoked in the strategy did not take into account structural inequalities and how vulnerabilities to and experiences of violence are shaped by sexism, racism, and other systems of power (George 2000; Bograd 2005). According to Janine Brodie (2002), the lack of attention to systematic inequalities is typical of neoliberal state strategies that seek to address gender-based violence. Fiscal constraints precipitated by the cod moratorium, the resultant major downturn in the local economy, and the province’s enhanced dependence on the federal government limited the provincial government’s willingness and ability to provide the necessary services to make the strategy a success (George 2000, 2011). Feminists all around the province, however, continued to advocate for a long-term strategy against violence. In 2006, the NL government established a six-year Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI) action plan (George 2011).

Launched in 2009, the Purple Ribbon Campaign was one of four VPI campaigns. Others focused on youth violence, child abuse, and elder abuse. The VPI worked across multiple government departments and consulted with a variety of community partners and stakeholders. These included the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, local Status of Women Councils, the Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador and their member shelters, the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault and Crisis Prevention Centre, the Seniors’ Resource Centre of Newfoundland and Labrador, the St. John’s Native Friendship Centre, the Multicultural Women’s Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities, among others (VPI 2013b). The VPI was centered in the Women’s Policy Office (WPO), which is part of the Executive Council of the provincial government (George 2000). Although the VPI action plan concluded in 2012 (VPI 2013b), a new plan is currently under development.

Successes and Tensions in a Neoliberal and Neoconservative Climate

The Purple Ribbon Campaign is unique among anti-violence campaigns in the Atlantic provinces in

that it incorporated key elements of feminist analyses of gender-based violence in its framework, message, and content, while enjoying substantial government funding. At the same time, neoliberal and neoconservative discourses did shape how this government-sponsored campaign was framed, a trend that feminist anti-violence scholars and activists have identified as characteristic of state responses to violence against women in other regions in Canada beginning in the 1980s (Beres, Crow, and Gottell 2009; Brodie 2002). In this section, I consider key components of the Purple Ribbon Campaign—the framework, message, content, and funding—with this tension in mind.

The Framework

The 2006 VPI action plan, within which the Purple Ribbon Campaign developed, included a series of Guiding Principles. The “core principle” was articulated as follows:

The core principle is that the social and cultural roots of violence are based on inequality. While women, children, seniors and persons with disabilities are more likely to be victims of violence, other factors such as disability, sexual orientation, economic status or racial origin can put them at even higher risk. Society reinforces violence through expressions of sexism, ageism, classism, heterosexism, racism and other biased attitudes. (VPI 2013b)

Given that “inequality” and the “social and cultural roots” of violence were specifically recognized, the VPI Guiding Principles were congruent with feminist analyses that emphasize that violence is based in structural inequalities. The naming of specific social identities and systems of power that increase vulnerability to violence (Johnson and Colpitts 2013) indicates that an intersectional feminist understanding of violence was incorporated into the action plan. This framing could be considered a feminist success because neoliberal discourse does not recognize systemic oppression on the basis of gender, race, or any other social division (Brodie 2002). In the Atlantic region, the Prince Edward Island (PEI) government is the only other provincial government to recognize that structural inequality contributes to “family violence” in its official anti-violence campaign, citing “injustice based on sex, race, age, class, sexual orientation, and physical or mental ability” as a causal factor (Government of PEI 2014). Unlike

NL, however, PEI does not name the systems of power, termed “biased attitudes” in the above quote, that contribute to these inequalities.

Contrary to feminist analyses, neoliberal states also tend to treat gender-based violence as a problem caused by individuals (Levan 1996). In Canada, this trend is often reflected in the use of such terms as ‘family violence’ or ‘domestic violence’ in federal and provincial government anti-violence campaigns, including those in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and PEI (Executive Council Office 2014; Government of PEI 2014; Newman and White 2006; Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women 2013). Andrea Levan (1996) asserts that these terms locate “the problem in the family rather than in a societal system of gender relations, and furthermore, obscure who was doing what to whom” (330). Thus, many feminists favour the language of ‘male violence against women’ or other similarly gendered terms because they make gender and structural inequalities visible (Walker 1990). The Purple Ribbon Campaign adopted this latter terminology in all its materials. (However, the provincial legal system often uses the term ‘family violence,’ particularly in reference to legal provisions associated with its Family Violence Protection Act (VPI 2013a)). Breines and Gordon (1983) are also critical of the umbrella terms ‘family’ or ‘domestic violence’ because they conflate very different relationships of violence—intimate partner violence, child abuse, and elder abuse—rather than recognizing that different analytical approaches and policy responses are required in each case. While the PEI government has launched one campaign that seeks to address these different forms of violence, NL developed separate violence prevention strategies to address intimate partner violence, child abuse, youth violence, and elder abuse (Government of PEI 2014; VPI 2013b).

The Message

The Purple Ribbon Campaign also stands out in the Atlantic region because of its unique message about gender-based violence, which has been disseminated through a series of print ads, a television commercial, and its website, respectwomen.ca. Both the ads and commercial are directed at families with male children; they encourage parents, and particularly fathers as primary male role models, to instill respect for women’s equality in their son(s) while they are teaching them

other fundamental skills and values, such as the tying of shoes and importance of sharing. The tagline in these print ads and the commercial is: "I will show him how to respect women" (VPI 2013a; see www.respect-women.ca to view the social marketing materials). In the press release announcing the campaign, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women stated, "If our young boys are taught to respect women from day one, then we have tackled a major obstacle in preventing violence against women in the future" (Executive Council 2009). The ads direct viewers to the campaign's website where they can obtain detailed information about gender-based violence in the province (www.respectwomen.ca).

The Purple Ribbon Campaign tagline makes violence against women explicit, naming men as the leading perpetrators of gender-based violence. This message is consistent with the radical feminist perspective on violence and, by using the umbrella term "women," it does not signal women's different positionalities and their varying vulnerabilities to and experiences of violence. That said, this gendered message is significant, especially given that neoliberal states tend to remove gender from the language of social policy (Kingfisher 2002). In Canada, neoliberalism has worked to ensure that, "Gendered identity...is now coded as just one of the many identities that make up the Canadian multicultural mosaic, rather than as a fundamental structuring principle informing the daily lives of Canadians, and a critical component of citizenship equality" (Brodie and Bakker 2008, 70). In this latter framing, women escaping violence become one of many 'special interest' groups looking for state support (Gotell 2007). When gender-based violence does gain attention, federal and provincial governments would typically prefer to fund a gender-neutral message about violence, rather than a woman-centered one (Morrow, Hankivsky, and Varcoe 2004). Hence, it is noteworthy that the NL government has funded an explicitly woman-centered message.

The way in which the message of the Purple Ribbon Campaign is couched in the notion of respect and boys learning to respect women is also consistent with multiple feminist analyses of gender-based violence. Respect, in this instance, suggests an understanding of different power differentials, which feminists have identified as creating the conditions in which gender-based violence occurs. Respect is also linked to equality in

the campaign's print ads (VPI 2013a). Some feminists have argued that boys are socialized from childhood to see violence, aggression, and toughness as acceptable, and often necessary, markers of hegemonic masculinity (Anderson 2005; Walker, 1992). The comments made by Minister Responsible for the Status of Women cited above support this understanding. The campaign's emphasis on teaching boys to respect women from an early age can be seen as an attempt to disrupt socialization into violent forms of masculine behaviour.

Despite these successes, neoliberal ideas have clearly influenced this takeaway message. Neoliberalism individualizes social problems, including violence, and encourages people to rely on themselves and their families, rather than the state, to deal with them (Kingfisher 2002). The message, "I will show him how to respect women," is directed at parents and especially fathers, who are asked to assume primary responsibility for addressing gender-based violence and ensuring that their sons will not be a part of the problem in the future. This message ignores the insights of intersectional feminist analyses of violence, that insist that gender-based violence is complex and strategies to combat it must take into account multiple systems and institutions of power that support it, including the state.

The Content

One feature that is common to all anti-violence campaigns in the Atlantic provinces is the provision of a list of resources, such as phone numbers for police, shelters, crisis lines, and affordable housing, for women seeking to leave violent situations. All four provincial websites have incorporated a liberal feminist emphasis on conceptualizing gender-based violence as a crime and stressing how the police and the justice system can help to ensure that the perpetrator is charged and the violence is stopped. However, this law and order approach overlooks the fact that many women who experience violence do not wish to involve police or the criminal justice system. Kelly (2003) cites a number of reasons why that might be the case: "distrust of police and state authority; fears that bringing in outsiders will escalate the violence; love for the abuser; a desire to keep the family and relationship together; feeling shame about the violence; and wanting to avoid public disclosure and exposure" (51). Furthermore, many women in abusive relationships depend financially on their partner or their partner's family and would not be able to make ends

meet without that support (Bennett, Goodman, and Dutton 1999). Mandatory charging in cases of assault in intimate relationships has resulted in some women also being charged after using physical force in self-defence (Ontario Women's Justice Network 2013). The Purple Ribbon Campaign and the Nova Scotia Domestic Violence Resource Center are the only campaigns in the Atlantic region that openly acknowledge these barriers on their websites. Both still encourage women to seek police assistance as a primary action, but also identify other options such as shelters, crisis lines, counselling centers, and seeking support from family and friends.

While the criminalization of gender-based violence was a key success of liberal feminism in Canada, Bohmer et al. (2002) argue that a criminal justice approach has the potential to take much of the power in these situations away from women survivors, as they have little control over what happens to their partner after police are involved. Rather, power is placed in the hands of the state and women who have experienced violence are relegated to the role of victim and their resistance and empowerment are overlooked (Gotell 1998). The criminal justice approach, evident in the Purple Ribbon Campaign and other provincial government-sponsored anti-violence initiatives, is also consistent with neoliberal and neoconservative discourses of law and order as a means of social control. Violent crimes are understood as acts committed by angry individuals in individual families, and not as symptoms of wider structural problems that need to be addressed (Gotell 1998). Another goal of neoconservatism is to maintain the integrity of heterosexual marriage and the traditional nuclear family (Brown 2006). By framing of gender-based violence as an individual crime within dysfunctional families, these institutions and the unequal power relations within them remain unchallenged (Bryson 2003; Gotell 1998).

Nevertheless, the Purple Ribbon Campaign can also be commended because it adopts an intersectional analysis of violence in many of the materials on its website, although it does not specifically use the term 'intersectionality.' For example, the statement prefacing the fact sheet on statistics on violence against women in the province integrates an intersectional perspective :

How violence affects victims depends on other aspects of their lives, such as their age, ethnicity, background, lev-

el of ability and sexual orientation, to name only a few. These multiple dimensions are weaved into all life experiences. For women, the impact and severity of violence can depend on many physical, social, and economic factors. (VPI 2013a)

The campaign website also includes specific information on violence as it affects different groups of marginalized women, a list of barriers that prevent women from leaving a violent relationship, which indicates an understanding of structural power relations, and a special section on additional challenges rural women face when seeking assistance (VPI 2013a). In the Atlantic region, the Purple Ribbon Campaign is the most comprehensive in this respect, although the Nova Scotia website includes content that speaks to Indigenous women, African Nova Scotian women, and women with disabilities (Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women 2013).

Despite the breadth of the Purple Ribbon Campaign website, it includes only one section on the specifics of violence against Indigenous women, and very little of the information in that section is specific to the province (VPI 2013a). Indigenous women's experiences of violence were not represented in the first Provincial Strategy Against Violence (George 2000). There are a substantial number of Mi'kmaq, Innu, Inuit, and Métis women in the province who face their own unique challenges in regard to gender-based violence that, like Indigenous women in other parts of Canada, are often complicated by geographic isolation and the legacies of colonization (Johnson and Colpitts 2013). Glynis George (2011) writes that the Women's Policy Office has not been able to successfully integrate many of the concerns and priorities of Indigenous and settler feminists in policy and action plans. That said, the Aboriginal Women's Violence Prevention Grants program, which is another component of the VPI, funds specific gender-based anti-violence programs in Indigenous communities on the island and in Labrador (VPI 2013b).

The Funding

The amount of NL government funding allocated to Violence Prevention Initiative and the Purple Ribbon Campaign can be interpreted as another feminist success in their efforts to ensure that gender-based

anti-violence work remained on the provincial agenda. An examination of NL provincial budgets from 1999 to 2012 indicates that the budget for Women's Policy stream, which encompasses both the Women's Policy Office and the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, grew almost every year.

This increase has been quite dramatic, with the amount budgeted growing from \$685,600 in 1999 to \$4,886,300 in 2011 and dropping slightly to \$4,755,500 in 2012 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1999, 2011, 2012). In comparison, funding for the government branches that deal with women's issues in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in 2012 was \$774,000 and \$3,198,000 respectively (Government of New Brunswick 2012; Government of Nova Scotia 2012). The NL government's growing funding package for the Women's Policy stream is particularly noteworthy in a neoliberal era of fiscal restraint and debt reduction (Gotell 1998). Federal and provincial governments have increasingly invoked fiscal restraint as a justification to impose funding cuts in various sectors, including feminist organizations who do gender-based anti-violence work, women's policy and anti-violence initiatives, and social welfare programs, such as income support and healthcare, the absence of which can increase women's vulnerabilities to violence (Cohen and Pulkingham 2009; Gotell 1998). Newfoundland and Labrador is certainly not immune to this fiscal strategy. The 2013 budget included particularly harsh cuts to the health care system, eliminating over 200 jobs (CBC News, 2013). Within this landscape, it is possible to hypothesize that the generous funding allocated to the Women's Policy stream and, within it, the Purple Ribbon Campaign might in part be due to its compatibility with a neoliberal pro-nuclear family and law and order agenda.

The Purple Ribbon Campaign was the last of four anti-violence campaigns funded under the VPI. Bégin (1997) has argued that, since the emergence of neoliberalism and neoconservatism, the focus of social programming has shifted to those deemed most 'deserving' of state support. In Canada, this has meant that social program funding directed towards women's equality has steadily been reallocated to the wellbeing of children and families (Brodie and Bakker 2007; Morrow, Hankivsky, and Varcoe 2004). In the area of violence prevention funding, children and the elderly are typically deemed to be the 'most deserving' of violence

protection from the state (Bégin 1997). Indeed, the VPI campaigns on child abuse, elder abuse, and youth violence were all implemented a year or two before the Purple Ribbon Campaign was launched (VPI 2013b).

Looking Forward

Given that the federal government actively encourages non-profit organizations to move towards a corporate service provision model so they come to rely less on state funding, feminist alliances with provincial governments may be an even more necessary step in future activism. The infamous ten percent rule, which allows non-profits to dedicate only ten percent of their resources to advocacy, limits the ability of feminist organizations to pursue the kinds of actions encouraged in feminist analyses of violence on their own (Bonisteel and Green 2005). However, the example of the Purple Ribbon Campaign shows that a government-sponsored campaign on gender-based violence can successfully retain key elements of feminist analyses of violence, including explicitly gendered terminology, the lens of structural inequality, and a consideration of intersectionality, in its framework, message, and content. Of course, the Purple Ribbon Campaign has not escaped the influence of the neoliberal priorities and ideologies that is the current *modus operandi* of the NL and other provincial governments. While this has certainly impeded the adoption of a deeper intersectional and structural feminist analysis of gender-based violence in NL, it is very likely that this absence has allowed the VPI and the Purple Ribbon Campaign to enjoy such a high level of government support. That said, the campaign could serve as an example to the other Atlantic provinces in terms of how to integrate a degree of feminist analyses into their own gender-based violence initiatives. There is also reason to be optimistic that feminist analyses of violence will continue to shape the new VPI action plan and anti-violence initiatives that are currently under development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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