

Women's Shelters: Governance, Neoliberalism, and the Creation of the “Shelter-Citizen”

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis has been made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

In this thesis, I expand upon existing governance research by examining the strategies deployed in women's shelters and theorize them as neoliberal mechanisms of governance intended, through “gentle coercion” (Cruikshank, 1999), to produce ideal shelter user-subjects. Drawing from Cruikshank's analysis of advanced governing strategies as creating the state-citizen (1999), I examine how both regiment-based shelters that rely on rules and punitive consequences, and shelters that use primarily caring-based governance approaches serve to project the notion of an ideal “shelter citizen.” This subject embodies neoliberal ideals of self-sufficiency and personal responsibility and aspires to middle-class norms, such as obtaining housing and gainful employment. I argue that the women’s shelter is situated in a particular way in the neoliberal state, as both distinct from, and a potential extension of the state. It therefore provides a unique example of how Cruikshank’s analysis of governance can be applied to an entity that purports to be separate from state governance, but which actually ends up extending neoliberal-based forms of governance into a supposedly “non-governmental” sphere. Additionally, as there is a notable lack of existing research on how governance operates within caring-based women's shelters, this research helps to fill this gap by focusing on the manner in which these shelters use “gentle coercion” as a form of neoliberal governance. I also focus on the strategies that these shelters employ to categorize and classify “acceptable” and “unacceptable” shelter residents, and how shelter-citizens often adopt these attitudes when talking about other shelter users. I conclude by arguing that such governance can be problematic for women whose identities and experiences differ from those of the essentially White, middle-class, and able-bodied cis-gender “shelter-citizen” ideal that is implemented within shelter procedures and programming.

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Chapter One

Introduction: Neoliberalism, Socioeconomic Status, and the Subject-Citizen

In *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects* (1999), Barbara Cruikshank explores how strategies of advanced neoliberal governance operate to create the “subject-citizen” through processes that are simultaneously “voluntary and coercive” (1999, p. 6). In doing so, she examines how these citizens become self-governing, as this governance instills in them the skills, self-sufficiency, and self-responsibility that they were formerly assumed to be lacking. Cruikshank also borrows theorist Michel Foucault's definition of governance as being “the conduct of conduct,” or the mechanisms that shape, guide or *govern* individuals' action (p. 40). She notes, however, that these mechanisms cannot exist without the subject's participation within these processes (p. 21). She also refutes those who claim that there is a definitive divide between the political and “the social,” or the sphere outside which politics is thought to exist. She calls on them to recognize that “democratic politics is not out there, in the public sphere or in a realm, but in here, at the very soul of the subjectivity. ... For democratic theory to insist upon the autonomy of the political or civil society is ... to be blinded by what is not there” (p. 124). The “political,” according to Cruikshank, therefore operates within subjectivity or life as it is constituted at large, not just within explicitly political or legislative institutions.

Both Cruikshank and Foucault treat governance as something that, at its core, is prevalent within both explicitly “political” and “non-political” institutions. It is simultaneously coercive and non-intervening, and aims to imbue subjects with the skills, disciplines, and mindsets

necessary for the creation of the self-sufficient, self-governing, nominally neoliberal citizen. Moreover, governance pertaining specifically to non-profit and philanthropic spheres stems from decidedly gendered origins. Cruikshank notes that from their explicit formation in the 19th century, the helping professions, specifically those undertaken to instil values and self-reliance within the poor, have been largely filled and administrated by middle-class, predominantly White women. She points out, “the social was and is the province of women and feminist reformers in particular” (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 58). Philanthropy was also one of the few means by which women could insert themselves into the public sphere, since they could not hold public office in the 1800s or vote (Cruikshank, 1999, pp. 58-59). Given that governance's history is intertwined with women's ubiquitous involvement in charitable organizations and the “helping professions,” it seems appropriate to treat non-profit, caring-based organizations that are specifically used and run by women as being sites of the governance practices that Cruikshank articulated. Cruikshank additionally notes that the forms of power utilized and implemented within shelters were akin to “quasi-governmental institutions and softer forms of power” (1999, p. 70), due to significant cuts in government funding, and increased reliance on private and non-governmental benefactors. Given the increasingly neoliberal nature of women’s shelter funding, it is, I argue, beneficial to explore the effects of shelter governance on shelter users, most notably the ways in which they may potentially speak back to this governance as political subjects.

Because this thesis also centers on how subjects respond to governance, it is important for me to articulate how their positionality within political situations impacts their vested interest, or lack thereof, in adopting self-governance. Previous research has explored subjects’ attitudes towards governance within various aspects of life, explicitly political or otherwise. Isin (1998), for instance, touches on these attitudes when addressing how neoliberal governance

within municipalities such as Toronto impact subjects. He notes that the amalgamations proposed within Toronto's "inner city constituency" were initially resisted by the area's "professional-managerial classes." (Isin, 1998, p. 178). These Torontonians used "a rhetoric of democracy and citizenship," which was couched in neoliberal notions, against restructuring city governance procedures (Isin, 1998, p. 179). Other groups however, including predominantly immigrant communities, responded with noted indifference towards the amalgamation and the increased outside governmental control that would result (Isin, 1998). Neoliberal governance therefore appears to be an instrumental tactic in empowering certain groups to take action on behalf of democratic and citizenship ideals. However, Isin's findings also call into question whether neoliberal notions of governance are as influential among less privileged groups, who often do not stand to benefit from the perpetuation of neoliberal governance in the same way as their privileged counterparts. For instance, within the context of a women's shelter, racialized, disabled and non cis-gender women who use shelters may feel they are less likely to benefit from, or be advantaged by, adhering to procedures than their more privileged counterparts are, and may therefore be less likely to participate in shelter programming or to follow rules. It is thus beneficial to explore if neoliberal strategies work equally well with distinctly marginalized and less privileged groups who use caring-based shelters, and who may have less interest in adhering to and/or being instruments of neoliberal governance.

Chapter Two

Defining Shelters: Caring vs. Regiment-based Approaches

Despite a wealth of past research on women's shelters that are explicitly regiment-based (Donnelly et al., 2006; Westlund, 1999), there is a noticeable lack of attention on caring-based approaches. I use these terms to broadly differentiate between two basic types of shelters, both of which provide shelter to women who have been victims of domestic abuse, rather than other risk factors such as homelessness. The first type of shelter is described in Gengler (2012), who argues that regiment-based approaches are used to “obliquely manage shelter residents,” and that they stem from “increased bureaucratization,” which she contends is due to increased decentralization and expansion of their “funding base” to include private benefactors and governmental contributions (2012, p. 502). Shelters have become more bureaucratic, and according to Gengler, have compromised their “earlier feminist commitments” in order to implement individual-based strategies that impose numerous controls upon shelter users (2012, p. 502). These included “pathologizing troublesome residents and using formal rules and counselling sessions to keep them in line” (2012, p. 502). Gengler also found that shelters that utilize these types of approaches are also likely to use broad categorizations of women, most notably “victim” and “non-victim” categories in an effort to “limit admission to women deemed deserving of help and keep out those who might cause trouble” (2012, p. 503). She notes that immediate supervision typically occurs when women enter shelters. Also, while “empowerment” may be used rhetorically within these types of shelters, Gengler, along with Bumiller (2007) and Cruikshank (1999), characterize such practices as being hierarchical in nature. The shelters rely heavily on notions of expertise, as professionals or “experts” use them to enforce control over shelter users.

These governing mechanisms ultimately work to create “notions of personal choice and individual power” which implicitly “shift responsibility for change onto battered women, and away from ... social services and criminal justice agencies” when it comes to addressing the systemic violence that shelter users frequently face (Gengler, 2012, p. 503). Gengler (2012) thus characterizes “empowerment” within regiment-based shelters as being highly intertwined with neoliberal notions of personal responsibility, despite using governance approaches that dictate numerous rules, routines, and responsibilities to shelter users. For instance, she notes that one of the shelters included in the study formerly had stringent curfews that, if broken, often resulted in consequences such as the removal of snack time privileges, and eventually, expulsion from the shelter (Gengler, 2012, p. 510). These examples indicate that these shelters have punitive responses towards shelter users’ rule-breaking. Based on these criteria, I therefore frame the regiment-based shelter as being heavily routinized and explicitly hierarchical in nature, due to a reliance on the “expertise” of shelter employees.

In contrast, I define caring-based shelters as focusing on women’s personal development, but in a manner that stresses shelter users’ personal dignity and growth rather than adhering to rules. As noted in Rudrappa (2014), these shelters may also have strong social justice orientations, and may be partnering with individuals and/or groups who are seeking similar social change. Unlike their regiment-based counterparts, caring shelters generally do not stress adherence to rules and schedules nearly as heavily, although shelter users may be expected to conform to certain rules, such as basic curfews (Donnelly et al., 2005). For instance, one of the shelters described in this thesis was a drop-in shelter, which only stressed that shelter users leave at three o’clock in the afternoon, and that they return no sooner than five o’clock. This is in contrast to the regiment-based shelter included in this study, in which stringent curfews were to

be followed. Also, the drop-in nature of the caring-based shelter suggests that the type of governance being used in this shelter is not nearly as extensive or personally controlling as that found in the other shelter. Rudrappa (2014) argues that the caring-based shelters she analyzed treated women as individuals, and aimed to “empower them on a personal level,” using what she described as “radical caring,” or the philosophy of embracing “justice at both individual and larger social levels” (2014, p. 40). She notes that this latter aspect involves a focus on shelters users’ personal safety, and emphasizes the desire for these women to “preserve life and assist their growth as autonomous individuals” (2014, p. 40). Rudrappa indicates that caring-based approaches are framed in more personalized contexts than their regiment-based counterparts. Shelter workers are also expected to partner with women in this regard, rather than enforce rules in an explicitly hierarchical manner (2014). Moreover, while the neoliberal notions of self-reliance and autonomy are evident in both caring and regiment-based women’s shelters, the former shelter type usually frames them through notions of support and inclusivity. This is evident in the language used on the drop-in shelter’s website, which states that “[the shelter] is many things to the hundred plus women who walk through its doors each day. It is safety. It is support. It is sisterhood.” The website includes a reminder of the bravery of women who use the shelter, and describes them as “striving to gain control of their lives and realize their potential.” The website’s welcome page uses supportive and inclusive tropes that also contain neoliberal sentiments about self-reliance (“gain control of their lives”) and hard work (“realize their potential”). This is in contrast to the language used in the regiment-based shelter, which instead stresses its commitment to providing support “through each step towards financial stability and independent living,” thus outlining specific goals for women to attain. The website also emphasizes the importance of workers’ interaction with shelter users; it notes that “women’s

advocates are on duty 24/7 ... to assist guests in setting goals and accessing community resources in their search for stable housing as they continue on their path to independence.” This message conveys the clear, defined role of the shelter worker and her relationship over the shelter user. It also contains a straightforward “road map” for shelter users to follow, which involves attaining “stable housing,” rather than remaining long-term in the shelter. The two websites’ messages and their choice of wording indicate that while each shelter’s goals may be similar, the manner in which these goals are to be attained is distinctly different, as the caring-based shelter stresses nurturing support. In contrast, more formal language that emphasizes clear pathways, via regimented planning and assistance from shelter workers, can be found on the regiment-based shelter’s website.

I argue that both types of shelters utilize neoliberal governance strategies to create the “shelter-citizen.” While it is of course virtually impossible to categorize all and any of the governance strategies that shelters use as strictly regiment- or caring-based approaches, and there may be some overlap between the two in some shelters, the overriding distinctions between them have, I believe, have been made quite clear here. I therefore use these terms throughout this thesis in order to easily categorize the shelters included in my research.

Chapter Three

Definition of Neoliberalism used within this Study

While a number of studies emphasize the neoliberal nature of regiment-based governance strategies (i.e., Gengler, 2012), scholars have recently suggested that the term has come to be a stand-in for a myriad of disparate concepts, and therefore often lacks clarity and consistency. It is thus necessary, I argue, to employ an articulation of neoliberalism that is clearly focused on how governance strategies can be employed within areas of the “subjectivity” such as women’s shelters.

Venugopal (2015) argues that neoliberalism has become “a deeply problematic and incoherent terms that has multiple and contradictory meanings, and thus has diminished analytical value” (2015, p. 165). He proposes that neoliberalism as a concept be expanded into different broad categories, one of which involves defining neoliberalism as it “actually exists” in the real world. This approach basically aims to “delineate and describe this phenomenon, trace its spheres of operation, and explore its dynamics” (2015, p. 166). In other words, neoliberalism, in this instance, is defined based on the spaces in “real life” or the subjectivity in which it is perceived as manifesting. Venugopal gives examples of previous scholars that have relied such an approach, including Wacquant (2012), whose focus centered on neoliberalism’s involvement in the growing “penal wing of the state” (paraphrased by Venugopal, 2015, p. 167), and Crouch (2011), who articulates neoliberalism as being concerned with public life as, he argues, it seeks to dominate the “giant corporation” through its influence over the former (Crouch, 2011, p. vii). While such approaches differ considerably in their exact definitions of neoliberalism’s role in public life, both treat neoliberalism as an entity that influences what Cruikshank would define as

the “subjectivity,” or life that is not explicitly within the political domain. This is in contrast to the explicitly economic-based approaches that investigate and scrutinize the free market, which Venugopal problematizes as frequently failing to properly define neoliberalism, using it instead as a “catch-all” for certain economic policies and practices.

For clarity’s sake, I utilize Venugopal’s second conceptualization of neoliberalism which I have described above throughout this thesis, since I view neoliberalism as being pervasive within governance as it is understood to exist in the subjectivity, or “real world” (Venugopal, 2015, p. 166). I therefore use the term “neoliberalism” as characterizing both these types of mechanisms that enable women to become self-governing, and the attitudes and instructions that confirm this behaviour as being desirable for citizens to adopt. This will largely be the only definition of neoliberalism that is used throughout this thesis. While I do, in one instance, define women’s shelters’ increased reliance on funding from private donors (rather than the state or through grass-roots fundraising efforts) as being “neoliberal” in nature, I would argue that this still fits with my conceptualization of neoliberalism as being found within governance approaches, rather than as an economic definition of neoliberalism. These practices are in keeping with neoliberal governance ideologies that emphasize self-sufficiency and independence, in this case from the government. Moreover, these private entities also often advocate for neoliberal approaches within shelter governance through emphasis on shelter users’ self-reliance (Cruikshank, 1999; Bumiller, 2007).

Chapter Four:

Definition and Conceptualization of the “Shelter-Citizen”

In order to properly articulate how governance works within women’s shelters, I focus specifically on the tactics and processes that create the final product, or what I deem the “shelter-citizen:” a shelter user/resident who stresses autonomy and personal responsibility, and embodies neoliberal aspects of success. Cruikshank (1999) defines “subject-citizens” as being both subject to governance practices and as responding to these practices through their own agency. She contends that subjects are made self-governing by the “small-scale and everyday governing practices of voluntary associations, reform movements, and social service programs” (1999, p. 12). In other words, the subject-citizen emerges through forms of governance that emphasize voluntary responsibility and initiative.

Like Cruikshank's subject-citizen, I characterize shelter-citizens as self-governing and self-reliant, despite benefitting from assistance from women’s shelters and potentially other public service programs. This is because, in keeping with Cruikshank's conceptualization of governance, the services provided to these women instil self-governance and emphasize the importance of traits such as personal responsibility and empowerment, and share much in common with what she refers to as the “self-esteem movement” (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 89). This movement celebrates women’s “personal empowerment” by emphasizing, for instance, their self-reliance and ability to seek out self-help (1999, p. 90). Cruikshank argues that this movement is implicitly political, as it advocates strategies that promote self-governance and are therefore neoliberal in nature (1999, p. 97). I argue that much like the self-esteem movement, caring-based women’s shelters employ governance in a way that emphasizes similar values of self-sufficiency

and self-reliance, but do so in a manner that purports to be nurturing and personally empowering, and which celebrates women's personal agency and resiliency.

Chapter Five:

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to both present a rationale for exploring how neoliberal governance within care-based women's shelter contributes to the creation of the “shelter-citizen,” and to document this process through an analysis of interviews that I conducted with women’s shelter workers and shelter users in Southwestern Ontario. These interviews, which number eleven in total, reflect how shelters, through procedures and regiments designed to “empower” women, serve to convey neoliberal values such as personal reliance and enterprise.

I conceptualize this “shelter-citizen” as having personal agency and free will. Taking a page from Cruikshank (1999), I point out that rather than being rendered powerless or stripped of agency by these types of governance strategies, the majority of the shelter users interviewed expressed appreciation for the means and methods of governance employed through harm-reduction approaches. Additionally, the women frequently emphasized the differences between themselves and less “desirable” shelter users, who do not fit the “shelter-citizen” mould. This suggests that boundary drawing and identity constructions were frequently used by these women to reinforce their positions as “shelter-citizens,” in contrast to women do not embody the ideal shelter user, due for instance, to their inability to maintain sobriety or find long term housing and/or employment.

I also argue that this form of empowerment is intertwined with racialized, ableist, cis-gendered and class-based expectations, which reinforce the notion that women's shelters tend to act as arbitrators of White, middle-class professionalized norms, despite purporting to

“empower” all women. For instance, previous research has found that lower-class, racialized women within shelters and drug-prevention programs who fail to conform to White, middle-class neoliberal notions of success and “empowerment” tended to be reminded more often than their White counterparts of their responsibilities to establish “good” relationships with social workers, and to succeed in drug-prevention and abstinence programming (Beck, 2008, p. 240). Racialized women were also treated as being more troublesome within the shelter, subject to increased scrutiny and implicitly given higher standards of behaviour and success to adhere to. Their behaviour was also singled out more than their White counterparts as being violent and difficult to handle (Beck, 2008; Donnelly et al., 2005). Additionally, because the purveyors of these programs tend to be White, middle-class, and able-bodied, the norms being implemented by women's shelter workers (in this case, the “experts” that Foucault (1975) refers to), and the rules and routines that shelter users are expected to follow are frequently based within (predominantly) White, middle-classed notions of independence and success.

While it is desirable for women within shelters to want to aspire to goals of empowerment and independence, I also argue that these mechanisms of governance may perpetuate White, middle-class, and ablest values and norms, thus causing the shelter to overlook the experiences of marginalized women. For instance, the emphasis on personal enterprise in one of the women's shelters stresses the desirability of independence via monetary gain, something heavily emphasized within middle-class, North American and individualistic cultures. Women from cultural and/or ethnic backgrounds that are less individualistic and more family-oriented may be reluctant participants in personal enterprise endeavours, which they may view as being in contradiction to their personally held values. Also, women who are socioeconomically more privileged, such as those who have previously or currently had access to more education or

economic resources, may benefit more from personal enterprise programs in which they have to exercise business skills and build and utilize social networks, since they are more likely than their less privileged counterparts to have had schooling on, and/or real-world experiences within, similar business endeavours.

Potential Contributions to Future Research

While a large body of existing literature focuses on the benefits of caring-based approaches in shelters in treating addiction and providing proper procedures for parenting (i.e., Donnelly et al., 2005), there is a notable lack of analysis on how these shelters employ governance procedures through their programming. My focus on caring-based shelters' use of governance, and its subsequent production of citizens within women's shelters (or "shelter-citizens"), extends the scope of this literature by emphasizing how this governance is conducted in such an environment, and how it impacts women's shelter users. This also illuminates how gendered notions of ideal citizenship, which are often intertwined with Whiteness and middle-classness, are instilled in women's shelters through governance, and how they serve to implement neoliberal ideals in subjects, based on hard work and self-reliance. My analysis of the women's responses to this type of governance, combined with the goals of caring-based shelters to instil independence through "gently coercive" governance strategies, is also unique, since both women's shelter users, and caring-based shelters themselves have generally been presented quite differently in past literature (i.e., Westlund, 1999; Donnelly et al., 2005). For instance, women are often portrayed as lacking any agency and as being bullied or coerced into obedience by the rules and routines imposed upon them by regiment-based shelters (Westlund, 1999). Conversely,

women's shelters that employ caring-based approaches are widely portrayed positively as being beneficial and nurturing to women, and in stark contrast to their more regiment-based counterparts, which are often framed as being much more neoliberal in nature, as well as more hierarchical in their employment structuring (Donnelly et al., 2005). While I agree that the often coercive techniques used in women's shelters are prevalent, and I also concur that there are obvious benefits to using caring-based approaches, I would additionally argue that these types of shelters are not exempt from implementing neoliberal values within their procedures and can also have hierarchical elements within their programming and structuring of employees, which may, in turn, lead to further marginalization of minority women who use shelters. Ultimately, the research presented constitutes an innovative, multi-faceted study of both the effective aspects and shortcomings of neoliberal governance within women's shelters, and how shelter users react to and are shaped by this governance.

Structure and Content of Thesis

This thesis is divided into three parts: The first section outlines my research methods and findings, detailing relevant aspects of the interviews conducted. Next, the literature review presents an overview of previous relevant research, most notably scholarship that focuses on shelter governance and its impact on shelter users, as well as relevant research on systemic inequalities present in shelters. The final section draws conclusions from the findings and also provides a discussion of future directions for women's shelter research, based on the study's results. Potential limitations to the research findings, and potential future directions for the research, will also be discussed in this section.

Chapter Six:

Research Methods

Shelter Types

The research carried out consisted of eleven qualitative interviews conducted with both shelter users and “staff within two South Western Ontario women’s shelters. One of these shelters was in the process of transitioning from a largely regiment-based model towards a caring-based approach to shelter governance by shelter employees, while the other was a “drop-in” shelter, with a long-time history of using caring-based strategies. These shelters typically offer programming with the goal of promoting individuals' well-being, through, for instance, boosting their self-esteem, and promoting self-care practices (Rudrappa, 2014). These interventions are in contrast to more punitive-based shelters, which are often characterized by more rigid rules, routines and practices that were more likely to utilize “one-size-fits-all” approaches towards governance (Gengler, 2012). Unsurprisingly, breaking or transgressing these rules is generally followed by steep penalties, including the removal of valued privileges such as later curfews for residents (Gengler, 2012). Both shelters were purportedly invested in women's empowerment approaches, and stressed their well-being and touted programs that were purported to be more nurturing and healing-oriented. These shelters were chosen because of their close proximity to the town in which I was presently residing.

It is important to note that both shelters offered programming that fit into the caring-based approach. The drop-in shelter especially interested me, because women were expected to

implement shelter goals and values even though they are not permanent residents. It was also for this reason that I use the term “shelter users” rather than, for instance, “shelter residents” throughout this thesis, as the majority of women interviewed did not stay within the shelter settings overnight, but instead went back to other residencies, such as homeless shelters or rented accommodations. The other shelter also made for an interesting parallel to the drop-in shelter, as it was in the process of transitioning from punitive-based structuring to a harm-reduction approach. It would therefore be possible to see whether governance procedures changed significantly based on the type of routines, regiments, and programming implemented, and what kind of impact, if any, this would have on shelter users.

Participant Demographics

For the purposes of this study, it is worth noting that all eleven participants were White. This is likely due to the fact that the cities where interviews were conducted were predominantly White in their racial/ethnic makeup, and neither city was known to be especially diverse in this regard. In total, five shelter workers, one former shelter worker, and five shelter users were interviewed. All of the shelter users were presently using the drop-in shelter, rather than the shelter that was in transition. Participants were not required to disclose their ages, but there was much more variance in age among shelter workers than shelter users: while the former group contained participants whose ages ranged from approximately twenty, to about thirty-eight, the latter group consisted entirely of women who were bit older, as their mentioned ages ranged from their mid-thirties to about early fifties. All of the shelter users had past experiences with domestic violence, and each was able to disclose such experiences to me. Both women's shelters

served a distinct clientele, and shelter users therefore consisted entirely of survivors of domestic violence, though the drop-in shelter's website also stated that many of its clients had or were presently experiencing homelessness as well. While some of the women in each shelter did experience periods of homelessness, the shelters were intended to assist primarily women who had experienced domestic violence. All shelter users had experienced some form of intimate partner violence (I.P.V.), which had heavily influenced their decision to go to the shelter. Educational backgrounds varied, as some women had not completed high school, while one had completed a two-year college program. All of the shelter users stated that their financial standing was, at the time of the study, precarious or poor, as some women were unable to afford their own rent, and many relied on social assistance programs, and/or spent their nights in homeless shelters or within other residential women's shelters. Also, while all of the women stated that they participated in services, two of the women served in facilitator positions, and one woman stated that she was about to become a full-time staff member in a paid position.

In contrast, the shelter workers, all of whom worked in the shelter in transition, had each completed some type of post-secondary education in a number of different programs, which was required in order to obtain a job at the shelter. Three of the respondents had either obtained or were still completing Bachelor's degrees, while one of the respondents had finished a college program in counselling. Another respondent, who was in charge of the shelter's programming, came from a background in policing, but had also attained a Master's degree in Social Work (M.S.W.). While socioeconomic status was not explicitly mentioned, the fact that these women all had access to post-secondary education, as well as subsequent full-time employment, suggests that they enjoyed a level of socioeconomic privilege and social capital that was considerably higher on average than that of the women who used the shelter's services.

All of the interviews took place within the shelters themselves. In both of the shelters, personal offices and private meeting halls were used. This ensured that the interviews were intimate and private in nature and, because they took place behind closed doors, no interruptions ensued. Each interview was conducted on a one-on-one basis.

Permission Strategies: Obtaining Entry and Consent for Interviews

To gain access to each shelter, I contacted shelter administrators via email and told them the purpose of my research. It should be noted that both shelters were contacted using these procedures. I also disclosed my research materials within each email that was sent. Interested participants then contacted me back, and a phone conversation followed and dates and times for interviews were established. In the case of the drop-in shelter, I was first given the contact information for the program coordinator, whom I then emailed and called in a follow-up phone call. She then granted me permission to set up interviews with participants, all of whom were shelter users. Participants were also provided with the research information materials, including a consent form that ensured that they were participating out of their own volition, and an information letter, which detailed the interview/research processes in greater detail. They were also presented with an end-of-interview letters of thanks, which listed the next steps that would be taken in the research process, namely the production of a thesis through the collection of further data and a summarization of remaining work to be done. The letters also ensured respondents that their names, ages, and other personal identifying information would not be disclosed anywhere in subsequent documents.

In order to ensure that participants were as comfortable as possible and felt that they could respond to questions truthfully, I also included a statement at the beginning of each interview with both shelter users and workers that contained an overview of the questions they would be asked, and also a reminder that their privacy and ability to decline questions and withdraw from the interview at any time would be respected at all points of the interview.

For each interview, I consulted my computer to ask participants questions that I had written down on a word document. As each of these interviews was also recorded, I did not type or write anything down while asking questions or while participants were talking. This ensured that I was able to pay full attention to participants, and grant them the attentiveness and respect they each deserved as they disclosed their personal experiences to me.

Only one of the respondents was contacted outside of the shelter environment, a former shelter worker through connections that I had made as an undergraduate student. Her interview was also unique in the sense that it took place over the phone. This interview was arranged through contacting her on social media, and an interview time was agreed upon by both of us. This participant contacted me over the phone at this specified time and date. I then proceeded to then read the interview questions on my computer, as I did for the rest of the interviews.

Interview Nature and Design

The purpose of the interview questions included in this study was two-fold: I hoped to get an understanding of both the shelter services offered, and the women's attitudes towards those services. Two different scripts were issued to shelter workers and users, respectively. For the

former group of participants, I conducted an interview consisting of three main sections. I began by asking questions about how shelter workers became aware of job opportunities at the shelter, why they wished to work in the shelter, and the processes through which they were hired. This was done in order to understand both how these women found their way into the shelter environment, and what their goals were in doing so. I was interested in how this would influence if and how they enforced shelter governance procedures, and if it would, in turn, impact the shelter users and their behaviour, which is one of the primary questions of my thesis.

The next section asks shelter workers to describe the routines and rules that the shelter implements, and the manner in which they are expected to be followed. These questions were asked to both understand how the shelter expects residents to behave, and how these shelter programs operated and if they were still carried out in the manner that they were originally intended. I also asked shelter workers which procedures they believed were more and less successful, why they thought so, and how these procedures were subsequently carried out. These questions were asked in order to better understand how the shelter employed governance, and which types of governance were most effective, at least in the minds of shelter workers. I hoped that these questions would give me a better understanding of the manner in which governance operated, and which mechanisms were successful and which ones were not.

The final section of the interview dealt with the workers' relationships with other workers and with shelter users. I included this section to understand if and how workers' dynamics with others in the shelter, specifically the shelter users, might be influential in explaining shelter dynamics, and the relationships that workers have with their clients. This may help to explain if

and how shelter users model their behaviour on the examples set by shelter users, and if such behaviour has anything to do with what their relationship with shelter staff is like.

In contrast, shelter users, whose interviews also consisted of three sections, were asked how they first heard about the shelter itself, what their educational and financial backgrounds were like, and if they had any children and/or close family. This constituted the first part of the interview. These questions were included in order to ascertain what the respondents' backgrounds were like, specifically their socio-economic status. This was done to determine whether or not shelter users with more privileged backgrounds, which may include increased access to education and financial resources earlier on in their lives, were more likely to succeed in following shelter procedures, and/or to state that the shelter was helpful in aiding them in obtaining their goals.

The second section consisted of questions about shelter users' experiences *after* coming into the shelter. Participants were asked about positive and negative experiences they had during their time at the shelter, their favourite and least favourite aspects of shelter programming, if they felt safe in the shelter and why, and what they thought of the shelter staff and if they had formed any friendships with other women within the shelter. These questions were intended to obtain a fuller picture of shelter users' experiences, and also to better understand if the attachments they had made led to their increased compliance with shelter rules and/or greater attachment to the shelter as a whole. This may then result in their increased internalization of governance procedures, and attitudes that are viewed as being desirable and therefore indicative of these shelter users having ideal "shelter-citizen" traits.

The third section touched on shelter users' goals and aspirations for the future. It included questions pertaining to current goals that they may have had and were currently working towards, as well as any future aspirations they had, and if the shelter was helping them to fulfill those goals. I asked these questions in order to better ascertain if the shelter assists individuals with their goals, and if so, how it does this.

For the purposes of this paper, all participants were guaranteed confidentiality, as was stated in their information letters. Each participant name included in this thesis is therefore a pseudonym.

Data Analysis and Emergent Themes

I conducted data analysis by first reading over the completed interviews three times, and then constructing basic categories that centered on, for instance, whether individuals had positive or negative attitudes towards shelter workers or towards the shelter itself. From here, I expanded these categories into more specific sub-headings, such as whether shelter users expressed negative or condescending attitudes towards other shelter users. Further categories included: Disadvantages among Shelter Users, and Specific Shelter Programming. Broader themes were used as headings in the "Results" section located near the end of this thesis, while sub-themes were likewise framed as sub-headings.

Chapter Seven:

Literature Review

Neoliberal Governance as Implemented through Professionalized Knowledge

Cruikshank (1999) examines the specialized knowledges and discourses used to administer advanced liberal governance. The use of such expertise as a basis by which to govern is touched upon by Larner (2002), who in her analysis of recruitment strategies within the New Zealand call centre labour force, points to the use of a “particular strategy” of employing expertise in order to mobilize women within call centres. Such strategies, she notes, involve the use of “‘post-welfarist expertise,’ including human resource companies, training providers, industry associations and information providers” (Larner, 2002, p. 650), that now regularly take on roles that have historically been filled by the practices of “state agencies” (2002, p. 650). Larner’s analysis highlights how expertise becomes implemented through non-state actors. This implementation seems to serve a dual purpose, as it benefits an increasingly privatized pool of “experts” who also encourage women to become call centre employees themselves. This is accomplished primarily through toll-free numbers that enable and invite the participation of women from various walks of life (for instance, mothers, migrant women and post-secondary students) to take jobs as call-centre operatives. Evidently, expertise is embodied in the call-centre environment through the use of designated “experts” who are positioned outside of “official” state governance. These experts, however, are still used to implement neoliberal ideas and attitudes of hard work and self-sufficiency in care-centre clients, in a manner that utilizes techniques that stress self-reliance and is similar to those that are implemented through women’s shelters’ staff and programs (Larner, 2002, p. 651). Such knowledge can also be quantified and

legitimated through the use of, for instance, professionals and experts, and through scientific fields and methods such as statistical-based research and analysis (Cruikshank 1999, p. 99). Cruikshank also argues that this professionalized expertise relies on the social sciences, which are used to legitimate governance strategies (1999, p. 100). Therefore, governance, according to Cruikshank, is articulated through the use of knowledge in a professionalized and specialized manner that legitimates the means of governance tactics and strategies that operate within organizations such as women's shelters, in order to implement and increase the subject-citizen's ability to self-govern. Foucault noted similarly that, beginning in the 19th century, the human body was reconceptualized as an object, upon which a new form of power, which relied on subtler or "gentler" forms of coercion, was exercised. This power allowed subjects to acquire the behaviours, knowledge, and skills that would enable them to become self-governing, as new disciplines were exercised upon them in order to carry out this endeavour (Spencer, 2001). Like Cruikshank, Foucault designated the newly-emerging social sciences, such as the statistical sciences, as being the tools that enabled the "regulatory and controlling functions" of "societal institutions" means of governance (Spencer, 2001, p. 12). For instance, women's shelter workers can use their status as educated workers to instil in shelter users "proper" behaviour, which also involves enforcing knowledge in the form of rules and routines, or alternatively, educational groups or classes that teach life skills or values, such as money management and maintaining abstinence from drugs. These routines and classes may also be further validated by officialised research findings, which present empirically validated proof of the success of these practices.

Evidently, governance, as it is understood to exist within what Cruikshank refers to as the "subjectivity," or the "everyday" (1999, p. 20) not specifically political sphere, is dependent

upon knowledge being used in a manner that exacts authority over citizens. This knowledge is constructed through notions of professionalization and expertise, such as through shelter workers' administration of programs and rule regimes to shelter workers. This, in turn, promotes their increased participation within a political system that also stresses personal responsibility and governance. Spencer also notes that political power and governance mechanisms are not found simply within formally political "superstructuralized positions," but instead are prevalent throughout societal institutions at large, and are fluidly constructed throughout what he calls "a more or less open field of possibilities" (2001, p. 12). This exercise in power, in turn, promotes the increased "democratization" of politics (Spencer, 2001, p. 12), and allows for increased citizen participation.

As past literature makes evident, Foucault's fluid and multi-faceted take on power (1975), as articulated by both Spencer (2001) and Cruikshank (1999), can be applied to analyses of social programs and policy, through a focus on both their purported goal/mission statements and the actual means by which they carry out these programs. For instance, Helfrich, Badiani, and Simpson (2006) outline how women's shelters prepare disabled women for their post-shelter work experiences, stressing the importance of employment and work ethic. "Experts" such as shelter workers and administrative staff accomplish the ingraining of these values through their repeated prioritization, as evidenced in shelters' aim of instilling financial independence within shelter users. While the authors note that disabled shelter residents are often disadvantaged and unable to easily attain such independence, the dominant narratives of self-sufficiency and work ethic are still implemented within shelter instruction and discourse (2006, p. 319). Hartnett & Postmus (2010) also note that the governing mechanisms within shelters serve to create a narrative of "personal responsibility, with shelter services directed at helping the individual"

(2010, p. 289). Governance thus works in a manner that emphasizes the subject's personal accountability, doing so through individualized mechanisms that still make use of professionalization and expertise as dispensaries of power.

Shelters also implement these professionalized knowledges through equally professionalized means of evaluating clients. Westlund (1999) outlines the manner in which domestic violence services and service providers “pathologize” women through processes of mental evaluation by experts who create definitions of women's health and well-being. For instance, she argues that analyses of battered women’s psychological state by psychiatrists and other physicians emphasize “profiling” that stress “normality” over women’s actual health and well-being (Westlund, 1999, p. 1050). These end up pathologizing women in ways which “measure, classify, and define battered women’s deviance not just from ‘normal’ female behaviour but also from universalized male norms of independence and self-interest” (1999, p. 1050). In other words, neoliberal values are instilled in the medical professionalization of psychiatric evaluations, as women are considered to be abnormal if they do not possess such traits. These “normalizing judgments,” as she refers to them (1999, p. 1050), are used, in turn, to govern women via normative prompts and statements regarding their behaviours and attitudes. She includes the “police force, courts, domestic violence shelters, counselling services, and the psychiatric and medical professions” (1999, p. 1051) as being able to formulate and pass such judgments. Westlund also contrasts the modern forms of power that are exerted fluidly within these institutions with what she deems the “pre-modern” or violent, chaotic methods of control that are imposed upon women by their abuser(s) (1999, p. 1051). These methods, in turn, she argues, stem from the state’s forms of governance, or the “arbitrary will of the sovereign,” which, in her words “replaces” the “impersonal, comprehensive, and highly regular rule of such

institutions” (1999, p. 1052). I would argue that Westlund’s appraisal of governance is somewhat wrong-headed in its contention that state or sovereign governance is “replaced” by institutional means of rule, rather than acting fluidly within all spheres of life or the “subjectivity.” Nonetheless, her overall argument is valuable because it articulates how tactics of governance work within shelters, as highly professionalized techniques that serve to create ideals for behaviour and attitudes which women within the shelter and domestic violence systems are expected to embody. She notes, moreover, that these tactics are also used to implement certain explicit norms, based upon “some of the gender norms that modern institutions themselves inculcate” (1999, p. 1045). While these norms may vary depending on the individual shelters or services and their purported mission statements and goals for women (1999, p. 1050), Westlund clearly outlines the manner in which shelter governance is made possible through professionalized knowledges. She also usefully articulates how these strategies are used to instil certain ideals, attitudes and expectations within women’s shelter users.

All of the above scholarship coincides with Cruikshank's and Foucault's articulation of governance as functioning throughout the “subjectivity.” The articulation of the subjectivity, which Cruikshank defines as being outside of the explicitly political and within the domain of the “everyday” (1999, p. 21), allows one to conceptualize governance as being enacted fluidly, including within domains in the non-profit sector, such as women’s shelters. The findings also emphasize that governance is not confined to explicitly “political” institutions such as legislative entities. Additionally, they demonstrate that tactics of governance can be employed effectively by organizations that purport to be ostensibly “left-wing” and empowering in nature.

Neo-Liberal Governance within “Left-Wing” Organizations

Cruikshank (1999) examines how “empowerment” became disjointed from its left-wing grassroots origins and institutionalized as a state strategy of governance. Cruikshank does not distinguish between the means used by either supposed “left” or “right” orientation, but instead by the outcomes that they aim to achieve (1999, p. 70). She uses the example of welfare rights activist Jacqueline Pope, whose goal of allowing poor and racialized populations to “govern themselves” differs from her right wing counterpart's motivations primarily in her emphasis on “public and democratic control over private services” (1999, p. 71). Like Pope's approach, Cruikshank notes that governance and empowerment strategies, such as those within women's shelters, are in fact explicitly political in nature, and enact governance in ways similar to right-wing initiatives (Cruikshank, 1999, pp. 70-71). Pope's theorized strategies of power include advocating for decreased “intrusion of the state and the colonization of black communities by public service bureaucracies,” and are characterized by Cruikshank as embodying the “market-driven strategies of neoconservatives” (Cruikshank, p. 71). Both approaches ultimately aim to limit governance of subjects by the state, in order to get them to govern themselves. Given that left-wing and grassroots-based organizations, such as Pope's, often enact strategies which culminate in subjects' self-governance, it therefore makes sense to examine women's shelters, which I argue also aim to create autonomous “shelter-citizens,” with a similar focus in mind. Also, as many women's shelters have grass-roots origins and are explicitly feminist in nature (Gengler, 2012; Rudrappa, 2014), it therefore makes sense that they would employ governance procedures and empowerment initiatives in a purportedly feminist manner, aiming to empower women by stressing both personal empowerment and personal responsibility. These motivations are explored by Rudrappa (2014), who notes that two shelters in Texas and Chicago that aim to

empower South Asian women escaping domestic violence do so in a manner that emphasizes shelter users' autonomy. She argues, for instance, that these shelters contradictorily use authoritative and increasingly professionalized services, which ultimately aim to increase users' independence (2014, p. 41). This occurs despite claims from workers that their strategies deploy the philosophies of radical care. The two shelters Rudrappa analyses employ governance tactics that are similar to their more neoliberal counterparts in stressing personal responsibility and being goal-oriented towards residents attaining autonomy. This, once again, reinforces the validity of Cruikshank's argument that, despite the apparent differences in political leanings and ideology, governance operates in similar ways within both left and right-wing strategies and organizations (1999). Most pivotally for my purposes here, this argument can be applied to women's shelters, which use governance tactics that often tend towards neoliberal goals and objectives. Governance within women's shelters manifests itself even outside of the explicitly political sphere, as it shapes, or at least attempts to shape, women's behaviour through professionalized rules and procedures that often emphasize neoliberal ideas of autonomy and self-reliance.

The Dichotomy of the “Shelter-Citizen” and the “Docile Body:” How does Governance Operate within Women's Shelters?

A majority of recent literature appears to position governance within homeless and women's shelters as stripping subjects of agency, and rendering them agentless as “docile bodies” in the process (Ramsay, 2016; Westlund, 1999). The term, “docile bodies,” coined by Michel Foucault, refers to the manner in which bodies, or subjects of discipline are controlled in

such a way that, once the process is successful, culminate in a “body as object and target of power” (1975, p. 20). Westlund (1999), for instance, utilizes this conceptualization of the docile subject when she critiques the manner in which shelters pathologize women and use procedures and “services” that cause them, thanks to the “arbitrary rule of the sovereign,” to become subject to a “compulsory principle of visibility,” caused by the “impersonal, comprehensive, and highly regular rule of such institutions” (p. 1049). Westlund’s critique therefore challenges the neoliberal notion that subjects intuitively *believe* that they have agency, and thus instil self-governance. Moreover, the neoliberal attributes that these shelters attempt to instil, she argues, are themselves “pathologizing and otherwise disempowering” (Westlund, 1999, p. 1046). Similarly, Beck (2008) argues that the “highly regulatory technologies of discipline and reform” function even outside of the immediate legal sphere (2008, p. 48). In both studies, Foucault's mechanisms of governance within women's shelters and drug rehabilitation programs are treated as regulating factors that basically serve to instil complete subjectivity within those who use women's shelters. These critiques are undeniably valuable for drawing attention to problematic aspects of shelter rules and policies, such as those that implicitly target or exclude minority groups of women (Donnelly et al., 2005; Rudrappa, 2014). However, they also fail to account for the fact that while the governance mechanisms employed in shelters may attempt to instil within women certain ideals, procedures, and values, such processes may not be explicitly coercive in nature. They also fail to consider that liberal democratic power is often effective precisely *because* subjects believe that they have agency (Cruikshank, 1999). For instance, women's shelter users may themselves adopt these values, and willingly comply with shelter rules, values and norms. They may also decide, on their own, to lead certain programs, or to make themselves part of promotional or entrepreneurial efforts within the shelter. Additionally, governance may

instil certain values, such as work ethic and self-reliance within shelter users, who may start to mirror shelter workers, both in their attitudes to others and in their actions. Because I am contesting the notion of Foucault's term “docile bodies” as it is used to describe subjects of governance as devoid of agency, exploring this topic would obviously benefit further from an overview of Foucault's work, which I will attempt to explain succinctly in the following paragraph.

As these above examples suggest, docile bodies can be conceptualized as being created through forms of governance that would be incapable of co-existing with subjects' agency. As Foucault noted, however, these mechanisms also aimed to instil in subjects the skills and attitudes ideal for producing productive and trained bodies. Addressing the manner in which this process occurs, Foucault notes that “it is easy enough to find signs of the attention then paid to the body ... that is manipulated, shaped, trained; which obeys, responds, becomes skilful, and increases its forces” (p. 20, 1975). In other words, the body, or the individual is the subject of fluid, multi-faceted forms of power. This change occurred, Foucault argues, during the classical era and became the “general” form of domination used throughout the subjectivity, rather than being limited to formal institutions of discipline such as the military during the pre-classical era. This domination involved “exercising upon [the body] a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself” (p. 21). This process amounted to “an infinitesimal power over the active body,” which was able to carry out forms of coercion and control it far more elegantly, and far less violently, than the forms of slavery and servitude that had preceded it (p. 22). This was due to administrative methods involved in these forms of power, which were thought to be rational in nature, and allowed for both the “accumulation of men and the accumulation of capital,” thanks to the governance techniques that enabled industry to employ

men in greater numbers than before (1975, p. 21). It also allowed for the implementation of further skills within the subject, and led to the creation of a “mechanism” which, Foucault argued, created an increasingly obedient subject whose usefulness as an instrument of governance and discipline also subsequently grew (1975, p. 22). Disciplinary power allows human bodies to operate with increased speed and finesse, and through its application of instructive and coercive forces, to construct “practiced, docile bodies” (Foucault, 1975, p. 20). It also relies on increasing professionalization, in order to properly manifest these forms of power, which Foucault describes as being a “an ‘aptitude,’ the ‘capacity’ which it seeks to increase” (1975, p. 23). Power, therefore, is not only fluid, but also seemingly quantifiable when manifested by professional knowledge, which the “expert” or professional uses to create the “docile body” through precise administration based on an accepted set of rules, doctrine and/or procedures implemented within their profession.

Such forms of power can, I argue, be manifested within women’s shelters. Previous research points out, for instance, that shelters’ decentralization and increased reliance on alternative sources of funding from, for instance, private benefactors, led women’s shelters to move away from their grass-roots origins as providers of gender-friendly safe spaces based on equality, and to rely increasingly on professionalization in the delivery of services (Bhuyan, 2012; Bumiller, 2007; Rudrappa, 2014). This can also lead to increased formality and hierarchal practices within women’s shelters. Gengler (2012), for instance, points out that upon entering shelters, women are often immediately subject to processes such as invasive surveillance and governance, which may take the form of, for instance, using “power as a tool of control” (2012, p. 501). “Coercive relationships” in turn involve the participation of shelter workers who may

espouse “empowerment” strategies that also mask a “power imbalance” due to workers’ authority over shelter users (Gengler, 2012, p. 501).

Ultimately, as has been examined in the literature, shelter governance relies on disciplinary forms of power capable of producing docile bodies. Foucault's conception of disciplinary governance describes it as both enacting coercive control over individual bodies, and also enforcing the subsequent implementation of these norms within subjects, which, in turn, allows them to exert and exercise power themselves. He describes such a process as allowing the subject to be both a “describable, analyzable subject, not in order to reduce him to “specific features,” but “to maintain him in his individual features, in his particular evolution, in his own aptitude or abilities” (1975, p. 20). In other words, Foucault's “subject” or “citizen” is dualistic in nature, being both a product of governance and an individual able to freely instill information and procedures that these forms of governance grant him. Cruikshank, in *The Will to Empower* (1999), further articulates this relationship of power as being cumulated and finalized in the “subject-citizen,” who, in their dichotomy, is reminiscent of Foucault's notion of the overlapping between the docile, dominated body, and the useful, active and learning body (1999, p. 17). In her review of Cruikshank's seminal work, Disch (2001) notes that Cruikshank articulates the citizen as being both “a participant in politics,” and “an effect and an instrument of political power” (paraphrased by Disch, 2001, p. 16). I contend that this view of citizen/citizenship mirrors my conceptualization of the shelter-citizen, as shelter users often go on to become model shelter-citizens who occupy both paid and unpaid positions of authority, and in doing so, perpetuate shelter rules and procedures. Essentially, they become “instruments” of the governance/political power present within the shelters. Cruikshank, Disch argues, conceptualizes power as being a strategy of governance that is rarely perceived of as one, due to its distinctly

covert functioning. Disch articulates this means of governance as purporting “merely to bring citizens into their own agents ‘in their own interest’” (Disch, 2001, p. 16). Furthermore, Cruikshank maintains that her *modus operandi* is “not to indict the will to empower but to show that even the most democratic modes of government entail power relationships that are both voluntary and coercive” (1999, p. 17). This contention further emphasizes the dualistic nature of the subject-citizen.

Previous research on caring-based women’s shelters has focused primarily on the benefits of shelters’ focus on individuals’ self-care regimes, well-being, and personal empowerment. In doing so, these studies have contrasted caring and regiment-based approaches, noting that the latter are more likely to use punitive-based forms of shelter governance that stress, more explicitly, personal responsibility (i.e., Gengler, 2012; Rudrappa, 2014). To date, there has been little research on how governance operates within caring-based shelters and services. For instance, Rudrappa (2014) examines U.S. shelters focused on meeting the needs of battered South Asian women. She characterizes these as “radical” caring shelters, whose mission statements included being dedicated to “intra-racial gender justice,” and a focus on implementing larger social change within South Asian communities through the altering of gender norms (2014, p. 597). Her analysis states that these shelters “mobilized the workers’ traditional gender” norms through the use of caring programs which emphasize help and acceptance (2014, p. 597). Rudrappa notes that principles of “maternal thinking, that is, concern for women’s safety in order to preserve life and assisting their growth as autonomous individuals, was extremely important to radical caring” (2014, p. 597). In other words, these grass-roots shelters rely on constructions of South Asian strength and femininity, which are then relayed through methods of discipline and governance that also stress the importance of autonomy. Moreover, she describes the shelter

workers as being in hierarchical positions of authority *over* the residents, thanks to “attendant cleaning schedules, [and] compulsory counselling sessions,” which “put workers in positions of authority over the residents” (2014, p. 601). Such routines indicate that even shelters that utilize harm-reduction approaches still enforce certain hierarchical procedures. Rudrappa's analysis gives an example of governance that promotes caring approaches that are nonetheless intertwined with disciplinary procedures and hierarchical structuring that is intended to implement procedures, knowledge and values within shelter residents. The shelters therefore aim to create ideal subject-citizens in a manner that stresses both their personal well-being, and growth and agency.

Other research addressed the manner in which shelter users themselves responded to such forms of governance. Stensrud (2005) notes that many women within women's shelters agreed that obeying workers and responding to routines and procedures was important, and a majority of respondents believed that the programs shelter workers ran helped them attain better lives (2005, p. 2). Beck (2008) also notes that for many women within harm reduction-based drug treatment programs (which, like women's shelters, are residential institutions), the notion of hard work, responsibility, and trust in the program go hand-in-hand with success. She uses the example of Tracy, who told the author that her successful completion of the program was dependent on her own initiative, stating that she had to “strap up [her] boots,” and realized that the program was going to be “hard work from the get-go” (2008, p. 246). However, she also emphasized the importance of putting her trust in the program and allowing herself to “stay open-minded so I could be taught” (2006, p. 247). Tracy’s testimony to the program’s success gives evidence of a woman who embodies the “subject-citizen” that Cruikshank articulated: she emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility and the ability to make her own decisions while apparently

choosing to participate in the program. At the same time, however, she also allows herself to be “taught” by the authorities within the shelter, and subsequently obeys them in order to succeed in the program. Additionally, women could go on to become “peer role-models” and were given privileges such as contributing to and enforcing rules in the house if they did a good enough job at following rules themselves and made the required progress through the program (Beck, 2008, p. 250). This again suggests that disciplinary forms of power also operate in care-based shelters, which aim to transform shelter users into self-governing citizens who then contribute to implementing and enforcing shelter rules and procedures.

Empowerment Discourses and Real-World Shelter Inequalities

Previous literature has outlined the ableist, class-based and racialized aspects of neoliberal governance and empowerment strategies within women's shelters (Donnelly et al., 2005; Gengler, 2012). Conversely, scholars have also explored how neoliberal governance strategies are used to mobilize and empower more marginalized populations, such as migrant women (Larner, 2002). For instance, Larner’s explores the neoliberal strategies that call centres based in New Zealand use to recruit women primarily from the Philippines as employees, though the use of “expert” knowledge based within different sectors of the call centre (2002). This latter study suggests that neoliberal governance frequently manifests itself in ways that are still empowering to populations that may be marginalized or otherwise less privileged. This also suggests that neoliberal governance is not uniform in nature, as there are variations in how it is deployed, as well as in its interactions with other programs, initiatives, and peoples’ responses to its workings.

While Cruikshank conceptualizes governance as being a system of gentle coercion that emphasizes the creation of autonomous citizen-subjects, she notes that such an approach, which has the citizen's personal governance and empowerment as its objective, does little to alleviate broader structural inequalities (1999, p. 21). She also cites the explicitly classed origins of women's involvement within philanthropic-based governance (1999, p. 58). Cruikshank traces *middle-class, White* women's 19th century initial involvement within governance and “public-political life” as centring on their efforts to elevate poor women (1999, p. 50). This suggests that governance, especially as it pertains to “Othered” women, such as those who are racialized, disabled, non-cis-gendered or socioeconomically marginalized, inherently involves assumptions about how these subjects ought to behave, and is therefore “classed” in nature.

Cruikshank also acknowledges that the mechanisms of governance that create these racialized, stereotypical and ultimately unfounded tropes can lead to unjustified mistreatment and discrimination against certain minority groups, most notably racialized women (1999, p. 110). Specifically, she outlines the processes through which bureaucratic practices at welfare offices produced the “welfare queen,” and perpetuated racist stereotypes that cast African-American welfare recipients as inherently lazy and dishonest (1999, p. 114). Although her focus here is on quantifying and knowledge-creating processes, such as the collection of statistics, rather than the practices of non-profit or government workers, she notes how processes, which are not explicitly political, act as forms of governance that ultimately stigmatize poor, racialized women.

Like Cruikshank's “welfare queen,” classed, racialized, non-cis-gender and disabled shelter users inhabit a distinct place within governance and quantifying tactics. Research has documented problematic racial assumptions as contributing to inequalities and “colour-blind”

systems of governance, which can end up marginalizing or further excluding racialized shelter users. For instance, Donnelly et al. (2005) point out that White privilege, as it functions within shelters, often blinds workers to the realities of systemic discrimination that people of colour face. They note that when White people “fail to acknowledge race and treat everyone exactly the same way, they may be seen as using a one-size-fits-all approach and not meeting the needs of diverse groups” (2005, p. 6). The authors illustrate this by pointing out that service providers are generally White, middle-class women, who are more likely to align with the goals and ideologies of White men, many of whom serve as the shelters’ benefactors, thanks to the uniting bond that their Whiteness and class privileges provide them (2005, p. 10). They note how class differences between shelter users and residents manifested within the shelter’s rules, routines and literature impact how certain shelter citizens are “Othered.” For instance, they point out that pamphlets contained in the shelters tended to promote ostensibly White, middle-class norms, such as those instructing residents on how to properly cook, clean, and raise their children (2005, p. 12). Also, because these shelters are staffed predominantly by White women, the authors argue that racialized women, especially black women who constitute the largest minority group in the shelter, often avoid such shelters, because they perceive them to be unhelpful and hostile towards them (2005, p. 13). Moreover, the authors give examples of shelter workers’ behaviours that were both implicitly and explicitly racist. For instance, one shelter worker’s defensive insistence that “a woman is a woman, and battered is battered” ignores the systemic racism that impacts racialized shelter users who cannot benefit from White privilege (2005, p. 20). More blatant racism was also found within responses that emphasized how black shelter users, in contrast to their White counterparts, were “Othered,” by both their race and socioeconomic status. One worker described many of the black women who used the shelter as being “lower

socioeconomic, not folks like you and me who can afford a hotel room” (2005, p. 21). Black women were also more likely to be described as “hot heads,” and as starting conflicts and being difficult (2005, p. 21). Black women are therefore stereotyped and “othered” even during their initial entry into the shelter, despite being severely underrepresented within the shelters in general. Workers’ responses also reinforce the notion that the shelter's services for women are “colourblind,” and therefore based purely on a set of rules and routines that seemingly do not discriminate against would-be shelter users based on race. At the same time, however, shelter workers’ attitudes about black shelter users also reinforce the implicit discrimination that black women were subjected to. These racist attitudes, moreover, were implemented within shelter literature, rules and procedures. They are further reinforced by discourses of professionalized knowledge, which are also used to legitimize discriminatory attitudes and treatment by framing certain individuals as “difficult” for not adhering to the shelters' procedures. Class, especially as something that is salient based on upon individuals' perceived lack of means, also serves to “other” certain shelter users. Also, the fact that black women were more likely to be classified as “lower-class” by shelter workers indicates that class and race intertwine in a manner which serves to further marginalize women, and tropes around class are frequently racist and racialized in nature. Black women, especially economically marginalized black women, are therefore framed by shelter workers as being within non-discriminatory spaces, which also implicitly create racist tropes around them by framing their behaviour as failing to conform to purportedly “colour blind” shelter norms.

This implicit marginalizing of certain shelter users is often visible within practices employed by shelters themselves. For instance, an emphasis on procedures meant to “sanitize” incoming residents in many women’s shelters implies an uncleanness among certain types of

women, who may be socioeconomically marginalized (Gengler, 2012). One shelter worker who participated in the study documented in this thesis also argued that such procedures were useful in determining “who our clients are.” This inherently assumes that shelter users are, by extension of their class status, unclean. It also serves to categorize certain women as potentially being problematic, based on certain salient aspects of their identity, in this case socioeconomic status. Bartlett (1999) expands on this notion, arguing that dirt and “dirtiness” is something that is constructed through its “relation to social value and disorder. Dirt is that which transgresses social boundary” (1999, p. 4). Cleanliness is thus intertwined with class/socioeconomic status, insofar as it is related to the “othering” of women who are not middle-class, and therefore not socially desirable. This emphasis on cleanliness as dictating a middle-class feminine norm also has its roots in Whiteness. Bartlett points out, for instance, that assimilationist practices in Australia centered on cleanliness as an indicator of Whiteness, which, in addition to being a racial indicator of superiority amongst colonial Australians, also involved “learn[ing] the cultural rituals of white society in order to approximate Whiteness,” and she notes that the latter was “also defined by a conformity to its social rules” (1999, p. 8). These rules around cleanliness were shaped by societal expectations around cultural, racial and classed notions of superiority, which Aboriginal Australians were expected to follow in their effort to become “ideal citizens,” shaped after their White, middle-class counterparts. Mary Douglas in *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966) similarly points out the manner in which “dirt” has been conceptualized based on its relationship to “disorder.” Cleanliness, in contrast, is describing as making “unity of experience” (1966, p. 2), and therefore stands, in some cases, for social order. She further describes purity rituals as being symbolic to human life at large, as individuals are able to separate “cleaned” individuals from their undesirable counterparts (1996,

p. 3). Cleanliness, in other words, also implies a proper way of doing things, which, in the case of the shelter user, indicates a compliance with White, middle-class femininity. Failure to conform to cleanliness standards can be indicative of an “otherness” which classifies shelter users as falling outside of White, middle-class feminine norms.

Donnelly et al. (2005) also point out that while shelters within the Southern U.S. are required to keep “data on the racial and ethnic makeup of their clients,” the shelter workers frequently did not disclose specific or accurate numbers of the ratio of black to White shelter users (2005, p. 25). Instead, they stressed that the shelters had about the same number of black and White users, and were serving both in equal proportion to their population in the outside community (2005, p. 25). This latter aspect of the shelter records indicates that social scientific forms of data collection can be used to legitimize shelters' discourses and practices, while projecting an image of the institution as progressive.

The casual racism touched on in Donnelly et al. (2005) manifests similarly in Stensrud's study (2005) of Saskatchewan's women's shelters and services to battered women. Stensrud points out, for instance, that in many shelters of the Saskatchewan population she surveyed, there is a notable lack of diversity; this is despite the fact that domestic violence is a problem that impacts women of all different racial backgrounds (2005, p. 12). She also notes that some shelter workers characterized these women, many of whom were Aboriginal, as not actually wanting to leave abusive partners, and instead were just wanting “a rest from the abuse, some food in their belly” (2005, p. 21). Such attitudes suggest a failure on behalf of the women's shelter users to change and to better themselves, and could be an indication of a failure to conform to shelter standards of self-betterment. The study also revealed that a majority of the women utilizing the

shelters were focused primarily on finding a safe place, where abusive partners and family members would no longer have access to them (2005, p. 22). Additionally, while shelter workers and shelter users alike agreed that women should have a place to rest, recuperate and feel safe, there was also strong emphasis put on “fair, efficient, organized procedures” (2005, p. 22). Some women also reported feeling as though shelter workers were judgmental about their situations and plans for the future, which included potential plans to leave their abusers (2005, p. 25). Moreover, shelter workers themselves who were interviewed admitted that Aboriginal women, who were a prominent population within Saskatchewan's shelter systems, were frequently discriminated against when trying to look for housing, as a majority of landlords would not rent to Aboriginal women (2005, p. 24). Stensrud’s study presents evidence of the systemic inequalities that certain populations within women's shelter services face. These inequalities and subsequent marginalization of certain residents belie the neoliberal notion that women’s agency and hard work is all that is required of them to better themselves, and to attain middle-class milestones of success, such as successful home rental and/or ownership.

Beck (2008) also highlights the systemic inequalities that exist within harm-reduction-based drug treatment residential facilities, which often emphasize self-empowerment strategies similar to caring-based women's shelters. These, she notes, are frequently based on a “treatment ideal of the self-reliant, active citizen,” which she argues is deeply problematic for racialized participants (2008, p. 30). This is due to an emphasis on “highly regulatory technologies of discipline and reform” that are both highly gendered and racialized in nature, and which reference the ideal of a male, White patient as the norm (2008, p. 30). This, she argues, creates a program in which the systemic barriers that both women and racialized people face are ignored by “structural forces which play into women's lives” (2008, p. 34). For instance, the “state

power” that Beck argues is filtered through “therapeutic practices, intensifying discipline and surveillance” (p. 30) is used to implement programs that she notes often fail to resonate as strongly with racialized women, who often do not enter willingly into such programs, and are often judged more harshly, especially if they have criminal backgrounds (2008, p. 30). Black women who entered the program were often treated more harshly by workers, and also faced greater systemic barriers outside of the shelter, such as harsher treatment from the law for transgressions such as drug use (2008, p. 30). The treatment programs and residence also advocate personal solutions to systemic inequalities, such as instructing residents to establish friendly relationships with law enforcement officials in order to obtain increased visitation time with their children (2008, p. 31). These “personalized” solutions to systemic inequalities illustrate a system that ignores the intersectional aspects of marginalization that racialized women face, while also promoting a “one-size-fits-all” model that perpetuates this discrimination to some extent, through treating the women more harshly and imposing higher standards on them than their White counterparts.

Disability is also a significant barrier to women’s success within the shelter environment (Smith, 2010; Helfrich, Badiani and Simpson, 2006; Chang et al., 2003). Smith (2010), for instance, points out that nearly half of all shelters contacted for the purposes of her study were unable to accommodate women with disabilities (2010, p. 23). Moreover, even when disabled women were able to physically enter the shelters, they were often isolated from other shelter users, because of the lack of accessibility to common areas such as dining and common rooms (2010, p. 24). These exclusions, despite not being based on explicitly discriminatory or marginalized discourses of knowledge (in contrast, for instance, to those that have characterized Aboriginal women within shelters, or which defined Cruikshank's “welfare queen” trope),

nonetheless contradict the notion that all shelter users need is personal agency and self-control to succeed in becoming an ideal “shelter-citizen.” Helfrich, Badiani and Simpson (2006) also outline how shelter procedures and neoliberal attitudes towards self-reliance frequently failed to prioritize and take into account both the personal motivations and limitations of shelter users with mental disabilities. Instead, they argue, women within shelters are frequently “empowered” by workers to obtain well-paying work and “economic self-sufficiency” (2006, p. 320). This, the authors note, is an approach that is frequently used despite “the meaning clients confer to the worker role” being distinctly different for women with mental disabilities (2006, p. 321). This compounded the difficulties that these women face, as they are uniquely and differentially marginalized as women with disabilities who have also suffered from domestic violence (2006). Such research indicates that women with disabilities are frequently neglected within women's shelter discourses.

Immigration status also presents unique challenges to immigrant women within women's shelter systems, many of whom do not fit comfortably into a framework created by primarily White, North American-born women. For instance, Lodhia (2010) notes that patterns of violence committed against immigrant women

are not easily addressed within existing legal paradigms of domestic violence because mainstream advocacy models continue to imagine as their primary subject women who *do not experience interlocking forms of oppression* [italics added] (p. 161).

These models are not explicitly exclusionary, but they rely on legal and program-based distinctions that failed to take into account factors such as these women' uniquely high likelihood of being deported, and the fact that they are less likely to find work due to the types of visas that they are issued, and are often in a state of forced reliance on abusive spouses (Lodhia, 2010, p. 165). Understandably, this means that neoliberal-based empowerment strategies, which emphasize self-sufficiency and independence, may not be as effective in helping racialized immigrant women, who face multi-faceted aspects of structural oppression and often have precarious legal statuses which make them more vulnerable than their White, native-born counterparts (2010, p. 161). Rudrappa (2014) also outlined the challenges that shelter workers frequently faced due to culturally-based conflicts between the strongly individualized norms and goals that were outlined for women, and the more family-oriented inclinations of the South Asian shelter users. For instance, workers often failed to understand why women returned to abusive partners and family members. Rudrappa suggests that such differences stem from a lack of understanding of the unique dynamics within economically marginalized immigrant women's lives (2014, p. 589). Moreover, although the shelter workers all hailed from South Asian backgrounds themselves, class-based differences, along with professionalized discourses that stressed more impersonal solutions to problems rather than individualized plans for each shelter user, often further marginalized both women's problems and their agency to solve them (2014, p. 599). This indicates that class-based differences between shelter users and shelter workers are often more prevalent than the "one-size-fits-all" programming that exists in many caring-based shelters would suggest, and may present significant barriers in helping shelter users attain the independence and self-sufficiency that women's shelters typically emphasize that they work towards.

Substance use among shelter users was also found to be a common source of stigma. For instance, Kurtz, Surratt, Kiley & Inciardi (2005) found that stigmatization was a common barrier faced by sex workers who were also drug users, when they attempted to use shelter services. They concluded by noting that these women's reluctance to place their trust in women's shelters was further exacerbated because of their tendency to "hide their sex work and drug use to increase the likelihood of receiving services" (2005, p. 355). This, in turn, often worsened their problems, because "hiding the very aspects of their lives that most harm their health is self-defeating because providers may well remain unaware of their greatest needs for care" (2005, p. 355). Shelter workers may therefore be ineffective in addressing these women's needs. Drug use thus appears to be a multi-dimensional problem among women within shelters, as stigmatization and women's resulting anxiety about it may culminate in these women being unable to disclose to shelter workers what their needs are. This, in turn, makes it more difficult to succeed in the shelter environment, and to meet the expectations that (I argue) governance in this environment places on individuals.

Previous research strongly indicates that limitations exist within women's shelters when it comes to implementing routines, rules, and structures that are effective in helping women of diverse backgrounds in an intersectional manner that address the real-life inequalities that they so often face. While Cruikshank's approach towards governance sheds valuable light on how self-governing "subject-citizens" are formed, I argue, based upon this literature review, that discourses that ignore intersectional aspects of discrimination and marginalization perpetuate inequalities based on assumptions made about certain aspects of women's identity, such as race and socioeconomic status. These, in turn, can create practices of governance that are less successful with women who are marginalized based on, for instance, class, race, sexuality, and

gender status. The research presented here aims to explore in greater detail how governance is implemented in ways that may enable some subjects to benefit from becoming self-governing, but I also acknowledge the systemic inequalities that are frequently embedded in shelters and governance procedures. These inequalities in turn can result in unequal outcomes for certain shelter users, as implicit biases towards marginalized women become tangible in both shelters' treatment of these women and the expectations that shelter users are expected to adhere to. Consequently, I argue that my thesis's focus on systemic inequalities within neoliberal governance provides a valuable and modifying contribution to research that characterizes shelter governance as rendering subjects as devoid of agency, *and* to neoliberal governance's characterizations of success as being dependent *only* on hard work and personal accountability.

Chapter Eight:

Results

In discussing the results obtained, I focus primarily on four areas: 1) information on shelters' backgrounds and procedures, which I obtained from the shelters' publicly accessible websites; 2) the governance strategies used within caring-based shelters; 3) shelter users' attitudes towards these governance strategies, which, I argue, indicate a willingness to adopt the values and procedures of the shelter in an effort to attain the status of "shelter-citizen;" and 4) aspects of shelter governance that are potentially problematic due to their reliance on predominantly White, middle-class norms in their programming. These inequalities often result in the marginalization of women who cannot aspire to these norms. This may stem not only from blatant and outright discrimination, but also from the ways in which shelter goals fail to properly take into account the unique and systemic challenges that certain groups of women face.

Shelter Backgrounds: Origins, Mission Statements, and Shelter Governance

Differences between Shelters Referenced in the Study

Because one of the women's shelters was transitioning from a regiment to a caring-based approach towards governance, there were a number of contrasts between the two shelters involved in the study, and how they used programming. The shelter in transition exemplified how neoliberal governance is still imbued within shelter governance approaches that are caring-based, as the shelter turned its focus from more regiment-based programming to caring-based

approaches, though women's programming still emphasized the importance of self-sufficiency and making good personal decisions. In contrast, research done in the caring-based shelter indicated that programs which stressed individualized solutions to problems, in contrast to the more impersonal, regiment-based procedures of the shelter in transition, appeared to be more successful in implementing neoliberal values in shelter users. Shelter users then appeared to have greater success in fulfilling obligations such as finding housing and employment. While these differences may be due to other external reasons, such as larger structural factors relating to race and socioeconomic status, which may give certain women distinct advantages over others when it comes to navigating the shelter's neoliberal expectations, the fact that these shelter users repeatedly emphasized the success of the program indicates that they may respond better overall to the caring-based approaches that the shelter used.

Shelter Websites: History and Descriptions of Services Offered

Each of the shelters included in this study employed, to various extents, caring-based approaches. However, because one of the shelters was still in transition from a primarily regiment-based approach to a more caring-based model when my data gathering took place, there were noticeable differences between the respective shelters' mission statements and websites. The drop-in shelter's purported mission statement was the following: "We promote mental wellness through responsive and innovative services and empower individuals on their recovery journey." The website also listed the following as its values: "Accountability, Compassion, Integrity, Welcoming, Innovation, Inclusiveness." The shelter's vision was also "an inclusive community with mental health and well-being for all." This emphasis on mental health coincides

with caring-based approaches, as does its focus on individuals' self care. The website's use of language that stresses both accountability and inclusivity also demonstrates the shelter's dualistic emphasis on individualized caring approaches and neoliberal notions of personal responsibility. The website's origin story emphasizes the grassroots beginnings of the shelter, and notes that they sprang from concerns about how women were "presenting themselves at local churches, the hospital and other agencies and other agencies suffering from physical and emotional abuse." The website also noted its grassroots origins and government support:

from these meetings, a Steering Group was created, Statistical information was gathered from Stats Can, the provincial government of the day, local police detachments and from health agencies. All of this gathered information proved that abuse was widespread in this area, and appeared to be growing worse. At this point, members of the Steering Group approached the municipal governments and requested support to open a women's shelter. While seeking financial support, it was important that acknowledgement be given [to] this widespread problem. The Ministry of Community and Social Services were very supportive of a women's shelter during this period. Through their direction, a different kind of agency was established known as the Contact Information Agency. This agency was a community-based agency, run by a volunteer board with an executive director, and initially it provided women with a "Listening Ear", contact numbers and community referrals to other agencies. The committed group of like-minded individuals persevered and in 1987 the agency called "People In Transition" was incorporated. In May 1987, [the shelter] opened.

This description of the shelter's history mentions its grassroots-based origins, but also emphasizes its use of local government support. The website's history page ends with a description of the shelter's current activities and mandates. It states that "today the organization continues to grow with outreach programs as well as transitional and affordable housing supports." The language used in the shelter's origin story suggests that it combines neoliberal notions of success (i.e., finding affordable housing) with caring-based approaches that are rooted in the shelter's grassroots origins, and are based on tailoring shelter services to the individual needs of the shelter users that the community served.

In contrast, the shelter in transition still employed language that was indicative of governance tactics that emphasized the individual's own ability to be self-sufficient and to seek out resources that would help them in "setting goals and accessing community resources in their search for stable housing as they continue on their path to independence." The shelter's neoliberal emphasis on self-sufficiency is made evident, as women are expected to use the strategies that they learn from the shelter to attain independence. The website's use of direct language allows for no divergence from this path, as shelter users' routes to success are rigidly set out for them. The milestones that they are expected to reach are, I argue, neoliberal in nature, as they emphasize middle-class notions of success, and stress the self-reliance that is needed for women to attain them. The shelter's history is listed on its website and spans nearly 90 years. It traces its origins from its creator and first benefactress, who wished to "address the welfare, safety and advocacy of all of this community's women, young women and their children." The story also notes that the shelter originally consisted of two organizations, which soon merged, leading to "a workable basis of co-operation and respect for each organization's very different

history, but common ideals.” Fast-forwarding to today, the shelter now enjoys status as a “recognized leader in providing housing programs for homeless women and their families in our community.” In addition, it emphasizes their delivery of a number of different services, including “three essential housing services, and “Skill Development Programming, which includes Women’s Addiction Recovery Meditation and ‘Sex Trade on My Terms.’” The Service also offers additional empowerment programs for young boys and girls through local schools. The contrast between the shelter’s grassroots origins, and its current, more neoliberal objectives, are evident in the website’s framing of its objectives. Its emphasis on programs with objectives such as skills development makes it clear that its focus is on women’s personal reliability and accountability. Moreover, the title of its programming for sex trade workers, “Sex Trade on my Terms,” also suggests that sex worker-shelter users are treated as autonomous workers and entrepreneurial subjects, as its construction of sex workers is inherently neoliberal in nature. The website further describes the program as “an excellent way to increase knowledge, enhance skills, build self-awareness and is a great stepping stone in moving life forward.” This again stresses the organization’s emphasis on learning skills that will increase individuals’ self-reliance, in order to wean shelter users off of their dependency on shelter services, and to mould them into autonomous individuals.

How Governance Operates within Women’s Shelters

Specific Shelter Programming and Governance Procedures

Because this thesis involved interviewing both shelter workers and users, I was fortunately able to extract a wealth of information about different aspects of shelter governance. The shelter that was in the middle of transitioning from a predominantly regiment-based model to a caring-based approach provided considerable insight in this regard. From the interviews obtained, it was clear that workers were changing the routines that the shelter had put in place, such as the adoption of a more relaxed attitude towards, for example, breaking rules and curfews and not meeting shelter deadlines for seeking housing on time. However, regiment-based approaches still persisted. Overall, the shelter offered programs that emphasized the learning of new skills and knowledge that provided instruction on how to become more self-sufficient and increase one's personal responsibility and safety. However, they did so in a manner that was seemingly non-coercive in nature, as shelter users could choose whether or not to attend. For instance, one of the workers, programming coordinator Karen, noted that of the 40 programs that she oversees in her position, the majority were "life-skills," while "some of them are preventative girls programming," which focused on how shelter-users could both avoid, and maintain abstinence from, drugs. These programs clearly aim to foster growth and development within certain areas in these women's lives. They do so by helping women with relationship skills, and improving their self-esteem, through the creation of crafts such as "positive affirmation jars," which served as reminders of their own worth and potential. Karen also noted that whoever was "interested" in such programs could partake, suggesting that there was a lack of direct coercion in getting women to participate in the program. These types of voluntary programs serve to implement more gently coercive forms of governance, which also ingrain notions of self-esteem, empowerment, and personal responsibility. Karen said, for instance, that "we do life skills here weekly, for shelter clients, and they offer an eight week program for

anybody else who's interested, so they do all kinds of stuff. It could be healthy relationships, it could be making positive affirmation jars." These programs were apparently more successful and popular amongst shelter users than those that emphasized strictly professional or work-oriented initiatives.

In contrast, Karen noted that many women were not able to find work, since they were still trying to gain their bearings within the shelter setting. She also stated that such work-related programs could be made "less heavy, less important" because they are less successful in helping women to become self-sufficient through finding full-time, and ideally meaningful work. Additionally, she talks about having lower levels of success among women who look for, but fail to find, long-term housing. This suggests that certain governance tactics that emphasize self-sufficiency and housing can fail to connect if they do not coincide with individuals' present socioeconomic circumstances. External economic factors, such as a poor housing market or lack of decent and/or affordable rental options in a particular city or area, may also play a role in shelter users' failure to find long-term housing. Also, women who face barriers based upon, for instance, racial discrimination and/or language barriers, as outlined in Lodhia (2010) and Stensrud (2006) respectively, would likely have a harder time finding housing than their White, English-speaking counterparts. Since shelter programming did not explicitly address these inequalities, it was problematic to assume that all shelter workers would succeed from a "one-size-fits-all" approach, given the systemic inequalities that certain women would likely face.

Also, because these procedures were left-over from the shelter's old rules and regime, which were implemented prior to the shelter's changing over to a caring-based approach, their lack of success could be an indication of the failure of approaches that stress control and govern

residents too stringently through overtly coercive means. According to Karen, such changes were made in order to better serve shelter users who may have been having difficulties with previous rules and regulations, such as those related to finding housing and adhering to curfews. These changes were supported by all of the workers interviewed. Karen elaborated on this point in her interview:

People with lived experience [were] put into different positions supporting [the current shelter users]. Um, the reason why our transition into harm-reduction is taking so long is because we're waiting to hold groups of women who are using substances to say, what do you need in this space?

Karen's response elucidates the manner in which governance now takes place within the new caring-based paradigm, which operates through "women's agency" in much the same way as neoliberal governance does, through focusing on the subject-citizen's autonomy. Women are expected to have a say in implementing shelter strategies and programming that work well for them. These methods also emphasize an expectation that women will then use these skills in order to assist current shelter users. Long-time shelter users are therefore expected to transform themselves into ideal "shelter-citizens," who, in turn, act as tools of governance, as they pass on and help to implement ideal attitudes and behaviour within others. This appears to work through the implementation of workshops that teach and reinforce desirable behaviours, which are also led by shelter workers, who may serve as role models for shelter users to emulate. This is further reflected by the fact that some of the shelter users interviewed also attained positions as peer

support workers, likely indicating that they had a desire to assist other shelters users in a manner similar to how the paid shelter workers assist women in the shelter.

Interestingly, sex trade workers who used the shelter were treated as legitimate, professional workers, but were also subject to curfews and were required to disclose how they made their livelihood, which suggests that they were subject to a regiment-based intervention, perhaps more so than other shelter users. The shelter in transition thus views sex workers as entrepreneurial subjects who embody, to an extent, neoliberal values related to self-reliance and personal responsibility, as is evidenced by the programs' emphasis on the abilities of sex workers to conduct their work in their own way. However, the enforcement of strict rules suggests a degree of stigmatization. Indeed, one of the workers argued that women disclosing their involvement in the sex trade could be problematic, since such disclosure could lead to further stigmatization from the other shelter users, some of whom may have come from sex-work backgrounds themselves.

The drop-in shelter also provided similar programs, such as the "Butterfly Program," which assisted substance addiction survivors, as well as programs devoted to budgeting, anger management, and other useful life skills such as sewing. Evidently, the caring-based approach within this shelter still aimed to provide workers with a sense of independence, self-reliance and the skills needed to become self-sufficient. It also uniquely emphasized personal enterprise and business acumen, through a program called Microenterprise. This program, which consisted of making jewellery and then selling it outside of the shelter environment, allowed women to sell the jewellery that they designed and created, within both the shelter and through outside venues. One resident noted, however, that the shelter prohibited her from selling her own jewellery

within the actual shelter, and that this was a setback because she was unable to capitalize on such an opportunity, and subsequently make more money in the process. This indicates that while the drop-in shelter users were expected to make money by applying their own skills and initiatives towards entrepreneurial means, and to use the skills that they had obtained during their time spent in the shelter, they were still also subject to some rules and regulations, such as those that dictate how and when women may sell merchandise. These rules thus serve to reinforce both women's autonomy and the neoliberal nature of the shelter, as women are discouraged from seeking assistance from the shelter, even in the form of payments for jewellery from other shelter users.

The shelter in transition also employed practices that, through bureaucratic processes, aimed to sort and single out shelter users. For instance, new potential shelter users were subject to copious amount of paperwork, which verified their personal information, along with procedures such as bag checks and "bedbug protocols," as well as mandatory showers and clothes cleanings. Karen noted that such procedures were useful in determining what kind of women were entering the shelters, saying that "I think the intake is probably important because then you have information to ... know who your clients are." Such procedures, in other words, are the first steps in governance procedures that both quantify and determine the types of women that are using the shelter, and also help shelter workers to instil governance patterns within women, through routines that emphasize cleanliness and responsibility for one's own body. These processes also mark the beginnings of women's potential transformations from shelter user to "shelter-citizen." The women are introduced to the shelter's governance approaches, which combine procedures that, like those described in Gengler (2012), immediately instil disciplinary mechanisms within new shelter users, and which begin the process towards turning

them into ideal shelter users. Karen also noted that there existed a mentality within the shelter that classified certain women, such as intravenous drug users, as deserving of harsher treatment than women who were, for instance, alcoholics. She stated “we would be more tolerant to somebody who had an addiction to alcohol, then we would maybe seeing an intravenous drug user ... you still see it in the community and with the women.” She called this type of discrimination a “systemic issue,” and noted that while such discrimination was improving with the implementation of caring-based approaches, vestiges of it still remained. This mentality serves to further reinforce the notion that certain shelter users are more “desirable” than others, even if they do not conform perfectly to neoliberal notions of the “good” citizen. For instance, abuse of alcohol may be less associated with deviance than drug use, and this may also coincide with discrimination against women who are, or are perceived to be, drug users.

The drop-in shelter, in contrast, did not enforce stringent rules or routines on residents. Instead, workers encouraged shelter users to attend various programs such as those devoted to parenting, drug abstinence, and skills-learning programs, including those that taught sewing and knitting. While the drop-in shelter also provided similar programs that emphasized good parenting skills, they did so in a manner that appeared to be “gently coercive,” and which instead stressed an individual's own willing participation in such programs. This is in distinct contrast to the shelter in transition, which, at the time that this interview occurred, still employed punitive-based procedures, such as shortening curfews in a manner that was intended to remind and reinforce women about the importance of following rules.

Overall, shelter users’ responses to the programs offered at the drop-in shelter appeared to be very positive. Most of the women also seemed happy with freely attending programs that

were provided at the shelter. Moreover, a number of the women interviewed who engaged in such programs were then focused on becoming self-sufficient and/or working themselves, as two of the women had obtained positions in the shelter, and another was focused on using the skills and business acumen she had gained to start her own line of jewellery. As Cruikshank indicated (1999), this reflects the ability of “gently coercive” governance approaches to both implement and perpetuate attitudes and behaviours that work by stressing women’s potential as entrepreneurs, and their autonomy and ability to *choose* to become self-reliant and hard working shelter citizens. This latter point, moreover, is made further salient by the voluntary nature of these programs.

Shelter Users' Attitudes Towards Workers, Other Users, Boundary Drawing and Routines

The majority of participants who used the drop-in shelter appeared to have largely positive attitudes towards the shelter’s staff, routines and procedures. While one resident criticized the shelter's rule against allowing women who make their own jewellery (outside of their Microenterprise efforts) to sell it within shelter settings, the majority of women praised the shelter for its lack of stringent rules and procedures, its part-time hours, and its open-door policy. For instance, one shelter user noted that due to the closeness of the shelter, she was able to come “seven days a week,” despite “not really needing to.” The ability to come and go from the shelter as one pleased appealed to many of the women, and many also emphasized the shelter's laid back, relaxed environment. Additionally, they frequently compared the drop-in shelter favourably to other women's and homeless shelters that they had used in the past, which they said were much stricter and more hierarchal in their rules and procedures. One participant named

Leslie even criticized the shelters she had frequented in the past as refusing to take her, due to a policy of only taking families. Overwhelmingly, the women indicated that they preferred the drop-in shelter because of its lack of hierarchy. While some women critiqued the shelter for not having food available more often during the shelter's open hours, they also all appreciated the other services that shelter staff provided, most notably assistance with moving and finding safe and affordable housing. All of the shelter users also remarked that they participated in at least some of the programs that the shelter offered. Moreover, three of the five women noted that they had found secure, long-term housing, while one woman resided in a women's shelter as her main place of residence, and another lived in what she considered to be "unsafe housing," but noted that she had a strong desire to leave her current place of residence, and was securing the help of a doctor to do so. The drop-in shelter's emphasis on participation in voluntary programs, in contrast to a more structured and coercive regime, suggests that it employed governance in a manner that stressed women's own free will and good judgment, rather than a regimented-based system that employed mandatory rules and structures. Additionally, while house meetings were held at least once a month to address any suggestions and/or complaints that shelter users may have had, one of the participants, Sarah, stressed the fact that meetings did not address topics such as parenting and shelter users' conduct, noting that "we have groups for that. We have parenting groups ... but everybody just brings up concerns that they have." These processes allow women to actively participate in the shelter's governance procedures, through bringing up concerns that they had, and shaping their experiences within the shelter.

It was also revealed by a number of shelter workers that for many shelter users, a sort of hierarchy existed pertaining to substance abuse and addiction. For instance, many of the women who used the shelter in transition were said to categorize *other* women in the shelter as being, for

instance, “dirtier” than others due to the type of substances that they were addicted to, despite often being addicts *themselves*. For instance, Tiffany, a part-time shelter worker, noted that a majority of shelter altercations took place when residents stigmatized others based on this supposed hierarchy of substance addiction, stating that: “when they fight with each other, like, what's most challenging ... it's usually over like, [one woman saying] she's a crack addict, and then it's like, why are you calling someone a crack addict, you shoot heroin.” This type of stigmatization, which is based on excluding other women who are perceived to be “dirty” or deviant based on their substance dependencies, indicates that not only do shelter users view drug use as being deviant, despite often being drug users themselves, they also attempted to make themselves seem “better” than other shelter users who may have had addictions that they did not have themselves. This may be because drug use, as an indicator of both deviance and socioeconomic status, is an easily salient way to differentiate oneself from other shelter users. While drug use is not something that coincides with the notion of the upstanding “subject-citizen,” the fact that many shelter users felt the need to stigmatize others suggests that, at least to some extent, they prescribed to norms dictating drug use as deviant, and indicative of failure. It is also indicative of boundary-drawing, as it separates certain women from others in a hierarchical manner, based upon how poorly shelter users adhere to proper shelter conduct.

Another notable finding stemmed from shelter users’ tendencies to differentiate themselves from other shelter users, based upon, for instance, their success within the shelter environment, as well as their abstinence from alcohol and/or drugs. For instance, Leslie emphasized that she had never engaged in any illicit substances or activities, stating the following: “I don't have any problems. I've never been in trouble with the law, I don't have a record, nothing. Very rare. I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't take drugs, I have no problem with

the law.” By emphasizing her lack of transgressions, Leslie also defines herself as an ideal “shelter-citizen,” who, despite relying on the shelter and its services, also embodies the neoliberal ideal of the self-governed citizen. This is further emphasized when she describes her desire to find better housing; she also compared her ability to abstain from drugs and illegal activity to her neighbours living nearby, many of whom engaged in sex work, or sold and engaged in illicit drugs. She additionally made the following comments about other shelter users: “A lot of the women do drugs, smoke, drink, they cut, their children have no shoes, I’m very rare, very. And bipolar too.” By emphasizing her own success in overcoming mental illness, in contrast to her apparently less successful counterparts, Leslie also stresses the difference between herself and the other women who use the shelter. Her response, moreover, is indicative of the pride and sense of personal responsibility that the shelter cultivates and encourages in ways that point to the internalization of the ideal “shelter-citizen.” Additionally, she differentiated between herself and another shelter user, who was using the help of shelter workers to move from another shelter, by remarking that she had never needed the help of shelter staff in such a manner. Moreover, she matter-of-factly pointed out that the woman who was using the shelter’s services to move her things was also “a bit of a hoarder.” This mildly stigmatizing comment, when contrasted with Leslie’s repeated emphasis on her ability to overcome her own mental health struggles, also suggests some mild shaming of the other shelter user, who perhaps had not attained her level of autonomy or overcome her mental illness in the same manner as Leslie had. Similarly, another shelter user, Patty, who worked in an unpaid peer-support role, firmly emphasized her lack of negative interaction in the past with police and law enforcement, and noted that she, unlike many of the other shelter users, did not need to attend anger management sessions, and had never used drugs. While Patty was quieter about her experiences, she

nonetheless was clear to differentiate herself from other shelter users who do not embody as many of the traits of the ideal “shelter-citizen” as she does. This may indicate that governance strategies in the shelter perpetuate certain ideals of citizenship that also imply a division of certain shelter users from each other based upon whether they display behaviour that is “desirable” or “undesirable” according to shelter staff.

While the majority of the shelter users appeared to have some feelings of friendship towards a number of the other women in the shelter, most of them also pointed out problematic behaviours among these women, in contrast with their own conduct and citizenship. These criticisms often took the form of differentiating statements about other individuals. The women emphasized other shelter users’ drug use and the difficulties they may personally have had in interacting with them. For instance, Tina, a facilitator, noted that the other women in the shelter could be often difficult, and would sometimes often lash out and become violent. She also emphasized her close relationships with both other shelter workers and the police, in contrast to her transgressions and past conflicts with them, saying the following:

My most positive experiences here? Well, there's been a lot. A lot of satisfaction with the girls because now I'm kinda on the other side. One of the best things that happened to me was because I never left after I did my community hours. I stayed, I've never used again, ever since I got out of jail. So, I relate, and I don't relate, it's a past thing for me, it's a current thing for the women, but I do relate to a lot of the women, and we do have a program here, Ontario Peer Initiative Development, so they paid for me to do that. ... I did my 50 hours community service, or internship hours you get for that. I graduated the

program, and yeah, so I co-facilitate groups here now, and I volunteer in the kitchen, and I start working here on a permanent basis in two weeks.

Tina differentiates herself from other shelter users, stressing how she, unlike them, has overcome the hardships and difficulties that characterized this shelter user population, including drug use and trauma from past physical and emotional abuse. Although she casts herself in the supportive role of a shelter peer worker, Tina also makes it clear, through her attitude and accomplishments, that she has deservedly attained a place as a paid employee, and now relates to both her fellow co-workers and the shelter users in a notably different way. She is now on equal footing with the former group and is assisting the latter group with problems similar to those that she herself overcame. Through her own hard work and determination, along with the services and values that the shelter has instilled in her, Tina comes to embody the ideal “shelter-citizen,” someone who is both hardworking and helpful to others, and who has overcome the negative habits and stereotypes associated with shelter users, in order to become a self-governing, and therefore ideal, neoliberal citizen. Her repeated emphasis on the effectiveness of programs such as the Peer Initiative Development, indicated the presence of initiatives created by the shelter that operate by allowing women to “freely choose” to embrace the shelter's programming and values. Also of significance is Tina’s emphasis on peer governance, in addition to self-governance, which emphasizes the role of reformed or empowered women who have already benefitted from shelter services, in helping and reforming other women. The ultimate objective is for women to help other women overcome similar hardships and to “freely reach” their potential and become ideal

“shelter-citizens” in the process. Such an approach illustrates Cruikshank's analysis of advanced liberal democratic governance and how it operates through the notion of individuals' freedom.

Is Systemic Marginalization Prevalent within Shelter Governance?

Because all the women involved in interviews were White, the results contained here were filtered through their perceptions, which were of course biased by such aspects as White privilege, and in the case of the shelter workers, socioeconomic privilege. Indeed, their responses reveal that a number of blind spots exist within the perceptions of White women who use and work in women's shelters. For instance, Donna, a former shelter worker, noted that many White women who frequented the drop-in shelter often expressed unsympathetic and racist attitudes towards Aboriginal women who used the shelters. She noted, for instance, that White women often stated that Aboriginal women should just “get over” past transgressions committed against them. This indicates that other shelter users disregarded the systemic discrimination and oppression that Aboriginal women as a larger group had experienced. Their attitude, moreover, echoes the neoliberal notion that *all* individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, should simply work hard regardless of their backgrounds, as systemic oppression is not viewed as an actual obstacle that uniquely affects certain groups of shelter users such as Aboriginal women. Donna also noted that throughout her career, Black or otherwise racialized women were consistently treated more roughly and were spoken to more harshly than White women who were using the shelter, and that such racist treatment also contributed to how they were treated by other shelter users. Donna's comments are similar to both Donnelly et al.'s (2005) findings and Cruikshank's conceptualization of the “welfare queen,” which reinforce how racialized tropes around shelter

subjects are reinforced through shelter governance practices, such as harsher disciplinary practices towards racialized women, and often result in black women being treated differently than White women according to those practices. This means that, contrary to the oft-repeated notion of colour-blindness, implicit practices of prejudice likely impact the treatment that racialized women experience within women's shelters. Their experiences would therefore belie the notion that shelters operate in a “colourblind” manner, or that all shelter users need is to be responsible and work towards their goals in order to be successful.

In contrast, another shelter user named Patty insisted that there was no difference in the treatment of racialized and marginalized women who used the shelter, saying “there’s all kinds. There's drug addicts, prostitutes, White, Black, Asian, there's all kinds. Yeah. All kinds of women.” When asked if there was “any animosity” amongst women in the shelter, she answered “I don't think so. I'm just speaking for myself ... Oh, and there's a lot of Natives. That just don't bother me. No.” By loosely categorizing these women together, Patty, who is also an unpaid peer support worker, seems to lump together certain groups of women who would implicitly be categorized as potentially more difficult or less “desirable” than their White counterparts. Such an argument is strengthened by the fact that Patty was only asked about racial and linguistic differences amongst shelter users, but still felt the need to lump them together with “undesirable” persons such as “drug addicts.”

As was indicated by each shelter worker, the most outwardly blatant forms of discrimination were against women who suffered from mental illness. Each shelter worker gave some indication that this was the biggest hurdle for new shelter users to overcome. For instance, Karen noted that:

The biggest amounts of stigma that we see between clients specifically is really around mental health. I think even just referring, so if we have somebody who's maybe in psychosis, and you kind of hear the women chatting, they'll be like, oh, the crazy woman, [I] think that's kind of how they're referring to somebody who's experiencing psychosis. So, I just think, fear-based, and a misunderstanding of mental health. ... I think that's a systemic issue, even the women's withdrawal management. So, you have somebody who uses alcohol, and the staff, we would be more tolerant to somebody who had an addiction to alcohol, then we would be maybe seeing an intravenous drug user. That's starting to shift within our organization, but you still see it in the community and with the women.

Karen here admits not only that women with mental health and addiction challenges are stigmatized by other residents, but also that the shelter's rules and attitudes may in turn influence these negative attitudes towards drug-addicted shelter users. Assumptions around women's drug use may stem from feelings of bias towards women of lower socioeconomic status, who would be more likely to use drugs than alcohol, as the former are assumed to be cheaper and/or more widely available. These attitudes also appeared to be adopted by other shelter users, who in turn stigmatize these women, even when, as Tiffany noted, they have similar drug problems themselves. This also demonstrates that governance procedures that are employed by shelters may be implicitly class-based in nature, as economically disadvantaged women are typically presumed to be more likely to do drugs than their middle-class counterparts. This makes it more difficult for drug users to succeed in obtaining "shelter-citizen" status, even when other shelter users' addiction to alcohol may be just as harmful.

Shelter users also often stigmatized sex workers who used the shelters. Karen, who was in charge of programming at the shelter in transition, some of which was centred around safety within sex work, noted that many shelter users negatively characterized shelter workers who were sex workers, even if they had engaged in sex work themselves in the past. Karen expands on this, noting that, “We see a lot of projection too, right? So we might see somebody who was engaged in sex work, who is stigmatizing somebody who's currently doing sex work, and I would argue that it's probably a projection.” Karen also notes that because the shelter requires sex workers to disclose the type of work that they engage in, it means that the shelter is “forcing somebody to identify in order to be allowed to work through that.” This may cause shelter users to implicitly adopt notions of what constitutes an acceptable shelter user, and they may in turn stigmatize women who engage in sex work, in an effort to distance themselves from women who do not conform to acceptable shelter norms. Additionally, the fact that women are made to reveal their sex work activities further emphasizes the fact that they are engaging in work that is not socially acceptable. By classifying the work that they do as something that the shelter needs to take “account of,” the shelter’s governance in turn serves to create further opportunities for women's stigmatization by making their apparently deviant behaviour more explicit. These findings coincide with Kurtz et al.’s contention (2005) that sex workers who use women’s shelters may face increased stigma upon disclosing both their economic activities *and* their drug use, which subsequently renders them less likely to disclose about either of them.

Forms of Marginalization and Prejudice against Shelter Users

Karen, who was in charge of programming, noted that she did not notice any outward discrimination against Muslim shelter users and that the shelter recently started to honour the shelter users' religious diversity by celebrating Ramadan. However, she also acknowledged that her own White privilege might have desensitized her to potential racism and micro-aggressions enacted against religious minorities. While the ability to check one's privilege is desirable, and demonstrates that some workers are cognizant of how it may impact the services delivered, other workers did not share this awareness, and repeatedly insisted that services were "colourblind" and did not involve assumptions or practices that could be considered racially prejudiced. For instance, Sandra, a full-time worker at the shelter in transition, repeatedly emphasized the shelter's "one-size-fits-all" approach, stating that

Everyone comes through this door. So it's different races, different cultures, different beliefs, like we've had people who, and this is just from my experience, this isn't me saying this, but we've had people who are [Black], and people who are older, and have different views, that think differently on them. Like we've had racial conflict before, but really it doesn't happen that often ... I've only seen it ... maybe once or twice.

While she conceded that there were likely some incidents of racism, her belief that such incidents were confined solely to isolated conflicts among residents, and were not indicative of systemic racism and prejudice at large, may indicate an unwillingness to admit to implicit racial biases amongst staff. This understanding conceptualizes discrimination or racism as occurring due to shelter users' ignorance, rather than based in any implicit behaviours on the part of shelter workers, or systemic policies and practices which, while they may not constitute outright

discrimination, may end up working against women who face systemic barriers that lead to marginalization. These findings coincide with Donnelly et al. (2005), who noted that shelter workers frequently emphasized shelters' "colourblindness," which worked to the detriment of racialized shelter users who did not benefit from the shelter's "one-size-fits-all" approach. Also, while her comments seemed well-intended in terms of shelter users' well-being and she seemed sympathetic overall, her characterization of the shelter's middle-eastern refugees indicated that the shelter did not have the adequate resources to provide for their unique needs. When asked about whether the shelter had a diverse population, she noted once again that

we get anything and everything that walks through that door. We actually had uh, a lady and her small children come from a foreign country who spoke zero English. Zero. ... That was probably one of the biggest struggles we've ever had. 'Cause I couldn't, I couldn't even imagine how terrifying that was. So it's like hard on our end, 'cause we feel bad like, holy cow, how are we supposed to be able to help her ... we had to pull a lot of strings. So, we actually uh, there's Interpreters Niagara that helped us out a little bit. We were able to contact O.W. [Ontario Works], 'cause she will need financial assistance, 'cause she had on income with two small kids, right? ... So O.W. was fantastic 'cause they actually had ... Ontario Works, so that's welfare. So they actually found a worker that spoke her language.

Sandra's points reinforce the insights of immigrant scholars, such as Lodhia (2010), who highlight the complexities of migrant women's experiences and the failure of existing shelter services to mitigate the unique marginalization they face. The difficulty that the shelter in

transition had in finding a professional who spoke the language of the shelter-seeking woman in question emphasizes this, and shows that women from refugee and migrant backgrounds are uniquely disadvantaged, even within shelter environments. While the shelter's goals and missions statements purport to give women the tools and resources they need, such as shelter, food, and women's advocates, to succeed and subsequently lead independent and fulfilling lives, the apparent lack of access to translators suggests that the shelter in transition is unequipped to properly administer to women who do not speak English. This limitation belies the neoliberal notion that all that is needed for women to succeed is hard work and self-sufficiency. It also contradicts the "one-size-fits-all" approach to caring-based shelter governance that is touted on the shelter's website, as refugee women face unique obstacles that are not addressed or included in the descriptions of women obtaining success through hard work and the tools and values that the shelter instils. This, in turn, indicates that neoliberal assumptions about self-sufficiency often fail to take into account systemic disadvantages that certain minority groups face.

Sandra also seemed to have a personal preference for certain shelter users, emphasizing that the needs of certain women, for instance mothers with young children, could be put in jeopardy by the behaviour of others using the shelter who were deemed to be irresponsible or dangerous. She notes that

we serve a lot of people with severe, severe mental health, right? And for people who come in to say that, you know, are suffering from the same struggles, that's conflict in itself 'cause a lot of people don't empathize. ... Like, I know [it's] a huge struggle and absolutely, we emphasize with this greatly, but for example [a] mom and child comes in, right? Say they, say they come in from like a domestic violence situation, so safety is

huge, right? But then we also serve people who are severely struggling with addiction, and with a mom and a small child, that's terrifying, right? Like you don't want your kid being around someone who's coming down from drugs, or is struggling in their addiction currently.

By framing certain shelter users – that is, those struggling with mental illness and addiction who fail to behave in a manner deemed appropriate by the shelter – as being a danger to a distinctly different type of shelter user, the mother with young children, Sandra made it clear that certain shelter users were preferred over others. It is understandable that some users would be constituted as more “difficult” than others by shelter workers, who would undoubtedly become stressed and further overworked when having to deal with difficult clients. However, Sandra’s answer suggests that implicit preferences over certain shelter users may end up creating systemic biases against drug-using shelter users.

Transgender women were also heavily stigmatized by shelter users at both shelters, as participants noted that cis-gender women often felt animosity towards their transgender counterparts, especially if the latter were still medically transitioning. Tina, a shelter user who had recently been promoted to a paid position in the shelter, noted that a number of women in the shelter expressed disgust and anxiety at the prospect of sharing the shelter space, as some would say “he [the transgender shelter user] still has testicles, I don't want him here.” While Tina emphasized that the shelter welcomed women in transition, the negative reception from other shelter users suggests that not being cis-gender was a serious systemic barrier to shelter users' acceptance among other residents. Such systemic discrimination coincides with Beck's argument

that shelter success is based, first and foremost, in conforming to White, middle-class cis-gender notions of the “acceptable” shelter-citizen (2008). These notions of acceptability may be internalized by shelter users, which may result in them showing even greater stigma than they would have normally showed transgender shelter-users. Transgender shelter users, moreover, are not even recognized, in these cases, as women, which is a disavowal of their identity. This type of “othering” explicitly excludes these women from the privilege that their cis-gender counterparts enjoy, and represents a unique challenge that precludes transgender women from the privileges based on sex and gender that the other women automatically enjoyed upon entering the shelter. Also, given the fact that transgender women, particularly women of colour, are subject to alarmingly high rates of violence (Rodriquez-Madera, et al., 2017), having access to shelters in which they feel safe is a unique and pressing need for transgender women. However, they are shunned and stigmatized in many cases, because their presence apparently makes some cis-gender women uncomfortable. This form of “othering” and discrimination is distinct from other experiences of marginalization that may occur in women’s shelters, due to the explicit exclusion that these women face, as their very identity as women is called into question, and therefore precludes them from being viewed as “real” women and as being deserving of access to the shelter. This means that women who are not recognized as cis-gender will, at least in the eyes of the other shelter users, never become “ideal” women “shelter-citizens,” because they are excluded from belonging to the category of “women” in the first place.

It is possible that certain shelter users, like Tina, who are put in positions of authority may partake in the more inclusive attitudes towards transgender women that the drop-in shelter purports to embrace. Indeed, if women’s shelter users, as I have argued, often take on the attitudes that the shelter perpetuates through instructions and workshops, they may, in turn,

become more welcoming and inclusive towards transgender women, if acceptance and inclusivity are values that the shelter stresses. Tina, for instance, was a former shelter user at the drop-in shelter whose attitude towards transgender shelter users was apparently positive. While she noted that the shelter staff personally welcome these women and understand their need for shelter as members of “vulnerable populations,” this purported goal is challenged somewhat by attitudes that shelter users themselves hold about the women. Tina did not further elaborate on transgender women’s situations in the shelter, beyond explaining that some women held hostile attitudes towards them. However, regardless of workers’ attitudes, the contrast between the shelters’ officially “progressive” and welcoming attitudes towards transgender shelter users and the often hostile and discriminatory treatment that these women face from other shelter users appears to be proof of the “unofficial” but nonetheless systemic barriers that transgender shelter users face. Furthermore, the contrast to the apparently inclusive environment of the neoliberal women’s shelter, and the actual challenges they face, such as discriminatory attitudes from other shelter users, also underline the fact that these narratives of personal attainment can easily be complicated and contradicted by aspects of women’s identities that do not conform to the White, cis-gender “norm” that is perpetuated by shelters.

Not surprisingly, given the decidedly weak disability laws found throughout the province (Condra, Dineen & Gills, 2015), women with physical disabilities faced serious accessibility issues in terms of both entering the shelter and being able to access and use certain areas. Karen describes the town in which the shelter was located, and emphasizes this latter point:

[it’s] really crappy for accessibility. ... Upstairs we have the elevator that goes up, which is where all the bedrooms are, and all the shelter beds. But in order to get to the kitchen,

you have to go down to the basement, which doesn't have an elevator. ...We do [get a lot of women with mobility challenges and barriers], and so, um, I think we have a few women right now who have walkers and scooters, so then we also come up to the dining room, um, but they can still access the bathrooms and things like that. At [a nearby shelter location], we have two fully accessible rooms on the main floor, which is where the dining room is, and [there is] a fully accessible washroom. So they're in a better position there, so oftentimes if somebody's okay to come to [the other nearby location], um, that would be the ideal setup. But sometimes you have to remove people from the community.

While I do not doubt that Karen is enlightened and aware of the unique barriers that disabled shelter users face, her response, which includes noting that women have to be “removed” from the shelter in transition, demonstrates either the reluctance or the inability to address the more visible structural and institutional aspects of inequality.

This unwillingness to tackle systemic issues could very well be rooted in the fact that the shelter in transition is presently severely underfunded, and that such repairs would be extremely expensive, rather than in explicit systemic discrimination or an outright lack of sympathy. Nonetheless, the results of the physical barriers that disabled women face undoubtedly disadvantage them in ways that their able-bodied counterparts do not have to worry about. Disabled women may in turn be more vulnerable to social isolation and subsequently poorer mental health, which would understandably make it more difficult for them to attain housing and gainful employment. The lack of overall accessibility to shelters also points to the shelter's

selective recognition of disabling conditions in relation to victims who have experienced and survived violence. Despite having some accommodations that are intended to assist women with mobility barriers, the shelter clearly lacks the resources required to properly accommodate these women so that they can achieve *full* accessibility, including increased access to the shelter overall. This in turn could lead to improved mental health, as disabled shelter users are then able to move about and interact with others in the shelter more freely. In other words, the shelter accommodates these women selectively, and there are significant gaps that women with mobility barriers face in obtaining the full shelter accessibility that their able-bodied counterparts enjoy.

Sandra similarly describes the challenges that disabled women uniquely face. Like Karen, she notes that being able to shelter disabled women is “a big struggle too. Like, we've had a lot of calls from people who can't do stairs, and it becomes a huge struggle because even if I had rooms open that were upstairs, they usually, they can't fill [them], right? ‘Cause they can't get up there.” Additionally, when asked whether or not a disabled woman would be turned away from the shelter, she answered “unfortunately yeah, because we would have no where to put her.” Sandra's attitude, while obviously sympathetic, nonetheless reveals the existence of ableist norms in the delivery of shelter services, which are further exacerbated by the organization's underlying financial constraints.

The examples listed above reinforce the unique challenges that women who use shelters face if they do not conform to the White, middle-class, cis-gender and ableist norms that are often implicit within neoliberal shelter governance. While both shelters purported to be non-discriminatory and welcoming towards women of any race, citizenship status and sexuality, the responses collected demonstrate that such claims often fail to take into account the more

systemic and structural barriers that pervade these women's experiences and life trajectories, and which cannot be fixed solely through shelter messages of inclusivity. These messages, moreover, are frequently intertwined with neoliberal notions of self-reliance and hard work. Marginalized women, in conclusion, are often included within the shelter's *formal* welcoming statements and programming, but are not able to benefit from shelter services in the same manner as their White, able-bodied, native-born and cis-gendered counterparts.

Chapter Nine:

Summary and Conclusions

I undertook this research to explore how governance within women's shelters functions, and how shelter users actively and willingly respond to mechanisms of governance. They subsequently go on to embody the traits that contribute to the making of the “shelter-citizen.” Drawing on Cruikshank's analysis of advanced liberal governance and the production of the “subject-citizen” (1999, p. 8), I discussed how shelter programs deploy a variety of governing strategies in order to transform shelter-users into shelter-citizens. This subject formation embodies neoliberal notions of success, most notably self-governance and self-reliance, despite her association with the women's shelter and with victimization more generally. Taking a page from both Cruikshank (1999), and Foucault (1975), my approach stresses both how governance extends beyond explicitly political institutions such as legislative bodies, and how it is deployed within the “subjectivity” through other social institutions. Philanthropic-based organizations such as women's shelters demonstrate these processes, particularly in relation to how subjects are taught to actively self-govern; govern each other through peer based interventions; and are also subsequently shaped into ideal neoliberal citizens in this process. This exploration of shelter governance is both timely and beneficial, given the increasingly neoliberal funding practices that shelters rely on, as well as the current lack of research focused on neoliberal governance that takes place within caring-based shelters.

While these approaches can be useful in helping to shape hardworking, self-sufficient individuals who can then contribute positively to society, often they also perpetuate systemic biases and inequalities within shelters. This may be due to the fact that the majority of shelter

workers and administrators throughout the history of philanthropic-based helping professions have been middle-class, White women (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 20). This means that addressing systemic biases within shelter governance can be difficult, but that doing so may lead to systemic changes that improve the overall outcomes for minority and marginalized shelter users.

In undertaking this research, I argue that valuable light has been shed on how governance is undertaken within care-based women's shelters. By viewing governance as being "neoliberal" in nature, this thesis conceptualizes women's shelters as being areas where governance takes place, although through "gently coercive" tactics which, if successful, culminate in creating the ideal "shelter-citizen." By acknowledging shelter users' agency in their responses to governance mechanisms, I also shift focus to how governance is successful in shaping subject-citizens who embody shelter ideals. Conversely, by addressing the manner in which governance occurs, this thesis also sheds light on the prevalent inequalities present within neoliberal practices in women's shelters. This, in turn, both problematizes women's shelter governance as being disadvantageous for certain groups, and also suggests that further work is needed in order to make women's shelters more inclusive and accessible. This work could first begin by acknowledging the inequalities that exist among certain vulnerable populations.

This research represents a valuable contribution to governance-centered scholarship, as it addresses a noticeable gap within governance studies: how neoliberal governance works within caring-based shelters that often rely on programs that are voluntary in nature, and stress self-reliance and the acquisition of skills, rather than on punitive-based rules and procedures. It also contributes to existing research through its conceptualization of neoliberal governance and the "subject-citizen" as existing within non-profit and non-state organizations like women's shelters.

I also argue that my articulation of the “shelter-citizen” reinforces this notion by stressing these women’s acceptance and adaptation of neoliberal governance. The research presented here also makes the argument that even subjects who rely on non-profit and welfare-based services can attain the status of “citizen,” so long as they willingly confer to, and adopt, neoliberal attitudes and forms of governance, which stress self-reliance and hard work.

Limitations of this Study

This study offers a cross-sectional snapshot of how shelter governance occurs in two different kinds of women’s shelters in South-western Ontario, and I argue that it also provides important insight into how that type of governance is implemented, through “gently coercive” methods that instil the attitudes and behaviour necessary for creating “shelter-citizens” who embody the ideal shelter user. Ideally, a study that is both longitudinal in nature and contains a more diverse population would allow for a broader understanding of the governing strategies deployed in shelters. Such an approach would also allow future research to explore the problems associated with a “one size fits all” governance approach and its impact on racialized, migrant and refugee women.

Another limitation of my research was my failure to ask if women with mental disabilities, such as those described in Helfrich et al. (2006), experienced unique challenges and disadvantages within the shelter. Since both Helfrich et al. (2006) and one of the shelter workers made the argument that shelter governance focused too much on obtaining employment, the research presented here likely would have benefitted from an understanding of how women

with mental disabilities responded to these types of shelter discourses. Ideally, this research would focus on how notions of self-sufficiency and gainful employment are conveyed to shelter users with mental disabilities, even though they may be uniquely disadvantaged, and may have a significantly harder time obtaining work than their able-minded counterparts.

Also, because all of the participants were White, heterosexual cis-gender and able bodied, the information obtained about the shelter's systemic marginalization of certain groups may also have been biased. Future research should therefore include a more diverse group of shelter users and workers, ideally participants who embody each of the different aspects of marginalization that were touched upon in the literature review.

Future Research Directions

The findings from this research suggest that conducting interviews with larger and more diverse shelter populations may shed further light on the processes which serve to create shelter governance procedures, and how these processes differ based on the various types of marginalization that certain shelter users face. For this reason, it would also be beneficial to include a cross-national sample of shelters located in cities and areas with diverse racial/ethnic makeup, socioeconomic status, income, and levels of educational attainment for individuals. Future research may also benefit from increased focus on shelter rules and protocols, and new questions could be added in order to better understand how these rules were formulated and implemented. Also, as there are considerable differences between shelters that are regiment-based and those that use primarily caring-based approaches (Gengler, 2012; Rudrappa, 2014),

future studies would likely benefit from administering two versions of the study questionnaire to shelter workers and users at each type of shelter. This would allow researchers to differentiate between them more easily than was done in the research presented here. The criteria in this thesis also made the distinction between caring-based and regiment-based shelters somewhat unclear, given that one of the shelters was in transition between these two types of governance philosophies, and its procedures seemed, in some ways, to be reflective of both of these approaches.

Lastly, it would be a good idea to examine how the “shelter-citizen,” as she is shaped by shelter governance, is then used as an example for other shelter users, and if she has a significant impact on their behaviour overall. It would also be beneficial to see if the majority of these women benefit from, for instance, White or socioeconomic privilege, and if this has an impact on how minority shelter users respond to them, such as whether or not this makes them more likely to react positively to shelter governance themselves. For instance, women may identify more with others who share certain racial or socioeconomic aspects of identity. Further research would also allow for a more precise exploration of *which* aspects of identity coincide with the creation of shelter-citizens. For instance, do women who are White identify more with White shelter workers, and then become more likely to model their attitudes and behaviour on workers’ behaviour than their racialized counterparts? Are women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds less likely to respond to shelter governance than women who have had greater overall access to education and/or capital? Future research would therefore benefit from conducting interviews with a more diverse sample of women. Ultimately, however, this thesis presents what I contend is a comprehensive and much-needed exploration of neoliberal

governance as it is manifested in women's shelters, as well as how it influences women, who respond with personal agency to "gently coercive" programs, procedures techniques.

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