'It doesn't always do justice to people': Neoliberalism's
Reorganization of Social Service Delivery in Ontario

by

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Abstract

Guided by institutional ethnography and labour process theory, this project explores the ways in which the discourses and practices of neoliberal austerity organize the work experiences of frontline social service providers and workers' various forms of resistance to this restructuring. Managerialist practices of accreditation and evidence-based practice appear to reorient service provision away from relational, social justice oriented work and community building, redistributing workers' time and energy to administrative practices involved in assessments, evaluations, and performance measurements. These ongoing changes take a toll on worker mental wellbeing and present challenges to the sustainability of social service provision by increasing workloads and limiting workers' access to support. While these changes in work processes present some challenges in workers' relationships with management and one another, they also open up new spaces to demonstrate solidarity and to work together to resist the neoliberalization of the sector.

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List of Abbreviations Used

EBP	Evidence-based Practice
IE	Institutional Ethnography
LPT	Labour Process Theory
MCYS	Ministry of Child and Youth Services
NPM	New Public Management
NPO	Non-profit Organization
NPSS	Non-profit Social Services
SIB	Social Impact Bonds

Chapter 1: Introduction

I remember it very specifically because it was a moment of heartbreak in social work ... I remember one time where the policy or protocol really didn't align with the needs of [the service user] ... To me that was kind of completely against why we do that work or the point of the organization itself. It was really a moment where protocols or the way organizations are run, the things they have in mind are not aligned with social justice or supporting clients or the ethics and values we have as social workers.

– Participant 5

The work experiences of social service providers are punctuated by moments of heartbreak – moments where organizational processes, protocols, and rules prevent workers from advocating for social justice, supporting clients, and conducting their practice ethically. In this project, I focus on such moments while at the same time demonstrating that they are necessary to the ongoing funding of services. I begin by describing how I came to focus on these moments of contradiction, why they matter, and to whom. Drawing on labour studies as well as feminist and other critical political economists, this analysis contributes to the literature on the impact of New Public Management (NPM) on social service agencies and those who work for them.

This research project was conducted in a mid-size city in Ontario, Canada, where social services delivery has experienced substantial change through the implementation of new public management. Ontario relies heavily on the nonprofit sector for social service delivery to vulnerable populations. Hit hard by the 2008-10 recession, governments have been making changes to the funding model and structure of the sector that fall in line with the broader politics of austerity (Fanelli, 2013; Porter, 2015). This study explores how the implementation of neoliberal policies have impacted social service provision in post-2008

recession Ontario, what this means for the way services are organized, and how workers experience these changes.

My interviews with frontline staff revealed that the participants shared a number of concerns. Two changes appeared to have the broadest impact on their work: mandatory accreditation and an increased emphasis on evidence-based practices. Both of these practices can be considered examples of managerialism brought on by the implementation of new public management at the provincial level. In this thesis, I trace the impact that managerialism has had on workplace relations, including the privileging of some masculinized aspects of supervision, as well as relations between workers and their immediate supervisors and management.

Further, I found that many of the issues stemming from managerialism, such as a competitive funding model, employment precarity, and increasing demands on workers' time, hindered workers' engagement in formal advocacy on behalf of their clients. These findings illustrate the ongoing intensification of managerialist practices that has reoriented frontline service provision away from the social justice values that inspired many social workers' commitment to human services work and toward the neoliberal priorities of efficiency and accountability.

Why this matters

I argue that the managerialist demands of NPM emphasize forms of accountability and measures of effectiveness that run counter to the goals and priorities of NPSS agencies and their frontline workers. In so doing, NPM reorients workers' priorities to focus on administrative tasks, such as a growing amount of paperwork, and accreditation standards

at the expense of time with clients, relationships with managers and coworkers, and time spent engaging with new developments in the field. This has had significant detrimental impacts on workers' mental wellbeing by increasing stress and anxiety, and causing feelings of "isolation," "heartbreak," and a sense of hopelessness that change is no longer possible. At the same time, the impact of NPM is mitigated by workers challenging the individualism inherent in current managerial models by emphasizing the importance of their relationships and solidarity with coworkers and service users as well as with management. These findings pose important questions about the sustainability of contemporary models of social service provision and indicate that efforts are needed to mitigate the impacts of austerity on frontline service providers.

Whereas most participants viewed their increasingly unsustainable workloads and the limits to formal advocacy as significant barriers to the effectiveness of their work, they also provided accounts of resistance, reflecting a careful negotiation of the tensions between their values, their desired outcomes for their work, and the limitations placed on their work by regulatory forces. Resistance took the form of solidarity among coworkers, strategic interactions with particularly difficult managers, and "emotional misbehaviour" in the context of a hyper-individualist and uncaring society. One interview participant suggested it would be beneficial to establish more communities of care in which teams of workers from diverse fields support one another, both practically as well as emotionally, in their work as a means of challenging this hyper-individualism and increasing the sustainability of their work.

Undertaking this research

My research path has as its starting point a desire to understand why social services, though rooted in social justice principles, are sometimes unhelpful and even alienating to the marginalized populations who need them. I wanted to understand how barriers to services for marginalized populations come to be and how they might be challenged. Drawing on my experience volunteering at an organization that provides mental health supports, emergency shelter, harm-reduction, and employment services to youth from diverse backgrounds, I had hoped to explore issues with accessing social services from the perspective of marginalized populations, specifically queer and trans*-identified youth. However, in conducting my preliminary research, I encountered literature addressing the many challenges faced by frontline service providers and perceived an opportunity to shift the entry point of my research to those who serve these and other vulnerable communities.

I also drew inspiration from a particular incident during my time as volunteer co-facilitator of a queer and trans* youth group. During a meeting to discuss plans for future programming, the social worker facilitating the volunteer programming stated that we would need to take time to establish concrete goals and measurable outcomes of our programming to be submitted for a funding application; this was something that, to my knowledge, we had not previously had to do. The programming we developed sought to provide queer and trans* youth with a safe space to socialize, feel empowered, and access various services; the successes of this programming include establishing strong connections with community, feeling supported, and meeting some basic needs such as access to food, clothing, or laundry facilities. Creating quantifiable metrics through which to evaluate our programming seemed both counterintuitive and not particularly useful.

Nevertheless, as the reporting of such outcomes was required to secure future funding, the social workers were required to engage in such administrative tasks at the expense of time to engage with volunteer program facilitators and with youth. This experience caused me to wonder how the workers felt about having to provide such outcome measures for their programming and whether this was congruent with their personal views and goals for their work.

An Outline of the Thesis

In this thesis, I begin by turning to existing scholarship to situate this study in debates regarding the role of the state in the provision of social services, the implementation of new public management, and the gendering processes of social policy and labour markets. Chapter two begins with a discussion of the methodology of Institutional Ethnography (IE), discusses why it was chosen, and how I went about conducting my research. To contextualize my research in the particular manifestations of neoliberal policy in Ontario, I examine key policies implemented over the last three decades that resulted in class-polarization, a weakened social safety net, and an NPSS struggling to cope with the increased demand with fewer resources.

I present the results of my case study over the course of chapters four, five, and six. In chapter four, I examine the incompatibility between the managerialist approach to service provision and the workers' goals of providing dynamic, client-centered services. This chapter demonstrates that the way managerialist practices, through accreditation and EBP, are imposed on social workers intensifies their development with clients, and creates a sense of isolation.

In chapter five, I explore the ways these external policy changes impact supervision and thereby create tensions between workers, their supervisors, and managers. At the same time, supervisors and managers find ways to subvert neoliberal policies to provide support and express appreciation for their workers, demonstrating that they do not wholeheartedly adopt managerialist practices. While tensions arise from changes in supervision, workers rely more heavily on their coworkers and team members for advice and support; this led to a strong appreciation for teamwork and strengthened bonds among workers. Participants clearly opposed the prioritization of administration in supervision and, by emphasizing the importance of their relationships over the neoliberal ideals of efficiency and productivity, they also challenged the increasingly individualistic nature of work processes.

In chapter six, I explore how workers politicize their work in the context of individualized and depoliticized service provision. I suggest that workers skilfully incorporate their political analysis and social justice values into their daily work with clients and with one another. Further, the challenges of working within the current political economic context create the conditions for workers to develop solidarity with one another as well as with management. Finally, I argue that by choosing to be emotionally invested in their work and workplace relationships, participants engage in forms of “emotional misbehaviour” that can be understood as a rejection of some of the neoliberal demands of the organization. In my conclusion I summarize my findings and arguments and point to areas of potential further research.

Literature Review

In exploring the ways in which the current political economic context of Ontario impacts the working conditions of non-profit social service providers, I engage with scholarship from a variety of disciplines, including social work, organizational management theory, labour studies, and feminist political economy. By bringing these disciplines together, it becomes clear that the NPSS in Ontario is being restructured through the implementation of NPM, a neoliberal practice that is reconstituting both government ministries and NPSS agencies as market actors by prioritizing efficiency, accountability, and performance measurements that provide information to funders but are not seen as relevant or useful by workers.

Previous studies have demonstrated, that NPM implementation has weakened the infrastructure required for service provision and has been detrimental to working conditions within the NPSS sector (Baines, 2014). In drawing from this interdisciplinary scholarship, I bring together debates on the changing roles of governments and non-profit social service organizations in the face of neoliberalization, discussions by feminist political economists on the gendered logic and processes that guide contemporary social policy, and labour scholarship on worker resistance.

My study contributes by exploring the impacts of two specific forms of managerialism – accreditation and EBP – on frontline workers and how these changes shape their workplace relations. Additionally, following feminist political economists and labour studies scholars, I argue that these are gendered processes that lead to the devaluation of the feminized, relational aspects of service provision in favour of masculinized, administrative aspects.

Finally, I show that the social justice ethos central to much of the work of NPSS agencies is devalued by complex regulations that limit workers' abilities to engage in formal advocacy; as a result, workers compensate by taking on other forms of resistance and micro-resistance. Whereas existing scholarship provides crucial insight into the social forces that influence and shape working conditions, my study focuses on how workers experience these changes to show how these forces impact their daily work.

Attributing New Public Management: Neoliberalism and Austerity

Critical scholars situated in various interdisciplinary fields attribute much of the reorganization of the NPSS in Ontario to the neoliberal restructuring that began in the 1980s (Fanelli & Thomas, 2011; Baines et al., 2014). Neoliberalization is a politically guided reconfiguration of state-economy relations characterized by an intensification of market rule with an emphasis on privatization, deregulation, marketization, decentralization, and fiscal austerity (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore, 2009; Little & Marks, 2010). Neoliberals favour a minimalist state with fewer state actors, increased market freedom, and reduced social spending, generally accomplished through cuts to social services; however, some scholars argue they have simply reconfigured social welfare systems in ways that responsibilize and surveil recipients through programs such as workfare (Little & Marks, 2010, 192), and offer individualized solutions such as skills development in an effort to produce independent, self-reliant citizens (Woolford & Curran, 2012).

Neoliberal austerity in Ontario, like in many jurisdictions in post-welfare states around the world, has largely been operationalized within public administration through the introduction of new public management (NPM) (Fanelli & Thomas, 2011, 151). NPM is

a model of public administration that consists of two streams: managerialism and modes of control. Managerialism emphasizes efficiency, a labour force disciplined to productivity, and professional management. Modes of control refer to emerging forms of “indirect control” through the use of technologies such as performance measurement, continuous quality improvement, contracts and markets, and an increased emphasis on audits and inspections (Evans, Richmond & Shields, 2005, 79). The implementation of NPM has reconfigured the relationship between governments and NPSS agencies from one of “partnership” to an increasingly hierarchical one in which governments contract out and offload the provision of services that had previously been provided by the state; despite this, governments retain control from a distance through narrowly prescribed funding and strict administrative accountability measures. In effect, NPM reduces government departments and public organizations funded by governments to business units by emphasizing value for money, efficiency, performance measurement, and financial accountability to taxpayers. Further NPM de-emphasizes the less quantifiable, longer-term service outcomes involved in improved quality of life for service users and for communities.

In line with this market-based logic, governments have shifted from long-term core funding to project-based, contract financing for social services (McIsaac, Park, & Toupin, 2013). This has resulted in fragmented services that are consistently threatened with the loss of funding and has created serious service gaps that further exacerbate the rise, and complexity, of needs (Baines, 2014). In contrast to core-funding models, project funding does not cover aspects of service provision not directly related to programming, such as operational and overhead costs. This change in funding model and unwillingness of

governments to maintain adequate funding levels compromises the infrastructure necessary for service provision and undermines the capacity of the NPSS to adequately respond to the ongoing crisis in the economy and communities (Baines, 2014).

Woolford and Curran (2012) suggest this restructuring is facilitated by a degree of complicity on the part of nonprofit agencies that have readily adapted to these new conditions by adopting business-like practices and collaborating with the for-profit sector. They argue that the survival of NPSS agencies depends on their ability to “embody and emulate its rules and procedures, and thus they attach themselves to new procedures designed to meet the disciplinary demands of the neoliberalizing bureaucratic field” (Woolford & Curran, 2012, 48). Further, as NPSS agencies increasingly adopt business-like management strategies, governments find new ways to incorporate market mechanisms - such as bidding for funding, social impact bonds (SIB), and social entrepreneurialism - into their funding regimes, based on the argument that competition will make services more efficient (PSFC, 2012).

With efficiency and increased productivity as key goals, managerialism encourages the standardization and fragmentation of work processes. In the context of the NPSS, Baines et al. (2014) argue that “NPM and managerialism [are] forms of work standardization in which work practices that do not contribute to efficiencies and elude easy quantification are eliminated from ‘best practices’” (437). These strategies also have the effect of deskilling service provision by shifting the focus away from creatively meeting clients’ needs and emphasizing instead the submission of risk assessments and other easily quantifiable performance measurements (Rice & Prince, 2013; Kosny & MacEachen, 2009)

– tasks easily transferred to temporary, part-time, and casual workers or even volunteers (Baines, 2006, 204).

The standardization of material work processes is complemented by a similar standardization of emotional engagement with the work (Baines, 2011). As Baines writes, performance and efficiency measures

regulate and standardize emotional labour, encouraging workers to follow carefully quantified and scripted processes from intake, through assessment, service provision, and termination, leaving little room for professional discretion, relationship building or value-saturated and open-ended processes of social equity and community empowerment. (143)

Thus, external policy and fiscal environments have become direct contributors to the stress and frustration workers experience at the changing nature of their work (Kosny & MacEachen, 2009, p. 373). Furthermore, this demonstrates the way in which the hyper-individualism of neoliberal ideology is institutionalized as it becomes more difficult to provide social services in a holistic approach that considers the need for social connection and community for people's wellbeing (Woolford & Curran, 2012).

NPM is Gendered

Following feminist political economists such as Phil Hubbard (2004), Susan Braedley (2012), and Donna Baines et al. (2012), I suggest that the changes brought on by neoliberal restructuring are gendered and have gendered implications for the workers in the field. Managerialism emphasizes the masculinized practices of administration and systematization, while devaluing the more relational aspects of service provision, which are constituted as feminized.

In making this claim, I employ a conceptualization of gender that draws on Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), who emphasize the relational nature of gender, viewing it not as particular roles or identities, but as “configurations of practices organized in relation to the structure of gender relations” (840); put another way, gender is not a pre-existing trait or identity, but rather the product of social actions that are understood according to the particular gender relations of the context in which these actions take place. In this discussion, masculinization will refer to the privileging of practices, institutions, and subjects most closely associated with contemporary masculinity - rational decision-making, objectivity, independence, individualism, professionalism, and expertise - while feminization refers to qualities, institutions, and subjects most closely related to social reproduction, care work, and relationships considered to be unnecessary, too costly, and lacking in scientific rigour (Braedley, 2012).

In analyzing questions of the gendered implications of neoliberal social policy, feminist political economists have argued that neoliberalism, much like the state and market, is an inherently masculinizing force (Hubbard, 2004). Specifically, it has had a masculinizing effect on social policy in that neoliberal discourses encourage shifts in public funding priorities from the domain of caregiving such as health care and social services to the more masculine domains of medicine and policing, calling for the surveillance and regulation of social service recipients (Braedley, 2012; Maki, 2011). The result is an attribution of individual responsibility, thus obfuscating broader societal issues and absolving society of the responsibility of caring for those in need. Instead, the solution to these issues is constructed in individualized and depoliticized ways (Brodie, 1997; Brown, 2016); as a result, there is a renewed emphasis on the domains of the household and family

as the sites of caregiving as social services are privatized and made less accessible (Brodie, 1997).

Similarly, feminist labour studies scholars have argued that labour markets are gendered as they are structured by the gendered practices, perceptions, and norms embedded in society (Cooke-Reynolds & Zukewich, 2004; Dykeman & Williams, 2014; Elson, 1999). In contrast to the standard employment relationship of the Keynesian era, which was characterized by full-time secure employment and generally occupied by men, employment relations in neoliberal times have increasingly taken the form of nonstandard employment relations such as part-time, contract, and flexible employment arrangements that tend to be insecure and poorly compensated (Lewchuck, et al., 2015). Due to the “ideal worker” norm, based on the male-breadwinner/female-caregiver model, such precarious employment was historically viewed as feminine employment (McDonald, Vosko & Campbell, 2009). Thus, labour markets reflect existing gender relations in society while they also reinforce these gendered relations. In particular, feminized labour - that which most closely resembles reproductive work traditionally done in the home - continues to be devalued and exploited as the state offloads social responsibilities onto the NPSS sector (Drevland, 2007).

As masculinized social policies reallocate resources away from care work, the labour and labour conditions of those engaged in feminized sectors continue to become more demanding and pose more risks while rates of compensation stagnate. For example, prevalent conceptions regarding what constitutes “women’s work” have created the perception that this work is harmless and, as a result, have rendered invisible many aspects of care work within occupational health and safety (OHS) research. In fact, Agnieszka

Kosny and Ellen MacEachen (2009) suggest that much of the work in the restructured social services is characterized by “constant demand, high stress and violence” (359). Additionally, increased pace, volume, and intensity of work, combined with stagnant wages and poor non-wage benefits, leave workers vulnerable to poor working conditions and a number of health hazards; these include stress and burnout (Baines, 2011), poor staff morale and negative changes in workplace culture (Charlesworth & Baines, 2015), and constant demand, violence, and even trauma (Kosny & MacEachen, 2009). This taken-for-granted nature of feminized care work obscures many of the hazards present in the day-to-day work of service providers, potentially compromising workers’ health and justifying the lack of coverage and compensation for issues such as chronic stress and burnout (Kosny & MacEachen, 2009).

Dominant gender relations inform how changes to work processes are experienced by individual workers. For example, scholars analyzing the experiences of men entering traditionally feminized work note that men retain their gender privilege even when entering a workforce traditionally dominated by women (Lupton, 2006). In fact, men often rise to administration and management positions in feminized sectors, “benefiting from assumed technical and leadership capacities” (Baines, et al., 2012, p. 364). Furthermore, the workers in past studies who identified as men reported a different experience of NPSS restructuring from that of women-identified participants. For example, the men generally appreciated the routinization and standardization of work processes, reporting that it helped keep them organized. Additionally, they had a tendency to attach less importance to the care and social justice aspects of their work, stating they regularly turned down overtime work in order to “successfully avoid burnout” and expressed little difficulty

separating their work from their private lives (Baines et al., 2014, p. 35). Thus, the literature suggests that gender and gendered practices play a significant role in shaping and regulating the work experiences of those in the NPSS.

NPM Restricts Advocacy

Scholarship on nonprofit advocacy explores questions regarding the relationship of the nonprofit sector to the government and the impact of legislation and regulation on service providers' advocacy. This is particularly relevant to studies on the NPSS because the social services sector is known to have a number of "value-added" benefits beyond service provision, such as community development and the promotion of civic participation and inclusion (Clutterbuck & Howarth, 2007; Eikenberry, 2009). However, the ability of service providers to fulfill these functions is, in many ways, tied to their ability to advocate with, and on behalf of, their clients. Additionally, much of the work undertaken in this sector is guided by social justice values and a desire to effect positive change. As discussed in chapter six, the success of such goals is hampered by the complex regulatory environment in which NPSS organizations operate as well as a need to adapt to the demands of the state and funders to secure future funding.

Based on the results of their survey of senior managers at NPSS agencies across Ontario, Lynn Eakin and Heather Graham (2009) found that few people understand fully the regulation that impacts the sector. Lawyers specializing in charity law are among those who *do* understand this "regulatory maze" (Eakin & Graham, 2009, p. 24), however few NPOs have the resources to retain such assistance (Eakin & Graham, 2009, 24). This creates barriers to organizations being able to access more funding and seriously impedes the

ability of charities and NPOs to respond robustly to changing circumstances and adapt to new demands (Eakin & Graham, 2009). One of the managers who participated in their study described how governments have “creat[ed] ‘firewalls’ between themselves and the knowledge developed in the sector in the form of advocacy restrictions and lobby legislation” (Eakin & Graham, 2009, p. 20).

As I will argue in later chapters, opportunities to engage in advocacy are limited and this impacts both the effectiveness of services as well as the wellbeing of those who provide them. Under the current *Income Tax Act*, charities may only use 10 percent of their resources for “political activity,” at the risk of being excluded from the tax benefits available to charities (DeSantis, 2010; Levasseur, 2012). While a number of scholars have argued that this has led to “advocacy chill” (DeSantis, 2010; Levasseur, 2012; Eikenberry, 2009), others have suggested that this environment merely changes the issues on which NPOs advocate and the tactics they use, but does not necessarily limit their engagement in advocacy (Chaves, Stephens and Galaskiewicz, 2004; Child and Grønbjerg, 2007; Mosley, 2011). However, this shift in the focus of advocacy hinders agencies’ ability to challenge the root causes of the social issues experienced by their clients by placing greater emphasis on issues of resources and regulation required to provide their services.

Resisting NPM

In light of the barriers to formal advocacy discussed above, sociology of work scholars and labour process theorists have been exploring other forms of worker resistance. Historically, the term “resistance” was used to refer to active, visible, and collective challenges to workplace concerns (Evans & Moore, 2015; Knights & McCabe,

2000), however more recent scholarship has also taken up the study of everyday acts by individual workers as acts of micro-resistance. Such acts need not be planned and often are not visible or directly related to the outcomes the workers seek, but they do represent the diverse ways workers oppose their working conditions and reflect how workers employ subtle methods to subvert these conditions in an attempt to influence change, maintain their autonomy, control the intensity of their workload, and seek out more opportunities for participation in decision-making processes (Hodson, 1995). Poststructuralist theorists suggest that such acts of micro-resistance are part of an “assemblage of practices that interact with restricting regimes of governance” (Strier & Bershtling, 2016, 114); in this context, resistance is no longer understood as a binary between overt opposition and implicit consent, but is conceptualized instead as a range of behaviours from subtle individual acts to more formal collective acts, all of which potentially contribute to a larger goal of demonstrating discontentment and influencing change.

In one of the first attempts to include individual acts in the concept, Randy Hodson (1995) defines worker resistance as “any individual or small group act intended to mitigate claims by management on workers or to advance workers’ claims against management” (80). This definition, however, clearly pits workers and management against one another, effectively excluding acts of resistance targeting broader political or economic contexts, such as government policies and austerity measures, against which workers and management could cooperate in order to oppose more effectively. Furthermore, such a definition may be less applicable to fields like the NPSS in which workers and managers often share similar values and goals, causing antagonistic employment relationships to be less common or less severe.

In a more recent study on the experiences of people of colour navigating racist institutional arrangements, Louwanda Evans and Wendy Leo Moore (2015) describe everyday micro-resistance as a constant and ongoing struggle between subordinate groups and those with the power to dominate, which may take the form of silent, everyday activities because the condition of subordination limits people's access to resources and their opportunities for collective resistance. As such, sometimes mundane and even contradictory acts, such as refusing to engage, false compliance, repudiating policies and regulations, sabotage, "playing dumb," absenteeism, and the creation of symbolic boundaries between workers and managers, can all be considered acts of resistance (Evans & Moore, 2015; Hodson, 1995; Vallas, 2003). As a further example, in their study specifically focused on the professional resistance of social workers, Roni Strier and Orit Bershtling (2016) observe "positive deviant practices" such as rule-bending, concealing information to help clients, spending more time with clients, and exaggerating clients' needs to increase budgetary support as forms of everyday resistance (113). Ultimately, these behaviours, whether carried out in subtle, indirect ways or in overt, orchestrated actions may serve as forms of empowerment, allow workers to gain more control over their work, and contribute to larger expressions of dissatisfaction in the workplace.

Scholars argue that it is imperative that acts of resistance be understood within the political, economic, and institutional contexts in which they take place as these forces inform the goals and strategies workers have access to and can employ (Van den Broek & Dundon, 2012). In particular, given the pervasiveness of de-collectivizing strategies (van den Broek & Dundon, 2012) used to discourage unionization and other forms of collective worker resistance, it is apparent that workers have fewer opportunities to pursue formal

resistance strategies. As such, individual behaviours have come to be more accessible to workers, especially those in precarious employment relations because engaging in less visible acts of resistance can protect workers from potential repercussions from their employer (Evans & Moore, 2015; Strier & Bershtling, 2016). Given this context, it is particularly important that contemporary research on labour conditions consider such acts as micro-resistance.

These examples of resistance and micro-resistance are not entirely unproblematic as they pose the risk of self-exploitation and, potentially, furthering neoliberal restructuring by enabling the continuation of service provision under conditions of constrained resources and growing employment precarity. Nevertheless, workers see these forms of resistance as challenging the uncaring, individualistic ideology of neoliberalism (Baines, 2014) while simultaneously allowing workers to retain autonomy over their work and express their dissatisfaction with the increasingly standardized nature of service provision. Furthermore, they demonstrate the resilience of service providers whose work is guided by a strong ethos of caring, solidarity with service users, and a commitment to social justice. Finally, they reflect the multifaceted, complex, and at times contradictory ways that workers engage in negotiating the conditions of their work (Knights and McCabe, 2000; Van der Broek and Dunden, 2012).

Chapter 2: Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Theoretical Framework

To analyze the changing nature and organization of the work of social service provision, I employ labour process theory (LPT). Harry Braverman (1974), building on Marx's writing of the labour process, developed LPT in the 1970s as a method to critically analyze the impact of scientific management on the nature of work in the twentieth century. He argued that scientific management expanded managerial control over the labour process by deskilling and homogenizing the majority of workers and concentrating knowledge and the conceptual elements of work in the hands of management (Smith, C. 2015); this theory illuminated the labour process as a key site of class struggle. His argument had a dramatic impact on labour studies as scholars took up his theory to further analyze how work processes become sites of struggle. Scholars have also taken up LPT to analyze how work processes reproduce and perpetuate social inequalities along the lines of class, race, and gender (Acker, 2006), and more recent scholarship has expanded LPT to include concepts such as "emotional labour" (Brook, 2013), "feelings rules" (Vincent, 2011), and resistance (Baines, 2010).

Previous studies in social work and social service provision have also employed labour process analysis to examine the shift in control that has resulted from neoliberal restructuring of the sector and the implementation of NPM (Baines, 2010, 2014; Cunningham, 2008; Harris, 1998). These studies have provided a nuanced analysis of a changing sector which has seen increased managerial control over day-to-day work processes as well as created opportunities for workers to resist oppressive practices and redefine service provision (Baines, 2010). As the NPSS is a highly gendered sector, it is

particularly important to consider the ways in which organizational practices and processes are themselves gendered and thus, reproduce and perpetuate gender disparities (Acker, 2006) - for example, considering how hiring and promotional opportunities are distributed according to presumed skill sets that may be rooted in gendered assumptions.

Considering the ways in which NPM has reorganized work processes to align more closely with the managerialist demands of neoliberalism and how this results in a shift in control away from workers and managers to external bodies like governments, funders, and accreditation bodies, labour process theory is an appropriate framework for this study. Further, social services overwhelmingly serve those who are subordinated and oppressed by regimes of gender, race, and class under capitalism. By aligning with their clients, NPSS workers are, indeed, positioned against capital interests. Labour process theory makes these connections, showing that NPM operates to coerce and discipline NPSS agencies and their workers in line with profit accumulation.

Methodology

Institutional ethnographers believe that people and events are *actually* tied together in ways that make sense of such abstractions as power, knowledge, capitalism, patriarchy, race, the economy, the state, policy, culture.

- Campbell and Gregor, 2002, 17, emphasis in original

Labour process theory provides a basis for this research by theorizing the connections between the work that people do and the ways in which organizational and managerial processes produce subordination and oppression in ways that support capital accumulation. But in order to operationalize this theory, I draw on institutional ethnography as my methodological approach. People's daily activities, including their paid

work, are organized and coordinated across multiple sites by a “complex of objectified social relations,” such as bureaucracy, administration, management, and professional organizations as well as dominant discourses and forms of knowledge – what Dorothy Smith refers to as “ruling relations” (Smith, 2004, 77). Drawing on institutional ethnography (IE) as my methodological framework, this study addresses how the discourses and practices of neoliberal austerity function as ruling relations that inform the work of frontline service providers.

Dorothy Smith established IE as an alternative to the masculine-centered sociology that excluded the perspectives of women and other marginalized groups; rooted in Marxist feminism, it is committed to developing an empirical understanding of how social relations operate. By beginning research from the perspectives of non-dominant groups, it is possible to elucidate the mechanisms through which ruling relations operate. To that end, my research begins with the everyday experiences of particular individuals - in this case frontline service providers. This reflects a fundamental belief of IE that all knowledge “has a standpoint from which some things are visible and some things are not” (Teghtsoonian, 2015, 4). By making visible sites of struggle and potential opportunities for change from the perspectives of the workers, IE enables the production of knowledge that may be useful for the purpose of activism; an intended outcome of this research, then, is to produce knowledge that could be useful for workers, unions, and other activists in challenging the imposition of NPM on such a vital and necessary sector.

Frontline professionals, such as teachers, nurses, and social workers, are often informants in IE because they make the linkages between clients and ruling discourses (Smith, 2006, 27). Scholars focusing on the changing nature of social work have also

employed IE as their primary methodology. For example, Shauna Janz (2014) provides an account in which institutional ethnographies revealed the way that new reporting practices reorganized and undermined service providers' efforts to provide support for their clients in community agencies in Canada. Further, Naomi Nichols (2014) employs IE to explore how funding and accountability practices, professional knowledge, and organizational hierarchies organize youth access to an emergency shelter in Ontario.

To begin in the actualities of people's lives, institutional ethnographers employ qualitative research methods; for my purposes, I chose to employ semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research methods can offer alternative perspectives to the norms, values, and perspectives of those who hold power (Taber, 2010). They enable participants to provide rich descriptions of their experiences as workers in a sector that is undergoing significant neoliberal restructuring. This provides an opportunity to understand social relations from perspectives that are often subjugated to more dominant or official accounts (Smith, 2004).

By prioritizing the experiential knowledge of workers, researchers are able to locate sites of disjuncture and use them as their sites of inquiry. As Katherine Teghtsoonian (2015) writes, "disjunctures arise in local settings when the knowledge and intentions of those living and working in them are subordinated to forms of knowledge that are oriented to processes and interests originating in extra-local settings" (4). In other words, a disjuncture occurs when the experiential knowledge of frontline service workers is disregarded in favour of the discursive knowledge derived from the current political economic climate. Therefore, participants are treated as "knowledge informants" (Smith, G. 1990, 641) who are "experts" of their own lives (Smith, D., 2001, 161) and whose vantage

points provide a valuable foundation for uncovering the specific machinations of social relations.

A critical insight of my study is that a disjuncture exists between the bureaucratization and institutionalization of the field and the priorities of frontline workers. Although both the workers I interviewed and the institutions of professionalization of the field, such as accreditation organizations, stated that their primary objective is to improve the experiences and outcomes of service users, what became apparent was that they approached this aim with dramatically different strategies. Accreditation bodies, for example, focus on organizational processes, such as governance, management, planning, and evaluation, as methods to improve services; from the perspectives of workers, however, these methods were largely disconnected from the service users they purported to help. By contrast, workers viewed creating context-specific programming based on the particular needs of their service users, as well as providing a range of training and development opportunities combined with ongoing supervision, as critical ways of improving services so that the needs of services users continued to be central to the process. Taking as my site of inquiry this disconnect in the respective service-improvement approaches of workers and the professionalizing institutions that enact the relations of ruling, my analysis focuses on the ways that an emphasis on accreditation and EBP has corrupted the participants' work and galvanized their resistance to such policies and processes.

Everyday activities in local settings are connected to ruling relations through the materiality of texts. Documents such as government or organizational policies and accreditation standards are the objectified forms of social relations. These easily replicable

and distributable textual technologies regulate, coordinate, and organize the work of service provision. Thus, an analysis of the way ruling relations influence this work also requires textual analysis to understand the way local activities are hooked into relations of ruling. The following section will detail the methods I used to conduct this research.

Data Collection and Analysis

Selecting the Research Site. I approached five social service agencies in two major urban areas in Ontario with a request to conduct research, in the form of interviews and document analysis, at their facilities. The agencies I contacted serve marginalized youth populations - i.e., queer and trans* youth, homeless youth, and youth in conflict with the law. Establishing contact with these agencies proved to be quite difficult as only three agencies responded to my initial request; of these three, only one expressed interest in participating in the study. Permission to conduct the study, along with a separate ethics approval, was obtained from the management team at the agency prior to obtaining ethics approval from Carleton University.

This agency's consent to take part in my research was given with the proviso that I would ensure complete anonymity. Management within this large multi-service agency placed significant importance on being completely unidentifiable within all written documents produced from the study. The difficulty I experienced in recruiting potential agencies may be reflective of the dictates of managerialism as they are required to remain competitive in order to acquire funding - that is, perceptions of the agency being associated with critical research may be harmful to an agency's reputation and their ability to secure future funding.

Recruitment. The study was open to all current and recent employees of the selected agency. My initial proposal was to conduct recruitment by going through the worker's union. The agency's management, however, stipulated that recruitment be conducted through the organizational hierarchy instead, suggesting that it would be unusual for a researcher to go through the union. Recruiting through management posed some concerns that this might deter potential participants, as workers might be suspicious of management and fear possible surveillance through the research; however, I felt I could sufficiently navigate this concern by also using the referral sampling technique to find additional participants.

Recruitment among the frontline staff began with the cooperation of the Director of Quality Assurance. This member of the senior management team distributed my recruitment letter via email to the directors of each of the four service departments so they could circulate it amongst workers under their supervision. The letter was then distributed to frontline staff three times at one-month intervals, asking potential participants to contact me directly to ensure their confidentiality. Though they had the option of contacting me either by phone or by email, all the participants chose to contact me via email. At the end of each interview, participants were asked if they would be comfortable connecting me to other potential participants and a number of people were found through referrals of this type.

Initially, I sought to interview between 15 and 20 frontline workers. Given that the field is staffed predominantly by women, I anticipated that the demographics of interviewees would be primarily middle-aged women with some degree of post-secondary

education. I further assumed that those with more access to post-secondary education would be most interested in participating in my research, however this proved not to be the case. In fact, participants were not representative of the demographics of the social service field; of the eight people interviewed, five identified as men, two identified as women, and one identified as non-binary. There was also a large age range among the participants.

I can speculate that two key reasons exist for why participants may not have reflected the general demographics of the field: first, research focusing on labour conditions likely draws individuals interested or involved in the labour movement, which in Ontario, has disproportionately represented the needs and concerns of men; second, as discussed in the literature review, chronic stress, being overworked, and having little discretionary time, to name just a few issues shaping social service workers' experiences, make it difficult for workers to find the time and energy to partake in research studies. Thus, the very conditions under study may be reflected in the difficulty I encountered in recruiting more participants.

In addition to interviewing frontline workers, I also hoped to interview approximately three to five managers to gain further insight into the funding model and the process of accessing funding, as well as the challenges they faced in their positions. Similar to my recruitment of frontline staff, I sought management participation by requesting that the Director of Quality Assurance distribute my recruitment letter with the specific request for managers to participate. Unfortunately, no managers responded to my recruitment efforts. As such, my analysis is limited to the information provided by the eight frontline workers who agreed to be interviewed. This is a limitation to my project because I would

have been interested to learn what changes the work of managers has undergone with the implementation of NPM; however, interviews with management were not required for my analysis.

Data Collection. The interviews were conducted in a public location chosen by participants. In the majority of cases, participants opted to meet at coffee shops or restaurants, though some felt comfortable being interviewed at their workplace. Written consent was obtained from each participant prior to their interview using the informed consent form Appendix A. Participation was completely anonymous, meaning that all names and identifiable references were removed during the transcription process. Interviews ranged from 55 to 120 minutes and followed a semi-structured interview guide comprised of open-ended questions related to participants' work experience, the challenges they faced, how they navigate those challenges on a daily basis, both positive and negative changes they had experienced in their work, and their ideas for solutions to problems in the industry; for a list of the questions posed in my interviews, please see Appendix B. Participants were also asked to provide personal explanations concerning how and why they became service providers, the influence this had on their work, changes they would like to see, and advice they would give to someone entering, or considering entering, the NPSS field. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.

In addition to interviews, I also undertook a review of publicly available documents such as the agency's annual reports published on their website, accessibility policies, information regarding the assessment tools used, client complaint forms, and the workers' collective agreement. External documents, including government policies that govern the

services provided by the agency such as the Child and Youth Mental Health framework, were considered for their role in structuring and guiding the work of service providers. Accreditation standards for the sector were obtained by request from the Canadian Centre for Accreditation (CCA). These were important for understanding the types of standards agencies have to meet as well as how accreditation reviews are conducted.

The agency's Executive Director also invited me to join a tour of three of their 20 facilities. This tour was designed primarily for members of the Board of Directors as well as representatives from sponsoring businesses and corporations. The tour included a brief description of the history of the agency and provided some insight into the perspectives of the agency's management. For example, the reasons the agency decided to create a charitable foundation - additional funds for new programming, facilities renovations, and operating costs - were explained in further depth than was present in the agency's annual report. The tour was also an opportunity to learn more about the agency's goals and priorities going forward. The information gleaned from the tour was documented in field notes that were also included in my document analysis.

Analysis. In IE the analysis generally starts during the data collection phase. As such, my analysis began while I was conducting the interviews in the form of an ongoing, iterative process that informed future interviews and the collection of textual data. I used the information gathered from the interviews and literature review to guide my search for organizational and public policy documents that impacted workers' experiences. These documents were read for both their intended purpose as well as for the less obvious implications that had been highlighted throughout my interviews and in the literature; this

discrepancy between intention and impact can be thought to define the disjuncture that forms the focus of this research project. Taken together, these documents and my interviews allowed me to trace how ruling relations are reorganizing the work of frontline service providers which, in turn, creates spaces for discussion concerning the impact that such changes have on the capacity of service providers to meet the needs of members of marginalized communities.

Transcripts of my interviews were coded using a thematic coding method which involved interrogating the meaning behind participants' statements and assigning codes to these meanings. This process generated several dozen codes, which were then categorized into broader themes through a process of identifying similarities and contrasts, repetition, analogies, and absences among the different interviews (Bryman, 2011). This process of categorization revealed the extent to which gender dynamics permeate much of what participants had to say about their experiences within the NPSS field; eventually, through repeated distillations of the coding, three coherent themes emerged which then came to form the core of my analysis: managerialism, workplace relations, and advocacy chill and resistance.

Conclusion

Together, Institutional ethnography and labour process theory are an appropriate grounding for this project, as both begin from the standpoint of people's everyday experiences to determine, through empirical methods, how ruling relations work to organize and regulate them. Taking this approach allowed me to start from the standpoint of frontline service providers and investigate the ways that their work is governed by

forces both internal and external to their organization, such as funding and accreditation requirements, a shift to evidence-based practice, and organizational sick leave policies. By conducting my research in this way I am able to connect the daily activities of frontline service providers to the political economic context in which they conduct their work to demonstrate the ways in which ruling relations prevent them from enacting social justice practices that could challenge the status quo to ensure further opportunities for capital accumulation. The following chapter will establish the context in which this particular study took place.

Chapter 3: The Political Economy of New Public Management - Neoliberalism's hostile takeover of the NPSS in Ontario

My study explores how neoliberal discourses and policies function as ruling relations, impacting the daily work and well being of frontline service providers. To situate my case study within the broader political economic context of Ontario, this chapter traces the implementation of neoliberal policies by successive provincial governments over the last three decades. I outline some of the particularly drastic policies implemented by Mike Harris' Conservatives and the subsequent Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty. Despite ideological differences and ostensibly different party platforms, successive provincial governments since the 1990s have employed the rhetoric of crisis management to develop policies and legislation that increased class polarization, weakened social security measures, and increased dependence on the nonprofit sector for the provision of social services. As a result, the nonprofit social service sector (NPSS), which is partially dependent on government funding and regulation for service provision, is experiencing struggles on two fronts. First, there is increased demand due to growing socio-economic disparities. Second, changes in government funding models have diminished the capacity of the sector to meet the rise in demand and complexity of need (Baines et al., 2014). These challenges directly impact not only the quality of service provision, but also the structure and organization of service provision.

This chapter begins with a discussion of how a recession in the early 1990s led to the election of a conservative government that used the rhetoric of fiscal responsibility to depoliticize need and reframe the provision of critical social services in terms of the managerialist priorities of cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and measurable outcomes. The

crisis narrative was solidified with the 2008-2010 recession, enabling the further entrenchment of neoliberal policies by presenting the privatization of public goods, openness to business and foreign investment, and the marketization of social services as solutions to the trying economic circumstances. These changes placed the responsibility for economic growth with the citizenry, while at the same time diminishing their access to resources and supports. In the final section of the chapter, I consider how these changes have resulted in the restructuring of the NPSS according to the managerial logic of NPM. This reorientation of the NPSS along the lines of business logic impacts social service providing organizations and those working for them profoundly as the social justice mandates of most NPSS agencies are compromised significantly if not eliminated completely.

Leading up to the 2008-2010 recession

During the 1990s the federal government retreated from its financial responsibilities for social programs by reducing transfer payments to the provinces. This was known as the “cap on CAP,” alluding to the Canada Assistance Plan which was designed to match a provinces’ expenditure on social assistance. In 1996, transfer payments were further reduced through the amalgamation of CAP and the Established Programs Transfer (EPT) into a single block payment method, the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). Combining these transfer payments was a form of offloading responsibility from federal to provincial governments by placing the responsibility of allocating funding for health care, postsecondary education, and welfare with the provinces (Kirby and Keon, 2004; Maki, 2011).

These changes made by the federal government worsened the impact of the recession in Ontario in the early 1990s and helped pave the way for the election of the Conservative government led by Mike Harris. Under the slogan of “Common Sense,” Harris implemented a number of drastic measures, including making deep and sweeping funding cuts to social service agencies and government ministries, and to offloading a host of provincial responsibilities to other levels of government (Maxwell, 2009). For example, municipalities took on greater shares of the cost of emergency services (e.g., police, firefighters, and ambulance), public health programs, child care, and Ontario Works, and they took on full responsibility of funding and administration of social housing (Government of Ontario, 1999, 1.6-1.7). The changes implemented by the Harris government “radically reoriented the province along the lines of neoliberalism” (Fanelli and Thomas, 2011, 149).

Further, the Harris government took advantage of the neoliberal turn at the federal level by intensifying the neoliberalization of welfare at the provincial level through introducing the *Ontario Works Act* (OWA 1997), which imposed an expectation of work-for-welfare on social assistance recipients. The OWA brought in more stringent eligibility criteria, new anti-fraud measures, and increased surveillance practices while reducing actual welfare rates for recipients (Maki, 2011). These changes reduced the issues of poverty and unemployment to deficiencies in the individual who “failed to be good market citizens” (Maki, 2011, 47). By focusing the discussions of welfare reform on the individual rather than on the unjust social conditions, the government further entrenched the view that welfare is unaffordable, “wasteful and susceptible to abuse” (Maxwell, 2009, 10), and that only “good” poor people are deserving of assistance (Maki, 2011). This same type of

moralizing language was also used to paint critical social services as too expensive and as being incompatible with the broader fiscal goals of the province, reframing NPSS in economic terms of value for money while failing to appreciate its broader social and political contributions. This “depoliticization of human need” (Evans, Richmond and Shields, 2005, 79) in the name of fiscal responsibility thus created opportunity for the imposition of NPM.

At the same time, an eight-year freeze of the minimum wage caused many of the working poor to fall further into debt and poverty, household debt doubled between 1990-2010 (Peters, 2014, 54); furthermore, Peter Clutterbuck and Rob Howarth (2007) report that, during the near-decade of stagnant wages, inflation rose by 23 percent. Even though the liberal government, elected in 2003, lifted the wage freeze and began implementing incremental annual increases, wages had been stagnant for so long that the increases were insufficient to fill the gap between the minimum wage and the low-income cut off (Maxwell, 2009). Thus, a combination of poor social assistance programs, inadequate wages, and sweeping cuts to social services left poor and working class people in Ontario particularly vulnerable at the onset of the economic downturn in 2008.

Responding to the 2008-2010 recession

The challenges facing Ontarians were compounded by the 2008 recession, providing the ideal conditions for governments to extol the benefits of governing according to market practices and rationale. This was reflected in both the federal and provincial governments’ response to the recession. In line with the budget orthodoxy of the Harper regime the initial response to the crisis was to “announce that their anti-recession plan was to keep

the budget balanced” (Evans and Albo, 2011, 16). To achieve this, the government planned to freeze public sector wages, restrict bargaining rights and limit opportunities to have pay equity complaints adjudicated (Evans and Albo, 2011). At the same time, the federal government also revealed a stimulus package that included new infrastructure projects, broad income tax cuts designed to encourage consumption and tax credits for home and cottage renovations (*The Star*, January 27, 2009). Thus, rather than investing in programs and services that would alleviate the impact of the economic downturn, the federal government placed the onus for reviving the economy on individual citizens in two ways: by limiting their rights as workers and by implying that they had a responsibility to consume in order to ensure economic growth.

The Ontario provincial government also responded to the recession with the discourse of “shared sacrifice” (Brown, 2016). Public sector wages were frozen, bargaining rights limited and commissions were established to seek out greater “efficiencies” in public services (Ontario Budget, 2011). While citizens were made to sacrifice through such measures, the provincial government gave billions of dollars in tax relief to corporations, sold off public assets, and reduced regulations to create a more “business friendly” environment (Fanelli and Thomas, 2011: Ontario Budget 2010). This was part of its Open Ontario Plan, which sought to attract new business and foreign investment to the province. Under this plan, Ontarians were told there would be seven years of austerity, with the budgets being balanced in 2017-2018. This meant the public sector wage freeze, constraints on labour rights, and the privatization of public services and public assets would be ongoing, rather than merely temporary solutions to an economic downturn.

Thus, the initial response to the recession of both the federal and Ontario provincial governments was to cut program costs, constrain wages, restrict the bargaining power of labour and to focus instead on encouraging consumption, seeking foreign investment, and offering both corporate and private tax cuts (Evans & Albo, 2011; Ruckert, Culdbick & Labonte, 2015). By placing the interests of business and the market over those of the citizenry, the state diminished its role as the purveyor of public goods, instead fashioning itself as a market player. In doing so, aspects of society that were previously considered to defy market logic by virtue of their role to alleviate the effects of maldistribution inherent to capitalist societies, also became subject to market logic.

Ontario's NPSS

While the marketization of social services has been ongoing for many years, the rhetoric of crisis and shared sacrifice that intensified during the recession enabled governments to push for new market mechanisms that would justify their further offloading of services. In 2011, The Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services, also known as the Drummond Report, was established to find efficiencies in the provision of social services. Interestingly, the Commission was explicitly not allowed to investigate reforms regarding revenue generation and "specifically not permitted to review the tax system" (PSFC, 2012, 21). This indicates that the goal of the commission was to find ways to justify reduced government investment in services rather than to simply identify efficiencies and "best practices." Ultimately, once inflation and population growth are taken into account, the commission recommended a 2.5 percent cut in real program spending – deeper than the cuts implemented by the Harris government (PSFC, 2012). In fact, the

report called for government spending on social services to be limited to 0.5 percent annual increases (Drummond, 2012, 514). However, simply keeping pace with inflation and population growth would require an annual spending increase of 3.1 percent (PSFC, 2012, 44). The report also recommended increasing dependence on NPSS organizations to deliver regulated services and encouraged the government to establish pilot projects for the use of social impact bonds (SIBs) (Drummond, 2012, 41). As a result, the 2012 Ontario budget called for expanding partnerships with the nonprofit sector, increasing public-private partnerships, and “identifying programs that the private sector could deliver more efficiently” (Ontario Budget, 2012, 95) - all of which have historically been methods used by governments to offload responsibility for social services and, as a result, further pulling the realm of human need into market relations.

Yet, years of funding cuts and accelerated client demand left the NPSS with a significantly reduced capacity to respond to the growing crisis (Baines, 2014). More than half of NPSS agencies in Ontario reported not just an increase in need, but an increase in the complexity of need, as well as having to shift their focus to crisis management to the detriment of their preventative programming (Social Planning Network of Ontario [SPNO], 2010); eighty percent of these agencies attributed these changes primarily, or in part, to the economic recession. Agencies also reported that they were supporting more people with the same amount of staff, increasing volunteer hours, expanding program staff time and hours, and fundraising more. Despite these efforts, however, 48 percent of NPSS agencies stated they were unable to meet the demand for services (SPNO, 2010). Compounding the issue of stagnant government funding was a reduction in funding from

corporations as they also sought to conserve capital due to a decline in revenues caused by the recession (SPNO, 2010).

To facilitate the process of further integrating social services into the market, in 2012 the Ontario government established the Office of Social Enterprise within the Ministry of Economic Development. The development of market mechanisms, such as social impact bonds (SIBs) and social enterprise, for funding NPOs allows governments to further offload the costs associated with social issues. A number of Ontario government commissions and community agency reports – for example, the Commission on the Reform of Ontario’s Public Services, 2012; Government of Ontario, 2013; Ontario Nonprofit Network, 2015 - have indicated that these business-like models of revenue generation are the future of NPSS sector-funding models, suggesting that this spurs competition and innovation in the sector (Eikenberry, 2009; Joy & Shields, 2013). This push for revenue-generating non-profits falls perfectly in line with the rhetoric of minimalist government that enables governments to legitimize their reduction of social spending. Moreover, it serves the added benefit of diminishing NPSS’ capacity to critique government policies and advocate on behalf of their constituencies (Aronson & Smith, 2010; Eikenberry, 2009; Rice & Prince, 2013). This cannot be divorced from the crisis narrative that has dominated since the 2008 economic recession in which “society has to pay through spending cuts and individual and community self-reliance to ensure future economic and employment growth” (Joy & Shields, 2013, 43). This is yet another way in which the Ontario government is able to invoke the language of shared sacrifice to legitimize the implementation of austerity measures.

The Ontario government defines social enterprise as “an organization that uses business strategies to maximize its social or environmental impact” and “a business with two goals: achieve social, or environmental outcomes, and maximize revenue” (Government of Ontario, 2013, 5, 7). By this definition, the key criteria for a social enterprise are economic participation in the market and the provision of a social good of some kind, leaving wide-open the possibility for for-profit actors to rebrand themselves accordingly (Brouard, McMurry & Vieta, 2015, 67). Leading consumers to believe that they are contributing to service provision through consumption would limit the revenue-generation potential of NPSS agencies because their funds would be further divided between programming and running the business and they would likely receive even less in direct donations (Eikenberry, 2009, 6). In fact, studies have found that social enterprises tend to be more complicated and less lucrative than anticipated; in one study, 71 percent of NPOs that attempted to establish earned-income ventures reported that they were unprofitable (Eikenberry, 2009, 7). Thus, this further distancing in the relationship between governments and the NPSS could have severe impacts on social service provision and contribute further to the deterioration of working conditions in the NPSS sector.

In a similar vein to social enterprise, SIBs “are a financial product used to encourage private, philanthropic, and/or public investors to provide upfront capital to support project-oriented service delivery by public, private, or nonprofit actors, or a combination of these actors” (Joy & Shields, 2013, 40). A key issue with the SIB model is that it forces social service agencies to simplify their service priorities to make them easily comprehensible and appealing to investors. This creates the risk that the most marginalized, those with the most complex needs, will be left behind, as single-intervention models are likely to receive

the bulk of the investment. In their assessment of the SIB model, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (2014) writes, “despite the glossy image as a progressive innovation, the real purpose of SIBs is to extract profit from human suffering” (13). When NPOs must focus on being economically competitive they have less time and energy to provide public goods such as social services and advocacy. Further, the diversion of focus also limits the democratic contribution of NPSS agencies as marketization reduces their ability to create spaces for community building and civic engagement (Eikenberry, 2009, 7). By arguing that social service agencies should be more entrepreneurial and “self-sufficient,” governments obfuscate their own divestment and offloading of social responsibility, exacerbating existing tensions with the NPSS.

Child and Youth Mental Health Sector

In the area of child and youth mental health, Ontario governments have undertaken sector-specific restructuring measures. There have been both positive and negative changes. The government first established the Ministry of Child and Youth Services (MCYS) in 2004. Prior to the existence of this ministry child and youth mental health services were provided under the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA, 1985), but were not mandatory, and thus were only provided to the level of available resources (MCYS, 2006). The establishment of the MCYS led to the creation of a mental health strategy specific to the needs of children and youth along with resources dedicated to this cause.

Additionally, much of this restructuring has sought to “streamline” services and to ensure that “core” services are available in all communities across the province (MCYS, 2012); to that end, lead agencies were established for the purpose of providing these core

services and collaborating effectively with other community agencies. Woolford and Curran (2012) are critical of government claims to supporting community building in this way, arguing that this is simply a means of reframing the offloading of services (52).

This restructuring was accompanied by a reorganization of the funding model as well as the creation of a “legislative and regulatory framework to enshrine the accountability of lead community-based mental health agencies” (MCYS, 2012, 3). In other words, the government of Ontario established the Ministry of Child and Youth Services not to provide services, but as a regulatory and monitoring body responsible for providing funding and for “licensing, enforcement and compliance” as outlined in the CFSA (MCYS, 2013, 42). In this way, the government offloaded not just the delivery of services but also the responsibility and accountability for these services to lead agencies. All the while, the government retained its power within the sector through increasing regulatory mechanisms and more stringent funding requirements. Accreditation processes and a growing demand for evidence-based service provision, to be discussed in the following chapter, are two of the means through which the government achieves this increased control and regulation.

As is often the case, increased power, autonomy, or resources for the agencies that take on this responsibility have not accompanied the devolution of service provision. This makes service provision more challenging as workers have to do the work of meeting the regulatory requirements set by governments and their discretion over the services they provide has been reduced. This thesis shows how this increases workloads, often by creating redundancies or new work processes that workers consider to be unnecessary, and takes up precious time workers believe would be more productively spent with their

clients. It also takes an emotional toll on workers as their work becomes further removed from their social justice values and increasingly prioritizes the administrative and managerial practices of organizational governance.

Conclusion

Neoliberalization is a multifaceted process that permeates the production of all public policy with many far-reaching impacts. In Ontario, neoliberal reforms were implemented in distinct ways at all levels of government. These reforms include corporate and personal tax cuts and reductions in business regulations that have benefitted the few while leaving poor, working class, and marginalized populations particularly vulnerable in the face of economic challenges. At the same time the NPSS has experienced significant restructuring as governments download oversight of service provision to lead agencies under the guise of “community building.” Despite offloading responsibility, reports such as the Drummond Report indicate that the province intends to invest even less in the NPSS in the future, instead encouraging service providers to become more entrepreneurial by taking on revenue-generating projects. All too often, the burden of NPSS agencies struggling to cope with increasing demands and lack of resources falls on the shoulders of workers who become overworked and experience stress and burnout. Additionally, the implementation of more stringent regulatory requirements reorients their work by increasing their administrative burden, creating redundancies, and limiting the amount of time they have to engage directly with service users. The next chapter will explore how these regulatory measures become manifest and the impact this has on the participants of this study.

Chapter 4: Missing the Mark: Quantitative Answers to Qualitative Questions

If the number one thing is that relationship [between workers and service users], then we need to have people on the frontlines who are happy to be there, who want to be there.

– Participant 3

In this chapter, accreditation and evidence-based practices are considered as two key managerialist processes used to achieve the goals of ruling relations to reduce state responsibility for service provision and to open up social services as sites of capital accumulation. According to the discourse of NPM, these practices are necessary to ensure greater accountability and quality assurance and improvement. The workers, however, experienced these forms of managerialism as a reconfiguration of their work to focus on performance measurements, risk assessments, and measurable outcomes as forms of accountability; these forms of accountability elide the perspectives of service users, instead serving the needs of governments, funders, and accrediting bodies. Participants in this study described this as a key challenge of their work arguing that it is time consuming, creates redundancies in the paperwork, devalues the importance of relationships in service provision, and limits the space for workers to provide creative input in program development; the demands these managerialist practices placed on workers' time and emotional labour created a sense of isolation, making their work less sustainable. Thus, there is a clear contradiction between the methods used to achieve managerialist goals and the priorities of workers.

This chapter begins with a look at the origins and history of accreditation processes, how they are being used today, and how the workers in this study experience them; workers indicated that accreditation limited their discretion and control over their work,

obscured aspects of their experiences, and created barriers to developing strong relationships with service users. The following section considers current social work literature on evidence-based practice, how it is being encouraged in Ontario, and what participants thought of its growing significance; participants indicated that EBPs facilitate the commodification of social services, contribute to a shift towards “fixing” clients, and limits their opportunities for creative input and professional development.

Accreditation: A History of Creeping NPM

Accreditation processes began in the US in the 1930s as a voluntary and professional initiative to improve the working conditions of surgeons. Over the course of the twentieth century, accreditation processes were developed for other areas of health care as well as education and social services (Cerqueira, 2006). With the implementation of NPM, however, the focus of accreditation became accountability and quality assurance or improvement rather than on maintaining or improving the standards of working conditions. This trend can also be seen in the accreditation of mental health service providers in Ontario. For example, the Canadian Centre for Accreditation (CCA, 2016), the body that accredits most mental health service organizations in Ontario, describes its mission as “assur[ing] quality and continuous improvement in community-based health and social services” and includes accountability as one of its primary values on its website.

Whereas these are laudable goals, research indicates that the methods and metrics used to appraise quality and ensure accountability are not conducive to assessing service quality from the client’s perspective. Rather, most performance evaluations focus on accountability in terms of technical criteria and state-defined targets which focus on

efficiency and measurable outcomes (Taylor & Liadsky, 2016). That is to say, it is accountability to funders, government ministries, and accrediting bodies rather than accountability to clients and communities served. As Taylor and Liadsky (2016) note, such evaluations are more focused on “keeping the system running smoothly” than they are on the “immediate contribution of their programs to the lives of specific, localized groups of users” (7).

In fact, studies conducted to measure the impact and effectiveness of accreditation on improving outcomes and client satisfaction in a variety of fields appear to be inconclusive with respect to whether it helps achieve its stated goals or not (Cerqueira, 2006; Nicklin, 2009; Pomey et al., 2010; Wagner, McDonald & Castle, 2012; Lee, 2014). Some benefits have the potential to translate into improvements in service quality for clients as well as to benefit workers by helping them manage their workloads and improving working conditions; however, studies also suggest that such benefits decline the longer an organization has been accredited (Pomey, et al., 2010; Wagner, McDonald & Castle, 2012). Some of the most commonly documented benefits include placing limits on the caseloads workers are permitted to take on; enhancing quality improvement and safety procedures; increasing public confidence in organizations; increasing awareness of best practices; and, if done in an inclusive and participatory manner, improving communication and professional cultural development, increasing teamwork, and worker morale (Cerqueira, 2006; Lee, 2014; Paccioni, Sicotte & Champagne, 2007).

However, other studies also indicate that accreditation may not be as effective as it is assumed to be and, in fact, poses a number of challenges for organizations, such as added costs, increased workloads, increased documentation requirements which can cause

workers to prioritize paperwork over interacting with clients, and using a single set of standards to assess organizations and programs in different environments (Cerqueira, 2006; Nicklin, 2009; Lee, 2014). One study also reported the negative impact on morale caused by an increased focus on paperwork, files and procedures that take away from focusing on the client (Lee, 2014).

A study on evaluation processes of social services in Ontario found that there are a number of reasons that make the results of such evaluations less relevant and, ultimately, lead to them being underused. These include a focus on accountability over learning; a mismatch between the evaluation approach and expectations; a mismatch between investment and expectations; inadequate communication among those who set accreditation standards, managers, and frontline workers; and inattention to certain kinds of evaluation questions (Taylor & Liadsky, 2016, 11). The majority of the literature agrees that current forms of accreditation that are government- or funder-driven are not as effective as they could be because they are rarely done in an inclusive, participatory manner that is meaningful to frontline practitioners.

Woolford and Curran (2012) locate the push for mandatory accreditation within the neoliberal “bureaucratic field” in which funding is framed as needing to be “won” on a “free and open market” (49). NPSS agencies are attuned to the conditions of the field because their survival depends on their ability to adapt to its changing demands (Woolford & Curran, 2012, 48). In this context, accreditation serves as a means for NPSS agencies to demonstrate their effectiveness and accountability to funders and taxpayers to secure future funding. For this reason, many argue that accreditation is about providing funders with “deliverables” on their “investment” rather than improving quality and being

accountable to service users (Woolford & Curran, 2012; Taylor & Liadsky, 2016). Such evaluation practices marketize relationships between funders and nonprofit agencies by reducing their collaboration to one of ensuring value for money (Woolford & Curran, 2012). The impact of this marketization is a shift in focus from what benefits clients to what delivers the most concrete, quantifiable results in the most efficient manner. Accreditation in this sense provides accountability upwards, to funders and government ministries, but not downward to those for whom services are intended.

Accreditation processes in Ontario have historically been undertaken voluntarily by social service agencies as a means of professionalizing the industry. The Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO) began accrediting agencies in 1988 with the stated goals of "setting the standards of excellence," improving organizational governance, and providing quality assurance. In the early 2000s, CMHO bylaws were changed, making it mandatory for all member organizations to become accredited (CMHO, 2016). At this time, the agency under study began its own accreditation process (Annual Report, 2002). Accreditation is achieved through a "tailored" program, consisting of a set of common organizational standards as well as program-specific standards that organizations must implement and adhere to as proof of a high standard of service. This process takes place every four years and involves the implementation of specific methods of providing services, from intake assessments to performance measurements. Organizational standards cover governance, management, planning and evaluation, quality improvement and risk management. In this sense, standards are heavily focused on organizational structure and governance, as opposed to being more directly concerned with service provision.

How Accreditation Works to Shape Work

In this research project, accreditation processes are considered as a manifestation of the relations of ruling, resulting in an emphasis on standards and processes over professional discretion and control, the erasure of aspects of the workers' knowledge and experience, and the deprioritization of workers' relationships with service users and with each other. According to the workers interviewed, accreditation was problematic because it increased their workloads, detracted from their ability to provide services, and diminished their access to support from co-workers and the community. They felt that accreditation standards often functioned as obstacles to achieving agency goals rather than improving services quality or effectiveness.

In line with the logic of NPM, accreditation standards emphasize professional management, efficiency, and worker productivity over worker discretion and control over their work (Bradley, Engelbrecht and Höjer, 2010). Participants in this study indicated these standards resulted in increased workloads by establishing statistical outcome measures that failed to account for all aspects of their work and by creating additional and frequently redundant paperwork; one participant explained his frustration in the following way:

accreditation standards are actually a bit of a nightmare. They increase the expectations as far as stats go. So right now the ministry wants...well they thought, in their own little bubble over there, that it was realistic for... half [our] time to be spent meeting with clients face-to-face. That's not including drive time...so the other fifty percent, in their bubble, would be plenty of time to drive, for paperwork, phone calls, and all the admin stuff that goes with it. (Participant 4)

These expectations, established by the accreditation process, reoriented participants' work from a focus on providing ongoing, client-centered support to an emphasis on fulfilling

program statistics and “produc[ing] positive outcomes” (Participant 4). The focus on statistical outcome measures was also accompanied by an increase in paperwork, much of which was felt by participants to be redundant, and which workers described as distracting from “the actual focus of the work” (Participant 4). This worker provided the following example with regard to the intake process:

So they keep adding ridiculous paperwork, different assessments they want, different outcome measures. So right now we are at a point where we get our clients to sign consent forms, just like this. Then, in our clinical notes, we have to document that they signed the consent form. So it's a constant duplication of the work. Nothing can be done in one or two steps, everything seems to be four or five steps.
(Participant 4)

Another worker described the problem as a lack of integrating new practices with existing ones:

So our program is accredited by the government and there is a certain baseline standard we have to meet. So often, if something new needs to be done, it's not 'how do we integrate that into our existing stuff?' It's 'let's add a new piece of paper.'
(Participant 3)

In addition to increased workloads and extra paperwork, accreditation standards were seen to be excessive and at times even counterproductive. Whereas some standards were considered to be useful, there were many that workers considered to be irrelevant, causing them to think of most standards as trivial and tedious. One interviewee provided the following two examples of organizational safety standards that frustrated workers because they seemed unnecessary:

So their doors could stay open before. So they just had these door jammers and could actually have open doors and could go in and out of their offices as needed and could go to the kitchen, but then the ministry said, 'no, all the doors have to be closed at all times.' So then staff have to constantly go through their keys and stuff, and sometimes things get busy, like a phone rings, and just again all those little

things add up over time. Just another example: fire extinguisher training. Before you could just watch a video on fire extinguisher training. Now you have to go to this physical training where you have to practice and you have to do it every year. Just stuff like that. (Participant 4)

Thus, accreditation processes intended to ensure quality improvement and accountability are rendered less effective because they are seen to be a form of micro-management that infringe on their ability to do their job. Lee (2014) also documented this effect in her study and notes the irony that “the sheer number of standards could potentially hinder quality by emphasizing many requirements instead of focused quality improvement” (210).

Another participant suggested that accreditation standards failed to achieve the stated ends of quality improvement and accountability to clients because of its emphasis on professional management and organizational process over the worker’s experiential knowledge. He explained his perspective this way:

In trying to be professional, they do accreditation standards. This is fascinating to me. Accreditation is about, first the standards are designed to be easy for accreditors to go through and check off whether or not you’ve met the standards; it’s more process oriented. If I wanted better standards, I would talk to a worker about the kind of training they have and how they enact the therapy they do. Accreditors don’t have time to read through case notes. They have time to look at goals and policies, which to me is often the least helpful thing for clients. (Participant 8)

Here the participant is critical of the existing accreditation methods and standards, as well as their very reason for existing - professionalization. For him, formalizing and professionalizing service provision creates increasing distance between the service provider, located as the “expert,” and the service user, constructed as needing to be “managed” and “fixed.” This was the opposite of what he wanted for his work.

This top-down approach of accreditation also caused aspects of the workers' experiences to be obscured or erased. For example, contact with clients that does not involve an in-person meeting is considered a "collateral contact" and therefore does not count towards the requisite amount of time for client meetings. However, workers described collateral contacts as being far more complicated than a mere phone call to arrange an appointment. For workers, such phone conversations presented another opportunity to develop and strengthen their professional relationships with clients, which they felt were key to the success of their services. Additionally, workers relayed stories of calling a client only to find they were experiencing a significant mental health episode and required support, causing them to provide the same type of support they would ordinarily provide in-person, but over the phone instead. Similarly, because the organization caters to clients around the city, staff sometimes have to drive significant distances to meet their clients, however present standards do not adequately account for driving time. The fact that these aspects of their work become obscured in this performance measurement model was frustrating to participants and reflected the fact that people setting these standards were not people engaged in frontline service provision on a day-to-day basis.

This disconnect between those who set accreditation standards and frontline workers has resulted in such standards obscuring aspects of service providers' work, such as collateral contacts, that they deem important to providing effective support to their clients; these aspects of their work do not disappear in the process, however, but rather simply go undocumented in their time logs. Those individuals who are responsible for establishing such standards are effectively defining on behalf of frontline service providers what aspects of their work are "productive" and therefore also which are not worth

counting. In doing so, the work becomes reoriented in ways that are more suited to meeting these standards - that is, workers' focus must now be on face-to-face interactions at the expense of the follow-ups and check-ins over the phone that they have identified as critical to the work of sustaining relationships. This also erases the behind-the-scenes work of service provision, which one worker described as

the stuff that you can't really quantify. It's the three different calls to confirm this appointment. It's the looking up resources for the client. It's spending time just thinking it through. You have twelve clients, what's happening? Trying to stay organized, keeping on top of your own. (Participant 3)

These new work processes of submitting more paperwork and more closely monitoring their activities placed limitations on workers' opportunities to interact and bond with coworkers, reducing their access to support from their team members. This point is particularly salient because some of the participants described their work as "isolating," "painful" and, at times, "heartbreaking." The need for community and support was beautifully described by one participant:

the less I'm isolated in my work and the more I can join with my colleagues in a diverse way, like shelter workers, counselors, frontline people. The more you can join in a healthy way, the better. There is something sustaining about a community of people trying to help. All those things really bolster me. (Participant 8)

In addition to being important for the wellbeing of the workers, he also considered this kind of collaboration to be crucial to the sustainability of the work, however the managerialist focus on efficiency and completing assessments and meeting statistics deprioritizes both the workers' relationships with their clients and with their coworkers. By placing the emphasis on the quantitative over the qualitative, managerialist practices separate workers from one another and fragment tasks and services in ways that are more

conducive to accommodating heavy caseloads; however, these changes have significant impacts on workers, for whom emotional support and community-building are critical to the effectiveness and sustainability of their work.

Evidence-based Practice: What counts as Evidence?

In conjunction with accreditation processes, NPM has led to increased demand for the use of evidence-based practice (EBP). The push for EBP in social work began in the US and UK in the 1990s and has only recently started in Canada. The demand for this paradigm shift stems from its adoption in other professional fields, particularly in medicine, which has played a large role in informing contemporary social work practice (Plath, 2013). The medical model serves the purposes of NPM because it privileges scientific knowledge and encourages the use of “evidence” in service provision, thereby devaluing the ongoing and relational nature of the work. Further, it allows for a focus on “cure” which serves as a way of constituting clients as personally responsible for their oppression by suggesting the problem is with the individual, rather than unjust social conditions. This has the added benefit of making services more efficient and measurable. However, there is great debate among social work scholars and practitioners about what EBP is and how it can and should be applied to the field.

The primary issue has to do with what constitutes evidence and what counts as knowledge. Those in favour of EBP argue that evidence should be largely quantitative, empirically based and collected through randomized control trials or systematic reviews. In contrast, there is a large community of qualitatively informed social work researchers and practitioners who argue that such methods are not applicable because they cannot

account for the social and political context in which social work takes place, rendering the interventions derived from such studies less effective or negated due to specific contextual conditions (Dore, 2006; Gray, Plath & Webb, 2009). In addition to the lack of a clear definition of evidence, there is also some controversy about whether it is a “decision-making process,” or an end of implementing particular interventions (Plath, 2013, 26). Finally, there is an ongoing debate within social work regarding whether evidence or relationships are the foundation for effective practice (Gray, Joy, Plath & Webb, 2013).

Furthermore, there are a number of different types of EBP, such as positivist EBP, pragmatic EBP, postmodern EBP and political EBP, all of which use different types of evidence, accumulated through a variety of methodologies, to inform their respective practices. The social work literature also refers to a number of social work practices that are often conflated with EBP, but which are actually distinct forms of practice. These include: “practice-based evidence” (Gray, Plath & Webb, 2009), “knowledge-aware practice” (Dore, 2006), “evidence-supported interventions” (Wike, et al., 2014), and “information-based practice” (Joy, Plath & Webb, 2013). All of these forms of intervention are based on some combination of research and clinical experience, however, this ambiguity that surrounds these discrepant formulations of EBP means that when funders, whether public or private, require organizations to adopt EBP, there is very little understanding of what this means or how it is to be done. However, from a funder’s perspective, EBP is an attractive concept because the translation of research into practice is assumed to be a straightforward process that will lead to better outcomes and, therefore, a better return on their investment.

Indeed, in their push to find efficiencies and save money on social services, the provincial government decided to implement the recommendation of the Drummond Report (2012) to make the use of EBP in services a requirement for agencies to which they contract out service provision. In addition, a number of mechanisms – namely, the Centre of Excellence for Evidence-Based Decision Making Support (Centre), the Program Review, Renewal and Transformation (PRRT) and the Transfer Payment Administration Modernization (TPAM) - have been established to enforce this shift to evidence-based practice by directly influencing the reorganization of service provision (Ontario Budget, 2015). Rather than provide opportunities for savings, the development of these enforcement mechanisms entails a transfer of resources away from service provision towards regulation. Prioritizing funds in this way is a key part of the implementation of NPM, which seeks to exert more managerial control through the standardization of work processes rather than encouraging various dynamic approaches that workers may feel are more appropriate.

How EBP Standardizes Work Practices

The goal of ruling relations to further opportunities for capital accumulation are facilitated by the emphasis on EBP as it enables social services to be pulled further into market relations through the commodification of therapeutic interventions. Additionally, EBP encourages a shift from a holistic approach to service provision that includes accounting for and challenging socially unjust conditions to focusing primarily on “fixing” individual clients, thereby reinforcing the individualistic and responsabilizing discourses of neoliberalism. For workers, however, the emphasis on EBP was experienced as a

devaluation of the knowledge they brought to their practice and limited their opportunities for creative input into programming and for professional development. The participants' concerns with EBP, as expressed in their interviews, were closely aligned with the issues documented by critical social work scholarship. They expressed concerns about issues such as the limited amount of available research funding, the types of research that received funding, the organizations that conduct research, interventions that are evaluated, research methodology, how research findings are disseminated, and what "social issues" are deemed worthy of research.

Participants expressed concerns about the growing shift towards EBP, arguing that it is a way of commodifying service provision by creating therapeutic models that are more commercially viable and marketing them to NPSS agencies. One worker explained his critique of the concept in this way:

As soon as people are able to prove that they have evidence, it is commercially and economically more viable for them to sell. I think it's good to have proof, but I'm skeptical on what proof is used. Often proof has more to do with what institutions have money to research. So some therapies, some interventions, get really heavily researched and they are the proof... there is not much scrutiny put on the methodology behind the research. (Participant 8)

The commodification of service models reflects the expansion of neoliberal market logic into the NPSS as profitability becomes a key criterion for the development and use of particular therapeutic interventions.

Further, this participant experienced the implementation of therapeutic models as the devaluing of the experience and knowledge that frontline workers bring to their practice. For him, no single model could account for the diversity or complexity of the needs of service users. Rather, he felt that workers who were familiar with the service

users were best positioned to develop and implement programming that would attend to such needs. This interviewee went on to say,

I think they miss the point of letting people who do direct services create services based on their clients feedback. Years and years ago there was more space for creativity. Like you might try a program and it may or may not work. Now agencies tend to go for models. (Participant 8)

The move to EBP also limits workers' opportunities for creative input and program development, which as Evans, Richmond and Shield (2005), point out by limiting the need for professional "discretion and creative interventions, workers with lesser credentials can now assume that work, thereby reducing labour costs" (89). Labour process theorists have noted that work in late-capitalism is characterized by a skills polarization (Smith, 2015, 228); in this case, service provision is becoming increasingly evidence-based and professionalized on the one hand, while at the same time deskilling those engaged in service provision in ways that are based on forms of knowledge not rooted in positivist science.

Some participants reported that there were fewer opportunities to provide creative input because of a shift to what they referred to as a mentality of wanting to "fix" service users, rather than provide the social justice based, community-oriented services they preferred to deliver. As one interviewee noted,

I have heard many of my colleagues say that we were increasingly shifting towards a medical model of service delivery. Like 'how do we fix this person?' rather than look at community health or drop-in services or connection. It seemed to be a little more rigid and structured. (Participant 1)

Indeed, proponents of EBP argue that social workers should only use interventions that are "proven to work," but this notion assumes that there is a given outcome that

reflects success and that this can be achieved by using the same method in similar situations, which reflects an ignorance of differences between people and differences in context (Gray, Plath & Webb, 2009). Furthermore, such an approach to service provision reflects the individualism inherent in the neoliberal logic that frames the ideal outputs of services as clients who are entirely self-reliant and capable of navigating their struggles independently of the state and service providers (Woolford & Curran, 2012). This individualistic logic creates the conditions in which service providers have to quantitatively demonstrate positive outcomes in the form of “successful clients” to justify the program’s existence.

According to workers, the “fixing” mentality was particularly evident in the increasing use of various standardized assessments, such as intake forms and risk assessments. As one participant put it,

I think there is always something new coming along and there is coined language around it. I don’t think there is much coined language around saying ‘what would you like services for? What do you think would be most impactful for you?’ I don’t know why we don’t ask everybody that. (Participant 8)

Most felt that such assessments were primarily designed to protect NPSS agencies from liability rather than effectively improving their ability to provide services. This “dispositional shift” (Woolford & Curran, 2012, 56) from attending to clients’ immediate needs to risk management is a commonly cited challenge for frontline service providers who feel their time would be better spent in other ways.

Workers also experienced the shift to EBP as a shift away from investing in worker development to investing in the implementation of fashionable new therapeutic models that satisfied the buzzword criteria of government ministries. Interviewees suggested that

training in such practices was as much about following trends, particularly trends set by hospitals and other medical or clinical models, as it was about improving their practice and service provision. This idea is exemplified in this statement from a participant:

We all had a training on a new therapy not long ago...Their motivation isn't always purely investing in what the staff want, necessarily. But it's like 'what is the hot new evidence-based therapy that we want you folks to know about and we'll do a baseline training.' But it's not ongoing...There's no targeted supervision or follow-up based on that training. So you sit for four days and, yeah, you retain some stuff, but unless you are directly practising it right away and getting that ongoing feedback, it's not gonna stick (Participant 3).

In general, workers were dismayed at the lack of investment in their development and training. They recognized that funding constraints posed a clear obstacle to this, but highlighted the contradiction in having stated goals of improving service quality included in funding contracts and accreditation standards, but not being provided with the resources to invest in the workers responsible for that service delivery. A worker who has been with the agency for several decades commented that he

probably came through the golden age of [the agency] training... Now it's, with budget constraints, trainings tend to be more the agency is moving in a certain direction and they will bring someone in...as opposed to exploring and trying new things. (Participant 8)

From this worker's perspective, learning opportunities were increasingly limited and there was less time and encouragement for workers to engage directly with new literature and explore new practices individually.

Workers' critique of EBP should not be interpreted as a rejection of research or an anti-scientific attitude. Indeed, workers expressed a strong desire to stay up-to-date on the social work research and intervention strategies and indicated that they had benefited from integrating research findings and theoretical perspectives into their practice. In fact, a

number of workers explained that seeking out new information and research in the field was a key coping mechanism when they experienced either practical or emotional challenges in their work.

Thus, the lack of ongoing training and supervision combined with limited time to engage with new research in the field of social work may also be an impediment to worker wellbeing. Several workers mentioned specific professional development opportunities, such as concurrent disorder training, compassion fatigue, and harm reduction trainings, as trainings they would have benefited from both to manage the situations they encountered as well as to manage their personal mental health. However, funding constraints meant that training opportunities were limited and as a result interventions based on scientific methods such as randomized control trials are privileged over training based on other forms of knowledge. Thus, EBP is not about how practitioners locate and use evidence or how they integrate research and practice or even how they make judgments and decisions, but rather it involves the “establishment of regulatory orientations, formal networks, organizational reviews, and models of implementation” (Gray, Plath & Webb, 2009, 2). EBP, in this sense, is designed to further processes of formalization and professionalization of social work that seek to standardize and control human services.

Conclusion

Accreditation and evidence-based practice are operating as managerialist practices that support the implementation of neoliberalism in the NPSS sector, as part of a shift in control of the sector from workers and managers to governments, funders, and accrediting bodies. This shift serves the neoliberal goal of offloading social responsibility - and the risk

and accountability that entails - to NPSS agencies, individual workers, and individual clients, while enabling the state to maintain control of service providers through a strict contractual funding regime. Accountability for individual workers is enforced through these contracts' statistical outcome measures that workers are expected to achieve as requirements to maintain funding as well as through new forms of documentation that consume workers time and take away from the relational aspects of the work. This has the effect of standardizing work practices to ensure greater "efficiency" at the expense of social justice oriented, community-building work. Participants perceived the emphasis on quantitative, rather than qualitative, measures of performance as a challenge to the effectiveness of their work and a contradiction to the notion that managerialism benefits clients. Accountability for clients is enforced through expectations that they will respond in a particular way to a particular EBP intervention.

The implications of these findings for workers are significant when considering the toll such restructuring takes on their mental health and the sustainability of their work. For example, it seems that worker wellbeing is being compromised by limiting their time to collaborate and develop connections with coworkers or other workers in the field as well as reducing the amount of discretionary time available to engage with new research in the field. This was described as having an "isolating" effect on workers, which is compounded by the fact that access to a common coping mechanism, engaging with new research, is being limited due to less discretionary time. This is reflective of the inherently individualistic nature of neoliberalism that fragments work processes and separates workers with the goal of increasing efficiency. Additionally, workers described emotional reactions, such as stress, anxiety, and frustration, as being directly related to having to

abide by accreditation standards to which they have little to no input and which they often feel are irrelevant. These emotional challenges, combined with increasing workloads, represent a significant challenge to the sustainability of service provision.

Chapter 5: Management and Supervision: Finding Masculine Privilege at Every Turn

I get the pressures are not coming from their desires to not pay us more. They're not hardcore neoliberals. They would love for their staff to get paid more, but yeah, you face clear pressures with funding being reduced.

— Participant 3

Neoliberalism's masculinizing effect on public policy has shifted public funding priorities away from feminized care work. As the previous chapter demonstrated, there has been a shift in control from workers and agencies to governments, funders, and accrediting bodies, which impacts the working conditions and workplace relations of those employed in the NPSS. This not only reorients the work of service providers, but also their relationships to one another, to their clients, and to management. In this chapter, I consider the interactions between, on the one hand, managers and supervisors, and on the other, frontline workers, to understand how managerialism affects the relationships between these groups. Rosemary Vito (2015) notes that there has been a shift in "the focus of supervision to the agency's administrative needs rather than to the needs of clients and workers" (Vito, 2015, 154), resulting in a change in the nature of the supervisory relationship. Many participants in this study also identified the agency's funding model as an added work stressor, noting the direct impacts on program funding but also the indirect impacts that delays in hiring needed staff have on the wellbeing of workers.

Gender is another significant actor in these relationship dynamics, manifesting itself in ways that reveal the masculinist logic of NPM and of neoliberalism itself. The privileging of masculinized practices has impacted supervision, creating divisions and tensions between workers and their supervisors and managers. At the same time, however, new spaces for managers and supervisors to subvert NPM's neoliberal dictates have also been

created. In the final section of this chapter, I analyze how a reorganization of workplace relations can foster a sense of solidarity among coworkers as well as between workers and supervisors. This will allude to a more detailed discussion in a subsequent chapter pertaining to the acts of resistance that both workers and supervisors engage in as oppositional to NPM generally and managerialism specifically.

Masculine Privilege in a Feminized Sector

The NPSS has been socially and politically constructed as feminized due to its contributions to the work of social reproduction, its roots in women's charitable community work, and the reliance on women as a cheap(er) labour force (Drevland, 2007). For this reason, the field has historically been staffed predominately by women. While this continues to be the case, with approximately 85 percent of NPSS workers identifying as women (Zizy, 2011), scholars suggest that part of the restructuring of the sector is an influx of men into the field (Baines, Charlesworth & Cunningham, 2014, p. 28). A contribution of this study is that the majority of its participants, five of the eight workers, identified as men. This is interesting because there has been relatively little written about the experiences of men in the field.

The men who took part in this study identified themselves in terms that are more typically associated with feminized people and feminized labour, rather than with terms more closely associated with hegemonic masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). For example, they tended to use emotive words to describe themselves, such as "sensitive," "empathetic," and "non-judgemental," and had strongly held social justice values. These men entered the field for personal or political reasons, or both. The concerns they

expressed closely mirrored the experiences of workers described in the literature, including struggling with the focus on performance outcomes, feeling that relationship development was being deprioritized, and being constrained in their practice by the medicalization of their services.

With the adoption of managerialist logic and practices, NPSS organizations are reorienting their priorities to align with the practices and priorities of the fields of business and the market, that can be considered as masculinized due to their tight associations and promotion of hegemonic masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). While this reorientation of their work poses challenges and concerns for the men in the field, the literature suggests that they nevertheless experience some benefits (Lupton, 2006; Baines et al., 2012). Indeed some of the men interviewed for this study acknowledged the likelihood that they experienced masculine privilege and that this privilege benefited them in their workplace interactions. One of the men, in describing his experience of feeling heard when providing critical feedback to supervisors or managers said,

I come to the table with a lot of privilege. You know, straight, white, cis dude. You know, people just listen to me for that reason, but I have always felt supported in voicing critical thoughts within this agency. (Participant 3)

Thus, the experience of masculine embodiment may inform men's workplace interactions by privileging their ideas, creating more space for them to feel heard, and enabling them to feel supported. This is an important finding, in light of a finding discussed below that is more consistent with the literature, that workers generally feel less supported.

Support for men may also be demonstrated in the form of gratitude; another male worker commented, "It's not a thankless job...you get a lot of 'thank-yous.' You get a lot of

gratitude” (Participant 4). In previous studies, feminist scholars have documented the expectation that women have an unlimited capacity to care, which contributes to the devaluation of feminized labour (Charlesworth, 2010; Kosny & MacEachen, 2009). Given this previous finding, this man’s statement about receiving “a lot of gratitude” as a man engaged in feminized work is particularly interesting. While this study is too small to determine whether this experience of gratitude is more common for men in the field than it is for others, the subject of how gratitude is experienced in the field would be an interesting line of inquiry to pursue in future research.

Job Strain under NPM

Job strain is a form of psychosocial stress characterized by high job demand and low control at work (Choi et al., 2014). As the work of NPSS agency staff is increasingly oriented towards meeting the growing demands of governments and accrediting bodies, workers become more susceptible to job strain by virtue of their growing workloads with additional administrative duties, increasingly invasive supervision from managers, a growing divergence between workers’ responsibilities and the social justice values of the agency, and increasingly opaque funding strategies which are geared toward accomplishing the same work with fewer resources. Thus, the changing dynamics between governments and NPSS agencies have directly impacted the relationships that managers and supervisors have with their frontline staff, resulting in employment conditions that contribute to job strain for everyone employed in the NPSS.

The prioritization of the masculinized activities of administration and evaluation has also influenced changes in the nature of supervision for frontline workers. Vito (2015)

describes supervision as a cornerstone of social work practice, providing workers with support and education while also fulfilling the administrative duties required in any organization. Supportive supervision in the form of social and emotional support helps “build and maintain workers’ motivation and resilience” (Bradly, Engelbrecht & Höjer, 2010, 776), which is particularly important in social work where the work is often labour intensive, complex, and emotionally demanding. Educational supervision is demonstrated by such activities as task assistance, teaching, training, staff development, and mentoring, which allow workers to reflect on their practice, help them develop creative solutions to complex issues, and respond in more thoughtful ways with clients (Vito, 2015). Supportive and educational supervision have been linked to job satisfaction and retention, reduced burnout, and increased workers’ effectiveness and organizational commitments (Vito, 2015). Despite the importance and benefits of supportive and educational supervision, Vito (2015) writes “many social workers report receiving inadequate and primarily administrative supervision” (154).

This claim is supported by research conducted by Greta Bradly et al. (2010) who argue that since the 1980s, social work scholarship has placed particular emphasis on the administrative role of supervision. They suggest that this is connected to the implementation of NPM, which emphasizes performance measurement, administrative accountability, and efficiency over the relational aspects of the work that often lie at the heart of social workers’ reasons for entering the field. Concerns about resource allocation and making decisions in accordance with regulations and legislation take primacy as indicators of accountable and responsible service provision. As the supervisors’ time and focus are shifted towards these administrative tasks, there is less time for clinical

discussion, feedback, reflection, and learning (Vito, 2015).

The workers I interviewed indicated that resource constraints resulting from years of underfunding and the change in funding model have had negative impacts on their supervision by shifting the focus from work practices to performance outcomes and resource allocation. One participant noted that “a lot of supervision tends to be administrative, around paperwork and reports, but less around actual clinical work that you are doing” (Participant 6). This undermined workers’ confidence in their work and their sense of contribution to the agency. This participant went on to say that “the culture when you have a big agency can be more about finances and project management, and the clinical side of it, feels culturally not as important” (Participant 6). Additionally, workers described how having overworked managers made them feel less supported in day-to-day decision-making; one worker related the following experience:

Often I would send questions forward that never got answers. Then I got in the habit of making decisions independently. Which was okay 85 percent of the time, but every once in a while I would make decisions that weren’t okay and then I would experience repercussions. One of my colleagues said they would give us just enough rope to hang ourselves. (Participant 1)

These workers’ experiences with supervision caused them to feel less supported in their work and contributed to increased levels of anxiety and stress. Furthermore, these changes caused workers to feel that there was an increasing disconnect between management and frontline staff as this no longer reflected the workers’ interpretation of the organization’s values. The shift in supervisory focus thus created tensions between workers and managers as workers felt that the critical aspects of supervision - support and education - were being overlooked. The managerialist focus on finances and running organizations more like businesses has changed the role of supervisor away from the critical tasks of

support and education to the business of resource management and promoting productivity and efficiency.

Governments have also used funding contracts as tools through which they can indirectly inform the parameters of employment relationships within the NPSS, for example through a directive which stated that any salary increases that were negotiated after 2014 were to be “absorbed by employers within available funding” (Ontario Budget, 2014, 153). This contributes to the already precarious employment relationships that are becoming increasingly common within the highly feminized sector. Although workers at this agency described their compensation packages as “the gold standard” of the sector, they felt that such government directives could make maintaining their compensation packages more difficult in the future. Indeed, some workers have already experienced the effects that this directive has had on the agency. One worker said he was unsure if he would still have a job the following year because his program was under constant threat of being defunded. This issue was directly related to the wage freeze: “so we had a 3% wage increase kick in this year. So the ministry wasn’t prepared to pay the extra 3%. They wanted to keep the program running on the same budget as it always has” (Participant 4). While the wage freeze is a government policy, over which the agency has no control, the challenges experienced by the agency around compensation do contribute to more strained relations between workers and managers.

This strain was particularly felt in regards to scheduling because the agency would wait as long as possible, sometimes several months, to fill vacant positions in order to save on compensation costs. This increased the workloads of the team members who took on the responsibilities of those positions. Additionally, the lack of transparency regarding

when the position would be filled created a sense of resentment as workers struggled to manage multiple roles without adequate warning of how long they would have to sustain their increased workloads. In one instance, where several members of a team were on leave or had quit, a worker approached her manager to discuss her workload. The response she received was to spend less time engaging with service users. From her perspective, however, this was an unreasonable expectation: “All of these conversations that are part of relationship building, ‘stop doing that.’ I don’t think that’s very realistic. How do I tell people, ‘please don’t talk to me’” (Participant 1). Furthermore, she argued this solution ran counter to the social justice values of the agency, which are supposed to center the needs and experiences of service users, by devaluing the importance of the relationship between service users and frontline staff.

However, limiting relationship and community building in favour of efficiency and productivity falls perfectly in line with the logic of NPM that expects NPSS agencies and their workers to continuously take on more work, with fewer resources. By eroding the relational aspects of their work, the neoliberal model undermines the participatory culture, sense of community responsibility, and voluntary spirit that are integral to the NPSS (Finley and Esposito, 2012). As managers have become increasingly overworked because of the administrative demands of funding applications, documentation, and reporting to various ministries and bodies, they are further removed from these ideals. The strain of being overworked and the separation from the ideals of the sector may cause managers to make demands of the frontline staff that appear to be disconnected from the organization’s values.

The biggest issue workers had with the shift in supervision related to a recently

implemented program designed to reduce employee sick time. The worker who first raised the issue described how the use of sick leave was directly connected to the increase in stress workers experienced. She said,

there [are] documents that look at sick leave over the last five years. It's going up across the board and that speaks to the employees' wellbeing, how stressed out they are, those are organizational products. People in helping professions generally have good intentions for their work and if people are calling in sick on a regular basis, something is wrong. So the organizations' response to that was to put in this attendance support program (Participant 1).

According to this worker, a sick leave report was circulated among the different departments within the agency indicating that usage of sick time had increased by more than 10 percent in seven different services or programs across the agency. Managers of these services and programs were asked to "look for ways to either build on a positive trend or develop plans to deal with negative trends" (Sick leave report, 2010-11). To that end, the attendance support program was implemented as an agency-wide policy to give workers who take a lot of sick leave additional support from their supervisors to find ways to reduce their sick time. As the employee quoted above points out, however, increasing use of sick leave is an "organizational product," likely related to the emotionally demanding nature of their work and a stressful work environment. In failing to acknowledge these organizational and environmental factors, this program individualizes these challenges, focusing on the struggling workers, rather than their working conditions. As a result, employees have not been experiencing this program as supportive, instead describing it as "punishing," "intrusive," and bad for morale.

One worker described the general impression of, and response to, the program as follows:

You meet with one of the directors, you have these meetings and you talk about the sick days you took. That's a pretty intrusive process. They call it supportive, but really it's questioning someone about their sick time. It's not supportive. Nobody's comfortable with that. It has had sort of an impact on morale and stuff. It creates certain bitterness and resentment against the agency. You know, having to tell your supervisor you took time off because your kids were sick and then your supervisor saying, 'isn't there somebody else who can watch your kids?' That's not supportive and it's not good for morale. And again, that's your time. So instead of meeting with your clients, you're stuck in this meeting with your director, talking about your sick time. (Participant 4)

The emotional response of bitterness and resentment is evidence of the increasing tension in vertical relations at this agency and conveys how the workers experience the program as a "money saving tool" rather than as supportive. Furthermore, the quote above clearly demonstrates the breadth of the impact such a policy has by impacting not just the worker, but also impacting their clients by consuming workers' limited time as well as limiting their ability to fulfill caregiving duties in other areas of their lives. Consistent with recent research in the field (Charlesworth & Baines, 2015) several participants expressed that achieving a healthy work life balance was a challenge for them, suggesting they might have to change careers in the future to be more present for their families. Rather than being helpful or supportive, this policy functions as yet another barrier for workers to meet the many competing demands in their lives. This is an example of how neoliberal social policy privatizes care work by limiting its accessibility in the public sphere through cuts to social services and by placing the burden of care on families, while providing those in helping professions with little support in balancing paid care work with external caregiving duties.

Another worker explained that once a worker had been on the program for a significant period of time, approximately three years, they would be subject to a "non-disciplinary termination." Such terminations were framed by the agency as the worker

being “unable to support [the agency] in meeting [its] organizational demands” (Participant 1). This worker, however, resented the euphemistic phrasing of “non-disciplinary termination” saying, “basically, you can get fired” (Participant 1).

The difference between management’s intent for the program as a supportive program and the workers’ experiences of it as punitive represented a key tension between workers and management. This can be understood as a “dialogical contestation” (Brook, 2013, 44). Brook (2013) describes this as a contest between management’s objectified meanings and employees collectively forged subjective meanings in which terms such as “supportive,” “non-disciplinary,” and “organizational demands” become “sites of dispute over their meaning, purpose and implication” (Brook, 2013, 44). While managers and workers in the NPSS have historically been considered to be “on the same side” with the government as a type of “ghost employer” (Courtney and Hickey, 2016), the increasing managerialist shift from which such attendance management programs stem creates contestations and increases tensions between management and workers. Policies such as the attendance support program are perfectly aligned with managerialist practices that seek to reduce costs, such as costs associated with employees’ use of collectively bargained sick leave. As the quote at the beginning of this chapter states, however, workers do not feel that such policies necessarily reflect the intentions of the agency’s management; rather, this is reflective of a paradigm oriented towards optimizing productivity with little regard for the needs or wellbeing of the workers.

Positive Workplace Relations

I think at my very first staff meeting I saw [supervisor's name] cry. So I knew it was ok to cry there. I never felt like my emotional responses within the context of staff were not ok. At my own staff meeting, I was quite emotional and we were quite emotional as a group and that was totally fine. (Participant 1)

While the implementation of the attendance support program and increasing pressure on managers to save costs have clearly had a negative impact on vertical relations, workers also had positive things to say. Most notably, contrary to the experiences of workers in other studies (e.g., Baines, 2011; Kosny & MacEachen, 2009), participants in this study did not feel the need to constantly regulate their emotions. Multiple workers identified that staff meetings were often emotionally open and supportive spaces where both management and workers were able to express emotions or issues they were facing. Working in an emotionally supportive environment was an important factor to make them feel validated and cared for at work. Additionally, workers experienced the annual staff recognition ceremony as a very positive and fun experience that made them feel appreciated. One participant commented,

they do stuff like staff recognition, which is actually a lot of fun... So supervision is a big part (of feeling supported). [Agency name] has a certain culture of people too, that are your coworkers; teams do tend to be close people that bond together. So there is a lot of support there. (Participant 4)

There is somewhat of a contradiction between management adopting the punitive neoliberal cost-saving policies discussed in the previous section while also creating supportive spaces and connections with frontline staff; this may be a reflection of the tensions managers and supervisors experience in their position as the buffer between workers and clients on the one hand and governments and funders on the other (Aronson

& Smith, 2010). As governments gain more indirect control over service provision through stringent funding contracts, managers may find themselves in conflicting positions of having to cater to funder demands and wanting to maintain positive working conditions for their staff. By providing these emotionally supportive spaces, management alleviates some of the stress and frustration produced by the changing nature of their work, particularly the standardization of their work that has diminished other opportunities for emotional expression and relationship development. Additionally, by demonstrating their own vulnerability in these meetings, these managers forged connections with their staff that allowed for the development of reciprocal compassion and solidarity.

Supervisors and lower level managers demonstrated solidarity with workers by not always complying with the demands of punitive organizational policies. One worker, for example, said, “I should totally be on the [attendance support] program, but I have a good relationship with my coordinator and my coordinator is supportive” (Participant 3). Thus, those workers who had strong relationships with their supervisors experienced significantly less stress about these policies than those who had more strained supervisory relationships.

In describing how interactions with managers improved her negative experience with scheduling, another worker provided an excellent example of the importance of supervisory relationships. This worker detailed her experience with scheduling while doing shift work at the agency’s shelter services as causing her to feel that she was “burning out” and that “no one care[d] what she want[ed],” causing her to consider leaving the agency. “I was physically reacting to the schedule and I was seeing other people were also. It was obviously impacting work and kind of coworker to coworker interactions”

(Participant 2). These reactions included being exhausted and not eating properly. She attributed her decision to stay to a “managerial shift” which led to her feeling mentored and listened to by new managers and being given new opportunities. In her situation, an improvement in her relationships with her managers made it possible for her to stay with the organization. Although neoliberal social policies and NPM inform relationships between supervisors and managers, they cannot define them and these participants’ stories provide examples of how managers can subvert these policies as a show of solidarity with their staff.

Organizational management research indicates that positive experiences with management and supervision are important factors in determining job satisfaction as well as having significant impacts on worker physical and psychological wellbeing (Fernet, Gagen & Austin, 2010). This means that positive vertical relations are an important element of workplace relations that could help reduce the risk of burnout and encourage more sustainable work practices. From these workers’ description of the role of supervisors, it is evident that workers see a strong role for supervisors to play in mitigating the effects of the political economic conditions on their work experiences. Workers also suggested that this type of support could operate in both directions; whereas managers could limit the impact of austerity measures on workers, workers could support management in pushing back against government demands. This idea will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter on resistance.

Participants described their relationships with their coworkers, particularly team members, as very positive. This was referred to as a “positive peer culture” by one participant who attributed it to “a certain sensitivity” (Participant 4) that is common to

many in the field of social work. Other participants described having close relationships with members of their team who shared similar political views or with whom they could debrief when they had negative work or supervisory experiences. For example, one participant stated that

I usually had really strong relationships with my immediate coworkers and the people that were on my team. Even though we were stressed about [supervisor] we relied heavily on each other; it was an early warning system, but we tried really hard to work together through that and as a result we became a really cohesive group. (Participant 1)

Workers also indicated that when supervision was lacking, they would rely on their team to make important decisions regarding difficult cases. In the following quotation one participant describes how teamwork can help mitigate challenges with supervision:

There is a lot of questions sometimes, because supervision is lacking, so you are not sure if what you are doing is the right thing. So I would see people be anxious because of this workload... As I mentioned before, teamwork is really important. So that can be very helpful. (Participant 6)

Workers attributed the strength of their relationships with their team members to the agency's ability to attract and retain highly qualified, progressive workers who see their work as much more than "just a job." The changing conditions of their work, particularly their experiences with supervision, informed workers' interactions with their coworkers. In this case, having coworkers who shared similar social justice values and progressive political beliefs strengthened the bonds among workers by uniting them in opposition to the increasingly administrative focus of their supervision.

Research suggests that positive coworker relationships act as a mitigating factor in situations with poor supervision (Hodson, 1997). In other words, having such a positive peer culture could be lessening the impact of recent tensions caused by the shift in

supervision on workers. However, in order to continue attracting more funding and new contracts, the agency will continue to grow in the near future. Workers expressed concerns about the growth of the organization as this was associated with its increasingly hierarchical, “corporate” structure and the agency’s focus on resource management. If work is not actively undertaken to improve the conditions of supervision, then the impacts of poor supervision could be exacerbated as this growth continues. Additionally, working in a field where both the work itself as well as the conditions of work can be isolating, it is important that the effects of poor supervision be mitigated and that further attempts be made to reduce worker isolation to prevent stress, anxiety, and worker burnout.

Conclusion

The implementation of NPM, with its demands for increased documentation, evaluation, and funding requirements, poses challenges for the relationships of those engaged in the NPSS sector. Individual supervisors and managers demonstrate solidarity with frontline workers by not always complying with punitive organizational policies and by encouraging staff meetings to be spaces that are emotionally open and supportive. Nevertheless the general trend, as seen in my interviews and in the literature, appears to be toward an erosion of the participatory culture, sense of community responsibility, and voluntary spirit that are integral to the NPSS. In other words, neoliberalism erodes the relational aspects of NPSS work by causing the organization to be run more like a business, thus undermining the feelings of supportive and educational supervision which are demonstrably linked to job satisfaction and retention.

Properly understood, the imposition of new regulations regarding documentation and

evaluation represent the further encroachment of masculine privilege within a feminized labour sector; this causes workers to feel less supported and more overworked as supervision places a growing emphasis on the administrative aspects of their work. In order to mitigate the impact of these changes in supervision, workers identified a positive peer culture and the feelings of solidarity it can generate as important to maintaining their mental health and avoiding feelings of burnout; this solidarity also created a safer space for workers to oppose neoliberal ruling relations by way of acts of resistance.

Chapter 6: Advocacy Chill and Resistance

[An] early story was that there was an informal Rainbow Service Providers Network where all the queer staff would sort of sound a bell about something that happened and then we would meet at some bar and bitch about it. Then we would all report back with the same message in all our different departments. Like, all sorts of histories of left wing pushing for grassroots change and working together. I was hearing these rumours of 'maybe it's time to start this up again.' I feel like maybe the environment is getting difficult enough that maybe that will happen. That has been productive and effective.

– Participant 1

Looking at it not just as self-care, but “justice-doing” and not looking at it as such an individualized thing or burnout. I think people talk a lot about burnout, but burnout is just the pain that people experience because of disconnection from the issues or not feeling like change is going to happen. So staying connected to those ideas and resisting neutrality is really important in the work. A lot of it has to do with social justice frameworks. If you align yourself with those guidelines, whether it's solidarity, or collectivization, building a movement, staying connected to other people doing the work, and not seeing it as singular moments in this giant machine, I think helps people a lot more than bubble baths.

– Participant 5

My research revealed that workers viewed their work as highly political and often incorporated this into their practice by helping clients relate their personal experiences to broader systems of oppression. In this way, they sought to challenge both the individualism inherent in neoliberal ideology and the notion of “fixing” clients. However, for a number of reasons, including dependence on government funding, competitive funding regimes, employment precarity, and lack of time, formal advocacy was relatively limited. Most participants described this as a significant hindrance to the effectiveness of their work and considered it personally challenging to know that their services were neither as accessible nor as effective as they could potentially be. This reflects a critical tension between

workers' values, their desired outcomes of their work, and the limitations placed on their work by the broader context of "advocacy chill." This chapter explores how workers articulate and negotiate this tension and the types of resistance that they engage in, when access to formal, collective forms of advocacy and resistance is limited.

In seeking to produce something that is practical and useful to workers, managers, and activists challenging the restructuring of the sector it was particularly important to me to identify existing resistance strategies. Workers resist difficult and oppressive conditions on a daily basis, sometimes without any acknowledgement. The daily work of resistance can sometimes feel futile and hopeless, but seeing the multiple ways in which different people engage in resistance has the potential to provide hope. It is important that the resistance work that they do be recognized and supported and that other potential sites of resistance be identified.

Situating resistance in the context of advocacy chill

An important contribution of NPSS agencies is the way their spaces foster community development and enable citizens to be more civically and politically engaged (Eikenberry, 2009). However, as resources become scarcer and demands on workers' time and energy increase, the tendency is to focus on service provision, risking the near exclusion of the advocacy that unites communities and challenges conditions of social injustice. Further, federal governments have hampered NPSS agencies' ability to engage in advocacy through regulatory and tax measures. In fact, in a recent report, the Ontario Nonprofit Network (2015) writes that "Canada has one of the most restrictive limits to advocacy for charities" (5). Under the *Income Tax Act* charities can only use ten percent of

their resources, including both financial and human resources, for the purpose of “political activities.” However, the use of this ambiguous term is itself stifling because organizations are uncertain about what constitutes political activity and fear the potential repercussions (DeSantis, 2010). Moreover, in 2012 the Conservative federal government, seeking to enforce this law, initiated a \$13.4 million program to audit charities under the guise of increasing transparency and accountability for the benefit of taxpayers (Canada Budget, 2012; Beeby, 2016). Those that engage in political activity over the ten percent limit are excluded from accessing tax benefits available to charities, which significantly hinders their ability to generate financial resources (Levasseur, 2012). The auditing program and the prospect of deregistration heightened the sense of fear among charities and NPSS organizations, causing many to reduce or eliminate advocacy from their work. This effect is known as “advocacy chill” (DeSantis, 2010; ONN, 2015).

In addition to the tax framework, a number of ongoing changes in the funding regime contribute to a chill on NPSS advocacy. These include a reduction in core funding options, more contract or fee-for-service arrangements, increased use of project funding models, funding cuts to some NPSS programs and the offloading of government services. These funding arrangements put NPSS agencies in less secure financial positions, put them in the position of always having to seek out new funding, and limit the resources they have to dedicate to advocacy. Organizations that take government contracts for service provision, in particular, report feeling “pressure to deliver services and de-emphasize advocacy and community outreach” (DeSantis, 2010, 26). However, for most service providers, advocacy is not a discrete activity and is, in fact, central to achieving their organization’s mandate because competition for limited public resources necessitates

advocacy to preserve their services. Their advocacy, informed by their daily experiences working with marginalized and vulnerable populations, also serves as an opportunity to convey the issues faced by their clients and propose potential legislative changes that would more directly confront the root causes of socio-economic inequality (Mosley, 2011). Thus, by limiting the amount of advocacy that NPSS agencies can engage in, governments are hindering the civic and political engagement of marginalized and vulnerable populations (DeSantis, 2010).

On the other hand, Mosley (2011) argues that current trends towards institutionalization and greater dependency on government funding may actually increase political opportunity for NPSS organizations by broadening the array of tactics they have available to them. In particular, she suggests that formalization and professionalization of non-profit service provision are likely to lead to greater use of “insider tactics” because more established organizations will be viewed as more legitimate by governments and will have more access to government officials. Similarly, some scholars have found that dependence on government funding may actually have a small positive effect on advocacy participation (Chaves, Stephens & Galaskiewicz, 2004; Child & Grønbjerg, 2007), though it is likely to influence the organization’s advocacy direction and the tactics they use. For example, Mosley (2011) suggests that resource dependence “may promote a kind of advocacy that focuses primarily on insider, peer-relationship connections, and less on calling attention to issues in a way that could jeopardize a working relationship” (442). Whereas such an amicable approach may be effective in achieving certain types of change, their ability to challenge the status quo is limited. Furthermore, preliminary research suggests that much advocacy focuses on influencing the regulations and funding

requirements tied to government contracts, rather than advocating on issues that more directly impact service users (Grogan & Gusmano, 2009; Mosley, 2011). Therefore, dependency on government funding does not necessarily lead to a reduction in advocacy by NPSS agencies, but it does impact the focus and tactics of their advocacy, decentering the concerns of service users while emphasizing concerns about resources, regulations, and accountability.

Government Funding: “You can’t be too outspoken”

Funding relations constitute one strand of the complex of ruling relations that shaped the work of the agency and the frontline service providers in this study. Workers indicated that to be competitive and receive funding – “to play the game” – this agency had to reduce its engagement in advocacy on behalf of clients to focus more on revenue generation. For this agency funding from government contracts, while substantial, was not enough to cover their operating costs; as a result, in 2009-10 the organization established a charitable foundation to generate additional revenue. For workers, this presented challenges to working in line with the organization’s ethics and values.

Workers indicated that resource constraints and the need for increased revenue generation likely played a role in the reduction in advocacy that had taken place in recent years. In particular, one worker noted that the agency had undergone significant restructuring because of funding issues:

It was an organization that grew very rapidly. It was a grassroots organization and it was always the leader of youth engagement for a long time. ‘For youth, by youth.’ Ensuring that youth are part of the process and are centred in the services. Which was really amazing, but as it grew, as they created a foundation which started collecting all this money and they started expanding...Which is great because they

need money, but it also became more of a corporation and it started acting against its own ethics and values. (Participant 5)

When asked whether he felt the agency engaged in advocacy on behalf of clients, another worker stated:

No, I think they provide services. If anything it would be frontline advocacy...Do they try and change the system? No. They still have to play the game. They have to apply for grants and funding and if you're too aggressive on the advocacy you're not going to get those monies. I think from a management position, you can't be too outspoken. (Participant 7)

Politicizing Clients' Experiences

Although organizational concerns about resources, regulations, and accountability had an impact on them, workers centered their political analysis and advocacy goals around the issues faced by their clients and other marginalized groups; however, they felt that the work of the agency was largely service provision, rather than advocacy on the issues their clients experienced. This lack of advocacy was seen as a significant limitation to the effectiveness of their services; as one worker asserted,

If you are not doing that systems advocacy you are not really getting to the root of the issue. So you are working with clients and meeting their needs, but you're not really advocating for the system to change and it doesn't actually help them get out of their situation. (Participant 5)

Participants felt restricted by the way social services had become distinct from one another and from advocacy organizations, which limited their role as service providers by individualizing and depoliticizing the issues their clients faced. Neoliberal restructuring discourages activities that target unjust social conditions, instead individualizing these conditions by framing them as deficiencies in skills or character on the part of service users

(Woolford & Curran, 2012; Finley & Esposito, 2012). By framing issues this way, the logic of neoliberalism provides easy solutions in the form of “fixing” service users and delegitimizes their appeals to the state for more support.

It is clear from the interviewees’ statements above that workers felt that catering to individual clients in the absence of political advocacy was insufficient in achieving the kinds of change they sought. Seeking to challenge the individualization of clients’ experiences, counselors help them contextualize their experiences within broader systems of oppression, politicizing the conditions of their lives in ways that are validating and empowering. For example, acknowledging the ways that racism, poverty, or experiences with the foster care system impact the life chances (Mananzala & Spade, 2008) of service users, putting them at greater likelihood of homelessness, unemployment, addictions, or coming into conflict with the law. By doing this, workers sought to challenge the moralizing and responsabilizing narratives that often confront service users to develop more positive and empowering personal narratives that recognize the resilience and strengths of service users. However, workers felt that the success of such an individualized approach would necessarily be limited and wished more advocacy was possible. At the same time, they expressed an understanding that agencies had to be careful not to be “too outspoken” for fear of losing their funding, particularly in the context of other agencies and charities being threatened with audits and the potential loss of the organization’s status as a charity.

Additionally, opportunities for NPSS organizations to collaborate on political campaigns are hindered by the competitiveness of the current funding model. One worker described the impact of the funding model as a “constant struggle”:

The way funding works, you can't necessarily collaborate or work together or advocate together because you're constantly being pitted against one another for funding. It is a constant struggle and small organizations are just trying to stay alive and competing with one another, that there is never time to do the advocacy work. It is not structured in a way that collaboration can happen. (Participant 5)

This barrier to collaboration made service provision more isolating and stressful for workers because it makes creating and sustaining working relationships with other agencies more difficult. Dean Spade and Rickke Manazala (2008) suggest that one intentional goal of neoliberal restructuring is to create a NPSS that ameliorates the worst effects of capitalist maldistribution through a depoliticized charity model, which ultimately functions to maintain the existing social order rather than challenging structural conditions. By isolating the various roles that had previously been accomplished by the NPSS, such as service provision, advocacy, and community-building, and creating barriers to collaboration, government can strategically ensure that opposition to it is diffuse. The fact that workers are seeking more opportunities for collaboration, both within the agency and with other agencies, reflects a desire to challenge the role of the NPSS in maintaining the status quo.

Being unable to collaborate with other agencies also makes it more difficult to seek out assistance from or refer clients to other agencies, even if those services might be a good fit for a client, because workers are constantly in a position of having to "justify" their jobs. This often comes down to having to prove there is a demand for their services by increasing caseloads. In fact, in some situations, social workers from other agencies actively campaigned to retain exclusive access to particular clients as a method of ensuring their own job security. Thus, competition for funding, while appealing to governments and funders as a way of "bidding down" the cost of service contracts, creates disincentives to

inter-agency collaboration and, in so doing, establishes barriers to providing the best and most effective services possible. This challenges the notion that adopting managerialist practices into service provision will help either service providers or their clients. Specifically, as this study demonstrates, this negatively impacts workers by further isolating them from communities of support, increasing their stress levels, and making their positions feel increasingly precarious.

There was also a concern that the lack of advocacy limited the voices of the most marginalized service users leading to new programming not being able to attend to their complex needs; as one participant expressed, “Our clientele don’t represent the same demographic as the city.... We are seeing less of more oppressed groups than of dominant groups, because our system is more accessible to certain groups” (Participant 3). For example, clients who are unable to consistently attend appointments due to struggles with homelessness or poverty require more supports and resources to help them cope than a client struggling with mental health issues who has stable housing. However, with “proven” and “measurable” outcomes being key funding criteria, it is difficult to develop new programming that caters to these populations. This has the potential to have a cyclical effect because as fewer members of particular groups are able to access services, service providers have less access to information about the issues they face or their service needs; as a result, those excluded from existing programming are also more likely to be excluded from future programming. Limitations on resources as well as constraints on time and advocacy further perpetuate this exclusion, which some participants highlight as a significant hardship; as one interviewee noted, “It is a challenge for me to do the day-to-day

stuff, knowing that it is inadequate. In many ways it is out of reach for many people who need it” (Participant 3).

However, this was tied to the changes in the funding regime as government priorities are a determining factor in program development and limited funding means limited accessibility. For example, drop-in services oriented towards empowering youth by providing them with volunteer experience and skill development, which youth could attend at their own convenience, had recently been reduced because it was not seen as a funding priority by the provincial government. This left agency staff in the position of having to advocate for more funding to reinstate programming that had previously been heavily used and had benefited many of the youth in the community. In this way, much of the advocacy work done by workers focused on resource allocation and working to maintain existing programming, taking away from the time they could be advocating for systemic change that would more directly target the causes of the challenges their clients faced.

“It’s Personal”

The workers’ advocacy on issues such as queer issues, race issues, women’s issues and poverty, did not simply impact their clients, but also impacted a number of the workers who were themselves members of marginalized or oppressed communities. For many, such experiences served as the impetus for getting into social service provision; as one interviewee noted,

I come from a marginalized community so I was seeing a lot of barriers and struggles that folks were experiencing. I wanted to be part of the field that could mend some of those issues and also bring a different kind of voice to the field too.
(Participant 5)

For this worker, the disconnect between service provision and advocacy was particularly challenging because wanting to engage in advocacy was central to their decision to enter the field. Moreover, they felt it caused service provision organizations to compromise their values and lose sight of their mandate out of a need to attract funding. They suggested such a misalignment between workers' values and the way their work is conducted causes a feeling of "heartbreak" and a sense of hopelessness that change is never going to happen.

Another worker stated that it was important for her to advocate on issues both within and outside of the agency because these issues exist in all domains of her life. She felt frustrated when she raised concerns that a program that was being promoted within the agency was perpetuating a form of oppression only to be told by her manager that "it's not important...it's not an emergency." She said,

for me the things that are most important in this role, don't become less important when I go home. I am an entire being and so I do take it personally and I think everybody in this position takes it personally (Participant 1)

The fact that a form of oppression she experienced was so easily dismissed was indicative of the growing disconnect she sensed between the organization's values and its practice. The disconnect may be related to the agency having to conserve resources by having fewer workers and, as a result, not having the time or resources to deal with issues they felt were not "emergencies." This reflects a key issue service providers have with the restructuring: their services are becoming increasingly reactive and cater primarily to those in "crisis" or "emergency" situations, rather than being able to assume a proactive role in addressing social issues.

For some, personal experiences with marginalization also helped them relate to their clients and enabled them to develop trusting relationships more easily. At the same time, workers who are members of the communities to which they cater also encounter more complex ethical questions that are difficult to account for in social work ethics guidelines. In particular, professional boundaries were a significant issue because organizational policy and ethical guidelines for social workers place limits on how and when workers can interact with clients. However, in the context of small communities, such policies are much more difficult to follow as people are likely to play multiple roles within the community, often sharing space with clients in contexts beyond the work environment. Organizational policies designed to protect clients from workers and reduce organizational liability are often too rigid to properly account for the experiences of marginalized workers.

One participant suggested that there should be multiple ethics guidelines and that organizational policies should be open to interpretation depending on the context; they went on to say,

The way I approach social work is that it is actually quite messy and relationships are messy, doing community work is really messy. I felt like there wasn't a lot of space to have those conversations because people are so concerned about quality assurance and liability and that kind of stuff. (Participant 5)

This worker found that following ethical guidelines could sometimes force workers to choose between their personal values and professional ethics and could also have adverse effects on clients. They described their struggle with this as "painful," "isolating" and "exhausting." For them, placing limitations on, and barriers to, advocacy meant that

these experiences would continue to go unaccounted for within organizational policies as well as in the broader social services field.

Workers felt that engaging in advocacy alongside their work as service providers helped them to cope with the emotional weight of their work with one worker describing the role of doing activism alongside their work as keeping them “connected to the idea of doing justice to people and social justice” (Participant 5). Engagement in advocacy was considered to be helpful in bridging the gap between workers’ values and the limitations of their work.

Solidarity

Practices of resistance also helped workers negotiate the tension between their goals and ideals and the constraints of working within the current political economic context. As discussed in the chapter on workplace relations, many participants felt that supervision was too heavily focused on administration and outcome measures rather than on support with clinical work; this had the effect of straining vertical relations. However, workers reported developing strong connections with teammates and described these relationships as an important source of support and assistance. For many, this support was primarily around decision-making and finding appropriate resources for clients, but for those with more strained supervisory relationships, these relationships were also an important source of emotional support and led to the development of small collective approaches to navigating challenging work environments. For example, one participant described how her team worked together in the face of a manager who chose favourites among the workers she oversaw; to cope with this asymmetrical treatment, workers would

often meet prior to team meetings to discuss key issues and the manager's favourite worker, with the support of the team, would take the lead in bringing forward concerns

In that way you are going to get in less trouble, so as a group we decide this is important. We are going to go to the staff meeting and we will all say the same thing. So we would sometimes have pre-meetings before our staff meetings to decide how we're going to get our ideas across. It was a lot of effort that should have been directed towards delivering services. (Participant 1)

In a separate case, where a team of workers had been struggling with the physical effects of poor scheduling and being overworked, team members worked together to advocate for improved scheduling practices that included more reasonable scheduling for shift workers. Despite feeling overworked and being in nonstandard, precarious employment conditions, these workers engaged in this advocacy over a period of years, committed to improving the working conditions for their coworkers and themselves. This represents a significant example of solidarity that challenges the individualistic ideology of neoliberalism by emphasizing the relationships among coworkers and their shared goal of improving working conditions over individual struggles that often prevent people from engaging in activism.

Feelings of solidarity were not limited, however, to team members, but, in fact, also extended to supervisors and even to senior management. For example, workers spoke compassionately about the challenges their supervisors and managers faced and consistently indicated that strained vertical relations were clearly connected to issues of funding and resource constraints. While workers pointed to a number of ways that managers could mitigate the impacts of austerity on their working conditions, such as fair scheduling, advocating on their behalf to more senior management, and being supportive, some service providers also envisioned a role for workers in supporting management in

challenging provincial austerity measures. One participant described his hope that the unions of multiple service providers could work together to put forward demands that included issues faced by managers too. Such a “bottom-up” initiative was thought to empower management to take a stronger and more vocal stance in their negotiations for government contracts. This degree of compassion for and solidarity with management may stem from the fact that the target of resistance by social service providers is “not only the management, but also the restrictive funders; the pro-market governments; and a wider, uncaring, gendered and racialized society” (Baines, 2008, 124).

Emotional Misbehaviour

In addition to these displays of solidarity among coworkers and between coworkers and management, my discussions with interview participants revealed a range of acts of micro-resistance in opposition to the issues or discontentment they experienced in their work. In his work discussing the economy of feelings, Steve Vincent (2011) describes the concept of emotional norms, or “feelings rules,” in the workplace as implicit expectations of workers to display or suppress particular emotions while at work. Rather than there being a straightforward distinction between acceptable and unacceptable emotions, Vincent (2011) describes emotional norms as existing on a continuum ranging from “conforming” to “nonconforming” emotions at work.

“Emotional misbehaviour” refers to the actions of those who are unable or unwilling to conform to the emotional norms and whose emotional displays are perceived to run counter to broader organizational interests. In the context of organizational interests often focusing on seeking funding opportunities, fulfilling statistical expectations, and financial

accountability to funders and taxpayers, prioritizing relationships with clients can be understood as the active rejection of the demands placed on the organization. In this study, all of the participants placed significant emphasis on the relationship between the service provider and the service user over the managerialist goals of fulfilling program statistics or perfectly meeting accreditation standards. Central to this was the belief that strong, trusting relationships are the foundation of the success of their services.

In the context of neoliberalization and intensifying austerity measures, some scholars suggest that emphasizing the caregiving relationship over the managerialist goals of the organization is a form of resistance insofar as it rejects the notion that social service agencies should be run like corporations, deprioritizes efficiency in favour of quality of care and challenges the individualism inherent in neoliberalism (Courtney & Hickey, 2016; Woolford & Curran, 2012). By rejecting dominant expectations of how the field should operate and what constitutes success, participants in this study were able to make space for their own priorities of building supportive, trusting relationships, and enacting social justice values.

Micro-resistance in the form of deliberate emotional management in ways that ran counter to what was expected of them was a common experience among participants. One worker described the expectations of emotional regulation in the field of social work generally as having to be able to “compartmentalize” experiences and essentially “hav[ing] to be two different people” (Participant 5). These expectations are a reflection of a broader societal context that devalues the caring, social justice ethos at the heart of social work, instead promoting caregiving models that diminish the importance of the relationships

between service providers and service users; on the topic of emotional investment, this participant went on to say that

people see it as a weakness of the worker, but I think it's a testament to the resilience and empathy and compassion...like it's harder because you're experiencing it and you're in it, but at the same time I think it makes you a better worker. (Participant 5)

Two aspects of this worker's statement can be seen as forms of resistance. First, the rejection of the expectation to "shut it off" is an act of resistance to the uncaring, individualistic ideology of neoliberalism because they are actively demonstrating empathy and choosing to foster connection with their clients, rather than separating themselves from their work. Second, they felt strongly that remaining so open and vulnerable allowed for stronger connections and better community building which would serve as the foundation for stronger advocacy and activism against all systems of oppression.

Conclusion

Although formal advocacy is limited, workers nevertheless found ways to engage in resistance. Finding support and solidarity in their teams was an especially prevalent experience that the majority of participants spoke of; in some instances, this resistance was very overt and strategic, whereas in others, workers provided subtler examples of how they relied on their team to compensate when they felt their supervision was less helpful or supportive than they needed. Despite this, workers also expressed compassion for management and indicated that they felt a sense of solidarity with them in the fight against government austerity measures. One can understand the solidarity that workers expressed

with respect to management as a form of engagement in workers' political agency (Wray-Bliss, 2002,15). The choice to draw connections between their experiences and those of management reflects the workers' broader political analysis that all workers in the NPSS, regardless of position, are subordinated to the managerialist processes that govern the sector, and that there is strength in unifying their positions rather than creating tensions with managers who are themselves bound by many of the same constraints as frontline workers. This analysis challenges the way some LPT literature reduces workers to the "personification of economic categories" (O'Doherty & Willmott, 2001, 458) and is perhaps indicative of a new way of engaging in labour politics in a world where work at all levels of an organization is increasingly precarious.

This political agency can further be seen in workers' discussion of "emotional misbehaviour" when they prioritize their professional relationships over the forms of managerialism that are increasingly encroaching on their work. Through the rejection of dominant expectations of emotional regulation, they challenge the neoliberal ideology of independence and self-reliance while also reconceptualizing emotional vulnerability as a strength rather than as a weakness or liability. In this way, they seek to bring the focus of their work back to community building and engaging in advocacy, rather than statistics and financial accountability.

Ruling relations, in particular the neoliberal funding regime, constrain the work of NPSS agencies by reducing opportunities for advocacy and collaboration. Workers feel this limits the effectiveness of their services because they cannot challenge the root causes of the circumstances faced by their clients. These methods of resistance function as ways of communicating their discontent with the ongoing changes and demonstrate their

commitment to the social justice ethos that guides much of their work. The resistance of social service providers is particularly important because improving the working conditions of frontline worker also helps to improve the services they provide and thereby the lives of the populations to whom they cater.

Chapter 7: Conclusion – Doing Justice to “Justice-doing”

Inspiration for this project began with my personal experience as a volunteer at a social service agency that catered to marginalized youth. In observing changes in the way our programming was operated and subsequently reading about the ways that neoliberalism was restructuring the NPSS sector more broadly, I became interested in learning about how this impacted the experiences of service users and providers. In undertaking this project, my aim was to conduct research that would both validate the experiences of workers and managers in the sector, and provide potential practical ideas for resisting these changing working conditions.

The most significant finding was the extent to which managerialist practices such as accreditation and EBP have become an “irresistible force” (Lee, 2014) in the reorganization of the NPSS. This has had a number of broad impacts on working conditions and workers’ personal experiences, particularly with respect to the mental health of NPSS workers and the sustainability of service provision. These included having less discretionary time to connect with team members, to seek support, or to engage with new literature in the field. All of these were described as coping strategies when workers experienced practical or emotional challenges in their work, and without them, participants were made to feel more “isolated” from other workers in the agency, thus increasing their stress and anxiety.

These managerial practices also had an impact on workplace relations, causing supervision to be increasingly administrative and, in some cases, even punitive. These changes created the circumstances for significant job strain by exacerbating tensions between workers and their managers; organizational management research has indicated are key risk factors in reduced job satisfaction and can have negative impacts on worker

wellbeing, both physical and psychological (Fernet, Gagen & Austin, 2010). While workers currently negotiate concerns with supervision by seeking more support from coworkers and team members, this research indicates that workers see a role for supervisors and management in mitigating the impacts of austerity on their work experiences. An example of this provided by one worker was that his supportive supervisor chose not put him on the “attendance support program,” which was described as “intrusive” and “punitive.”

The conditions of feeling overworked, under constant threat of losing funding, and being situated within a complex regulatory system that limits the political engagement of NPSS agencies was also perceived as a hardship by workers, who felt their work was neither as accessible nor as effective as they wanted it to be. This was difficult for workers, many of whom entered the field with strongly held social justice values and a desire to have a positive impact beyond individual clients. In spite of the external limitations on formal advocacy, workers engaged in forms of resistance daily, including expressions of solidarity with their team members by strategically working together to negotiate the challenges of working under difficult managers. More individual resistance took the form of “emotional misbehaviour” (Vincent, 2011) by prioritizing their relationships with service users over the broader organizational concerns of fulfilling statistical requirements or ensuring accountability.

These findings indicate that workers experience a number of significant challenges in their work, including intensifying workloads, strained vertical relations, and having to focus on administrative tasks to the detriment of their relationships with service users - all of which have direct impacts on worker mental wellbeing as they describe feelings of being taken for granted, isolation, heartbreak, stress, and anxiety. This suggests that specific

actions need to be taken to improve these conditions, such as ensuring positive vertical relations; supportive supervision; limiting workloads; increasing discretionary time; demanding more inclusive, participatory accreditation and evaluation processes; and making room for advocacy and political engagement.

At the same time, this research also demonstrates the degree of worker resilience and their ability to find multifaceted ways to negotiate their working conditions and workplace relations. Though not the focus of this study, research exploring workers' resilience and resistance strategies in greater depth would be valuable for understanding such negotiations. Furthermore, research exploring the specific experiences of marginalized service providers who cater to communities of which they are also a part would provide insight into how social work can be more accommodating of marginalized workers as well as how social service agencies can better cater to their communities within the context of existing ruling relations.

This study demonstrates how the discourses and policies of neoliberal austerity function as ruling relations that frame the context of non-profit service provision and impact the work experiences and wellbeing of frontline service providers. By using labour process theory, I posit a connection between changing work processes under NPM and the ambitions of ruling relations to further capital accumulation. The competitive funding model that NPM imposes on NPSS agencies not only inhibits cooperation and inclusion among related agencies, but also has the effect of bidding down the cost of service provision by measuring the effectiveness of services according to the business logic of efficiency and value for money. In this way, governments are able to further divest from the provision of social services, opting instead to encourage the expansion of market logic into

the NPSS sector while also deregulating market activities to encourage investment and create a more business-friendly environment. These shifts further facilitate processes of capital accumulation at the expense of those in need of, as well as those who provide, social services.

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Appendices: Ethics Protocol Components

Appendix A: Informed Consent Forms for Interviews

Consent Form for Service Providers

I, _____, volunteer to participate in a study on the impact of austerity measures implemented by the Ontario provincial government on service provision at [agency name]. This study aims to understand the impact of public policy on service provision and to explore the ways that service providers navigate the changing political economic climate. The data collected for this project will lend itself to an analysis of neoliberal austerity measures and the changing role of the state in service provision.

I understand that my participation in this project involves taking part in a semi-structured interview that will last between 1-1.5 hours, with a possible 30-minute follow-up interview. I permit this interview to be digitally recorded with the understanding that my identity will be kept confidential and any data from this interview used in the final project will be completely anonymous. Digital recordings of this interview will be downloaded onto a USB key and printed transcripts of my interview will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's private residence, where he has sole access. The digital recording of my interview will be permanently deleted once it has been transcribed. Electronic copies of interview transcripts will be stored in an encrypted and password-protected folder.

I understand that this project involves potential professional risks. I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any question, may end the interview at any time, and have the opportunity to withdraw from the study until [Date: TBA]. If I withdraw, all the information I have provided will be erased and will not be used in the final project.

Research findings will be written in the form of a master's thesis and as a report for [agency name]. I understand the findings will be made available to me at my request and the final report will be submitted to the management team at [agency name], my employer.

Theo Hug is an MA candidate in the Institute of Political Economy at Carleton University. He can be reached at theo.james.hug@carleton.ca. This research will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Dan Irving and Dr. Susan Braedley.

This study has been reviewed by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board and received clearance on [Date: TBA] for the period lasting until [Date: TBA]. Any questions or concerns about my involvement in the study can be direct to the CUREB chair, Professor Louise Heslop, at ethics@carleton.ca or at 613-520-2517. **Alternatively, concerns may be directed to [name], Director**

of Quality Assurance and chair of the Research Ethics Committee at [agency name and contact information].

Signature of participant _____

Date _____

Signature of researcher _____

Date _____

Researcher:

Theo Hug

MA candidate, Institute of Political Economy

Carleton University

theo.james.hug@gmail.com

Supervisors:

Dr. Dan Irving

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613-520-2600 x 3662

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Personal information:

1. What is your position at [agency name] and what does that entail?
2. What is your educational and/or professional background?
3. Why did you get into this line of work?
4. How long have you been working in the NPSS sector? How long have you been at [agency name] specifically?
5. Are you employed at [agency name] on a full- or part-time, temporary, contract basis?

Service users:

6. Youth accessing services at [agency name] come from various marginalized communities. Can you provide some general details concerning their various identities and communities and some of issues that your clients face?
7. Have there been any changes in the types of people accessing services since you have been here? [For example, have you noticed an increase in demand for any services in particular?]

Work and working conditions:

8. What would you describe as the most important aspects of your work?
9. What types of skills are essential for conducting your work?
10. Does [agency name] provide access to skills training opportunities for all employees?
11. Describe the day-to-day work that you do?
12. How much discretion do you feel you have when making decisions about your day-to-day work activities?
13. What are the major challenges to conducting your work? What impact do these challenges have on your work?
14. What do you see as potential solutions to these challenges?
15. Are you aware of any informal or formal efforts made to address these challenges? If so can you provide examples of ways that either you, co-workers, management, your union have tried to address these challenges? What types of solutions have they proposed?
16. Have there been any policy or organizational changes since you have been working here that have impacted you or your working conditions?
17. Have you noticed any changes to your workload or expectations about your work pace?
18. How is work distributed among you and your colleagues?
19. What types of expectations do you experience from your managers? Service users? Do you feel these are reasonable and attainable expectations?
20. How are jobs evaluated? Are there different evaluation mechanisms/ guidelines for different positions? Who is responsible for conducting such evaluations?

Social Justice:

21. Do you consider your work, and the work of [agency name] more broadly, to be grounded in social justice values? How would you say your personal values align with those of [agency name]?

22. What role do advocacy and activism play in your position?
23. Do you consider yourself an advocate or activist for the people that access your services?
24. How much power do you feel you have to create the types of changes that would help your clients?
25. What changes would you like to see, either organizationally, across the sector or societally?
26. When you are emotionally affected by your work or working conditions, is there space for you to express such feelings in the work place? Do you ever feel the need to moderate, or even suppress, emotions that arise at work?
27. Do you have other care-work responsibilities in your life besides working here?
[prompt: children or aging family members, part-time or contract employment at other agencies]
28. Do you feel that working here allows you to have a healthy work-life balance?
29. What advice would you give to someone interested in working in the social services sector?
30. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

[Date]

To whom it may concern,

My name is Theo Hug, and I am an MA Candidate in the Institute of Political Economy at Carleton University. I would like to invite you to participate in a study titled "Social Service Provision in the Age of Austerity."

Research Objectives:

The objectives of this study are twofold: 1) to map the connections between austerity measures implemented by the provincial government and service providers; and 2) to explore best practices concerning how service providers and nonprofit managers navigate these political economic conditions.

Specifically, this project sets out to understand how policy changes made by the government of Ontario, in the wake of the 2008-2010 financial crisis, have impacted the work of service providers. I intend to begin my investigation from the perspectives of frontline service providers, so that I may gain insight into their work practices and how changes in funding or resources impact services provision.

Interview Details:

This study involves one in-depth, 1-1.5 hours interview, with the possibility of one 30-minute follow-up interview. Each interview will take place in a location that is mutually agreed upon, convenient and safe. Providing your consent, interviews will be digitally recorded for the purposes of transcription. Following transcription, all audio files will be permanently deleted .

It is my intention to protect your identity to the best of my ability by ensuring that all of your responses remain anonymous and confidential. Names will not be used in the final project.

I am the only person who will have access to the research data. All electronic data, including audio-recordings and transcriptions, will be stored in encrypted and password-protected files on my personal computer. All hard copies of data, including handwritten notes, USB keys and consent forms, will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my private place of residence.

As a voluntary interview participant, you have the right to refuse any questions, to request that certain responses not be included in the final project, and to end your participation in the study at any time, for any reason, up until [Date: TBA]. If you withdraw from this study, all information that you have provided will be immediately destroyed, and will not be used in the final project.

Ethics Details:

This project has been reviewed by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board and received clearance on [Date: TBA] for the period lasting until [Date: TBA]. Should you have any questions or concerns related to your involvement in this research project, please feel free to contact the CUREB chair, Professor Louise Heslop, at ethics@carleton.ca or at 613-520-2517.

If you are interested in participating in this study, or have any questions related to the research, please feel free to contact me at theo.james.hug@gmail.com or my co-supervisor Dr. Dan Irving at dan.irving@carleton.ca

Thank you in advance for your interest in this project. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Theo Hug

Appendix D: Research Ethics Protocol Form

CUREB A&B: Research Ethics Protocol Form

1. Project Team			
1A. Lead Researcher (Detailed instructions)	☐	Academic Staff	Last name/First name
	☐	Library or Other Staff	<i>Response:</i> Hug, Theo
	☐	Post-doctoral Fellow	Official university (or other institution) email address:
	☐	Ph.D. Student	<i>Response:</i> theo.james.hug@gmail.com
	☒	Master's Student	Indicate your department, faculty and institution
	☐	Undergraduate	<i>Response:</i> Political Economy
	☐	Other	
1B. Academic Supervisor (Detailed instructions)	☐	Same as lead researcher	Academic supervisor(s) Last name/First name. (Note, the supervisor must be copied on all correspondence with CUREB.)
			<i>Response:</i> Irving, Dan and Braedley, Susan
			Official university (or other institution) email address:
		<i>Response:</i> dan_irving@carleton.ca; susan_braedley@carleton.ca	
		Indicate your department, faculty and institution	
		<i>Response:</i> Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies, FASS; School of Social Work, Faculty of Public Affairs	

1C.	Project Team Members (Detailed instructions)	X	Not applicable/No other team members	List the project team members here. For each team member, provide the following: 1) Last name/First name 2) Email address 3) Role in project 4) Department and institution (E.g. Master's student in Canadian Studies at Carleton)
	<div>Response:</div>			

1D.	Researcher Training (Detailed instructions)	X	No training provided/Not applicable	Describe any additional training the researcher(s) have (or will receive) to work with the participants. Response:
		Researcher will be trained		
		Researcher is trained		

2.	Study Overview			
2A.	Project Title (Detailed instructions)	Title of Research Project		
	Response: Social Service Provision in the Age of Austerity			

2B.	Study Goal (Detailed instructions)	What question will your research answer (1-2 sentences)?
	Response: This study will investigate the impact of the changing political economic context on the work and working conditions of service providers. What challenges do social service organizations face and what solutions do the workers propose? How much power do they feel they have to create change? How might the issues service providers experience impact the youth that access those services?	

2C. **Study Purpose and Benefits**
([Detailed instructions](#))

Study rationale: why should the research be pursued; what are the benefits, and to whom? (Benefits can be to research community, companies, or society in general.)

Response: This qualitative research study will contribute to scholarly debates concerning critical political economy, gender, social service provision and the impacts of social policy. My project will be a valuable resource to service providers, academics, advocacy groups and activist groups challenging austerity and fighting for better social supports from the government. Additionally, it will be useful to service providers by highlighting some promising practices for navigating the conditions of service provision in the current political economic climate.

2D. **Dates of Recruitment/Participant Interaction**
([Detailed instructions](#))

Not applicable/Secondary Data

When will you start recruiting participants? (DD/MM/YYYY)

Response: 15/05/16

When will you stop interacting with participants? (DD/MM/YYYY)

Response: 15/09/16

2E.	New or Previously Recorded Data (Detailed instructions)	☒	Primary Analysis (New Data are Collected)	Does this research collect new data or analyse previously collected data (secondary analysis)? If the research involves secondary analysis, describe the coding of personal identifiers and indirect identifiers within data. Note: Tri-Council has defined anonymized data to be data irrevocably stripped of direct identifiers (a code is not kept to allow future re-linkage).
		Secondary Analysis of Directly Identifying Data		
		Secondary Analysis of Coded or De-identified Data		
				<i>Response:</i>

2F.	Additional Reviews (Detailed instructions)		No additional review	Has this project been reviewed for academic merit (not required, but for the Board's information). By whom? As part of a tri-council grant application or student's thesis committee?
	☒	Departmental review		
		Grant council review		
				<i>Response:</i> Thesis committee and head of Institute of Political Economy

3.	Funding and Approvals			
3A.	Project Funding (Detailed instructions)		Unfunded	Who is funding this project? If applicable, include the funding source/agency/company, program, award name, and number (from CUResearch)
	☒	Tri-Council Funded		
		Other Award/Grant		
		Contract Funded		
		Personal Consulting or Personal Work		
	☒	Scholarship		
				<i>Response:</i> SSHRC: Joseph Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship-Master's and departmental scholarship from the Institute of Political Economy

3B. **Researcher Funding
(for research
contracts and
personal consulting
only)**
(Detailed instructions)

X	Not applicable/Not contract funded research
	No funds are paid directly to the researcher as personal income
	The researcher will receive a portion of the funds as personal income
	A copy of the contract/agreement has been submitted to the Research Compliance Office

For research contracts and personal consulting only: Is there a real or perceived conflict of interest and how will it be managed? How much funding (dollar amount and the percentage of the total) will the researcher(s) receive as income? Provide the title and date of any contracts. (The REB may review the contract.)

Response:

3C. **Minimal Risk
Review Request**
(Detailed instructions)

	No
X	Yes

Would you like to request this protocol be considered for minimal risk review? If so, please briefly justify. If not requesting a minimal risk review, leave this section blank. (The REB will use this information to make a decision as to whether this application will be reviewed at full board or via a delegated process).

Response: The focus of this project is on work done by social workers and management at [agency name] and there will be no interaction with the populations that access their services for this study. Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw from the project **during the data collection process**. The questions asked during the interviews pertain to the work of professionals and the linkages between this work and provincial social policy. This experience poses no more risk than their everyday life activities.

3D. **Additional Approvals Required**
(Detailed instructions)

	Not applicable/No other approvals required	Is organizational permission required to conduct research (e.g., schools, employers, other universities, correctional services, aboriginal communities, and other data collection locations)? If conducting research in another country, is local permission required? Indicate if permission has been secured and provide a copy of the permission. Research with biohazards or animals must also secure approval from the appropriate committee at Carleton University.
X	Organizational Permission	
	Visa/Travel Permits	
X	Other REBs or Institutional Approvals	
	Biohazards	
	Animal Care Committee	
	Other (please specify)	
	Permission letters attached	
X	Letters to follow	

Response: The project proposal will need to be approved by [agency name] management as well as undergo a review by their REB

4. **Methods: Participants**

4A. **Participant Interactions Overview**
(Detailed instructions)

X	Directly interacting with participants	Briefly list what will happen to, or will be required of, the participants during the course of the research. (Only a project overview is requested here; methodology details are required in the first question of each section). If the research involves secondary analysis of data that has already been collected, the REB needs information about the original data collection to be confident data were collected ethically.
	Interacting with participants online (e.g. online surveys)	
	Observing participants	
	Secondary Analysis of Data	
	Other	

Response: Participants will be

asked to take part in a semi-structured interview that will last approximately 1-1.5 hours, with a potential follow up interview of 30 minutes. The interviews will be digitally recorded and, once transcribed, I will send them a copy in case they want to edit, exclude or add to any of their responses.

4B. **Description of Participants**
(Detailed instructions)

Describe the participants and any inclusion criteria. If applicable, describe any exclusion criteria. If using a separate sample of control participants, describe this group.

Response: Participants will be the frontline service providers at [agency name] from each of the services they provide, including: mental health, community housing, youth justice and employment services. Additionally, I will interview members of the management team. All participants must be involved in the provision of services to the youth either directly or in a supervisory capacity.

4C. **Number of Participants**
(Detailed instructions)

What is the number of participants requested? If multiple groups of participants are involved, breakdown by participant type. Provide a justification including a statistical rationale if appropriate.

Response: I hope to interview 15-20 frontline staff and 4-5 managers

Vulnerable Population
4D. (Detailed instructions)

X	Not Vulnerable Population
	Vulnerable Population

Describe any pre-existing vulnerabilities associated with the proposed participant group(s) that may cause additional risks. Describe the associated risks and mitigation strategy.

Response:

Participant Relationship to Researcher
4E. (Detailed instructions)

	No previous relationship
	Instructor-Student
	Client
	Employee
	Friends/Family
X	Other

Describe any relationship that exists between the participants and the research team or any recruiting party or sponsor. Indicate how relationships will be managed so there is no undue pressure put on participants.

Response: I will be conducting the research at an organization where I used to volunteer, so I may have had past interactions with some of the social workers or management staff that I interview. I think this will work to my advantage as they will already know me and be more comfortable interacting with me.

Conflict of Interest
4F. (Detailed instructions)

X	No conflicts
	Financial
	Commercial Entity Benefits
	Other

Describe any real or perceived conflicts of interest for any research team member that could affect participant welfare. If so, describe it here and indicate how it will be managed.

Response:

5. Methods: Recruitment

Recruitment Methods
5A. (Detailed instructions)

	Not applicable
	Posters
	Social Media
	Online Panels (e.g. Qualtrics)
	Student Participant Pool (e.g. SONA)
X	Emails
X	Letters
	Telephone
	Snowballing
	Other

Describe each step of how participants will be recruited. This includes how contact information is obtained, how participants will be made aware of the study, where will recruitment materials be located, and how participants can express their interest. Provide a copy of the recruitment material(s) including any oral scripts, recruitment posters, recruitment emails, social media postings etc.

Response: I intend **share my recruitment materials with the chair of the research ethics committee at [agency name] who will disseminate it to the directors of different departments encouraging anyone interested to take part.**

Additionally, to seek members of the management team to interview, I will ask the Executive Director and Associate Director for assistance, as they have both been very helpful and supportive thus far. Participants can then contact me to indicate their interest in taking part

5B.	Location of Recruitment (Detailed instructions)	☐	Not applicable	List all recruitment locations. If some locations require permission prior to recruitment, indicate if permission has been secured. <i>Response:</i> I will recruit participants at the various locations at which [agency name] provides services. Permission for recruitment will be sought upon REB approval
		☐	Carleton	
		☐	Other Canadian School/University	
		☐	Canada	
		☐	Online	
		☒	Other	

5C.	Third Parties in Recruitment (Detailed instructions)	☐	Not applicable	If using third parties to recruit, indicate who is doing the recruitment and how it will be accomplished. Does the third party have contact information for the participants? If not, how will it be acquired? <i>Response:</i> <u>Recruitment will take place through [agency name]. My recruitment letter will be disseminated by the chair of research ethics committee among the directors of the different service departments encouraging interest staff to take part in the study.</u> Additionally, I intend to use snowballing as a recruitment method by asking participants to encourage their co-workers to take part as well.
		☒	Third Parties	

5D.	Recruitment risks to Participants (Detailed instructions)	☒	No risks / Not applicable	Describe any risks to participants during the recruitment phase. <i>Response:</i>
		☐	Mild risks	
		☐	Moderate risks	
		☐	High risks	

5E. **Recruitment risks to Researcher**
(Detailed instructions)

x	No risks / Not applicable
	Mild risks
	Moderate risks
	High risks

Describe any risks to the research team during the recruitment phase.

Response:

5F. **Benefits**
(Detailed instructions)

	No Direct Benefits to Participants / Not applicable
	Direct Benefits to Participants

Describe any direct benefits to the research participants as opposed to society or knowledge.

Response: This research will reveal some "promising practices" that service providers use to navigate the contemporary climate of austerity. **Specifically, I hope that this research will be validating in terms of the challenges that workers are experiencing as well as provide them with a sense of solidarity with other workers and potentially provide them with some strategies to challenge or subvert the policy or regulatory mechanisms that cause these challenges.**

Additionally, by illuminating how social service provision is socially organized it will also provide a better understanding of the impact of social policy implemented by the provincial government which can hopefully be used to **support agency requests for more resources.**

Compensation
5G. (Detailed instructions)

☒	No Compensation/Not applicable
☐	Money / Gift Card
☐	Reimbursement of Travel Expenses
☐	Refreshments
☐	Course Credit
☐	Other

Describe all compensation/remuneration and indicate when participants will receive the compensation. What is the monetary value of the compensation/remuneration? What happens to the compensation if a participant withdraws?

Response:

6. Methods: Informed Consent

Obtaining informed consent
6A. (Detailed instructions)

☒	Signed consent
☐	Online consent
☐	Oral consent
☐	Implied consent
☐	Parent/Guardian consent
☐	Assent
☐	Other

Describe the method for obtaining informed consent from the participants. If signed consent is not used, justify the alternative method chosen. Include a copy of the consent materials.

Response: In advance of the interview I will email the participants a recruitment letter as well as a consent form, both of which contain detailed information about the study. At the beginning of the interview I will ask them to sign a hardcopy of the consent form.

Deception

6B. (Detailed instructions)

X	Full Disclosure (i.e. no deception)
	Partial Disclosure
	Mild Deception
	More than Mild Deception

Describe the deception and/or partial disclosure (e.g. what information is withheld). Why must it be used and why not an alternative research method? Describe the magnitude and likelihood of harm. Deception requires debriefing and secondary consent forms. The secondary consent form allows the participant to consent to the use of their data when they have been informed of the true nature of the study. Partial disclosure requires a debriefing form.

Response:

Debriefing

6C. (Detailed instructions)

X	Not applicable/not required
	Participants will be debriefed

Will participants be debriefed? If this is the case, describe when and how participants will be debriefed. (Include a copy of any documents that will be provided to participants). Describe any risks during debriefing and how they will be mitigated. According to Tri-Council, debriefing is required in all cases of deception:
<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter3-chapitre3/#toc03-1b>

Response:

6D. **Withdrawal Procedures**
(Detailed instructions)

	Not applicable	Describe the procedures for a participant to withdraw. What will happen to data from participants who withdraw? Describe any deadlines and limitations on withdrawal.
x	Participants can withdraw	
	Participants can only withdraw during the study session	
	Special withdrawal procedures	
		<i>Response:</i> Participants can withdraw any time during the data collection process. If a participant chooses to withdraw all data provided by that participant will be destroyed.

7. **Methods: Data Collection**

7A. **Data Collection Methods**
(Detailed instructions)

	Questionnaires / Surveys	Describe the method of data collection being used and provide details of any instruments used. Breakdown by phases, participant groups, or types if required. If data collection is being done online, visit the detailed instructions for full details on what information the REB requires. (CUREB requires a copy of any questionnaires, surveys, or interview guides).
x	Interviews	
	Focus Groups	
	Oral and/or Visual Stimuli	
	Equipment and/or software testing	
	Other	<i>Response:</i> The method I will employ is Institutional Ethnography. This is a type of ethnography that involves semi-structured interviews with participants as well as document analysis. The documents to be analyzed include intake forms, assessment reports, and policy regarding work protocols and interactions with clients.

7B.	Location of Data Collection (Detailed instructions)	☐	Carleton	Where will the participant be during data collection? <i>Response:</i> Interviews will take place at a mutually agreed upon location which may either be a public venue and/or their place of work.
		☐	Canada (other than Carleton)	
		X	Workplace	
		X	Public venue	
		☐	Online	
		☐	Other	

7C.	Photography or Recordings (Detailed instructions)	☐	Not applicable	If the participant will be photographed, video-recorded or audio-recorded, indicate how the data will be acquired and protected (if applicable). <i>Response:</i> Interviews will be audio-recorded and transferred onto a USB key designated exclusively for this project. It will be password protected and only accessible to me <u>and my thesis supervisors</u> . I will transcribe, code and analyze the data on my personal laptop where all files will be stored in an encrypted and password protected folder to which only I have access. Once the interviews have been transcribed I will destroy the audio files.
		☐	Photographs	
		X	Audio Recording	
		☐	Video Recording	

7D.	Translation or Transcription (Detailed instructions)	☐	Not applicable	If you require the services of a translator or transcriber, describe what services you will use and how you will interact with the translator and/or transcriber. If a confidentiality agreement will be used, include a copy. <i>Response:</i>
		☐	Translation	
		☐	Transcription	
		X	Researcher will translate or transcribe	

7E. Online data collection (Detailed instructions)	☒	Not applicable	Describe the technology platform used to collect online data. Describe the security of the data. Will participant IP addresses be recorded? Are there any special limits to privacy? <i>Response:</i>
	☐	Carleton-based server	
	☐	Commercial server (based in Canada)	
	☐	Commercial server (outside Canada)	
	☐	Other	

7F. Bio-interactions (Detailed instructions)	☒	Not applicable	Describe the apparatus and methods to acquire biological specimens or fluids. (e.g., blood, saliva, tissue samples.) How will specimens be safely stored and destroyed? If any will be kept, explain why, how and for how long. <i>Response:</i>
	☐	Biological specimens/fluids	

7G. Bio-instruments (Detailed instructions)	☒	Not applicable	Bio-instruments touch or send energy into the body. (e.g., electrodes, MRI/X-ray.) Describe the apparatus and its use. If applicable, explain any significant risks and compare the dose (e.g., electrical, radiation) to established safety standards. <i>Response:</i>
	☐	Bio-instruments	

7H. Bio-interventions (Detailed instructions)	☒	Not applicable	Describe the apparatus and methods associated with the bio-intervention. (e.g., drug, stress, medical devices.) Explain any risks to the participants and compare it to established safety standards. <i>Response:</i>
	☐	Bio-interventions	

7I. **Risk of Psychological Harm**
(Detailed instructions)

X	Not applicable/No risks
	Mild risks
	Moderate risks
	High risks

Explain the rationale for your selection, and, if applicable, explain the nature, magnitude and probability of the risks and how they will be mitigated.

Response: **The study does not involve any psychological risks which exceed risks encountered in daily life as the interview questions are innocuous and individuals will remain anonymous in the final report.**

7J. **Risk of Physical Harm**
(Detailed instructions)

X	Not applicable/No risks
	Mild risks
	Moderate risks
	High risks

Explain the rationale for your selection, and, if applicable, explain the nature, magnitude and probability of the risks. Describe how they will be mitigated.

Response: **This study does not involve any physical risk which exceeds risks encountered in daily life as there is no physical component to data collection.**

7K. **Risk of Social and/or Economic Harm**
(Detailed instructions)

☐	Not applicable/No risks
☒	Mild risks
☐	Moderate risks
☐	High risks

Explain the rationale for your selection, and, if applicable, explain the nature, magnitude and probability of the risks and how they will be mitigated.

Response: **There is a potential professional risk if the organization/employer learns of information provided or comments made by an employee that they deem inappropriate. This is very unlikely as participation is voluntary and anonymous and no identifying details about interviewees will be included in the report.**

Incidental Findings
7L. (Detailed instructions)

X	Not applicable/No incidental findings anticipated
	Low probability
	High probability

Describe possible incidental findings (unanticipated discoveries that relate to the welfare of participants or others) and how they will be managed. Examples are becoming aware of abuse of a child, or imminent harm to a participant or third party. Your approach to managing any findings should also be described in the informed consent.

Response:

8. Methods: Data Storage and Analysis

Identifiability of stored data
8A. (Detailed instructions)

	Anonymous
X	Pseudonyms/Coded
	Real participant names with data attributable
	Real participant names with data non-attributable
	Different levels of anonymity for different groups of participants

Describe the identifiability of research data, including how pseudonyms will be assigned, if applicable. If there are different levels of anonymity for different groups, describe each level here.

Response: For data management purposes, interviews will be assigned a number. Once they have been transcribed I will delete the audio files and will save the transcripts to a password protected and encrypted folder on my personal computer.

8B. **Identifiability of published data**
(Detailed instructions)

X	Anonymous
	Aggregate data only
	Pseudonyms/Coded
	Real participant names with data attributable
	Real participant names with data non-attributable
	Different levels of anonymity for different groups of participants

Describe the identifiability of data that will appear in publications, including how pseudonyms will be assigned, if applicable. If there are different levels of anonymity for different groups, describe each level here.

Response: I will refer to them by their general position within the workplace (ex. "a frontline service worker stated..." or "a member of the management team said..."), but all names and other identifying details will be excluded.

8C. **Data Storage (during the project)**
(Detailed instructions)

	Encrypted
X	Password-protected
	Anonymous data
	Physical documents
	Other

How are data being stored and kept safe? Provide details for electronic data and hard copies if applicable.

Response: Electronic transcripts will be stored in a password-protected folder on my personal laptop. Hardcopies of the consent forms will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home.

8D. **Data Disposition**
(after the project)
 (Detailed instructions)

☐	Retained by the researcher(s)	After project completion, describe how the data (confidential and non-confidential aspects) will be stored for future use, made publicly available, archived, returned to participants, or destroyed. If shared, with whom? Describe any restrictions on access. If destroyed, how long will data be kept? Will personal identifiers and the actual data be destroyed at different phases? Will participant contact information be kept for future studies? <i>Response:</i> All data, both hardcopy and electronic, will be destroyed upon completion of this study
☐	Stored in a depository	
☐	Archived	
☐	Shared with research agreement	
☐	Shared publicly	
☐	Returned	
☒	Destroyed	

Data Breach Risks
8E. (Detailed instructions)

☒	Mild risk to participants
☐	Moderate to participants
☐	High risk to participants

Describe how likely a data breach is to occur and how it could affect the participants. If risks are significant, how will they be mitigated?

Response: A data breach is highly unlikely as all data will be kept either in a password-protected folder on my private laptop or in a locked filing cabinet in my private place of residence, to which only I have access. In the unlikely event that a data breach did occur, there is a potential professional risk if the organization/employer learns of information provided or comments made by an employee that they deem inappropriate.

9. **Declarations**

Supervisor Approval
9A.

☐	Not applicable
☒	Supervisor Approved
☐	Supervisor has not approved

For student projects, please indicate the date that the supervisor approved the application to go forward for REB approval. (All CUREB-A applications must copy the supervisor when submitting an application to ethics@carleton.ca. CUREB-B applications are automatically submitted to the supervisor through the online application system; therefore, the student must inform his/her supervisor that the application has been submitted so the protocol may be approved by the supervisor and received by CUREB-B).

Response: April 25, 2016

Declaration #1
9B. (Detailed instructions)

☒	I agree
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This ethics application accurately describes the research project or scholarly activity that I plan to conduct.

Declaration #2
9C. ([Detailed instructions](#)) ☒ I agree No recruitment or data collection for this protocol will commence before ethics clearance.

Declaration #3
9D. ([Detailed instructions](#)) ☒ I agree No changes will be made to the research project as described in this protocol without receiving clearance from the Research Ethics Board.

Declaration #4
9E. ([Detailed instructions](#)) ☒ I agree The Research Ethics Board will be notified immediately of any alleged or real ethical breaches or concerns, adverse events, or participant complaints that arise during or after the course of this research project.

10. **Comments**

Comments (optional)
10A
.
Do you have any comments or suggestions on the form
Response:

Appendix E: Carleton University Ethics Board Approval Letter

CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS APPROVAL

Ethics approval for the following research has been cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A (CUREB-A) at Carleton University. CUREB-A is constituted and operates in compliance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS2).

Ethics ID: Project # 104496

Principal Investigator: Theo Hug

Co-Investigator(s): **Dan Irving (Primary Investigator)**

Susan Braedley (Research Supervisor)

Theo Hug (Student Research: Master's Student)

Study Title: **Social Service Provision in the Age of Austerity [Theo Hug]**

Effective: **June 10, 2016**

Expires: **June 30, 2017.**

Restrictions:

This certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modification to the approved research must be submitted to CUREB-A. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.
3. An Annual Application for the renewal of ethics clearance must be submitted and approved by the above date. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the closure of the file. If funding is associated, funds will be frozen.
4. A closure request must be sent to CUREB-A when the research is complete or terminated.
5. Should any participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to CUREB-A.
6. Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans 2nd edition* and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research* may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Please email the Ethics Coordinators at ethics@carleton.ca if you have any questions.

APPROVED BY:
Andy Adler, Vice Chair

Date: June 10, 2016

Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A