

The Politics of Narrative, Narrative as Politic: Rethinking Reproductive Justice Frameworks through the South Dakota Abortion Story

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The article examines the 2006 struggle over abortion rights in South Dakota in order to consider the circulation of narratives on two distinct, but intersecting scales: first, the use of women's individual narratives as a rights-gaining strategy; and second, the narratives that reproductive justice scholars and activists have constructed about these movements. The article argues that the case of the South Dakota abortion wars encourages a rethinking of feminist assumptions regarding the political utility of personal narratives, and that the engagement of Native women in this case suggests the need for more complex understandings of the relationship of reproductive justice to reproductive rights frameworks. Scholars often produce these positions as fundamentally different, but, in practice, they often overlap in ways that suggest their deep intertwinement. This analysis adds to critical scholarship on reproduction not only in its focus on aspects of a case that have largely escaped attention, but, more importantly, in its insistence that broader social frames can be understood through a rethinking of the political utility of both personal and movement narratives.

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In 2006, the South Dakota state legislature passed “The Women’s Health and Human Life Protection Act.” Signed into law by Governor Mike Rounds, this draconian ban on abortion made no exceptions for rape, incest, or health of the woman.¹ In fact, even if the life of the pregnant woman was in danger, according

to this new law, physicians would be required to do everything possible to preserve the fetus. Abortion had already become increasingly inaccessible across the country (due, for example, to a lack of abortion providers, the refusal of many states to cover abortions through Medicaid and other state-based health care for low-income women, and the proliferation of restrictive laws, such as the twenty-four-hour waiting period and parental consent). And yet, South Dakota's abortion ban still shook the country—as much for its harshness as its overt challenge to the 1973 Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*. Had voters accepted the ban, in all likelihood the case would have eventually traveled to the Supreme Court, creating an opportunity to revisit *Roe*. South Dakota simultaneously came to symbolize the greatest hopes of the anti-abortion movement and the greatest fears of abortion rights supporters.

This article examines the 2006 struggles over abortion rights in South Dakota in order to consider the circulation of narratives on two distinct, but intersecting scales: first, the use of women's individual narratives as a rights-gaining strategy; and second, the narratives that reproductive justice scholars and activists have constructed about our movements. I consider the anti-abortion campaign's deployment of women's first-person narrative accounts of their unintended pregnancies, a tactic long used by abortion rights advocates for its epitomizing of the feminist "personal is political" mantra: telling women's stories in the interest of social change.² The state's abortion rights group, the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families, in contrast, had little to say about women's lives, instead relying upon pro-privacy, pro-family, and anti-government intrusion rhetorics. An analysis of this seemingly unexpected reversal has the potential to illuminate broader social frames, which, as Judith Butler (2009) points out, are themselves operations of power. The discourses, ideologies, and strategies present in the South Dakota abortion wars are the operations of power I deconstruct here, with the intention of illuminating the ideologies undergirding reproductive justice narratives.

But the story of the South Dakota abortion wars must not be told simply in terms of the campaigns working for or against abortion rights, since the events occurring in Indian Country significantly impacted the case. Native women entered the discursive fray by sharing narratives, a strategy of the anti-abortion campaign, to articulate *support* for abortion rights; in telling their stories, Native women drew from discourses, ideologies, and strategies typically associated with anti-abortion *and* abortion rights positions, as well as those of reproductive justice supporters. I argue, first, that the case of the South Dakota abortion wars encourages a rethinking of feminist assumptions regarding the political utility of personal narratives, and, further, that Native women's engagement in this case calls for a more complex understanding of the relationship of reproductive justice to reproductive rights frameworks. Scholars and activists alike often produce these positions as fundamentally different, but in practice, they often overlap in ways that suggest their deep intertwinement.

Beyond the Binary: Reproductive Rights and Justice, Scholars and Activists

Reproductive justice advocates and scholars often posit that reproductive rights movements rely upon choice and privacy rhetorics in their too-narrow work for contraceptive and abortion rights—issues represented as the concerns of middle-class white women. By contrast, reproductive justice is described as addressing a broader range of reproductive concerns through an intersectional focus on social justice; it is that which has worked to push mainstream feminists beyond understanding abortion as the single most important women’s issue. Scholars and activists often cite both the eugenicist history of abortion and the abuses of contraception production and distribution (Soto Laveaga 2009; Smith 2005a, 2005b), which have and continue to disproportionately impact women of color, low-income women, and women with disabilities, as well as the politics of many reproductive issues that have garnered less attention. These include, but are not limited to: coercive sterilization (Gutiérrez 2008; Smith 2005a, 2005b); criminalization, welfare reform, and social supports for poor women to have and raise the number of children they want (Derkas 2012; Roberts 1998); environmental racism—manifesting, for example, in toxins in breast milk (LaDuke 1999), transnational and transracial adoption (L. Briggs 2012), population control (Sasser 2014); and reproductive technologies (Bumiller and Smith 2009).

In making these important contributions, reproductive justice advocates and scholars often produce their positions as distinct from those of reproductive rights movements. Kimala Price (2010), for example, suggests that as a movement works to create an identity, it “not only defines itself by what it is, but also by what it is not. . . . An object has meaning because of another object that is its opposite” (53). Although Price “do[es] not mean to imply that the reproductive justice movement is a countermovement to the pro-choice movement, that is, a movement created to directly oppose the political agenda of the pro-choice movement,” this is, in effect, the relation she describes: “The reproductive justice movement forms its identity partially by setting itself apart from the mainstream pro-choice movement; we make sense of the identity and goals of reproductive justice because of its difference from the mainstream pro-choice movement” (55–56). Legal scholar Robin West (2009) similarly sees the fight for legal abortion as “in tension with” the demands for “greater community and state assistance” (1394). And in a review of *Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice*, a 2004 anthology widely considered to be a foundational reproductive justice text, Rickie Solinger (2005) argues that the collection offers “crystal clear explanations of the *differences* between pro-choice work and working for reproductive justice” (239; emphasis added). This is precisely the variety of narrative to which I referred when I suggested elsewhere that “[f]or the last two decades, scholars and activists have discussed the relationship between reproductive justice and reproductive rights frameworks and movements primarily in terms of the[ir] differences” (Thomsen 2013, 149).

It is clear in such narratives which movement is the marker of progress. We move, as Zakiya Luna (2009) suggests, “from rights to justice.” The reproductive justice movement has a “more holistic agenda” (Price 2010, 60), utilizes a “more comprehensive rubric” (Elena R. Gutiérrez, qtd. in L. Briggs et al. 2013, 105), and is “broader in scope than its predecessors” (Price 2010, 61–62). Abortion epitomizes the focus of the rights-based frameworks from which reproductive justice advocates move in our desires for more holistic, broad, and comprehensive approaches. “The main goal of the reproductive justice movement,” Price argues, “is to move beyond the pro-choice movement’s singular focus on abortion” (42). Indeed, reproductive justice has come to be viewed as “a corrective to the narrow focus on abortion that dominated electoral politics and feminist work since the 1970s” (Mason 2013, 233).

While *reproductive justice* is commonly described as a framework that emerged from the activism of women of color, scholars have begun, with the growth in reproductive justice scholarship, to describe the circulation of the term in ways that speak to its capaciousness. Erika Derkas (2012) groups scholars who analyze reproductive justice issues, calling this body of work “reproductive justice theory.” Luna and Kristin Luker (2013) suggest that reproductive justice “contains multiple modes: analytic framework, movement, praxis, and vision” (328). And Carol Mason (2013), in her discussion of organizing a reproductive justice workshop at her university, calls reproductive justice “an idea” (226) and an “organizing principle” (233).

This brief discussion of scholars’ definitions of reproductive justice speaks to the impossibility of creating any accurate distinctions between reproductive justice scholarship and activism. As such, I will refer to scholars and activists or advocates throughout this article, refusing to delineate any parameters between them. This approach is in line with those of other reproductive justice scholars and advocates: a great deal of academic scholarship on reproductive justice roots its analyses in the work of reproductive justice activists (Luna 2009, 2010; Mason 2013; Nelson 2010; Price 2010; Silliman et al. 2004); reproductive justice activists publish in academic forums and speak at academic conferences (Ross 2006); and the National Women’s Studies Association held its first reproductive justice interest group meeting in 2013, an event attended by scholars and activists alike. Scholars have long addressed this co-constitutive nature of scholarship and activism, knowledge and engagement (L. Briggs 2008; Enke 2007; Lipsitz 2008), a relationship to which Mason (2013) refers in her discussion of the mutual accountability of reproductive justice scholars and activists: “We teacher-scholars are accountable to the activists and professional advocates as much as the activists and professional advocates must be accountable for their policies and discourses that we teacher-scholars analyze” (237).

In this article, I expand on the important work of reproductive justice activists and scholars to examine the relationship of reproductive rights and justice frameworks to each other and, along with anti-abortion frameworks, to one

specific political strategy: the utilization of women's narratives. Feminist scholars and activists have long celebrated the incorporation of marginalized voices into hegemonic narratives as a way to confront the predominance of these narratives. In her now-classic article "The Evidence of Experience" (1991), Joan W. Scott points to the limits of such a position. She critiques scholars' deployments of individual experience, arguing that in assuming that experience can count as evidence, we naturalize identities and experiences, leaving unexamined how identities and experiences are socially produced in the first place. Despite the influence of Scott's essay, the use of personal narratives as an activist tool has largely escaped appraisal, although this strategy relies upon the ideology that Scott famously critiques: viewing individual narratives as unmediated forms of knowledge and truth. When anti-abortion organizations use the strategies that feminists fought to legitimate, and abortion rights groups frame their arguments within neoliberal logics, we must revise feminist assumptions regarding the liberatory possibilities of using individual narratives as a rights-seeking strategy, a point exemplified by the South Dakota abortion wars.

This analysis of the South Dakota abortion ban is fundamentally concerned with tribal politics, contemporary abortion issues, feminist storytelling, and reproductive justice narratives. It adds to critical scholarship on reproduction not only in its focus on aspects of a case that have largely escaped attention, but, more importantly, in its insistence that we can better understand broader social frames through a rethinking of the political utility of both personal narratives and those movement narratives perpetuated by scholars and activists. Previous scholarly and activist discussions of the South Dakota abortion ban have largely overlooked the contributions of Native women to the case, despite both some scholarly interest in South Dakota's abortion politics and also activists' recognition of the ban's significance.³

That scholars and activists have disregarded the complexity of this case (see endnote 3) speaks to the politics of race and place in reproductive rights and justice struggles more broadly. While reproductive justice scholars and activists have advocated for the necessary centralizing of race in reproductive justice work (a position disregarded at times, as this case makes clear), the role of place—or, how, as Mason (2013, 230; emphasis in original) says, "*place matters*"—in actualizing and analyzing reproductive justice has been less explored. To ignore place is to miss a fundamental part of how the ban came to exist; the decision of anti-abortion groups to launch this battle in South Dakota cannot be dislodged from broader cultural assumptions about the anachronism of the rural (and) Midwest. Such positions have influenced discussions of the case, allowing it to be dismissed as rare and extreme and creating obstacles to recognizing the ways in which the approaches in South Dakota reflect maneuvers utilized in broader anti-abortion and abortion rights efforts.

In what follows, I first situate the 2006 campaigns within the context of anti-reproductive rights legislation in South Dakota, and explain the

significance of the state in terms of national struggles over reproductive rights. Second, I analyze the websites, campaign promotional materials, news coverage, and commercials associated with both the abortion rights and anti-abortion campaigns in the state to examine how the campaigns deployed women's narratives. Third, I highlight the subaltern discursive strategies used by Native women to both further connect the emergence of women's narratives to broader rhetorics and to complicate the reproductive justice versus reproductive rights dichotomy. In much the same way as Faye Ginsburg (1998) identified Fargo, North Dakota, as a microcosm of the national abortion debate during the 1980s, the case of the ongoing South Dakota abortion wars in the 2000s provides entrée into the current state of reproductive rights activism, as well as the relationships between both reproductive justice and rights frameworks and specific political strategies and broader ideologies.

Situating South Dakota

Although the 2006 ban is the focus of this article, it represents neither the beginning nor the end of anti-abortion political activism in South Dakota. State legislators introduced eight pieces of anti-abortion legislation in the 1970s, fourteen in the '80s, seventeen in the '90s, and more than forty pieces since 2000.⁴ The 2006 ban is reflective of both the rise in anti-abortion legislative activism and the increasingly conservative nature of the state's legislative proposals. Since 2006, the South Dakota state legislature has twice made national headlines for its radical attempts to restrict abortion. In February 2011, state legislators unsuccessfully proposed House Bill 1171, which would have essentially made it legal to kill an abortion provider and to commit acts that would otherwise be considered felonies. Just weeks later, legislators passed House Bill 127 to require women seeking abortion to first be "counseled" at "Crisis Pregnancy Centers"—unregulated and unlicensed anti-abortion organizations that front as medical clinics, but are generally staffed by untrained volunteers connected to religious organizations. These legislative attempts reflect broader cultural patterns: in 2011 alone, over 1,100 pieces of anti-abortion legislation were proposed in the United States (Joffe 2012).

The Events

In South Dakota, a state with a population of 785,000, fewer than 800 abortions are performed annually, the lowest number of any state (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation 2011). At the time of the ban, not a single doctor in the state was willing to offer the procedure; one day each week, Planned Parenthood flew in a formerly retired doctor from Minnesota to perform abortions at its clinic in Sioux Falls, the state's largest city, which sits in the southeast corner of the state. So it was in South Dakota, a state with one abortion clinic, no abortion

providers, and the fewest abortions performed, that (national and local) anti-abortion advocates chose to battle over one of the country's most controversial social issues.

In response to the 2006 ban, some of the state's political leaders, clergy, pro-choice activists, and healthcare providers formed the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families, with the goal of repealing the legislation. Campaign volunteers collected 38,000 petition signatures—over twice the required number—to refer the issue to South Dakota voters. Abortion rights supporters and opponents across the country expressed surprise when 56 percent of the state's voters repealed the ban. Leslee Unruh, executive director of Vote Yes for Life, nationally renowned abstinence-only sex-education advocate, and founder and director of crisis pregnancy centers in South Dakota, led her campaign to collect enough signatures to refer the ban back to the voters, who overwhelmingly defeated it for a second time in 2008.

But these bills and repeals only represent one part of the politics of South Dakota's abortion wars. Cecilia Fire Thunder, the first woman president of the Oglala Sioux tribe and the tribe's leader at the time of the abortion ban, created great controversy upon promising to build a women's health clinic on the Pine Ridge reservation if South Dakota voters did not overturn the ban. Fire Thunder's vow, combined with the sovereignty of tribal lands, guaranteed that abortion would remain legal in one area of the state. Her nearly all-male tribal council subsequently impeached her on the grounds that she had solicited donations for an unapproved clinic—a claim that Fire Thunder denied. The council added fuel to the fire when it not only banned abortion on tribal land, but also “banished from the reservation anyone who considers getting an abortion or helps someone else obtain one” (K. Briggs 2006). Native women across the country responded with outrage, making use of discourses both reflective of and different from those of anti-abortion and abortion rights supporters. The material and symbolic implications of both the impeachment of the tribe's first woman president and the tribal abortion ban crystallized the South Dakota ban as a Native woman's issue.

Life or Healthy Families? An Overview of Campaign Discourses

The South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families' discourses reflected and diverged from those of national abortion rights organizations. Its refusal to deploy “choice” frameworks signaled a departure, while its move away from discourses of women's liberation, equality, and rights and its decision to instead champion privacy, family, and anti-government intrusion marked a convergence. The campaign supplemented these preponderant discourses with rhetorics of doctors' rights and healthcare. As evident in the title of the organization alone, the campaign utilized discourses dominant in two different periods in the history of abortion rights—pro-family rhetoric from the 1980s,

and health-infused language from the late 1990s and early 2000s—to characterize the nature and goals of the group (Saletan 2004; Thomsen 2008). Ironically, the discourses the campaign deployed (pro-privacy, pro-family, anti-government intrusion) as alternatives to choice rhetoric reflect the very neoliberal ideologies that undergird choice frameworks. The individualistic nature of such approaches was, apparently, less of a concern to the campaign than the possibility that pro-choice discourses might conjure up an image of a person (woman) making a choice (to abort).

Vote Yes for Life, on the other hand, featured images of young women and paired them with discourses to match. This approach is in line with those of anti-abortion groups more broadly, which have worked to cultivate critiques of abortion through ostensibly pro-woman positions (Rose 2011; Siegel 2008). In doing so, anti-abortion groups mimic the discourses of victimization and privacy that abortion rights advocates also utilize. For anti-abortion supporters, women are victimized and harmed by abortion itself,⁵ while abortion rights advocates depend on the trope of the sexual-assault victim to argue for rights. Further, anti-abortion advocates use the framework of privacy to argue that taxpayers should not have to pay for the abortions of “other people,” while abortion rights advocates suggest that the government should not be interfering in private decisions. This brief overview of the campaign strategies deployed in South Dakota speaks to the overlapping logics of contemporary anti-abortion and abortion rights groups, as well as the relation of local campaigns to broader movements.

Where Are the Women?

The South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families website (“Home,” 2006b), decorated with photographs of families who appear to be happy and healthy, began: “State legislators have done enough. Now it’s up to South Dakota’s families. It’s time to heal and move forward. Sign this petition and ask the South Dakota Legislature to please stop fighting over abortion and dividing our communities and to spend more time focusing on issues such as health care, education funding, and economic development.” Never once in this passage is the word *woman* used; with the removal of the term *abortion*, which appears just once, this same language could be directed at any legislature debating a range of social issues. In framing the government as the cause of divided communities and families as able to halt legislators, the abortion rights campaign pitted families against government, implying that abortion is a family decision, and, further, that family decisions are outside the purview of the government. This (unsurprising) move follows the US Supreme Court’s defense of abortion via the constitutionally protected right to privacy outlined in the Fourteenth Amendment. In framing abortion as a family, rather than governmental, issue, the campaign placed abortion in the private sphere, thus allowing for a further ignoring of the material ramifications of governmental noninterference.⁶

The South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families (2006a) website’s “About Us” section described the organization as “a bipartisan group of citizens . . . concerned that the abortion ban initiative . . . is detrimental to the health and well-being of women and families in South Dakota and would cost taxpayers millions to defend in court battles.” The word *women*, which appears once, is combined with *families*. By looking at this section of the website, it would be entirely possible to miss that women are the ones who actually experience abortion. The organization did not mention the rights or equality of women, arguing instead that such a ban would compromise the health of South Dakotans. That the campaign includes a statement about state finances in its organization’s description reflects the extent to which neoliberalism inflects the campaigns that work for issues that progressives, liberals, and even leftists have historically supported.

Campaign commercials relied upon similar discourses, but moved beyond centralizing anti-government intrusion, pro-family, pro-privacy, and health rhetorics to make space for a new trope: the woman as victim of rape or incest. Consider the following text from a 2006 campaign commercial: “South Dakotans agree: honor and protect human life. Reduce the number of abortions. But should a woman who is the victim of rape or incest be left with no option? What about the mother whose health would be seriously threatened? Referred law 6 makes no exceptions for these tragic circumstances. Government would decide, not these women and their doctors. It just goes too far.” In this commercial, the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families (2006c) framed abortion as something negative that should be “reduced,” and as necessary only in extreme circumstances—specifically, for victimized women and mothers with health problems. The commercial ends with the image of a distraught, white heterosexual couple talking to a doctor in his office—an image meant to suggest that, with the ban’s implementation, private decisions would be subject to governmental interference.

As these examples show, the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families relied upon pro-privacy, pro-family, anti-government intrusion and health rhetorics. The only women to appear were in the abstract, materializing sporadically as sick mothers or victims of sexual assault. No personal narratives surfaced, and when images of women were invoked, they collectively told one story—a story of victimhood.

Women, Women, and More Women

The Vote Yes for Life (2006a) campaign, by contrast, explicitly framed abortion as a woman’s issue. The campaign’s philosophy, in its website’s “About Us” section, began by claiming that the campaign is “about the South Dakota women who have faced unplanned pregnancies and are sharing their stories”:

From the 14-year-old who decided to parent her child, and now has a beautiful family . . . to the twenty-something who chose abortion and “felt like a vapor” afterward, the South Dakota women are coming forward to share their stories. . . . A 21-year-old recent college graduate shares her indecision at facing the possibility of abortion, and her joy when she decided to choose life. . . . The joy turned to anguish when she learned her daughter had a severe neural tube defect; but her story concludes with her everlasting love and cherished memories for her daughter who not only survived birth, despite the doctor’s prognosis, but lived for 32 amazing days. Another 20-year-old shares her story of being drugged and raped. Despite being a virgin before the rape, she chose to give birth to the child. . . . These awesome women all faced abortion as an option, and now understand that abortion should not be an available [sic] for women.⁷

Through a variety of women’s profiles, Vote Yes for Life linked abortion to women’s experiences, through which, much like the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families, it painted women as victims: victims of sexual assault, “incorrect” prognoses by doctors, and abortion itself. Although only one woman mentioned above chose abortion, all of their experiences were used to argue for outlawing it.

The images utilized in all aspects of the campaign recalled the narratives of these women. Consider an image used in the campaign’s promotional materials: a box divided into quarters, one face filling each quadrant, included the images of two blonde, white, stereotypically Midwestern-looking women, one racially ambiguous baby, and one racially ambiguous woman, who, considering the racial dynamics of South Dakota, were presumably intended to be read as Native or mixed race. The two white women were recognizable as the individuals who shared their stories publicly, their faces materializing on flyers at rallies, on banners, in commercials, in the background at press conferences, and in promotional videos. In short, these photographs and narratives became so central to the campaign that (some) women’s experiences were present even when the women themselves were not.

One 2006 campaign commercial, Vote Yes for Life’s (2006b), incorporated the images of women to argue that rape was no reason to allow legal abortion. Photographs and video footage of women’s faces popped up onscreen, accompanied by written text that mirrored the commercial’s spoken words: “Referred law 6 does not change the fact that women can still use the morning after pill. Victims of rape and incest can still access the best options for medical care, compassion, and justice. And this can include the morning after pill. . . . The fact is rape doesn’t have to end in pregnancy. Women have options in referred law 6.” In this commercial—the campaign’s response to those who found the ban’s restrictions in cases of rape or incest too extreme—Vote Yes for Life invoked women, none of whom, incidentally, saying that their pregnancy resulted from

rape.⁸ Each of the women in the videos and many in the photographs featured in the commercial were identifiable as those whose stories appeared in other campaign materials.

Leslee Unruh (2006) similarly featured women in an election-night interview in 2006. As a preface to the live interview, the news anchor stated: “There is no disappointment, at least not that we understand, from the Vote Yes campaign . . . I know they want the vote to go their way, but are they accepting the reality now that, perhaps, they’re not going to succeed?” Reporter Kelly Graham responded: “I hope I heard you right but they are not accepting reality. . . . Leslee, tell me, the AP is saying that Vote No is the winner.” Unruh responded excitedly:

They are never gonna win! We are never gonna quit—ever, ever ever. . . . We have hope in this nation. There are people in West Virginia here and they are gonna put this same bill in their legislature, Planned Parenthood. There are people in Texas here and they are gonna put this same bill in their legislature. And there are men like Roger Hunt and Matt McCulley that have championed women, and there is a new day coming! Women are being heard all over this nation and it started right here in South Dakota.

Beyond framing South Dakota’s anti-abortion campaign as a catalyst for future similar state-based efforts, Unruh linked the production of a different nation to women’s stories. She continued: “There are women here that have had abortions. I have a woman that walked in five minutes ago. And she said, ‘For the first time in my life I feel free. Because I finally have told my story, I don’t have to live in shame anymore.’ We are not gonna live in shame. We are gonna tell our stories.” For Unruh, women simultaneously occupy a social position characterized by strength and weakness; women are strong enough to tell their stories, but too weak to make decisions about their lives. Women who had been dismissed, shamed, and silenced were now finding freedom through their stories—stories made possible by the championing of men.

Native Women Political Leaders: Front and Center

In choosing South Dakota as the location from which to launch this battle against abortion, both national anti-abortion leaders and the state’s (largely white male) politicians underestimated the impact of the cultural values of Native women, who, along with Native men, make up 8 percent of the state’s population. Cecilia Fire Thunder epitomized the engagement of Native communities with the case: Fire Thunder spoke at press conferences and was often quoted in South Dakota newspapers, the feminist press, the Indigenous press, and the mainstream national news as a spokesperson for her tribe, as well as for the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families, which sponsored Get Out the Vote activities on South Dakota reservations. Further, Native women bloggers

discussed the ban and Fire Thunder's commitment to abortion rights. Her public support of abortion rights, and the subsequent responses it provoked, forged new discourses that became a critical component of the debate, one that pulled from the ideologies of reproductive justice and rights movements, as well as from the strategies of South Dakota's abortion rights and anti-abortion campaigns.

At a 2006 press conference in Rapid City, South Dakota, Fire Thunder spoke about abortion rights in terms of tradition, oppression, history, religious freedom, and assaults on the constitution:

The very reasons all of the white people that are standing here holding their signs and all the white people in America, the reason you are here . . . you have to go back less than 300 hundred years ago. You were pitiful, weren't you? You didn't have no place to go. You didn't have a pot to piss in because you were running away from religious persecution. And you came to America to be able to practice freely—how to believe, how to live. What is Freedom?! . . . You don't infringe upon my right to speak up for what I believe in. I did not come to your rallies. I did not come to your gatherings and hold up my signs because I respected you and your beliefs. And you are not respecting me at all.

At this particular press conference, a handful of (all seemingly white) anti-abortion activists held signs that read: "Children are Sacred. Vote Yes for Life on 6." Such signs co-opted language that commonly circulates in Native communities in an attempt to connect Native spirituality to an anti-abortion position. In directly addressing the activists, Fire Thunder suggested that the activists' infringement on the event was symptomatic of broader infringements—those by white people on Indigenous people and those by Christians on others' beliefs. Abortion politics, she implied, cannot be understood outside of these broader historical, religious, cultural, and political contexts.

Fire Thunder was not the only prominent Native feminist in South Dakota to have the trajectory of her political career impacted by the abortion ban. Charon Asetoyer, for example, ran for the state legislature, in part, as a response to the ban. In a speech at the 2007 National Organization for Women (NOW) conference, Asetoyer, like Fire Thunder, situated her discussion of abortion within broader historical and cultural frameworks: "Never did we ever as an indigenous woman [*sic*] did I ever have to face a government who would decide for me what I could and could not do with my body. Because in our culture the matters of women are left up to women . . . and they are not thrust out into the political arena for political and public scrutinization." For Asetoyer, the broader cultural context of the abortion ban included sexism in Indian country and the role Native men played; she refuted the notion that public debates around abortion could be complementary to traditional Indigenous practices. Elsewhere, Asetoyer responded to the suggestion for public discussion of abortion made by one of the men on the tribal council that impeached Fire Thunder, stating that "[t]hese matters are not up for scrutiny by our male

counterparts. This is a discussion for women to have in privacy of other women. Whoever calls for public debates has been totally converted to a colonial way of thinking” (K. Briggs 2006). Among those Native people involved with public discussions of the abortion ban, this point was rarely contested. In fact, Will Peters, the tribal council member behind Fire Thunder’s impeachment charges, stated: “I didn’t like being dragged into the abortion issue. . . . In the Lakota culture, it’s not a man’s business to tell a woman what she can and cannot do” (Peres 2006). The irony, of course, is that Peters placed himself at the center of the abortion debate, telling women what they “can and cannot do” through passing a separate tribal abortion ban, while also stating that Lakota teachings view abortion as women’s business. While Peters’s positions differ significantly from those of Asetoyer and Fire Thunder, one similarity is noteworthy: their acknowledgment that abortion must be considered in relation to cultural context, a position evident in Asetoyer’s claim that those Native men who worked to further anti-abortion sentiment were operating within a colonialist framework. The political and cultural changes made possible by colonialism, for Asetoyer, account for the sexism in Indian country that allowed men to find acceptable an anti-abortion position in the first place. Put simply, she suggests that abortion cannot be understood outside of colonialism.

As a result of their engagement in South Dakota’s abortion politics, Asetoyer spoke at the national convention of a major liberal feminist organization (NOW), and Fire Thunder became an important spokesperson for reproductive rights struggles both locally and nationally. Yet, despite these connections with the local abortion rights campaign and a national feminist group, the discourses that Asetoyer and Fire Thunder deployed did not simply reflect those commonly deployed by these groups. They discussed abortion in relation to colonialism, religious freedom, race, and tribal politics—connections long ignored, as Andrea Smith (2005a, 2005b) and others have pointed out, by reproductive rights organizations, a disregard similarly evident in the approaches of the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families.

At the same time, the discourses used by Native women leaders were not entirely separate from those of these groups. For example, Asetoyer mentioned privacy and Fire Thunder extolled the virtues of freedom. The South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families’ use of similar pro-freedom and pro-privacy discourses reflects a comparable recent trend among national abortion rights groups. Abortion rights advocates commonly assert the benefits of freedom from governmental interference, and claim the need for privacy among women, their families, and their doctors. But *privacy*, for Asetoyer, refers to something quite different: for her, it is not a framework through which we might demand individual rights, but instead refers to a space of collectivity through which conversations and support can manifest. And *freedom*, as Fire Thunder tells us, means far more than freedom from governmental interference; instead, it refers to the freedom to speak, to live, and to believe in ways that whites

and Christians have long worked to make impossible for Native people. Quite different deployments of privacy and freedom indeed!

Native Bloggers

While Native women leaders in South Dakota were at the center of the public debate over the 2006 legislation, Native women across the country discussed the ban in the blogosphere, overwhelmingly supporting Fire Thunder.⁹ Discourses, of course, travel multidirectionally; as such, an analysis of the South Dakota abortion ban, as well as the discourses utilized by Native women leaders in South Dakota, is enriched through a consideration of how the ban was discussed by those Native women involved in a very different type of activism than the variety of frontline abortion rights political advocacy that Fire Thunder and Asetoyer represent. Jacqueline Keeler, a Navajo and Yankton Dakota Sioux woman who lives in Portland, Oregon, is one such activist. Well-known for her work to eliminate racist Native mascots, Keeler blogged about Fire Thunder's impeachment and the issue of abortion for Native women. In one of the thirteen entries on the topic that she posted between July 6 and August 30, 2006, Keeler argued

[w]e cannot as modern Lakota/Dakota/Nakota or even Dine or American women be constrained by [traditions]. We can be informed by them, even inspired, but we must make decisions for our bodies, our future, our well-being that are sensible and that show that we value ourselves. We, as women, are more than our biology, we are more than just baby machines for a Lakota Nation, a Dakota Nation, or a Nakota Nation. We are productive members of society, we are the ones earning the college degrees, holding the jobs and are the ones by and large, that must raise the children, earn wages to buy them shoes and pay for their futures. We must be the ones to be able to make these choices concerning our bodies. (July 9)

In this blog, titled "Fire Thunder Impeachment and the Rights of Women," Keeler spends little time discussing the particulars of the impeachment; instead, she addresses what she sees as the broader cultural ideologies that inform anti-abortion sentiment; her post serves as a response to Indigenous people who believe that abortion goes against tradition, is a white woman's issue, or is a continued form of genocide against Native people.¹⁰ Keeler continued, examining abortion in relation to traditional values, poverty, and sexual assault in a framework informed by a belief in the systemic nature of racism and sexism:

One gender cannot pay the price for a broken society. And we cannot ignore the real price women pay and that children pay raised in difficult circumstances . . . pregnancy and childbirth mark periods of the greatest economic stress for families in the United States on or off the reservation. Expectant

parents . . . are more likely to slide below the poverty level. Women in the workforce, educated or not, are more likely to face negative job performance reviews when they are pregnant. Society punishes women for veering from the male norm.

In a blog that began by reflecting on Fire Thunder's impeachment (ostensibly due to abortion politics), Keeler did not focus on abortion; instead, she made the broader point that gender structures our socialities, including childrearing, poverty, and workplace practices. Throughout, she discussed the meanings of Yankton womanhood, Lakota ceremonies, and traditional Lakota/Nakota/Dakota views on childbearing and -rearing. In so doing, Keeler not only expressed her support for Fire Thunder, but, like Asetoyer, rooted the opposition to abortion in colonialism, suggesting that "the idea of an enlightened Indigenous tradition . . . was lost to U.S. imperialism."

The comments sections attached to this variety of blog post served as important sites for engaging what the ban meant for Native women. One commenter, Tankshi TA, responded to a story about Fire Thunder's impeachment posted at the "Women's Space" blog:

Cecelia, When a Lakota woman loses this type of decision to a Lakota man(?) is that man truly Lakota? This is a prime example of colonialism at it's [sic] worst. The christian [sic] mentality has taken it's [sic] negative grasp upon our people in that Lakota women are now looked upon as objects of ownership. 150 years ago, we were true Lakota, no drug & alcohol inflicted social problems such as rape and incest existed. We didn't need to address abortion in such a public way as we did have our medicine to deal with such a pregnancy. . . . I admire Cecelia for attempting to deal with the reality of our situations on the Rez. by offering women and young girls an opportunity to make that choice with their own bodies. (2006, June 30)

Tankshi TA linked the ongoing legacies of colonialism with the fight over the legality of abortion; in so doing, she, like the other Native bloggers and political activists featured here, drew from common reproductive rights rhetorics: Tankshi TA called abortion a "decision" and suggested that it is a "choice" women need to make "with their own bodies"; Keeler claimed that "we must make decisions for our bodies" and that women are "more than just baby machines"; and Asetoyer stated that decisions made in regards to "my body" are not up for public scrutiny.

It would be a mistake, Kim Tall Bear (2006b) cautioned in "World Pulse," a women's issues and rights blog, to view these positions as akin to those of dominant pro-choice groups. An assistant professor of American Indian studies at Arizona State University at the time of the ban, Tall Bear both lauded Fire Thunder and also warned of the danger in associating her with a pro-choice position:

Fire Thunder set an important example in speaking out against legislation that fails to consider the cultural values, social realities, and political authorities of tribes in the state. On the other hand, the would-be pro-choice allies of Fire Thunder and clinic organizers should understand that Lakota perspectives on abortion are nuanced. They are at once spiritual, historical and political in ways that are not synonymous with the established platforms.

In the following excerpt from a highly circulated piece online, Tall Bear (2006a) contributed to the discussion of Fire Thunder's impeachment by challenging the terms of the debate:

For those of us who do not subscribe to certain Christian doctrinal teachings, but who do subscribe to cultural imperatives about the sacredness of life, our moral and political response to terminating a pregnancy is not captured by either of the most vocal positions in the American abortion wars: the "pro-choice" and "pro-life" positions. . . . Both women and men in my family and in our tribe endured their share of hardship, including sexual violence. I grew to understand that within a colonial context. Abortion, in that context, might be considered a sad but necessary decision. We differed from the "pro-choice" position in that we spoke of this and all reproductive decisions not as a "right" or a "choice," but as a responsibility that grew out of the power in women's bodies. We differed from the "pro-life" position in that we recognized that the decision could be shaped by the hardship and violence that haunt Indian people to this day. Our views about the sacred nature of the unborn child were not synonymous with fundamentalist Christian views. From my upbringing, I came to understand abortion as a difficult topic with only context-specific and imperfect solutions.

Tall Bear pointed to the complexities of the abortion debate for Native women through deploying terminology typically associated with both anti-abortion and abortion rights positions. The "unborn child" and the "sacredness of life" exist alongside "the power in women's bodies" and abortion being, at times, a "necessary decision." For Tall Bear, as well as for the other Native bloggers and political leaders featured here, abortion is not presented as that which must be decided solely within one's nuclear family, and it was not described strictly in relation to families' health. Instead, they framed their support of abortion rights within an understanding of colonialism, Native spirituality, the use of traditional medicines to deal with unwanted pregnancies, sexual violence, child-rearing, and poverty. Throughout, these bloggers and political leaders framed abortion as a woman's issue (a strategy evident in the local anti-abortion campaign), and also utilized discourses similar to and distinct from those of the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families, as well as those commonly associated with national reproductive rights groups.

The discourses, ideologies, and approaches of Native women bloggers and political leaders challenge, as does Smith (2005b), dichotomous framings of pro-choice versus pro-life positions. As Tall Bear (2006b) asserts, “Fire Thunder’s emergent voice—and those of the women uniting around the issue at Pine Ridge—have the potential to liberate us from the usual polarized positions on abortion.” The polarization to which Tall Bear and Smith have pointed (pro-choice versus pro-life) is, as I argue here, only one example of polarized positions that circulate around abortion. The engagement of Native women with the South Dakota abortion ban encourages a rethinking of scholarly and activist representations of reproductive rights and reproductive justice as binaristic. In their engagement with the abortion ban, Native women bloggers and political leaders used discourses and expressed ideologies commonly associated with *both* the reproductive rights and justice models. Reproductive justice, as the aforementioned narrative goes, is the model that women of color have developed to address reproductive issues beyond abortion rights, the primary concern of white women. And yet, as this story of the South Dakota abortion wars suggests, abortion remains a fundamental issue for Native women, a point that encourages us to view reproductive rights and justice frameworks as a relation existing on a continuum rather than as distinct or adversarial.

Reproductive Justice as (Beyond) Critique

In their critique of reproductive rights movements’ frameworks and tactics, calls for more capacious understandings of what constitutes reproductive issues, and highlighting of a broad range of reproductive health concerns, particularly those of women of color, reproductive justice advocates and scholars have advanced and intervened in social movements and scholarship about reproduction. In so doing, as I detailed in the introduction, they have commonly positioned reproductive justice as distinct from reproductive rights. Ramifications of this problematic are evident in scholarship on Native women’s reproduction. In her analysis of Native women and reproductive justice, Barbara Gurr (2011) lists Native women’s diminished access to “abortion counseling and services” as one of the consequences of the under-funding of Indian Health Services (IHS) (728). And yet, in her analysis of the inadequacy of IHS’s care, Gurr focuses entirely on childbirth, sexual assault, and contraception. Abortion is mentioned nowhere—with the exception of linking it to reproductive rights (rather than justice) movements (723). As another example, in a chapter of *Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice* (2004) that features the work of Asetoyer and the Native American Women’s Health Education Resource Center in South Dakota, Jael Silliman and coauthors discuss a wide range of reproductive health issues that Native women face, including fetal alcohol syndrome, infant mortality, teenage parenting, and the cultural insensitivities

of IHS providers. Abortion is mentioned briefly in only one paragraph under the heading “Redefining Reproductive Rights,” pointing to the ways in which abortion is called up to be eschewed: abortion is the marker of a movement in need of redefinition.

I suggest that reproductive justice advocates’ and scholars’ discursive distancing from abortion, a method used to mark the concerns of reproductive justice as distinct from reproductive rights, has harmful consequences for how we conceptualize reproduction and organize for justice. That the potentiality and necessity of abortion is often silenced in reproductive justice advocates’ critiques of reproductive rights movements might be less problematic if abortion were actually immaterial to the women being represented by the reproductive justice framework—a framework that unintentionally erases the complexity of the concerns of women marginalized by race, class, ability, sexuality, and geography through depicting these very women as outside the purview of reproductive rights movements. The problem, then, is not only that the narratives that reproductive justice advocates tell about our movements are limited, but also that such narratives make it difficult to view pro-abortion activism, as well as scholarship on abortion, as anything other than liberal, white, and uncritical. This framing of reproductive justice as “beyond” abortion has likely contributed to the disregard of abortion among critical race, queer, and poststructuralist theorists,¹¹ as well as the erasure, as detailed by Jennifer Nelson (2003), of the involvement of women of color in abortion rights struggles.

As the Native women connected to the South Dakota abortion ban make clear, abortion is far too central to reproductive justice to cede the issue to those white, liberal ideologies that reproductive justice advocates and scholars critically address. Abortion is deserving of scholarly interventions that consider the complexity of its sociality. As Lauren Berlant (2005) says of the multidimensionality of pregnant women’s bodies, abortion (embodied by women who have had abortions, anti-abortion and abortion rights activists, scholars who write on abortion politics, and aborted fetuses alike) occupies “a status as a national stereotype and [i]s a vehicle for the production of a national culture” (87). In ignoring the multidimensionality of abortion—indeed, in producing abortion as devoid of complexity—reproductive justice scholars and advocates disregard the influence of constructions of abortion on broader social issues, including those issues that these very advocates and scholars have addressed.

I am not suggesting that reproductive justice activists never engage in abortion rights work. However, our narratives do not capture this engagement, impacting how we understand abortion and carry out related action. Although right-wing anti-abortion advocates’ work to make “abortion the stand-in for feminism” need not be the starting point for reproductive justice advocates (Rosalind Petchesky, qtd. in L. Briggs et al. 2013, 106), acknowledging the continued relevance of abortion is important. Quoting a piece she published more than two decades ago and describing it as “depressingly relevant today,”

Petchesky argues that “abortion is the fulcrum of a much broader ideological struggle in which the very meanings of the family, the state, motherhood, and young women’s sexuality are contested” (ibid.). Abortion debates retain a significant place in cultural discourses and imaginaries. This is not to say that the approaches of those reproductive rights groups critiqued by reproductive justice scholars and advocates are not in need of revision and increased capaciousness—they are; it is to say that the scapegoating of abortion, the using of abortion to stand in for the limits of a movement, ought to be rethought. That abortion may not be *more* important than other issues for actualizing reproductive justice need not suggest that it is any *less* important.

The story of Native women and the South Dakota ban provides evidence for and challenges the claims that reproductive justice advocates have long made, particularly with regard to the lack of applicability of pro-choice frameworks for women of color. Native women discussed abortion through capacious frameworks, referencing the history of colonialism, the contemporary problems that Native people face, and various other reproductive concerns, issues beyond the scope of traditional reproductive rights movements. At the same time, they also drew from classic pro-choice discourses, as well as the neoliberal ideologies that these discourses trade in. Furthermore, the abortion ban prompted Asetoyer to run for state political office, while Fire Thunder’s political fate was altered because of her public opposition to the ban—a position that Native women bloggers across the country lauded. Native women’s engagement with this case calls for a complex reconceptualization of the relations between reproductive rights and reproductive justice frameworks.

Such reimaginings require reproductive justice advocates to engage in critical analyses of our own approaches; that reproductive justice has been produced *as the critique* has functioned to position it as that which is *beyond* critique—it is always already critical. In her analysis of feminist narratives about feminism, Clare Hemmings (2011, 13) argues that “which story one tells about the past is always motivated by the position one occupies or wishes to occupy in the present.” The narratives that reproductive justice advocates tell about our movements, then, reflect the (critical) political position that we desire to occupy, rather than strictly some inherent distinctiveness between reproductive justice and rights frameworks. In short, such narratives are political—and politically deleterious. It is through critique that our movements and scholarship grow and flourish. The lack of critical engagement directed inward toward reproductive justice scholarship and activism is startling, precisely because reproductive justice is rooted in a belief in the necessity of social critique; it is not simply the mainstream in need of leftist engagement, without which it is too easy for reproductive justice movements to lack the very capaciousness we critique elsewhere.

My critical reflections on reproductive justice narratives emerge from my participation in reproductive justice work¹² and are rooted in the belief that, as

Laura Briggs (2008) argues, movements are strengthened via activist and scholarly critique, while academic engagement in movements sharpens scholarship. In order to better imagine leftist paths forward, one question we must ask, then, is: How might current (and, if we are not careful, future) reproductive justice discourses prevent us from engaging in vital self-critique?

Beyond South Dakota

The simultaneous *particularity* (evidenced in Fire Thunder's impeachment) and *generalizability* (the use of common anti-abortion and abortion rights discourses) of the case of the South Dakota abortion wars provides a unique opportunity to examine broader discursive patterns as well as resistances to these models, to read the use of women's narratives as a rights-gaining strategy both critically and reparatively, and to analyze the activist and scholarly narratives that frame reproductive rights and reproductive justice as distinct. Considering South Dakota's anti-abortion and abortion rights campaigns in relation to each other suggests that the presence or absence of women's narratives is political, strategic, and connected to the discourses deployed by the organizations. Considering the two mainstream campaigns in relation to the discourses of Native women allows for a more complex analysis of the possibilities and limitations associated with the use of personal narratives, and also raises questions about the narratives that activists tell about our movements.

The South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families deployed discourses that furthered problematic ideas of the government as harmful to families and as having more pressing concerns than women's reproductive rights. Even if the abortion rights campaign utilized women's narratives, which it would not because doing so runs counter to its discursive foundations, it would simply choose narratives that reinforce its ideologies, as did Vote Yes for Life. In short, the campaigns' neglect or celebration of women is symptomatic of their broader ideologies—ideologies that will only be enhanced through the production and circulation of women's narratives.

To be clear, I am not advocating for the re-centralization of women and their narratives in abortion debates; instead, I highlight the connections between dominant rhetorics and the emergence of women's narratives to argue that this connection, following Scott (1991), should encourage us to view narratives as politically, historically, and socially constructed and situated rather than as a reflection of an inherently true experience. If we move to understand narratives in this way, we must pause to rethink the liberatory potential of sharing our stories and using them as a justice-seeking strategy. When we uncritically deploy experience as a form of evidence, the ways in which subjects are constituted *through* social movements goes unacknowledged (Lipsitz 2008), keeping the individual intact and benefiting neoliberal ideologies.

At the same time, the anecdotes shared by Native women in South Dakota and the blogosphere suggest that personal narratives can be deployed in ways that illustrate the relationship between individual experiences and the structures through which they are inflected. Notably, narratives of Native women's individual experiences with a crisis pregnancy were absent; instead, Native women defended abortion rights through stories of their lives, families, and traditions, consistently addressing broader issues that impact Native communities and pointing to possibilities for the use of narratives to disrupt dominant discourses.

By drawing and departing from the discourses and ideologies of both the abortion rights and anti-abortion campaigns, as well as broader reproductive justice positions, Native women bloggers and political leaders developed discourses that were imperceptible in other areas of the debate, a difference that cannot be accounted for through the obvious variations between the blogosphere and more traditional means of political expression. All discourses are, of course, constructed within and reflective of broader ideologies, political projects, historical moments, geographic places—and, most simply, the capacity of the material space they will occupy (a billboard, a blog, a commercial). Viewing the rhetorics of political campaigns as more constrained or strategic than those used by Native women, who were, in some cases, also political leaders, would be a grave mistake. Each of the sets of discourses analyzed here—those of the South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families, the Vote Yes for Life campaign, Native women in both the blogosphere and South Dakota, and reproductive justice scholars and advocates—can be understood as strategic, constructed within limitations in order to reach a political goal. At the same time, there is danger in reducing the rhetorics of campaigns that work for issues we support to “strategy”; we limit our ability to critically engage with our movements and undermine the possibility of imagining alternatives.

This analysis of women's narratives as a rights-seeking strategy opens up a space through which we can begin to imagine approaches to reproductive justice that neither produce reproductive rights and justice as distinctive nor assume the political utility of personal narratives. Indeed, such reimaginings are deeply interrelated: how a movement strategically utilizes narratives influences the kind of narratives a movement can tell about itself. Moving forward, we must consider how we might answer Hemmings's (2011, 16) call to “[experiment] with how we might tell stories differently rather than telling different stories.” Doing so could create the space for scholars and activists to reassert the importance of abortion in struggles for reproductive justice, to critically analyze the intricate relations between abortion and the social, and to better build coalitions—ultimately imagining our movements, ourselves, and our worlds otherwise.

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Notes

1. Although I am wary of those critiques of abortion policy rooted in “no exceptions” discourse, which reproduce ideas about when abortion is proper, I use these terms here because the ban’s no exceptions is precisely what placed South Dakota in the national spotlight.

2. For a discussion of the Redstockings, the first feminists to tell their abortion narratives publicly, see Jennifer Nelson (2003, 5–7). For additional examples of abortion rights supporters’ assumptions that using women’s narratives is a feminist strategy, see Helen Susan Edelman (1996), Gloria Feldt (2002), Cara MariAnna (2002), Ellen Messer and Kathryn May (1988), and Patricia C. Miller (1993).

3. As an example of activists’ recognition of the importance of the South Dakota ban, the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) (2008) listed its defeat as one of just twenty-seven key moments in the organization’s forty-year history, the only state-based legislation included alongside Supreme Court cases such as *Roe v. Wade* and *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*. For examples of developed portrayals and analyses of the case ignoring Native women’s engagement, see Ann Milliken Pederson (2007) and the documentary *Middle of Everywhere: The Abortion Debate from America’s Heartland* (2008), directed by Rebecca Lee and Jesper Malmberg.

4. For a spreadsheet of the proposed and passed bills, amendments, and laws, see the South Dakota Right to Life fact sheet (the years 2011 and 2012 are not up to date and are missing items of recent legislation). This accounts for the slight discrepancy

between my numbers and those provided in the chart. See http://www.sdr1.org/pdfs/Pro-life_Record%20Sheet.pdf.

5. Scholars have long critiqued abortion rights advocates' reliance upon privacy frameworks. In describing abortion as a private decision to be made free of governmental interference, reproductive rights advocates produce logics that we then have to work against. Claiming that the government should not be involved in reproductive issues undermines our ability to advocate for increased governmental involvement, including resources for single mothers and repealing the Hyde Amendment. For examples of the widely circulating critiques of privacy discourses in abortion rights movements, see Nancy Ehrenreich (2008) and L. Briggs et al. (2013).

6. Melody Rose (2011) argues that, while pro-woman rhetorics are reemerging in anti-abortion groups, movement discourses are still dominated by the fetus and the immorality of abortion.

7. Much could be said of this quote. But because my goal is to show how the anti-abortion campaign featured women's narratives, I will not deconstruct the many problematic assumptions evident here, except to note that their ideas about sexual assault are deeply troubling: rape is worse for virgins, and abortion is more detrimental to women than sexual assault.

8. While the campaign website references a woman who had experienced rape and continued the resultant pregnancy, none of the women whose images appeared in the commercial described here stated that their pregnancy resulted from rape.

9. I am not implying that *all* Native women support abortion rights or Fire Thunder's approach. However, as the blog posts I consider here suggest, those Native women blogging about Fire Thunder's impeachment overwhelmingly expressed their support for her.

10. For a discussion of the notion that abortion represents genocide for people of color, see Dorothy Roberts (1998).

11. For an exception, see Lauren Berlant (2005).

12. In 2006, I was working with Winona LaDuke at the White Earth Land Recovery Project, a reservation-based nonprofit in northern Minnesota, on reproductive, economic, and environmental justice projects. Because of my reproductive justice organizing, NARAL asked me to return to my home state to collect signatures as part of the South Dakota Campaign for Health Families' efforts to overturn the ban. My analyses are deeply informed by my work with Native women and this campaign.

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