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REGULATING UNSHELTERED PEOPLE IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

By

Bailey Trotti

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2021

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Regulating Unsheltered People in the Public Library

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the library as a public space in relation to unsheltered people. The public library is a historically significant institution in the Western world and one of the few remaining public spaces whose occupants do not need purchasing power for temporary tenancy. For unsheltered people, public libraries may provide important resources they do not possess or cannot otherwise access. Yet, despite the importance of libraries to unsheltered people, public libraries have sought to use policies to closely govern and sometimes exclude them in various ways. Drawing on governmentality, sociology of governance, and related literature, the overarching research question of this thesis is: how have unsheltered people – a perceived risky community – become problematized and governed in public libraries of Canadian cities consistent with neo-liberal objectives? The research for this thesis consisted of the collection and analysis of public library policies in Windsor, Ontario, Vancouver, British Columbia, Toronto, Ontario, and Calgary, Alberta as well as documents pertaining to governance through freedom of information requests from the public library in Vancouver, British Columbia. This thesis draws attention to the control and exclusion of unsheltered people in public libraries and ultimately the shrinkage of public spaces and facilities unsheltered people are permitted to occupy or freely use. This research also fills gaps in knowledge since previous literature has neglected to explore in detail how public libraries govern and regulate unsheltered people specifically.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving and supportive grandfather, Howard Geisler. Thank you for exemplifying hard work and always encouraging me to reach for the stars. I miss you more and more with each passing day.

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Introduction

Beginning in the 1980s, Canadian governments began to implement neo-liberal policies of reduced spending on social services and affordable housing, the privatization of the public sector, and ‘responsibilizing’ the citizenry (Dej, 2016; Gaetz, Dej & Ritcher, 2016; Steger & Roy, 2010). The structural changes in welfare and the economy have created and exacerbated the homelessness crisis and led to greater unemployment and underemployment (Huey, 2007). Neo-liberalism allows the wealthy to expand their fortune and reaffirm their privilege at the expense of disadvantaged members of society (Donnan, 2014: 585). Neo-liberalism has moved Canada from a model of social citizenship, where all citizens are entitled to assistance and benefits, to a model of market citizenship, where citizenship is based upon consumerism and one’s market contributions (Donnan, 2014: 586). Under neo-liberalism, social policy with equality as its objective is believed to be anti-economic (Foucault, 1979). The effects of neo-liberalism have become highly visible in Canadian cities (Coleman, 2004; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Ruppert, 2006).¹ Neo-liberalism is broadly referred to as a type of culture, a policy framework, a dominant ideology, and a governmental rationality (Brady, 2016: 8). In this thesis, neo-liberalism is understood primarily as a governmental rationality.

One of these effects of neo-liberalism is an increasing number of homeless people populating public spaces and facilities. People who are unsheltered – a state of homelessness – live in places unintended for human habitation such as the streets, and they often rely on public facilities to survive (Amore, 2019; Busch-Geertsema, Culhane

¹ This model of citizenship shows few signs of returning (with talk of a guaranteed wage for everyone and more benefits, to name a few) even after the end of the pandemic, whether that happens remains to be seen.

& Fitzpatrick, 2016). Stereotypical images of being unsheltered are abundant on social media, but it is recognized that such stereotypical images represent a very small portion of the people experiencing homelessness (Homeless Coalition of Windsor-Essex County, 2018). Neo-liberal governance in Canadian cities has created conditions where regulatory bodies place attention on the growing visibility of unsheltered people in public spaces “not for what they do, but for who they are and where they are” (O’Grady, Gaetz & Buccieri, 2011: 7). Increased policing from both public and private agencies, the enactment of ‘anti-poverty’ ordinances, and the use of dispersal techniques have become common responses to unsheltered people in public spaces (Walby & Lippert, 2012).

The growing number of unsheltered people populating public spaces in specific areas like downtown cores has fueled concerns about widespread disorder (Beckett & Herbert, 2010). The public unease of unsheltered people is often informed by stereotypes and stigma (Adams, 2014). Some Canadian political leaders have even disseminated anti-poverty rhetoric in media, calling on Canadian police officers to forcefully remove unsheltered people from city streets (O’Grady, Gaetz & Buccieri, 2013: 543), suggesting they are not economic actors and exist outside the economy, which through a neo-liberal lens means they are valueless and require ‘fixing’ (see Li, 2016).

Public spaces are, in theory, and by definition, to be accessible to everyone. The phrase ‘public space’ evokes images of parks, roads, streets, benches, and sidewalks. According to Chellew (2019), public spaces are equated with a city’s urban core and its public amenities. A public space is where people from all walks of life can interact and thus strengthen community bonds and build social capital (Hodgetts et al., 2008). Thus, public spaces serve valued political ends (Blomley, 2007). Calling a space ‘public’ is to

imply that it is governed by norms of equality and fairness too (Mosher & Hermer, 2002). Citizens cultivate a sense of belonging by accessing and using prime public spaces such as community centres and libraries. For unsheltered people specifically, the right to inhabit such spaces potentially allows them to feel part of civic life and experience a sense of belonging (Hodgetts et al., 2008). However, public spaces under neo-liberalism are no longer automatically open to all a city's residents (Hodgetts et al., 2008). Through a neo-liberal lens, the presence of unsheltered people in public spaces is deemed to pose a risk to a city's current and future ventures. One such public facility and space is the public library.

This thesis focuses on the library as a public space in relation to unsheltered people. In the Western world, the public library is a historically significant institution. Public libraries are symbols of intellectual and political freedom (Harris, 1999). Public libraries offer citizens a quiet and safe space to access information and resources such as books, periodicals, computers, and the Internet. Libraries are one of the few remaining public spaces whose occupants do not need purchasing power for temporary tenancy. It is assumed with the title of 'public library' that all citizens are entitled to enter and remain (Simmons, 1985). Windsor, Ontario's public library, for example, claims to be the 'City's living room' (Windsor Public Library, 2020).

For unsheltered people, public libraries provide important resources they do not possess or cannot otherwise access (Anderson, Simpson & Fisher, 2012; Kundrik, 2011; Wong, 2009). Public libraries also provide unsheltered people a safe space during daytime hours (Anderson, Simpson & Fisher, 2012; Hodgetts et al., 2008). Some studies suggest libraries additionally serve as avenues for unsheltered people to escape their

stigmatized identity and are an opportunity to legitimate their presence in a prime public space (Giesler, 2019; Hodgetts et al., 2008; Wong, 2009). Yet, despite the importance of libraries to unsheltered people, public libraries have sought to use policies to closely govern and sometimes exclude them in various ways.

Unsheltered people are commonly referred to as ‘problem patrons’ in library policy discourse (Anderson, Simpson & Fisher, 2012; Kelleher, 2012; Simmons, 1985). Simmons defines the ‘problem patron’ as a “myriad of behaviors exhibited by... individuals like assault or physical threats, chatty patrons, disruptive and unattended children, eating and drinking within the library, and sexual deviants” (1985: 111). Unsheltered people in these spaces tend to be approached and governed as less than full citizens and sometimes excluded in various ways. Their mere presence has been problematized amongst other patrons and library staff regarding proper library use, health and safety, and in balancing the rights of users and staff members. In response, unsheltered patrons both inside and outside the public library have become strictly policed and overtly and covertly surveilled.

Research on public spaces and unsheltered people has correctly sought to explain governance through reference to neo-liberalism, however, it has not focused on public libraries specifically or shown how unsheltered people are governed from *within* this institution. Drawing on governmentality, sociology of governance, and related literature, the overarching research question of this thesis is: how have unsheltered people – a perceived risky community – become problematized and governed in public libraries of Canadian cities consistent with neo-liberal objectives? One sub-question is: how do public libraries covertly, indirectly, and/or mundanely govern unsheltered people through

policies targeting offensive odors and bag limitations? The second sub-question is: how are some more indirect tactics and strategies of governing unsheltered people, including *responsibilization*, that are consistent with broader neo-liberal objectives of excluding unsheltered people reflected in public library policies? The final sub-question is: Are trespass laws, typically associated with private property, used to exclude unsheltered people from public libraries and if so, how? To address these questions, public library policies in Windsor, Ontario, Vancouver, British Columbia, Toronto, Ontario, and Calgary, Alberta as well as documents pertaining to governance through freedom of information requests from the public library in Vancouver, British Columbia were acquired and analyzed.

Literature Review

Some previous research focuses on public libraries in Canada and the U.S., however, there is no research on the governance of unsheltered people in Canadian public libraries consistent with neo-liberalism. There is a qualitative study of two of Canada's largest libraries, the Vancouver Public Library Central Branch and the Toronto Reference Library, to determine how successful they are at being public spaces (Leckie & Hopkins, 2002). There is also a qualitative study of how unsheltered men use the public library and how they experience the library as a public space in Vancouver, British Columbia (McKendry, 2013). However, as discussed below, neither study engages with neo-liberalism, governance, or sociology of governance. In the U.S., there is some research on the views of unsheltered library patrons from the perspective of library staff and housed patrons (Anderson, Simpson & Fisher, 2012; Gehner, 2010; Kelleher, 2012; Simmons, 1985; Wong, 2009), and the policies created in response to their presence in the public

library (Simmons, 1985; Wong, 2009). However, this research similarly lacks conceptual engagement with neo-liberalism and governance.

This literature review begins by discussing relevant Canadian literature that focuses on unsheltered people in public urban spaces more broadly which is necessary for understanding the responses to unsheltered people in the library (Baillergeau, 2014; O’Grady, Gaetz & Buccieri, 2011; Reese, DeVerteuil & Thach, 2010; Blomley, 2007). Canada, in general, relies on a patchwork of emergency and temporary services to meet the immediate needs of unsheltered people. O’Grady, Gaetz, and Buccieri (2011) argue that while it is important to meet these needs, the use of emergency services as the official response fails to create meaningful, long-term solutions and may cause other unintended consequences such as the increased visibility of unsheltered people in public spaces. Most emergency shelters and essential services for unsheltered people are concentrated in downtown cores. Some unsheltered people are without money for transportation to shelters or services in suburbia, that is, if any exist (O’Grady, Gaetz & Buccieri, 2013), thus further contributing to their visibility in public.

Law enforcement and policing has become a key component in response to the increased visibility of unsheltered people in these spaces (see Adams, 2014; O’Grady, Gaetz & Buccieri, 2011). Baillergeau states that “the criminalization of behavior has become a tactic for responding to the presence of marginalized groups in public spaces” (2014: 355). However, the notion of criminalization in this research does not account for other enforcement-based but more mundane tactics used against unsheltered people. Rather, the term criminalization is used to recognize only how unsheltered people enter the criminal justice system (Adams, 2014). Framing unsheltered people as a problem

coincides with the rise of neo-liberal governance and is often accompanied by a ‘tough-on-crime’ agenda (O’Grady, Gaetz & Buccieri, 2011). Under such policies and practices, social services are reduced, policing is enhanced, and blame is placed on those most in need. Overt poverty is not seen as systematic failure to provide adequate social support to people in crisis and the failure of neo-liberal policies. Consistent with this those people who are most in need seldom receive public sympathy or resources to confront this crisis. Instead, the presence of unsheltered people in cities has tended to be viewed as a threat to public safety (Baillergeau, 2014).

Moreover, the visible signs of poverty are claimed to accumulate in urban public spaces alongside emergency services like temporary housing and employment opportunities (Reese, DeVerteuil & Thach, 2010). The visible signs of poverty are believed to reduce the possibility financial investment in specific areas (Reese, DeVerteuil & Thach, 2010). Unsheltered people come to be deemed to represent a threat to citizens with purchasing power, the local economy, and the urban landscape more broadly. The status of unsheltered has become linked to crime and deviance. Reese, DeVerteuil and Thach (2010) assert that the widespread implementation of zero-tolerance policies toward poor people, including those who are unsheltered people, is a social cleansing strategy to facilitate urban revitalization and gentrification. Gentrification refers to ‘middle-class’ changes occurring across urban areas and such strategies are linked to the physical improvements of run-down public spaces and the eventual displacement of working-class people by middle- and upper-class people (Phillips, 2010).

Unsurprisingly, gentrification strategies to move unsheltered people out of the

downtowns of major Canadian cities – sites of urban development and economic prosperity – is evident too (Reese, DeVerteuil & Thach, 2010).

Privately owned spaces are governed by trespass laws that give property owners wide-sweeping regulatory powers to prohibit and enforce desired conduct (Lippert, 2004; Ruppert, 2006; Stenning, 2000). Trespass laws in Canada give property owners the right to expel an individual at any time, for any reason, or, as Ruppert (2006: 285) points out, no reason at all. This authority and power have extended to some property deemed or assumed to be public too, such as city halls, courts, and libraries (Walby & Lippert, 2015). Given this, an individual deemed ‘undesirable’ to the environment can be expelled from some public spaces for no other reason than being there (Ruppert, 2006). This begs the question of whether and how trespass laws are enforced at public libraries and, if they are, whether and how unsheltered people are disproportionately targeted? (see also Walby & Lippert, 2015). The research on private space or ‘mass private properties’ (see Shearing & Stenning, 1981) has not included attention to how this legal authority is used in public libraries.

It is important to note that research about unsheltered people in Canadian public libraries more broadly is also limited. In Vancouver, British Columbia, a qualitative study was conducted to explore how unsheltered men use the public library and how they experience the library as a public place (McKendry, 2013). The findings revealed that unsheltered men use the library often, and for reasons similar to those of other library patrons such as to read a book or magazine, and to use the internet and computers. Of the twenty-three respondents, four men successfully completed their GED with the knowledge gained from the resources available at the public library. Since access had

potentially life-changing effects for these men this provides further evidence of the importance of examining how this population is governed by libraries. Moreover, while most respondents held favourable views of the library, some felt they did not belong and thus did not socialize with other patrons. Unsheltered people, McKendry (2013) argues, can be considered a non-spatial community. Unsheltered people are often not allowed to have space in the public “despite the fact that it is not illegal to be homeless” (McKendry, 2013: 18). Without their own legally recognized space, unsheltered people encounter legal and political challenges to occupy private and public alternative spaces such as libraries (McKendry, 2013). The public library, McKendry concludes, was largely regarded amongst unsheltered male participants as a safe place to occupy and thus “a respite from the misery of homelessness” (2013: 125). Unfortunately, this study did not investigate how unsheltered people were governed in the public library or provide information on the use of trespass laws. It also lacked overall conceptual engagement regarding neo-liberalism, governmentality, and sociology of governance concepts or themes.

Another Canadian study examined the publicness of the Toronto Reference Library (TRL) and the Vancouver Public Library Central Branch (VPL) (Leckie & Hopkins, 2002). The research sought to determine how successful the TRL and VPL were at being public places in a new North American culture of increasing privatization, decreased public funding, and advancing information technologies. North American culture and its economy are described here as post-industrial, however, policies such as decreased public funding and privatization are inherently neo-liberal and this study failed to acknowledge or examine the neo-liberal ideal that was likely at work. Significantly,

however, the study noted public libraries' ideological shift away from their neutral status as a public institution toward one of an active agent for private interests in the market economy (Leckie & Hopkins, 2002). For example, some public institutions that have been underfunded by the government have turned to private sponsors to fill financial voids (Leckie & Hopkins, 2002). These public and private ventures, Leckie and Hopkins argue, "tarnish the sacred tenet upon which public libraries have been founded and have operated for most of the previous two centuries" (2002: 360). Leckie and Hopkins (2002) conclude that despite the pressures of decentralization and suburbanization, the TRL and VPL remain necessary and valued public spaces. Unfortunately, this study also did not explore how unsheltered people were governed in the library and it too lacked overall conceptual engagement with neo-liberalism, governmentality, and the sociology of governance.

Compared to Canada, there is more research on public library policies in the U.S. (Anderson, Simpson & Fisher, 2012; Gehner, 2010; Giesler, 2019; Kelleher, 2012; Kundrik, 2012). To begin, the American Library Association (ALA) adopted Policy 61, the 'Poor People's Policy,' in 1990 (Kelleher, 2012). Policy 61 made fifteen recommendations to create more inclusive libraries by improving its services to vulnerable patrons (Anderson, Simpson & Fisher, 2012). Under Policy 61, an unsheltered person's right to inhabit public libraries provides them with safety and security, and a sense of belonging within their community (Giesler, 2019). The Social Responsibilities Roundtable, a group part of the ALA, formed the Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force (HHPTF) to raise awareness on public library code of conduct rules that

disproportionately target unsheltered people such as policies on offensive odors (Kelleher, 2012).

Some public libraries in the U.S. have been found to allow only patrons with a fixed address to obtain a library card (Kelleher, 2012). Library cards are used to borrow library materials and it allows patrons to use the library computers. Evidently, such a policy imposes significant accessibility barriers for unsheltered people. A major claim is that public libraries are required to take a leap of faith and must be willing to lose some library materials when allowing unsheltered people to obtain a library card (Kelleher, 2012). This is stigmatizing and unfair because it assumes unsheltered patrons are more likely to steal or lose library materials compared to housed patrons. Importantly, a library card can cultivate a sense of belonging within an unsheltered person who may feel unwelcomed in many public spaces (Kelleher, 2012).

Kelleher (2012) also assessed how unsheltered people use and view the public libraries in Lansing, Michigan. The study illuminates the importance of public libraries in the lives of unsheltered people. The sample of 121 respondents was not large enough to be statistically significant, however, the sample used was larger than any other U.S. research on the subject (Kelleher, 2012). The findings counter the belief that unsheltered people are ‘problem patrons’ (Anderson, Simpson & Fisher, 2012; Kelleher, 2012; Simmons, 1985) and do not use the library for its intended purposes. For example, only two percent reported using the library to sleep and five percent for using the library restroom to clean up (Kelleher, 2012). Internet access and computer usage for entertainment purposes were ranked as most important to unsheltered patrons in the

public library (Kelleher, 2012). Overall, unsheltered patrons were appreciative of public library services and resources.

In the U.S., unsheltered people have been long referred to as ‘problem patrons’ in public library literature (Anderson, Simpson & Fisher, 2012; Kelleher, 2012; Simmons, 1985). Simmons defines the ‘problem patron’ as a “myriad of behaviors exhibited by... individuals like assault or physical threats, chatty patrons, disruptive and unattended children, eating and drinking within the library, and sexual deviants” (1985: 111). Several themes in literature on the ‘problem patron’ have been identified, including the implication that unsheltered people are not legitimate patrons and their presence is often offensive to others (Simmons, 1985). Problem patrons are sometimes viewed as relatively harmless nuisances, but there is the fear their disruptive behavior will become criminal (Anderson, Simpson & Fisher, 2012; Kelleher, 2012; Simmons, 1985).

An ethical analysis on the policies of the Joint Free Public Library in Morristown, New Jersey was conducted (Kundrik, 2012). The policies, including a ban on offensive body odors, were drafted in effort to deescalate a growing problem with unsheltered people in the public library. An unsheltered patron successfully sued the public library and in a court ruling, the policies were considered too vague, unreasonable, and subjective (Kundrik, 2012). Kundrik (2012) applies the theory of utilitarianism and determines that library policymakers place the needs of the majority – the ‘respectable’ library patron – over the needs of the minority – the unsheltered patron. The study concludes that a patron’s social position of ‘unsheltered’ leaves them susceptible to greater discrimination. Kelleher (2012) and Kundrik (2012) identify problematic policies, but both articles do not seek to explain how unsheltered people are governed in the public

library or establish linkages to neo-liberalism and governmentality and the sociology of governance.

In summation, there has been no research on the governance of unsheltered people in Canadian public libraries or how they have become problematized within such institutions. Canadian literature has broadly focused on unsheltered people in the public spaces of its cities (Baillergeau, 2014; O’Grady, Gaetz & Buccieri, 2011; Reese, DeVerteuil & Thach, 2010). Only two scholarly articles have studied Canadian public libraries, but both do not address how unsheltered people are governed in the library and lack overall conceptual engagement with neo-liberalism and governance (Leckie & Hopkins, 2002; McKendry, 2013). Most research on unsheltered people in the public library has been conducted in the U.S., but similarly does not address the research questions in this thesis (Anderson, Simpson & Fisher, 2012; Gehner, 2010; Kelleher, 2012; Simmons, 1985; Wong, 2009).

To reiterate, and based on this literature review, the overarching research question of this thesis is: how have unsheltered people – a perceived risky community – become problematized and governed in public libraries of Canadian cities consistent with neo-liberal objectives? In addition, the thesis’ sub-questions include the following: first, how do public libraries covertly, indirectly, and/or mundanely govern unsheltered people through mundane policies targeting offensive odors and bag limitations?; Second, what are some more indirect tactics and strategies of governing unsheltered people that are ultimately consistent with broader neo-liberal objectives of excluding unsheltered people, including *responsibilization*, reflected in Canada’s public library policies?; And third, are

trespass laws, typically associated with private property, used to exclude unsheltered people from public libraries and if so, how?

Conceptual Approach

The conceptual approach of this thesis draws on the governmentality, sociology of governance, and neo-liberal literature. Governmentality is the attempt to shape human conduct while drawing attention to non-state constructions of criminality (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde, 2006). Governmentality has created all modern forms of political action and authorities employ strategies upon populations to ensure good and avert ill (Rose, 1996). According to governmentality literature, power is exercised through micro and mundane relations of governance to affect behavior (Valverde, 2010). Governance, as defined by Hunt and Wickham (1994), refers to “any attempt to control or manage any known object” (as cited in Lippert, 2012: 168). Crucially for the purposes of this thesis, this also means that libraries engage in governance. To govern is not to only govern others only, rather, government also consists of how we govern ourselves, things, and entities (Foucault, 1991). There is considerable overlap between the governmentality and sociology of governance perspectives (the main difference is that the former focusses more on discourses and the latter more on actual practices (or the ‘discursive’ and ‘the real’), but that distinction is not hard and fast- see Lippert & Stenson (2010) for this discussion). Governance can be enacted by both non-state actors and state actors (Lippert, 2012). Valverde (2010) states that the micromanagement of conduct associated with classical discipline is ubiquitous today and can flow from practices that govern at a distance such as policies of urban surveillance like CCTV surveillance. Expertise also

appeals to policy makers who seek to achieve objectives and need guidance for desired conduct within their institution (Miller & Rose, 2008).

Governance may take a discernable form, therefore there is a focus on discourse (Lippert, 2012). An important element of this perspective is discovering what Foucault called governmentalities which, according to Lippert (2012), unearths the specific ways of thinking about governance that make it practicable. One such governmentality is neo-liberalism. A sociology of governance approach aims to discern how these specific discourses of rule shape actual governmental practices within schemes of urban governance and institutions and pays more attention to actual arrangements and practices of governance (Lippert, 2012). Further, this perspective pays attention to knowledge as necessary for the exercise of governmental power (Lippert, 2012). Such knowledge, according to Lippert (2012), can be formal and scientific or informal and unsystematic. Discovering how these forms of knowledge are produced can be important to understanding governance in the public library.

As discussed in the introduction, neo-liberalism is broadly referred to as a type of culture, a policy framework, a dominant ideology, an assemblage of technologies and also a governmental rationality (Brady, 2016: 8). A neo-liberal governmentality, according to Steger and Roy (2010), is evidenced in entrepreneurial principles of competitiveness, self-interest, and decentralization. Such governmentality supports the reduction of social services, tough law enforcement, conservative values, and replacing welfare with workfare (Steger & Roy, 2010). Neo-liberalism seeks to shift responsibility for 'risky' social conditions to the citizen and away from the state (Rose, 1996).

Under neo-liberalism, the community has become a new zone of investigation and classification (Rose, 1996). Communities are diverse and allegiance may be based on some of the following: religion, politics, lifestyle, and health. Features of a community – its strengths, cultures, and pathologies – are problematized and made amendable (Rose, 1996). Some communities are defined as hopeless and incapable of self-management and thus deserving of exclusion from the public (Merry, 2001; Li, 2016). The lack of a certain social status can transform how that person is treated and seen by authorities (Beckett & Herbert, 2010). These risk communities like unsheltered people who are excluded by neo-liberal governance tend to be subjected to increased surveillance and governance (Reese, DeVerteuil & Thach, 2010).

Accordingly, scholars have noted the emergence of techniques consistent with neo-liberal governmentality that seek to govern without governing society (Miller & Rose, 2008). That is, these strategies try to govern through the autonomous choices of citizens and to govern through citizens' allegiance to communities (Miller & Rose, 2008; see also Hamilton & Lippert, 2020; Lippert & Walby, 2016; Simon, 2006; Sokhi-Bulley, 2011; Valverde, 2016). Governing through is broadly understood as “conducting conduct” (Hamilton & Lippert, 2020: 128). Governing through accomplishes beyond what is claimed to be governed and it operates upon, rather than against, the freedom of actors (Hamilton & Lippert, 2020; Simon, 2006). The effects of governing through reach actors who are in a position of responsibility for others (Simon, 2006). This thesis therefore explored in part how public libraries covertly, indirectly and/or mundanely govern unsheltered people *through* mundane policies targeting offensive odors and bag limitations.

Moreover, the neo-liberal subject is expected to take responsibility to shape their best self (Dej, 2016; see also Garland, 1997). Strategies of self-improvement, according to Dej (2016), relate to consumer culture and economic inequalities that make it difficult for people living in poverty to participate. The neo-liberal subject is no longer assumed to be naturally capable of responsible, self-directed action and thus government at a distance becomes useful (Rose, 1999; see also Garland, 1997). The obligations of responsabilization come from a perception that as a neo-liberal subject, we must self-govern to limit reliance on the state (Dej, 2016). Dej (2016) argues that the convergence of the private and the public realms can be used to explain the public's hostility towards people on social assistance. People who do not live up to neo-liberal expectations are held responsible for their failures and for socially structured inequalities (Dej, 2016). The shame that is often associated with being unsheltered is articulated through neo-liberal discourses of normalizing responsabilization (Dej, 2016). Given the above, responsabilization is another technique of neo-liberal governance that this thesis seeks to discern in the data.

Furthermore, the specific urban governance logic of 'clean and safe' "refers to ensuring a consumption environment free of refuse and risk for consumers to pass through unscathed" (Lippert, 2012: 169). In his study on the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) discourse, Lippert (2012) found people who lack purchasing power or a private residence are deemed to interfere with consumerism and the pedestrian flow in BIDs. The 'clean and safe' logic governs to minimize interference with consumerism, ensure smooth pedestrian flow, and security. The 'clean and safe' logic may be evidenced in policies that, for example, limit the number of bags patrons can bring into the library,

something which arguably affects unsheltered persons who carry more (or all) of their belongings with them more than other patrons. I sought to include the logic of ‘clean and safe’ because neo-liberalism on its own did not seem to fully capture the finer considerations evident in governing a public space and facility such as the library.

Merry (2001) argues that the city’s wealthy often use spatial governmentality to exclude impoverished citizens. Spatial governmentality, like risk management governance, employs measures to obscure socially offensive behaviors from public view (Merry, 2001). Resultantly, various architectural designs have been developed and employed to target people and their conduct, namely those like unsheltered people who use or rely on public spaces more than others (Chellew, 2019). For example, hostile architecture uses elements of the built environment to exert control and govern the conduct of people through its design (Chellew, 2019). This neo-liberal developmental logic is used to channel out people who are believed to pose a risk to the greater public space (Beckett & Herbert, 2008).²

Governmentality and governance-related literature informs this thesis research that focuses on the governance of public libraries in Canadian cities mostly in relation to neo-liberalism. The objective of this research is to address these knowledge gaps by studying policies and practices to identify how unsheltered people are governed in Canadian public libraries. The research question guiding this study asks, how have unsheltered people become problematized and governed in public libraries of Canadian cities consistent with neo-liberal objectives?

² Hostile architecture may be present in public libraries; however, most institutions are closed to the public due to COVID-19 regulations.

Methodology and Research Procedures

The methodological approaches adopted for this thesis is a discourse analysis and a Foucault-inspired sociology of governance perspective. To begin, a discourse analysis is used to study the links between discourse and broader social and cultural developments (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). The goal of discourse analysis is to investigate links between the use of language and social practice (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). The analytical work on and with paper-based and computer-mediated documents, a ubiquitous aspect of contemporary society, can uncover the documents use and function in organizational settings (Rapley & Rees, 2018). Documents are a medium for information to be shared, as they are created for a particular purpose (Coffey, 2014).

There are several different approaches within the field of discourse analysis. One approach that befits my research objective is a Foucauldian discourse analysis. Through a Foucauldian theoretical perspective, a discourse analysis concerns itself with the way language has been constructed and shaped in terms of its social and historical situatedness (Cheek, 2008). Language and knowledge are not considered value free, therefore, a discourse analysis through a Foucauldian lens is necessary to uncover the unspoken assumptions and meanings implicit within (Cheek, 2008). This mode of analysis offers the potential to challenge aspects of reality that have come to be viewed as normal and thus taken-for-granted (Cheek, 2008). Additionally, this approach can illuminate the effects of power Foucault posited as being exercised through various agents and institutions (Cheek, 2008). A Foucault-inspired sociology of governance perspective proposes that the governance of people and places can be enacted by both non-state actors and state authorities (Lippert, 2012; see also Sleiman & Lippert, 2010;

Hermer & Hunt, 1996) and it focuses more on actual practices. As mentioned above, governance broadly refers to “any attempt to control or manage any known object” (Lippert, 2012: 168). An important element of this perspective is discovering what Foucault called governmentalities which, according to Lippert (2012), unearths the specific ways of thinking about governance that make it practicable. One such governmentality is neo-liberalism. A sociology of governance approach aims to discern how these specific discourses of rule shape actual governmental practices within schemes of urban governance and institutions and pays more attention to actual arrangements and practices of governance (Lippert, 2012). Further, this perspective pays attention to knowledge as necessary for the exercise of governmental power (Lippert, 2012). Such knowledge, according to Lippert (2012), can be formal and scientific or informal and unsystematic. Discovering how these forms of knowledge are produced can be important to understanding governance in the public library.

The research for this thesis consisted of the collection and analysis of public library policies. An analysis of policy can provide insight on how it can operate as a form of governance (Shore and Wright, 2011). By critically analyzing the discourses evidenced in public library policies along with practices they effect, a better evaluation can be made about the rationalities and mentalities that govern public libraries in Canada.

First, when selecting the public libraries to include in my research, I considered their locations: a public library located in a downtown core – regarded as a site of urban development and economic prosperity – may experience greater neo-liberal governance than those located in suburbia. I used an online map to determine which public library

was located in the downtown core of its respective city. I selected one public library from Windsor, Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary.³

I also considered the libraries in cities where the total number of people who were unsheltered and live in places unintended for human habitation and who often rely on public facilities to survive was relatively high (Amore, 2019; Busch-Geertsema, Culhane & Fitzpatrick, 2016). This included cities of Windsor, Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary based on their most recent Point-In-Time Count (BC Non-Profit Housing Association, 2020; Calgary Point-In-Time Count Report, 2016; Homeless Coalition of Windsor-Essex County, 2018; Street Needs Assessment, 2018). The statistics presented in a Point-In-Time Count provide a 24-hour snapshot of the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in cities across Canada (BC Non-Profit Housing Association, 2020; Calgary Point-In-Time Count Report, 2016; Homeless Coalition of Windsor-Essex County, 2018; Street Needs Assessment, 2018). Data is generally collected every three years through local service agencies and volunteers who were deployed on city streets and in emergency shelters to conduct interviews with people who were identified as experiencing homelessness (BC Non-Profit Housing Association, 2020; Calgary Point-In-Time Count Report, 2016; Homeless Coalition of Windsor-Essex County, 2018; Street Needs Assessment, 2018). A Point-In-Time Count maps homelessness by Indigenous identity, racial identity, gender identity, and age, however, this thesis will consider only the total number of people who are unsheltered. Vancouver conducted its Point-In-Time Count in the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak (BC Non-Profit Housing

³ I selected the following public libraries within these four cities: the Windsor Public Library located at 185 Ouellette Avenue; the Vancouver Public Library located at 2674 Hastings Street; the Toronto Reference Library located at 789 Yonge Street; and the Calgary Public Library located at 616 Macleod Trail SE.

Association, 2020), however, other Counts were cancelled for health and safety reasons, and I had to rely on previously collected data from Windsor, Toronto, and Calgary. These reports may no longer adequately capture the number of people who are unsheltered given the economic impacts and policy responses regarding housing and homelessness due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Toronto and Vancouver had the highest number of unsheltered people. In Toronto, it was estimated that of the 8,715 people who were experiencing homelessness, 533 people were unsheltered in 2018 (Street Needs Assessment, 2018). The number of people experiencing homelessness in Vancouver was counted at 2,095 with 547 people unsheltered in 2020 (BC Non-Profit Housing Association, 2020). In 2016, 3,430 people in Calgary were counted as experiencing homelessness with 194 people unsheltered (Calgary Point-In-Time Report, 2016). I selected Windsor for its familiarity and proximity. In 2018, of the 197 people who were identified as experiencing homelessness in Windsor, 10 people disclosed that they were unsheltered (Homeless Coalition of Windsor-Essex County, 2018).

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

Most public library policies were made available on the respective library's website, however, I filed Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in attempt to obtain information that is not made public. FOI requests are formal and low-cost applications for the unpublished general records of public institutions available under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). Each province in Canada has FOI legislation that grants all citizens the right to request access to records such as policies, e-mails, and incident reports (Luscombe, Walby & Lippert, 2017). A

citizen who exercises their right to file a FOI request must navigate and broker the ‘wild’ complexities of legal negotiation and appeal (Luscombe, Walby & Lippert, 2017).

I filed FOI requests on October 8, 2020 via letters sent through regular mail to the aforementioned public libraries in Windsor, Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary.⁴ I requested to receive digitized copies of the following records from January 1, 2019 to January 1, 2020: all general occurrence reports pertaining to the enforcement of trespass policies; policies pertaining to membership agreements, patron code of conduct, and library cards; and all staff memoranda and updates regarding membership agreements, patron code of conduct, and library card policies. Each request required an initial fee of \$5.00. Prior to receiving any responses, I assumed I would be able to acquire information from a public library with relative ease in comparison to police agencies as found by Luscombe, Walby, and Lippert (2017). However, only the Vancouver Public Library fulfilled my request and thus I had to proceed without FOI documents from Windsor, Toronto, and Calgary to finish the research in time since when whether the other data requested would be provided was very uncertain. The following section briefly discusses my experiences submitting FOI requests to the Windsor Public Library, the Vancouver Public Library, the Toronto Public Library.

Monaghan (2015) identified four barriers in FOI brokering. I, as an FOI user, encountered two barriers: time delays and fees, and redaction. Time delays and fees included arbitrary time delays and fees issued by FOI agencies who seek to bar disclosure

⁴ I sent my first request to the City of Calgary via regular mail. A City representative responded to my request over email to inform me that the Library is a separate public body for the purpose of the FOIP Act and provided the ‘correct’ contact information. However, after sending my second request over email, I received a response from postmaster@outlook.com stating, “the recipient’s email system refused to accept a connection from your email system.” The Service Alberta website (<http://www.servicealberta.ca/foip/find-a-foip-office.cfm>) had the same e-mail address listed for the library.

(Monaghan, 2015). The Toronto Public Library first requested clarification of my inquiry on December 4, 2020. *Clarification* as conceptualized in Luscombe, Walby and Lippert was found to be “a code word for negotiating the request’s scope to reduce coordinators’ workload” (2017: 256). The Toronto Public Library delivered their final response on December 12, 2020, and stated that in accordance with the fees prescribed in *the MFIPPA Regulations*, R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 823, the total balance for my request was \$120.00. The Windsor Public Library wrote a three-page letter in response.⁵

After acquiring the documents from Vancouver, I established coding frames that were used to lay out key ideas and definitions (Givens, 2008). The process of coding helped to identify, organize, and interpret ideas and concepts uncovered in the data collection (Given, 2008). Following data collection, the analysis predominately examined policies on the patron code of conduct; surveillance and CCTV systems; the term and conditions of membership agreements; and borrowing library materials. Further, public library policies were examined for indications of governing strategies consistent with broader neo-liberal objectives of excluding unsheltered people; covert, indirect, and/or mundane policies targeting offensive odors and bag limitations; the use of trespass law; and rhetoric that problematizes and ‘others’ unsheltered people in the public library. In

⁵ The Windsor Public Library wrote the following: I am informing you that the Windsor Public Library was contacted and responsive records pertaining to your request were located. Your request, as submitted, will require a lengthy manual search through a large number of files by specific staff in the department. Some records may be located off-site. Under these circumstances, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act allows a municipality to implement a user-pay principal in order to complete your request. Based on my review of a representative sample of the records obtained from the department, the total fee to process your request are estimated to be \$610.00.” In addition, the Windsor Public Library stated that due to the large volume of records involved in my request, under s. 20 of MFIPPA: “I will be exercising an extension of 60 days in order to complete your request which is January 9, 2021. This will allow staff from the department sufficient time to work on your request. This time frame may change for some records due to third party notification procedures, however you will be notified accordingly.

sum, policies have been chosen to be analyzed to demonstrate how public libraries are governed in practice. Undertaking an analysis of policies allows for an in-depth examination of how unsheltered people are governed consistent with the objectives and questions of this thesis.

Analysis

In what follows, I discuss the results of my analysis. I first discuss library cards, then codes of conduct, policies governing comfort, offensive odours, dress, and bag limitations, incident reports, and finally trespass laws. Below uncovers how the public library in Windsor, Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary covertly, indirectly, and/or mundanely govern unsheltered people through mundane policies.

Library Cards

This thesis discovered the issuance of a library card as an indirect tactic and strategy of governing unsheltered people that is consistent with broader neo-liberal exclusionary objectives. Library cards are used to borrow library materials and it allows patrons to use the library computers. A card is the property of the library and library staff may require a card to be presented to verify access to its services or borrowing privileges. Library staff has the authority to ask for the card to be returned if the patron does not abide by policies and procedures. Non-compliance with library card policies may result in the library suspending or revoking library privileges including the use of the card to borrow and access to library services. Prior research discovered that some public libraries in the U.S. have only allowed patrons with a fixed address to obtain a library card (Kelleher, 2012).

The *Vancouver Public Library Cards Policy Code VPL-BD-CC-001* seeks to “demonstrate a commitment to the patron experience by removing access barriers and increasing ease of use, and applies this in decisions about library cards” (2019). A person looking to obtain a free library card at the Vancouver Public Library must:

Live or own property in the City of Vancouver or within the Public Library InterLINK Agreement area... Library cards are also free to: all British Columbia (B.C) residents not covered by the Public InterLINK agreement, who possess a valid ‘BC OneCard’ library card from their local BC municipality or regional library; all daycares, family child centres, preschools, childminding centres; and family places in the InterLINK area; and all Care Centres in the InterLINK area who wish to obtain a library card to borrow materials for the benefit of their residents, patients, or social service/health residential clients (e.g. half-way house and residential treatment centre). (Vancouver Public Library Cards Policy Code VPL-BD-CC-001, 2019)

It is important to note the use of the word *live* in the *Vancouver Public Library Cards Policy Code VPL-BD-CC-001*. To illustrate, an unsheltered person who enters the Vancouver Public Library requesting a free library card *lives* in the City but does not have a permanent address. This may suggest that *living* is not enough to warrant a free library card: in order to be worthy of a free library card, a person must be fixed to a place. This assumes unsheltered patrons are more likely to steal or lose library materials compared to housed patrons and thus problematizes unsheltered patrons (see also Kelleher, 2012).

There are several types of free library cards offered at the Vancouver Public Library including an ‘access card’ which is defined as a low barrier card for persons who may not qualify for a standard adult card due to insufficient identification, or for patrons who may face difficulties paying overdue fines and an ‘internet access card’ for patrons who only wish to access the wireless and/or hard-wired network (Vancouver Public Library Cards Policy Code VPL-BD-CC-001, 2019). The policy, however, does not

clearly indicate what library services are available with a ‘low barrier’ card. People who do not meet the free card criteria under *The Vancouver Public Library Cards Policy Code VPL-BD-CC-001* include the following: visitors to the City of Vancouver or people living outside of the InterLINK area and are not covered by a service agreement and/or possess a ‘BC OneCard’ are deemed a non-resident and must pay a fee for a library card (2019). The fee for library cards were not disclosed on the FOI-acquired documents or the Library’s website. Therefore, I was unable to conclude whether the fee was used as another technique to exclude unsheltered people from the public library. However, the *Vancouver Public Library Cards Policy Code VPL-BD-CC-001* promises “patrons who feel that they have been charged fines or fees unfairly may request a review by a supervisor, manager, or a director. The final decision regarding the charging of fines and fees rests with the Chief Librarian” (2019). Yet how that review is to take place or how long it might take would be unclear to the unsheltered person who was initially denied it.

The Toronto Library’s *Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy* covers all activities relating to registration of library users and borrowing and use of library collections and services. The policy sets conditions and governs the use of the library card; establishes borrowing privileges, responsibilities, and restrictions; and a schedule of fines and fees (*Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy*, 2018). A person who lives, works, or attends school or owns property in the City of Toronto, or who has an immediate family member living at the same address who owns property in the City of Toronto, or any person who lives on a First Nations reserve in Ontario, is eligible, upon presentation of acceptable identification, to receive a library card with borrowing privileges without charge and is entitled to use the Library’s services

(Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy, 2018). A person must present their name and address identification and disclose date of birth and contact information to obtain a library card.

The Toronto Public Library's *Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy* defines a 'non-resident' as people who do not live, work, attend school or own property in Toronto, or do not live on First Nations reserves in Ontario, and may access services and borrow materials with some exceptions by paying a non-refundable fee (2018). People who do not meet the eligibility requirements for a library card and who do not wish to pay the non-resident fee for a library card are eligible for a visitor card upon presentation of name identification and disclosure of other personal information (Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy, 2018). Under the *Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy*, people who are experiencing homelessness or who are precariously housed and unable to provide permanent address identification are eligible for a library card with limited borrowing privileges upon presentation of name identification and disclosure of other personal information (Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy, 2018). People who are experiencing homelessness or who are precariously housed and unable to provide permanent address "may borrow five items at a time, with some exceptions, and have full access to library services including those available through digital channels" (Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy, 2018). Still, the Toronto Public Library imposes significant borrowing restrictions upon unsheltered people. The policy requires unsheltered people to disclose personal information in exchange for intellectual enrichment.

Moreover, patrons are responsible for library materials borrowed from the Library: a replacement cost will be charged for material long overdue and for material that has been lost or damaged (Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy, 2018). The loan periods for library materials vary. The policy states that books can be borrowed for twenty-one days and magazines or periodicals can be borrowed for seven days (Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy, 2018). A patron's borrowing privileges will be suspended in the following cases: a patron has more than fifteen items overdue, or has more than \$30.00 in fines or charges which includes both unpaid fines on returned materials and fines accruing on items not returned yet; and has received a system-wide exclusion of six or twelve months (Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy, 2018). For adults aged twenty-five and older, the fine amount per day per item is \$0.35 and the maximum per item for each loan period is \$14.00. For people under the age of twenty-five, the fine amount per day per item is \$0.15 and a maximum per item for each loan period is \$6.00. The replacement cost of library material will be the default cost, the invoiced price, or the order price, whichever is greater (Membership, Circulation, and Collection Use Policy, 2018). For unsheltered people, fines and late charges can act as a deterrent from borrowing library items. Accumulated fines and late charges can burden unsheltered people.

The Windsor Public Library's *Lending Services Policy* establishes a framework of policies to govern the equitable sharing of library materials which provide the opportunity for members of the public to access and borrow materials without charge, ensure the care of and accounting for materials in the Library collection, and define rules for the fair and equitable use of library resources (2016). The *Lending Services Policy*

supports the principle of universal and equitable access and reflect the Library's *Mission, Vision, Values, and Customer Service Pledge*: "the mission of the WPL is to enrich our community by provided access to resources that inform and entertain" and "we believe in the freedom to read, learn, and discover" (2016). According to the *Lending Services Policy*, a library card may be obtained with appropriate identification by a person who is a resident of the City of Windsor, without charge; a resident of a community participating in a reciprocal borrowing agreement such as Essex County, without charge; and not a resident of the City of Windsor, for a fee (2016). A resident is defined as anyone who resides within the City of Windsor, or owns real property within the City of Windsor (Lending Services Policy, 2016). A non-resident borrower is defined as a person who is not a 'resident' and who can be issued a library card upon presentation of proper identification and payment of a fee (Lending Services Policy, 2016). A person who is not a 'resident' is still a member of the public who, according to the *Lending Services Policy*, is provided with the opportunity to access and borrow materials without charge (2016). Therefore, the *Lending Services Policy* does not clearly delineate who is a member of the public and thus eligible to access and borrow materials without charge.

The Windsor Public Library also offers a temporary guest card with restricted borrowing privileges may be obtained for a fee (Lending Services Policy, 2016). Membership at the Windsor Public Library can be suspended for unpaid fines for damaged, lost, or unreturned materials, or violations of library policies (Lending Services Policy, 2016). The replacement cost is at the discretion of the Library and the replacement cost will include the purchase cost and the processing cost of the material (Lending Services Policy, 2016). A patron who fails to return library materials, or fails to

pay the cost of any loss or damage, may be subject to suspension of all library privileges and could face prosecution (Lending Services Policy, 2016). Borrowing privileges or access to other services may be suspended if the accumulated fines or fees charged reach \$20.00, the patron has been issued a Notice of Trespass from the Library, or the patron has refused to abide the Library policies and procedures (Lending Services Policy, 2016).

A final point of interest I examined within the policies was whether Vancouver, Toronto, and/or Windsor take patron's photos when acquiring a library card. Each time a patron is required to use their library card, such as borrowing books or perhaps scanning in and out of the library, staff members can verify the patron's identity with the photo on record. The photo would therefore act as a form of surveillance and government at a distance (see also Lippert & Walby, 2012). Unfortunately, I was unable to determine whether Vancouver, Toronto, and/or Windsor take patron's photos when acquiring library cards.

Codes of Conduct

A code of conduct is a set of rules that outline the norms and the expectations of behavior of an institution. A code of conduct governs the public and staff of an institution in or on the property to maintain a safe and orderly environment. Any violation of the code of conduct may result in a person's suspension from the premises or more serious offences may result in criminal prosecution.

The FOI-acquired document titled (1) *General Issues* outlines the Vancouver Public Library's (1.2) *Expectations of Behaviors*. The *Expectations of Behaviors* is a code of conduct. It states the following: "problems arise when people display behavior which either consciously or unconsciously violates or restricts the rights of others to use the

library” (2019). To ensure everyone can safely use and enjoy the public library,

Vancouver implemented an extensive list of rules people must follow:

Library users must not: disturb, obstruct, molest, fight or interfere with any person’s comfort and use of the library; verbally abuse (swear, yell, threaten), persistently argue or display belligerence toward other users or staff... beg or sell services, goods, wares, merchandise or any illicit substance; steal from the library or other patrons... have inappropriate dress, for example, no shoes/no shirt; sleep, or place feet on library furniture; use a cellular phone or other device in a manner that disrupts others; and refuse to follow library procedures or cooperate with staff requests (i.e. refusal to have bags checked after gate alarm). (Expectations of Behavior, 2019)

The introduction of Toronto Public Library’s *Rules of Conduct* policy states: “any behavior that does not support a welcoming environment and/or violates the *Rules of Conduct* may result in cost-recovery charges, suspension of library privileges, exclusion from the Library on the basis of the Ontario Trespass to Property Act and prosecution” (2013). Patrons are asked for their cooperation “in maintaining a welcoming environment conducive to study and enjoyable use of the Library” (Rules of Conduct, 2013). Staff is asked to apply these rules in a fair, dignified, and positive manner for the benefit of all:

Violent, threatening, abusive, discriminatory, or harassing language or conduct of any kind is not allowed; disruptive or intrusive behavior is not allowed... members of the public may not make requests for service based on prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Human Rights Code...members of the public must open all bags, books, and papers for inspection if requested by staff; library materials may not be taken into washrooms; posting notices, distributing circulars or petitions, soliciting or engaging in any commercial activity on library property must not be conducted without prior written approval of the Library...members of the public must wear shirts and shoes and other appropriate attire. (Rules of Conduct, 2013)

Next, the Windsor Public Library adopted its code of conduct called the *Facilities Use Policy* (O – 5). The objective of the policy is to “provide a framework for the provision of safe, clean, and accessible public library facilities” (Facilities Use Policy, 2016). The policy further states that the Windsor Public Library Board strives to “protect and preserve the property under its control” (Facilities Use Policy, 2016). Every person

visiting the Windsor Public Library is required to conduct themselves in a manner that will not disturb others in the Library or cause damage to Library property. The Windsor Public Library's *Code of Conduct Policy* (O – 4) was approved in February 2020. Similar to its policy governing *Facilities Use*, the *Code of Conduct* states: “The Windsor Public Library provides a welcoming, safe, and clean environment” (2020). The *Code of Conduct* asks that everyone be law-abiding, and respectful of library customers, visitors, staff, and volunteers (2020). While visiting the library, people are asked to abide by the following:

Be responsible for your belongings. Three personal items are permitted in the library: small bags, suitcases, backpacks, and boxes; strollers, walkers, wheelchairs, and service animals are welcome; supervise children in your care; use library furniture, equipment, and property for their intended purposes; leave the library promptly at closing time and comply with staff direction; and dress appropriately: shoes, shirts, and other suitable clothing must be worn. (Code of Conduct, 2020)

The *Code of Conduct* further lists behavior that is deemed unacceptable in the Library:

Behavior that disrupts others or damages Library property; threatening, abusive, or harassing language and/or behavior...sleeping or napping in or on library property...emitting offensive odours. (Code of Conduct, 2020)

The Calgary Public Library's *Code of Conduct* asks people visiting the library to “work together to create a welcoming and safe Library we can all enjoy” (2021). The *Code* includes the following provisions:

Respect others; take responsibility for those in your care during your visit; dress appropriately for a public space; be courteous, remembering that others want to enjoy the Library as much as you do; use furniture, equipment, and spaces for their intended purposes; keep all valuable personal items with you; remember we all share the air and strong scents can negatively impact others. (Code of Conduct, 2021)

The *Code of Conduct* further states that some behaviors are unacceptable, including “abuse of any kind toward others; intoxication or using intoxicating substances; illegal activity; carrying or using a weapon; sleeping; damaging or stealing Library

property; and bringing in personal items that will interfere with others' use of the space" (2021).

Comfort, Offensive Odours, Dress, Bag Limitations, and 'Clean and Safe'

The codes of conduct from Vancouver, Toronto, Windsor, and Calgary contained several mundane policies that covertly, indirectly and/or mundanely govern unsheltered people. I will discuss the policies described above that make it easy for library staff to exclude unsheltered people.

First, Vancouver's code that states Library users must not "disturb, obstruct, molest, fight, or interfere with any person's comfort" (Expectations of Behavior, 2019) is vague and highly subjective. Without a clear definition of what constitutes *comfort*, what would library staff consider a legitimate interference of a patron's comfort? After all, what may interfere with one patron or staff's comfort may not interfere with another patron or staff's comfort. According to Simmons, housed patrons often considered the mere presence of unsheltered people offensive and hence uncomfortable (1985). Therefore, such a rule could be used with malicious intent. Second, the code of conduct states Library users must not "persistently argue" (Expectations of Behavior, 2019) or "display belligerence towards other users or staff" (Expectations of Behavior, 2019) is also vague. Can a Library user argue, but not argue *persistently*? How many times and over what period would it be deemed persistent? What do library staff define as *belligerence*? Third, the policy that states Library users must not "have inappropriate dress" (Expectations of Behavior, 2019) is highly subjective. What would be considered inappropriate dress? Similar to interfering with any person's comfort, what may be inappropriate dress to one patron or staff member may not be inappropriate dress to

another patron or staff member. And some unsheltered people would not necessarily be financially able to purchase and/or even regularly wash clothing (i.e., dress) that all library staff would deem appropriate, thus leaving them especially susceptible to exclusion through this aspect. Finally, the *Expectations of Behavior* does not allow patrons to “beg or sell services, goods, wares, merchandise or any illicit substance” (2019). Whereas other policies have covertly, indirectly and/or mundanely govern unsheltered people, the aforementioned policy overtly bans the actions commonly associated with at least some unsheltered people (it would likely target unsheltered patrons much more than anyone else who does not need to beg). But begging is not illegal, is often done quietly or even silently consistent with quiet libraries, and as Mosher and Hermer (2002) note, is a form of expression in public space. One possible explanation for such overt language in this case could be the especially high population of unsheltered people in Vancouver (BC Non-Profit Housing Association, 2020).

The Toronto Public Library’s *Rules of Conduct* also contains several policies that would make it easy to exclude unsheltered people, despite its promise that staff will “apply these rules in a fair, dignified, and positive manner for the benefit of all” (2013). First, the introductory statement that “any behavior that does not support a welcoming environment... may result in cost-recovery charges, suspension of library privileges, exclusion from the Library on the basis of the Ontario Trespass to Property Act and prosecution” (Rules of Conduct, 2013) is vague and subjective. What sort of behaviour(s) do not support a welcoming environment? A patron who displays any behavior that a staff member thinks is not a welcoming environment may face significant penalties such as exclusion from the Library using the Ontario Trespass to Property Act – laws which

are typically associated with private property. My third research sub-questions asked: Are trespass laws, typically associated with private property, used to exclude unsheltered people from public libraries and if so, how? Unsheltered people may be unfairly accused of displaying behavior(s) that do not support a welcoming environment and therefore could face exclusion from the Toronto Public Library. Without a clear guideline of what behavior(s) do not support a welcoming environment, library staff are left to use their own discretion and thus such a policy that carries profound consequences is too subjective.

Second, patrons are asked for their cooperation “in maintaining a welcoming environment conducive to study and enjoyable use of the Library” (Rules of Conduct, 2013). This quotation contains a theme of responsabilization, requiring patrons to be responsible in creating and maintaining a welcoming environment. This implies that other patrons are responsible for reporting on those whose conduct is deemed uncomfortable or otherwise violates the code of conduct. There is therefore a sense in which the governance of unsheltered people relies on a form of common knowledge of patrons, also seen in the ways that problematic patrons of bars and liquor establishments are to be governed (see Valverde, 2003), rather than through regular and direct observation and surveillance of patrons by staff. Yet, the policy also states “members of the public must open all bags, books, and papers for inspection if requested by staff” (Rules of Conduct, 2013) which reveals a method of surveillance and governing at a distance used at the Toronto Public Library, authored by staff. The knowledge used by the staff to do this and make decisions also seems to be a common knowledge so mundane that it is not even referred to in policy. Yet it also reveals that here too a common rather than an expert

knowledge is being relied upon and deployed in the governance of unsheltered patrons in this library. Also, under what circumstances would staff request patrons to open all bags, books, and papers? This policy allows staff members to inspect a patron's personal belongings whenever they choose, and a patron must oblige, rather than based on clear criteria underpinned by science or knowledge of risk to the library (that is, expert knowledge of one kind or other). Fourth, similar to the Vancouver Public Library, the Toronto Public Library also overtly bans conduct *commonly* associated with unsheltered people. For example, the *Rules of Conduct* forbids patrons from "soliciting" in the Library (2013). Toronto also has a high population of unsheltered people, therefore there is a greater need to overtly ban the actions of unsheltered people (Street Needs Assessments, 2018).

Several notable findings emerged in the Windsor Public Library code of conduct policy too.⁶ To begin, both the *Facilities Use Policy* (O – 5) and *Code of Conduct Policy* (O – 4) states that it will provide a safe, clean, and accessible environment for patrons. This suggests the 'clean and safe' governmentality (Lippert, 2012) found to be used on public streets and often used to govern or exclude unsheltered people, youth, and other problematized populations there, is evidenced inside the Windsor Public Library too. Second, and relatedly, the *Code of Conduct* deemed "emitting offensive odours" (2020) as an unacceptable behavior in the Library. This may well disproportionately target and exclude unsheltered people who may not always have access to showers. This is plainly an example of governing through odour. Further, a policy banning offensive odours is highly subjective- what are the parameters for the kinds of odours allowed in the public

⁶ It should be noted that the Windsor Public Library recently revised their *Code of Conduct* in February 2020.

library and based on what forms of knowledge? For example, some people find some brands of or all men's cologne or women's perfume to be offensive especially when used extensively, whereas others do not. Who ultimately determines what odour is offensive and using what kind of knowledge? Apparently expert knowledge is not at work here either. Third, the *Code of Conduct* permits patrons to bring in three personal items such as small bags, suitcases, backpacks, and boxes (2020). Without a private dwelling, unsheltered people may have to carry around all of their personal belongings. Resultantly, bag limitation policies may bar unsheltered people from entering the public library. Fourth, the policy banning "behaviors that disrupts others" (Code of Conduct, 2020) is vague and far-reaching. How do library staff enforce this policy in a fair and consistent manner? Like the Vancouver Public Library and the Toronto Public Library, what one staff member or patron considers disruptive may not be a disruptive behavior to another staff member or patron. Here too there is a common knowledge of staff being relied upon to govern. Policies that govern comfort and behaviors may covertly, indirectly, and/or mundanely govern unsheltered people. Fifth, the policy banning "sleeping or napping in or on library property" may be used to remove unsheltered people from the property. The removal of people sleeping or napping in or on the library property have neo-liberal aesthetic considerations and use the 'clean and safe' logic (Lippert, 2012).

The Calgary Public Library delicately worded their *Code of Conduct*, asking patrons to "remember we all share the air and strong scents can negatively impact others" (2021). Again, policies on odour are highly subjective and may covertly, indirectly, and/or mundanely govern unsheltered people. Next, the Calgary Public Library asks patrons to not bring in personal items that will interfere with others' use of library space

(Code of Conduct, 2021). The policy does not specify the number or kinds of personal belongings allowed in or if there are any size limitations. Like the Windsor Public Library, bag limitation policies may bar unsheltered people from entering the public library. The rule demonstrates a ‘clean and safe’ rationality. Patrons are told not to “bring in personal items that will interfere with others’ use of space” (Code of Conduct, 2021), which echoes a similar sentiment found in BIDs’ discourse of ensuring smooth pedestrian flow (see Lippert, 2012).

Within the Calgary Public Library’s *Code of Conduct*, a neo-liberal theme of individual responsabilization emerged that was found in other libraries discussed above too. For example, the policy asks patrons to “take responsibility for those in your care during your visit,” “be courteous, remembering that others want to enjoy the Library as much as you do,” and “remember we all share the air and strong scents can negatively impact others” (Code of Conduct, 2021). The policies require its patrons to use common knowledge to self-govern conduct and be responsible to create a “welcoming and safe Library” all patrons can enjoy (Code of Conduct, 2021).

Incident Reports

The fourteen incident reports obtained from the Vancouver Public Library document specific details including the type of incident or behavior, description of what happened and the actions taken, verbatim quotations, and the time, date, and location of the incident that occurred. The responsive records from the Vancouver Public Library had significant redactions. Redactions occur when FOI agencies reference sections of FOI legislation to justify severing portions of the documents and barring disclosure of key materials and words (Monaghan, 2015). The Vancouver Public Library cited s. 22(1)

of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.B.C, 1996, “The head of a public body must refuse to disclose personal information to an applicant if the disclosure would be an unreasonable invasion of a third party’s personal privacy.”

Nonetheless, some findings emerged from the analysis of this information too.

Interestingly, the incident report form asks staff to record the gender, age, height, weight, complexion, hair, and other distinguishing features such as speech or tic of the patron in question. Once drafted, incident reports are circulated amongst branch staff members via email and kept for an undisclosed amount of time to assist in later surveillance and control of the premises. Such detailed surveillance individuals, who would certainly include unsheltered persons, is hardly consistent with the unfettered use of public space (although other public spaces under neo-liberalism are similarly becoming surveilled, as discussed earlier). The following representative incident reports reveal indirect tactics and strategies of governing unsheltered people as well as how the policies are put into practice.

First, a report made 31 January 2019 recalled an incident with a patron asleep/unresponsive in the bathroom stall. Staff wrote that they were alerted to the patron in the men’s washroom. Staff entered the men’s washroom and “asked the patron if (redacted information) was alright, knocked on the stall door and sought response multiple times.” Staff wrote that “(redacted information) was breathing loud enough to hear and made some groaning noises that made (redacted information) sound groggy but awake.” The patron “was unable to leave under (redacted information) own power,” therefore staff decided to call the Non-Emergency Line. After being examined by First Responders, the patron left, and the First Responders disposed of the needle they found

discarded in the stall. It is unclear whether the patron was unsheltered. This report nonetheless reveals the strategies used when responding to medical concerns in the library. Significantly, this report suggests that governance is at least partially complaint driven and dependent upon common knowledge generated and then passed along by other patrons to staff consistent with the policy described above.

On 23 May 2019, an incident report was made on a banned patron in the library displaying “belligerent behavior.” Staff wrote: “I recognized patron (redacted information) [and] possibly others at computer workstation.” Staff approached the patron with the phone number for security on a generic business card and said “hi there, you have to speak with security at Central before you come back to the library,” (redacted information) said “I don’t need anything! You people! I don’t need to talk to no one!” The patron was said to be posturing towards staff aggressively. Staff offered (redacted information) the card again and said “Do you want to take this with you? Contacting them is the only way you’re going to be able to use library services again.” The patron took the card from the staff member and ripped it up. According to staff, the patron moved toward the exit, stopped, and flipped over a table that had a community jigsaw puzzle on it. Staff ordered the patron to leave and the patron repeated the words back “in a high, mocking tone.” The patron then paused in the atrium and spit backwards, spraying the door. Staff contacted the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) security and Vancouver police. Staff wrote that while on the phone, “I saw (redacted information) smearing an unknown gooey brown substance on the front window. I checked moments later and saw (redacted information) changing clothes on the sidewalk.” When police arrive and took a report, the patron was no longer in sight. In close, staff wrote “if (redacted information)

returns to the branch both VPL security and the police encouraged us to call 911 rather than approaching.” Again, it is unclear whether the patron was unsheltered. The report does however speak to the use of private security and reveals the use of trespass laws in the library, one of the sub-questions of interest, since it is a public space. While this report describes disturbing, perhaps even risky behaviour involving bodily and other unknown substances, it also, however, raises the question of whether the patron could have been simply left alone to use the computer station instead in this instance. It also raises the question of what the patron had been banned for originally to justify staff asking the patron to leave this time and what private security would have required (if anything) to permit this patron to immediately or ever return to the public library.

A report made 13 November 2019 described a brief encounter with a banned patron in the library. Staff reported that they were “informed that a banned patron (redacted information) was in the branch on a computer. (redacted information) was quiet and well behaved.” The report states that staff approached and informed the patron that “(redacted information) there is a ban note on your record, so we have to ask you to leave today.” The report stated “(redacted information) very respectfully said ‘what? No... Can I stay?’” to which the staff member replied “(redacted information) would need to talk to security downtown to have the ban lifted.” The patron later discovered that the ban had been lifted on November 1 “(redacted information) uses (redacted information).” Again, it is unclear whether the patron was unsheltered, but it does however show the use of private security and trespass laws to ban and exclude patrons, including unsheltered patrons.

Another a report made 17 July 2019 described an incident with a woman in the family bathroom after hours. Staff reported that “at 8:55, someone had been in the family washroom a long time and was concerned they wouldn’t be out by closing time (9pm).” At 9:08 p.m., after several attempts to get the woman out of the washroom, staff let the woman know that they had a key to the washroom and would enter if she did not come out. The woman responded “being rude gets you nowhere! Just hang on and give me some time!” to which staff answered, “we’ve given you time, you have to go.” According to the report, staff could hear zipper sounds from the washroom, suggesting the woman was getting dressed. Similarly, it is unclear whether the woman was unsheltered. However, based on the details of the report, it is believed that the woman was using the Library’s family washroom to bathe and thus did not have access to a washroom to bathe elsewhere. Therefore, the woman was likely unsheltered. When staff stated that they had a key to the washroom and would enter if the woman did not come out, the woman asked staff to “give me some time,” making the bathing assumption probable. This report illustrates an unofficial strategy likely used against unsheltered people, since they arguably would be among those people most likely to need “more time” in the library’s washroom. It raises the question too of whether other washrooms were available for other patrons during this time or on other floors/areas of the library, thus calling into question whether it was necessary to intervene in this instance or if it was an effort to target an unsheltered person for removal. It is significant that there was nothing unredacted in the report that indicated this washroom had been left damaged or in disarray to justify removal either.

One incident report made 18 October 2019 detailed a “shoe-less man sitting out front of library.” The type of incident was described as “patron behaviors – distraught/unusual.” The report also had significant redactions, for example: “We had a shoeless (redacted information) the previous day camping in our elevator, so I went to see if it was the same person.” The staff member expressed concern “about (redacted information) being shoeless on a cold, rainy day, and about the obvious distress, I called the Non-Emergency Line to see if we could get some help.” It is unclear whether the shoeless man was unsheltered, however, *camping* is an activity commonly associated with unsheltered people (see Walby and Lippert, 2012). This incident report illustrates more broadly the unofficial strategies used when library staff encounter unsheltered people. While the incident report illustrates concern over the person’s well-being, it is unclear why it would matter if it was the same person who had been previously camping, other than to try to stop the unsheltered person from entering the library space again.

Trespass Laws

A third and final sub-question of the thesis concerned the use of trespass law. The objective of the Toronto Public Library’s *Rules of Conduct – Exclusion, Reinstatement and Appeals* policy is to identify the types of misconduct that lead to exclusions under the *Ontario Trespass to Property Act*. The Toronto Public Library has the discretion in determining whether a person who does not comply with the Rules of Conduct will be excluded and the time period of the exclusion. Staff are encouraged to consider any mitigating factors such as an individual’s age, mental or physical ability, or the circumstances of the incident. A person who is deemed as being disruptive, intrusive, threatening, abusive, or uses discriminatory language or behavior, or attempted theft or

vandalism may receive a suspension of one day or an exclusion of two, six, or twelve months. Unfortunately, as described above, many of these terms are subjective and, in the end, rely on common knowledge of staff and perhaps responsabilized patrons who have made complaints to staff. One implication of this is that unsheltered people may be excluded in ways not based on any kind of expert or scientific basis. Since trespass law is used, there is not an avenue for appeal either. Any person who has been excluded from the Toronto Public Library has the right to request a review of the exclusion from the Library properties and request to review the decision of the Library Director regarding reinstatement. For an exclusion of twelve-months, the person can only apply for reinstatement to the Library Director after the twelve-month period has ended. One should emphasize here that unsheltered people need access to a library's resources and a twelve-month ban seems overly severe in the least.

Also, Vancouver's incident reports were documented on *Securiguard* forms; according to the *Securiguard* website, *Securiguard* is a Vancouver-based security company that offers a variety of services including aviation security, commercial and residential security, and government security for the City of Vancouver, Surrey, and Abbotsford ("Securiguard: Our Services", 2021). While Vancouver's policy did not mention trespass law and thus keeps it hidden from the public, this finding suggest that trespass law was very likely used to govern unsheltered patrons in this library too since this form of law is the main legal authority used by private security guards (see Ruppert, 2006; see also Stenning, 2000). Put differently, the discovered presence of this private security company alone suggests that trespass law is being used in this library to exclude people. This finding is important because there is some question about the

appropriateness of using private security to govern public spaces and facilities, in part because they are often deemed to be less accountable due to their significant powers noted earlier than other authorities.

Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated how unsheltered people have become problematized and governed in public libraries of Windsor, Ontario, Vancouver, British Columbia, Toronto, Ontario, and Calgary, Alberta, consistent with neo-liberal objectives, governmentality, and sociology of governance related concepts or themes. The research revealed how neo-liberalism and sociology of governance related concepts or themes shapes public library policies and how the movements and actions of unsheltered patrons are strictly regulated through its policies.

This thesis answered the following sub-questions. First, research uncovered how public libraries covertly, indirectly, and/or mundanely govern unsheltered people through mundane policies targeting comfort, offensive odours, dress, and bag limitations. The analysis revealed several policies that make it easy for library staff to exclude unsheltered people in or on library property. Research also found evidence of the ‘clean and safe’ logic operating alongside neo-liberal governance in the public libraries of Canadian cities (see also Lippert, 2012; Sleiman & Lippert, 2010). The ‘clean and safe’ logic successfully captures the finer considerations that go into governing a public space and facility such as the library.

Second, this thesis revealed the more indirect tactics and strategies of governing unsheltered people that are ultimately consistent with broader neo-liberal objectives of excluding unsheltered people reflected in Canada’s public library policies. The analysis

found the issuance of a library card and library card fees to be an indirect tactic and strategy of governing unsheltered people that is consistent with broader neo-liberal exclusionary objectives. The incident reports acquired from the Vancouver Public Library also revealed some indirect tactics and strategies of governing unsheltered people that are ultimately consistent with broader neo-liberal objectives of excluding unsheltered people. The incident reports did not directly identify unsheltered people, however, they illustrated more broadly the unofficial strategies used when library staff encounter unsheltered people (and in some cases the patrons in question could be deduced to have been likely unsheltered). There was also the question of what kinds of knowledge were used to govern the public library which in this case seems to common knowledge rather than any kind of expert or scientific knowledge. The problem with this is that it lends itself to too much discretion and whims of other patrons who make complaints and to staff. The implementation of vague public library policies is thus highly subjective and potentially detrimental to unsheltered persons' use of the libraries in question.

Third, trespass laws, typically associated with private property, have been used to exclude unsheltered people from public libraries. Through my research, I discovered that the Toronto Public Library uses the *Ontario Trespass to Property Act* which allows library staff to use their own discretion in determining whether a patron who does not comply with the *Rules of Conduct* will be excluded and the time period of the exclusion. The incident reports acquired from the Vancouver Public Library also revealed the use of trespass law to govern unsheltered patrons and private security as the main legal authority in the library. As discussed above, when enforcing trespass law, library staff rely on common knowledge and perhaps responsabilized patrons who have made complaints to

staff. There also seems to be reliance on forms of surveillance which seem inappropriate to a public space. Resultantly, unsheltered people may be excluded in ways not based on any kind of expert or scientific basis.

This thesis only began to study the governance of unsheltered people in public libraries in Canada. Future research, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic ends, should examine these policies and practices through other methods too. One area not examined here, due to an inability to safely visit libraries, were architectural means of governance to prevent unsheltered people from accessing or using libraries once inside. Certainly, more incident reports could be requested from other libraries using freedom of information requests too and other libraries studied not only for how they govern but also some of the provisions they have in place to ensure unsheltered persons including those who are causing no harm are able to access and use library space as public space.

Overall, this thesis has drawn attention to unsheltered people's exclusion or control in libraries and ultimately the shrinkage of public spaces and facilities unsheltered people are permitted to occupy or freely use. For unsheltered people, public libraries provide important resources they do not possess or cannot otherwise access. Besides preventing use of much needed resources in a public space, the governing practices of the public library that exclude unsheltered people in these ways can also contribute to an increased sense of distrust, stigma, and disrespect (Hodgetts et al., 2008). Yet, despite the importance of libraries to unsheltered people, public libraries have sought in policies to closely govern and sometimes exclude them in various, often subtle or indirect ways, or which are vague (what odours? what forms of dress? etc.) as to allow for such governance. As citizens, unsheltered people have the right to access libraries and use

them as a public space if they are not causing others harm and due to being unsheltered, they often have a need to do so more dire than other patrons.

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