University of Nevada, Reno

The Homeless Campus And The City: Delineating Care And Control Spaces In Reno

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by

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Abstract

Contemporary homelessness management policies are based on a combination of care and control practices that create complex policy landscapes. In that line, local governments may actively fund and support homeless shelters and voluntary organizations while sweeping informal encampments and developing anti-homeless ordinances and infrastructure. This thesis articulates this theorization of care and control dynamics in contemporary homelessness management to study the recent development of the Nevada Cares Campus in Reno, Nevada. Drawing from the accounts of the experiences of those inhabiting the campus, the newly open facility is studied first as a shelter space with its own care and control dynamics, and second as a tool for the spatial organization of homelessness in the city of Reno.

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Preface

For me, homelessness has been tied to Reno since the first time I set foot in this city. It was the summer of 2019, and I was visiting UNR as a prospective student while trying to make sense of this gambling city in the process of rehabilitation. Because at the time I had no clue when the American holidays were —well, I kind of still don't—, I scheduled my visit for the weekend of Labor Day. Although my soon-to-be advisor took the time to meet with me and show me around the city despite the inconvenience of the dates, I spent hours and hours of that weekend just wandering around the Midtown and Downtown areas by myself. I was appalled by the amount of people pushing shopping carts filled with their belongings up and down, or panhandling, or just sleeping under the burning sun of summer Nevada. I had already witnessed homelessness in the American city while staying in Los Angeles, but the case of Reno really caught me off guard.

In late August 2020 I moved to Reno for my master's degree. Without knowing it, I rented a room at the house that was home to the Reno Burrito Project (RBP). Funded by my roommate, Blaize Abuntori, the RBP prepared and served homemade burritos to the homeless Renoites in Downtown. The example of Blaize and the RBP motivated me to start thinking of ways in which I could take part in helping the homeless community. While doing so, Dr. Casey R. Lynch adapted an independent study we had on public space and transformed it into a course on the geographies of homelessness. That course and, especially, its final paper, influenced greatly the development of this thesis. Said paper contained a general review of the geographies of care and control of homelessness management and an exploration of Reno's geographies of homelessness. The twenty-something page long paper included interviews with local journalists

Anjeanette Damon and Nico Colombant; the founder and director of Karma Box, Grant Denton; and Marie Baxter and Barbara Klipfel, CEO and Chief Operating Officer of Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada respectively. In late January 2021, I finally found how to help the homeless community and founded 'Laundry to the People' in company of Ilya Arbatman and Rosie Zuckerman. At first, we started providing laundry services to those staying at the tent city in the underpass of Wells Avenue. When the Nevada Cares Campus opened and the city swept everyone from the encampment, we adapted and kept offering consistent laundry services to the unhoused and, generally, anyone in financial need. Over our first year of existence, we have provided more than 600 laundry loads.

Through my work with Laundry to the People I got in contact with different people experiencing homelessness in Reno, as well as with different individuals and groups involved in outreach projects. The relationships I built with them resulted in a better understanding of the realities of homelessness in the city, which was crucial in the development of my research.

Interestingly, the initial aim of this thesis was to study how care and control dynamics widely studied in the literature of the geographies of homelessness, unfolded in the context of the campus, placing special attention on how they were experienced by the campus residents. As my work advanced paralleling with the campus development, I realized that what the campus was offering differed greatly from the hyped expectations set by local politicians and public officials. As I witnessed the failure of the measures of care and control implemented by the campus management, I started to think of the Nevada Cares Campus from a wider lens. That way, the goals and research objectives from this thesis shifted, enlarging my initial scope and

observing the campus in the context of Reno's spatial politics of homelessness management.

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This thesis explores the ways in which the post-revanchist city implements strategies of homelessness management based on contradictory dynamics of care and control. My contribution to the literature on the revanchist and post-revanchist urban modes of governance is the introduction of the homeless campus model as the latest artifact of spatial control. What is interesting about the homeless campus is that it carries the double task of maximizing care and control based on logics of concentration. Said differently, the rationale of the campus is twofold. First, based on a compassionate standpoint, it centralizes homelessness services and resources to efficiently reach more individuals. Second, by concentrating resources, the campus expects to attract and contain the possible largest number of homeless individuals, effectively removing them from urban spaces where they might threaten capital investment, revitalization, and redevelopment.

The work on this thesis is grounded on a case study of the Nevada Cares Campus, a recently developed homeless campus in Reno, Nevada. Through the study of the Cares Campus and Reno's policy on homelessness, I examine the risks that the concentration rationale of the campus model, embedded in the logics of the post-revanchist city, might entail. In particular, the case of Reno shows how effective campuses can be in spatially controlling the homeless even when the compassionate provision of care is insufficient or missing. That way, the campus, while wrapped in a narrative of compassion and care, might become the ultimate tool for removing the

homeless from public spaces in investment areas; thus effectively turning into a central element of the punishment and control machinery.

Key to my findings is the collection and reproduction of the lived experiences of those inhabiting the geographies of homelessness in Reno. In this regard, campus clients[1] are given a central position in my research, in line with the demands from local homeless people and advocates for a meaningful role in the review and enactment of homelessness policy.

1.2. Outline of chapters

In Chapter II, I am going to examine contemporary homelessness management. Drawing from the literature on the geographies of homelessness as well as other social science literature, I will show how homelessness policy today is based on a coordination of care and control dynamics aimed at mediating between the needs of capital investors and the urban poor.

Chapter III will set the bases for this thesis analysis. First, the model of the homeless campus is explored and exemplified. Then, the Nevada Cares Campus is described in detail.

Chapter IV is probably the most relevant one from this thesis. In this chapter, I will draw from the experience of campus clients, a member of the VOA staff, and the report from a third-party consultant to explore the ways in which measures of care and

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[1] In this thesis, I make a distinction between 'resident' and 'client' to define different campus users. Residents are those who stay at the facility, who sleep at the shelter or the safe camp. The category of 'clients' includes residents but also those who make use of the facility at different times for eating, showering, using the bathroom, or just resting in the warm room during the winter. Non-resident clients at the NCC don't share bathrooms with the residents, having a designated bathroom area with portable toilets located outside the big shelter. I would have preferred to refer to the latter group as 'users' but the word 'clients' was the one commonly used to designate shelter users in the literature. When exploring my interviews with shelter clients, I will use the term 'client' to refer to non-resident clients, and 'resident' to describe resident clients.

control unfold at the Cares Campus. Closing the chapter, I will review local media articles and video reports, official documents, promotional videos of the campus, and public statements made by city officials and public servants. By doing so, I will disentangle how measures of care are used to formulate narratives that, in turn, shape the way homeless management policy is enforced.

In Chapter V, I will show how different revitalization processes occurring in downtown Reno and its surroundings push homeless people away to less desirable spaces. This process of slowly shielding Downtown from homeless people will be framed in the context of an ongoing city rebranding that is drastically changing the city's economical, demographic, and physical landscapes. Rather than displacing the homeless by scattering all around the city, it seems like the development of the Nevada Cares Campus aimed at concentrating them. In this regard, I make the argument that Reno is the perfect example of the post-revanchist city, failing at providing care and compassion in its attempt to mediate between the needs of capital investment and the urban poor.

Finally, Chapter VI will recapitulate the main points made by this thesis and will draw the lines for further research. The thesis is closed by a personal reflection.

1.3. Methods

As explained in 1.1., this thesis is grounded on the experiences of those inhabiting the geographies of homelessness in Reno. Homeless people are usually victimized and regarded as passive actors, which denies them any sense of agency and prevents them from having a meaningful role in the decision-making processes affecting them. In this regard, I felt it was essential to counter this narrative and give the perspectives and experiences of homeless Renoites a central position on my

research. In order to stay true to this research philosophy, I based my research approach on qualitative methodologies.

In that respect, I carried out ethnographic fieldwork in Reno from November 2020 to February 2022. During this period, I conducted hours and hours of participant observation through formal and informal conversations with homeless Renoites, local advocates, and different individuals involved in outreach efforts. Although I was open and clear about my research work, sometimes I felt anxious with the dilemma of establishing the line between my personal relationships or volunteer work and my work as a researcher. This tension was two-sided, as some of the times I headed down to the vicinity of the Cares Campus to conduct interviews or informal conversations I would end up abandoning the research task and focusing on outreach efforts.

Most of my exchanges with research participants (aside from the formal interviews) happened in the context of my volunteer work with Laundry to the People. In this regard, we have campus clients coming in every week looking to get their clothes and blankets clean. Conversating and building ties with them is part of what we do, as the washing and drying cycles leave time for conversation. Additionally, talking with the people we serve helps us find ways of better supporting and helping them. In our conversations, the campus will emerge casually, as it was home for some of them and it was part of their day to day, their anecdotes and, sometimes, their rants. Of course, all the information collected in these informal conversations has been treated with the upmost respect, avoiding any personal or private details.

Regarding more formal data collection, I conducted 11 semi-structured interviews with people experiencing homelessness that were or had been clients of the Nevada Cares Campus. These interviews were directed towards capturing how the complex dynamics of care and control unfolded in the context of the campus and, more

importantly, how were they experienced by the research participants. I conducted them between January and February 2022 and took place mostly in the vicinities of the Cares Campus. Three of them were conducted outside the laundromat where Laundry to the People takes place. The interview participants included three shelter residents, four safe camp residents, three non-resident clients of the campus, and a former shelter resident who was staying outside while waiting to be accepted into the safe camp. Two of the shelter residents and two of the non-resident clients were interviewed in pairs, in contrast with the other individual interviews. I also had the chance of interviewing a VOA staff member in early March 2022. This interview was online through a digital voice-calling service.

Except for the latter —who refused to be compensated—, all the interview participants received a $10 gift card as compensation for their research participation. All the interviewees were also given pseudonyms to keep their identities secret. For the case of the VOA staff member, they are simply referred to using the pronouns they/them.

The process of participant selection for the interviews was complex. In some cases, I arranged interviews with people I knew from my work as a volunteer or people that homeless advocates had put me in contact with. Then, other participants were selected through 'snowball' sampling. Finally, five of them were selected randomly in the vicinities of the Nevada Cares Campus.

Additionally, relevant information was collected through attendance or online review of several meetings of the Community Homeless Advisory Board (CHAB). In parallel, I made an extensive review of different materials such as local media articles and reports, official documents, promotional videos of the Cares Campus, and public statements made by city officials and public servants.

Since the beginning of this research project, my aim was to capture the experiences of those experiencing homelessness. Usually left out of the conversation and the decision-making processes directly affecting their survival, I tried to give them a central place in this thesis.

Chapter II: Contemporary Homelessness Management in Urban Spaces: the Care and Control Tension

2.1. Public Space: the Entrepreneurial and Revanchist Cities and the Homeless

Geographers have long studied public space and the ways in which we interact with and within it, as well as the ways we shape and, reciprocally, are shaped by it. Because homeless or unhoused people are usually regarded as those without access to private spaces and thus, forced to live in the public (Blomley, 2009), the study of public space becomes an important dimension of the scholarly work on homelessness. Following this idea, this section approaches how the evolution of urban public spaces between the latter 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st Century have shaped homelessness management, especially in the United States.

Rooted in the globalization dynamics and the political hegemony of neoliberalism (MacLeod, 2002), the urban spaces of the 1970s and 1980s saw the rise of what Harvey (1989) termed the ‘entrepreneurial city’. The term defined a mode of urban governance based on public-private partnerships that are entrepreneurial and speculative in nature. In the entrepreneurial city, the role of the local government moves from working to redistribute wealth through welfare, to a position of business enabler (Harvey, 1989; MacLeod, 2002). Two important implications of the entrepreneurial city are worth noting. First, the kind of economic activities and functions offered by the entrepreneurial city tend to create either low-paying jobs or high-paying managerial

positions, increasing income and wealth inequalities (Harvey, 1989). Second, under the entrepreneurialism mode of governance, cities enter an exhausting dynamic of inter-urban competition for capital that helps the spreading of de-municipalization and urban commodification (Harvey, 1989; Hennigan & Speer, 2019; MacLeod, 2002). This latter process of commodification entails fostering a certain image of the city landscape that attracts capital from businesses and tourists to the detriment of the urban poor (Lelandais, 2016). In turn, maintaining this image forces cities to hide the growing inequality gap in urban space, which is mostly done through a punitive response to visible urban problems that may compromise the city's economic development (DeVerteuil, 2006; MacLeod, 2002).

In his famous book 'The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City', Neil Smith (1996) conceptualized the 'revanchist city' as the shift from a period of welfare and anti-poverty legislation in the 1960s to a 'neoliberal revanchism' in the 1990s. At the urban level, this shift translated into the reclaiming of urban public spaces by the urban upper classes at the expense of other groups including minorities, the poor, and, especially, homeless people. This process of reclaiming public space was enabled through harsh policing and the implementation of anti-homeless policies (DeVerteuil, May & Mahs, 2009; Smith, 1996).

The concepts of the entrepreneurial and the revanchist city can be seen as two sides of the same coin, as the revanchist city principles seek to enforce the ideals of business development and capital-attracting aesthetics intrinsic in the entrepreneurial city. In conjunction, both these concepts are useful to explain how contemporary urban policy and design are implemented in undemocratic ways prioritizing the needs of businesses, the wealthy, and tourists (Álvarez-García et al., 2017; Attoh, 2011; Madden, 2010). These changes in urban policy radically change the conception of public space

and, therefore, its social uses. In that sense, urban spaces are not seen any more as places for social interaction but places for investment (Németh, 2009) and consumption (Costa, 2009; Miles, 2010). As seen above, the new conception of public space is tied with its commodification. Again, homeless people's unsightliness emerges as a visible obstacle to this urban commodification, as their lack of access to private spaces forces them to live in the public (Blomley, 2009). This 'live in the public' refers to the forced performance of everyday actions such as urinating, sleeping, drinking, or making love in the open (Mitchell, 1995), threatening thus the very much sought new urban aesthetic. Although, as authors such as Kohn (2004) argue, these intimate bodily functions are "intrinsic to life itself" and there is no amount of criminalization or policing harassment that can prevent the homeless from performing them (p. 129), the reality is that anti-homeless laws, anti-homeless design, harsh policing, and surveillance and control systems are implemented in urban space as an attempt to squeeze and collapse homeless spaces; thus eliminating their right to be in the city (Blomley, 2009; DeVerteuil, Marr & Snow, 2009; Mitchell, 1995, 1997, 2003; Mitchell and Heynen, 2009; Petty, 2014; Soja, 2014).

2.2. From the Punitive City to the Care and Control Framework

We have explored the roots of the rise of a certain mode of city management that seeks to control and punish the homeless in an attempt to 'purify' public urban space (Mitchell, 2003). However, recent accounts of contemporary homelessness response point out more complex patterns that escape the narrow focus of the revanchist and punitive frameworks and embrace also more compassionate or caring measures (Brinegar, 2013; DeVerteuil, 2006; DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs, 2009).

Brinegar (2013) explains this shift in homelessness response as resulting from the change of the composition of the homeless population and its increasing numbers during the last decades of the 20th century. In this context, she argues, while governments and private organizations focused on providing shelter beds and services, municipal efforts focused also on criminalizing homeless activities to control and remove homeless people from public spaces where they had a growing visibility. DeVerteuil, May and von Mahs (2009) go further to argue that the geographies of homelessness, far from collapsing as a consequence of the punitive framework, have proliferated through a variety of spaces that include those "that accommodate and support homeless people" (p. 652). Therefore, although relevant for the field, the study of the punitive frame must include the complexities entangled in the emergence of the so-called 'spaces of care' (DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs, 2009; Hennigan & Speer, 2019). For Speer (2017), the new realities of compassionate policy "make for a complex, nuanced landscape of homelessness that is simultaneously confining and open, punitive and caring" (p. 161). This complexity can be exemplified in the ways current city policy on homelessness combines seemingly contradictory actions such as the sanction of anti-vagrancy or anti-homeless ordinances with the active funding and support of homeless shelters and voluntary organizations (DeVerteuil, 2006).

Looking at the case of Fresno, Hennigan & Speer (2019) observed how the city bulldozed all homeless encampments in 2013 while expanding the provision of housing vouchers. Hennigan & Speer see this policy turn as compatible with the revanchist approach, which mutates into what we could call 'compassionate revanchism'. This kind of policy response highlights an idea of 'required care' by which criminalization ordinances preventing the homeless from panhandling, urinating, sleeping, or even sitting in public (DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs, 2009; Mitchell, 1997, 2003) are used

as tools for law enforcement "to push people to accept services, such as shelter" (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2017, p. 10). Murphy (2009) defines these complex dynamics as "giving rise to a deeply ambivalent new benevolence" that she defines as 'post-revanchist compassion' and

> reflects the needs of local policymakers and politicians to mediate, on the one hand, the imperatives of capital investment and, on the other, the inevitable displacement and marginalization of large numbers of the urban poor in the face of neoliberal restructuring. (p. 311)

Thus, the mediation between the needs of capital investors and the urban poor creates a policy landscape of complex dynamics where, as argued by DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs (2009), "the line between 'care' and 'control' is not always easy to determine" (p. 652).

This ambiguity between care and control dynamics may be explained by the fact that, although initially different in means of action and ideological basis, both care and control measures seem to share the same goal: to spatially manage the urban poor and homeless populations, usually by removing them from urban spaces undergoing processes of revitalization (Hennigan & Speer, 2019). This is a very relevant point, especially for geographers, as the idea of compassionate revanchism does not describe a general change of attitude towards the homeless *per se* but a change that is spatially determined. Said differently, the revanchist/compassionate city is a punitive space for homeless people in its prime city while offering spaces of care in its more deprived areas (Johnsen, Cloke & May, 2005).

2.3. Care and Control Dynamics in Spaces of Shelter

This thesis focuses on the study of a homeless campus. As I explore further in section 3.2., homeless campuses are recently developed spaces of care that include

different shelter provisions, as well as homelessness services and resources within an enclosed area. In that vein, it is interesting to explore how geographers and other social scientists have studied the way care and control dynamics unfold in the context of different spaces of care. This exploration of the literature may be useful to the study campus' dynamics as this new comprehensive response to homelessness is also embedded in the context of post-revanchist compassionism.

The most common shelter provision, homeless or emergency shelters can be seen as 'quasi-total institutions'[2] whose residents, although being institutionalized, are free to leave at any time to take care of a wide range of responsibilities such as education, work, or treatment programs (Armaline, 2005). As quasi-total institutions, shelters offer a great example of how care and control dynamics are entangled in spaces of care. This idea is exemplified by DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs (2009) in the ways shelters provide homeless people with a space where they can sleep, eat food, and access related services. At the same time, they argue, most of the shelters oblige their residents to comply with restrictive regulations aimed at controlling and discipline their residents. Moreover, for DeVerteuil (2006), housing services for the homeless (including shelters) can only exist if accompanied by strict regulation of homeless people's behavior. Highlighting the capability of shelters to act as spatial control tools, DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs (2009) also discuss the role of shelters in spatially controlling homeless people. While offering services to them, they argue, shelters move homeless people off the streets, rendering the homelessness problem less visible. That way, shelters work as a tool minimizing economic costs for the city and possible image-

[2] Armaline (2005) described 'quasi-total institutions' in contrast to 'total institutions', which are those that "organize and potentially constrain behavior and interaction among residents to fulfill organizational necessities" such as safety, control, or containment (p. 1125). Examples of total institutions include prisons, mental institutions, or the military.

related damages for the politicians. In a similar manner, Hopper (1990) described shelters as places that emphasize containment and control aimed at “curb[ing] the movement of the wandering poor” (p.14). Control dynamics, thus, have a spatial dimension, as they might intervene in the spatial social dynamics by affecting who is able to access and be visible in public space.

The sanctioned encampment model, popularly known as ‘safe camp’, refers to those homeless encampments that are officially authorized or supported by city governments (Herring, 2014). Official local support differs greatly case to case, ranging from just giving permission to camp under a minimal set of rules to a heavy involvement in city-sanctioned camps. This latter may include operation funds for services such as case management or counseling, access to public property, access to social services, and even access to water and sewage infrastructure as well as garbage collection (Junejo, Skinner & Rankin, 2016). The intensity of city government involvement in the management of the sanctioned encampments may also vary greatly. This managerial role may range from just issuing camping permits tailored to determined parcels, to deriving management to a third-party actor (e.g., a non-profit organization) or exercising direct control of the safe camp. As a model, the sanctioned encampment is based on the informal camps that pop up around cities as an alternative system to housing for unsheltered communities. Speer, (2017) argues that these informal encampments —also known as ‘tent-cities’— offer homeless people the option of being part of a community that offers them autonomy, security, and privacy in ways that shelters are not able to. Similarly, Donley & Wright (2012) observe how, as happens in all human groupings, encampments have their own social structure with leaders, labor division, group rules, and informal sanctions for rule violations.

Apart from property-related issues, the opponents of homeless encampments usually cite concerns for public safety as the main reason behind their opposition (Junejo, Skinner & Rankin, 2016). The possibility of sanctioning encampments that are more or less supervised by city governments opens the possibility for increasing safety and spatially controlling informal encampments. This option entails an opportunity to maintain the positive outcomes from tent-cities (e.g., the sense of community and individual responsibility) while mitigating the negative ones (e.g., safety and security issues or the tent-city residents' vulnerability to encampment evictions). Very critical of safe camps, Speer (2017) refers to these sites as 'tent wards', a concept reflecting the mix between care and incarceration that they offer. The process of converting an informal tent-city into a safe camp often involves several forms of seclusion and control such as the issuing of special IDs for the camp residents; the obligation of undergoing check-ins, breathalyzer tests, and detailed screenings to enter the site; the prohibition from bringing visitors inside the safe camp; or the enforcement of strict regulations determining which activities are allowed inside the facility (Herring, 2014; Speer, 2017). Safe camps are often fenced and surveilled, as well as usually located in isolated areas miles away from downtowns. Explaining how intertwined care and control measures are within spaces of shelter, Speer (2017) sees the tight securitization of the safe camp as a tool to both police the daily lives of its residents and protect them. This duality of intentions, Speer states, "highlights how protective and disciplinary functions become deeply enmeshed" in spaces of shelter such as sanctioned encampments (p. 162). Turning again to their utility to maximize the spatial regulation of homelessness, Herring & Lutz (2015) warn that the toleration and even legalization of encampments by city officials must not be characterized as benevolence. Instead, government officials see them as strategic spatial tools to manage the poor at lower costs in a context of

welfare austerity and expansion of anti-homeless laws. At the same time, they argue, sanctioned encampments "provide an alternative to the dependence associated with shelter life by preserving self-worth and marking distinction from the homeless on the street." (p. 697)

Finally, for the specific case of Reno, it is interesting to look at the relatively new concept of the tiny-house villages. This is interesting for two main reasons. First, Reno already has a working tiny-house village program just on the other side of the street from the Nevada Cares Campus (see Hackbarth, 2021; Northern Nevada HOPES, n.d.). Second, the campus is set to start its own tiny-home village project using mod-pods as a year-round substitute for the original tent-based safe camp (Stefansson, 2022; This is Reno, 2022). The landscape of the tiny-house village is usually composed of large common facilities, porches, and community gardens that are prioritized at the expense of larger private spaces (Deaton, 2016). The concept aims at reducing environmental impacts and increasing housing affordability through a reduction of spatial footprints. The tiny-house movement sees the villages as a possible and cost-effective solution to different housing issues, including the homeless crisis (Evans, 2020; Ford & Gomez-Lanier, 2017). At the same time, they exercise certain control strategies over their residents, as most tiny-house villages are placed in gated facilities and demand mandatory sobriety, screenings, and background checks for granting access (Evans, 2020). The first tiny village destined for housing homeless people was established in Seattle in 2016. Each 8-foot-by-12-foot tiny-house had a cost of $2,200 (Ford & Gomez-Lanier, 2017), which helps give an idea of how cost-effective tiny-house villages could be.

Chapter III: Homelessness in Reno and Washoe County: the Road to the Nevada Cares Campus

3.1. Drawing the big picture: Contemporary Homelessness Management in Reno and Washoe County

Homelessness is a widespread and pervasive issue in the United States. The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 1 found that, on a single night in 2020, around 580,000 people experienced homelessness in the United States (The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021). 61% of them stayed in sheltered locations (e.g., shelters, transitional housing, etc.), while the 39% remained unsheltered (those who stayed in public streets, parks, abandoned buildings, or other places not suitable for human habitation). For the State of Nevada, the 2020 AHAR reported 6,900 people experiencing homelessness, 61% of which remained unsheltered. Pandemic-related disruptions complicated the counts of unsheltered homeless individuals for the same report in 2021. The report, thus, focused only on sheltered individuals, which provides a less complete picture of homelessness in the nation (The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2022).

In a localized approach, the Northern Nevada Continuum of Care's Point In Time count (PIT) conducted on February 4, 2021, found 1708 people experiencing homelessness in Washoe County (Point in Time Count, n.d.). Out of those 1708, 780 stayed unsheltered, 697 stayed at emergency shelters, and 231 were taking part in transitional housing programs. The year before, the PIT counted 1231 people experiencing homelessness, 477 people less than for 2021. This dramatic increase in the homeless population is especially worrying for the unsheltered population, which the Northern Nevada Continuum of care has seen increase by 875% since 2017 (Washoe County, 2021, 27:57). At the same time, the number of people staying at

emergency shelters —which decreased in 2020 as the result of a decrease in the number of available beds because of COVID-19 social distancing measures (Community Homelessness Advisory Board Staff Report, 2020)— surpassed that of 2018 and 2019. Looking back further in time, the magnitude of the homelessness issue is even more worrying. A little more than a decade ago, Reno recorded 700 people experiencing homelessness, which by 2019 had already increased by 79% (Liu and Corbitt, n.d.).

The relevance of homelessness in the region's political landscape can be demonstrated by the fact that homelessness was one of the hottest topics of the past 2018 local elections (Rothberg, 2018). Also in 2018 the regional administrations established the Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB). The CHAB is composed of elected representatives from the City of Reno, the City of Sparks, and Washoe County and meets monthly to make recommendations on homelessness in the region based on the collaboration of local organizations and agencies (City of Reno, 2021a; Community Homelessness Advisory Board, n.d.). However, local policy response to homelessness has been fragmented, to say the least. Following the care/control dynamic organization, it is interesting to divide the city and county's actions regarding homelessness in two groups: measures of care and measures of control.

3.1.1. 'Care' Measures

Care actions are those based on compassionate principles and aimed at the provision of services and help for the homeless people. In that sense, the cities of Reno and Sparks, as well as Washoe County have partnered with several non-profit organizations to provide homeless services including housing and sheltering, job market reinsertion, addiction and mental health counseling, food delivery and

provision, etc. Some of these partnerships include, among others, agreements with the Northern California & Northern Nevada affiliate of Volunteers of America (VOA), Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, Northern Nevada HOPES, and different local non-profits such as Karma Box or RISE.

Two of these partnerships include the 'Reno Works' program and the Village on Sage Street. The first one is a city of Reno and VOA joint initiative designed to address unemployment among local homeless shelter residents. For twelve weeks, the participants of the program take part in comprehensive workshops focused on improving their employability and get first-hand working experience through the City of Reno Public Works and the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Departments (City of Reno, n.d.). The Village on Safe Street was developed through a partnership between the City of Reno, VOA, and the Community Foundation. Opened in August 2019, the Village on Safe Street is designed as transitional housing for low-income working people. The village is formed by 216 small single-occupancy, dorm-style units, an onsite laundry, and meeting and recreation spaces. Each unit is rented for $400/month and residents in the village must prove to have a monthly income between $1,320 and $2,735 (Community Foundation of Northern Nevada, n.d.; Volunteers of America Northern California & Northern Nevada, n.d.).

Before the opening of the Nevada Cares Campus, the Reno area had two permanent operative shelters. The first was the men's emergency shelter operated by VOA and located on Record Street in the downtown area. Although being one of the central axes of homelessness services in the city for years, the shelter had a mixed reputation that was aggravated after making the news in 2019 because of several concerning events —namely, a stabbing and a violent assault (AP News, 2019a), and the finding of a dead man's body on the shelter's roof that had gone undiscovered for

several days (Damon, 2019b). Moreover, when Pat Cashell (the shelter's director and Regional Director for VOA Northern Nevada) was asked about security issues in the shelter during a Community Homelessness Advisory Board meeting, he stated: "I'm telling you, [the shelter is] not safe. I don't want anyone to think it's safe. It's dangerous. We need to do something drastic, not today but yesterday. By no means would I ever call that place safe" (as reported by Anjeanette Damon, 2019b). The operations in this shelter were moved to the Nevada Cares Campus when it became operative.

The second permanent shelter in the Reno area is 'OUR Place', a women and family shelter opened in June 2020 in the city of Sparks. The shelter is managed by local advocate organization RISE and offers shelter and wrap-around services "for 136 women, 38 families, and their animal companions" (OUR Place, n.d.). Interestingly, OUR Place is located in Sparks because a municipal law prohibits operate more than one homeless shelter in the city of Reno (Damon, 2017b).

Another city partnership related to sheltering the homeless is the tiny-home village Hope Springs. As mentioned before, it was developed as a partnership between the City of Reno and Northern Nevada HOPES. The village is designed as a drug-free and sober transitional housing project for homeless people. Residents are able to stay in the community between three to six months and, instead of paying rent charges, they are expected to fulfill duties inside the tiny-house community related to clean-up, security, and maintenance. The complex contains thirty 92-square-feet units and a central building of around 3000 square feet with showers, restrooms, and a kitchen. The village is fenced and has 24/7 security (for more information on Hope Springs see Higdon, 2018; King, 2020; News 4 & Fox 11 Digital Team, 2018; Northern Nevada HOPES, n.d.).

Law enforcement agencies have also shown an interest in including less punitive and more caring approaches to their work with the homeless population. Sparks PD and the Washoe County Sheriff's Office have established the Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement (H.O.P.E.) teams. Designed as police outreach patrols, H.O.P.E. teams aim at breaking the barriers between law enforcement and the region's unsheltered populations through partnering with Medicaid providers, local shelters, local entities providing a continuum of care, and other similar groups and agencies (Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement, 2022). Other efforts of care include the City of Reno's Clean and Safe team. This initiative partners with different local and regional organizations to develop outreach programs of different nature, as well as cleanups of public parks and areas along the Truckee River —which includes sweeping homeless encampments (Clean and Safe Program, 2022).

Although completely unrelated to the county and city governments, it is worth including in this section that Reno possesses an unparalleled landscape of independent and self-funded non-profit grassroots organizations. These groups, formed by people from diverse demographic backgrounds, use financial and material donations from third-party individuals to consistently provide homeless people with different resources, including goods and services. Among others, these local organizations provide food, clothing, blankets and sleeping bags, books, and hygiene products, as well as laundry services and even a community-funded housing project aimed at accommodating different families and individuals in weekly motels. The list of groups includes Reno Burrito Project, Black Wall Street Reno, Reno Hearts You, Family Soup Mutual Aid, Laundry to the People, Biggest Little Food Not Bombs, Reno Soup for the Soul, Reno Gastro Project, Biggest Little Free Pantry, Helping Hands Loving Hearts,

Red Equity NV, the United Federation of the Universe, Reno Sparks Together, and many, many others.

3.1.2. 'Control' Measures

While Washoe County and the City of Reno funded and developed these actions and partnerships aimed at providing care to the region's homeless population, other measures in staunch contradiction with the principles of care were adopted.

The prime control action in the Reno area is the continued eviction and bulldozing of informal homeless encampments. Popularly known as 'sweeps', encampment evictions have consistently been part of the contemporary response to homelessness in the region, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (see AP News, 2019b; Bonaparte, 2021; Conrad, 2018, 2020a, 2020b, 2021a; Reno News & Reviews, 2019; Serrano, 2020; Spillman, 2019; This is Reno, 2021a for reports on recent encampment sweeps and Starbuck, 2020a, 2020b for the news coverage centered in the sweeps during the pandemic). In Reno, encampment sweeps are supported by two city codes. First, Reno Municipal Code 8.23.090 bans camping without a permit in any parks and recreation facility. Second, Reno Municipal Code 8.12.030 bans camping on public property located within 350 feet from the Truckee River (see eLaws, n.d. to access a copy of the whole Municipal Code regarding 'Public Space, Safety, and Morals').

In building support against the encampments and justify the sweeps, two different rhetorics are articulated to produce the specific lines upon which the City frames its discourse on homelessness. First, there's an explicit use of sanitation rhetorics to frame the encampments as public health hazards. In this regard, encampment demolitions are never referred to as 'sweeps'. Rather, these are always

called ‘cleanups’. This sanitation approach is not new. As explored by Speer (2016a, 2016b) it is a common institutional reaction to frame encampments as ‘trash’ or ‘garbage’ to be cleaned up by ‘sanitation crews’. This use of language, she argues, obscures the fact that sweeps entail the destruction of homes and eliminate the possibility of alternative policies such as improving encampments with garbage services or sewage infrastructure. The second rhetoric used to frame homelessness encampments is that of safety and security. In this regard, camps are seen as a public safety concern (see, for instance, Conrad, 2020b) affecting both housed and unhoused people. The combination of both rethorics is epitomized by the naming of the ‘Clean and Safe team’, which has among its duties the clearing of homeless encampments. The team's name, then, is not an accident but a clear allusion to the understanding of camp sweeps as a safety and sanitation effort (Clean and Safe Program, 2022; Starbuck, 2020a).

It must be acknowledged that the safety and sanitation rethorics are not made up from nothing. Encampments alongside the Truckee River pose an environmental risk that has translated into notices of violation issued against the City of Reno by the Washoe County Health District (Johnson, 2020). At the same time, the Reno Police Department logged 1,625 calls for service related to homeless people in the downtown area for 2020, while the Reno Fire Department responded to 351 fires at homeless encampments from March to early June in 2021 (Mullen, 2021). Discussing this issue in my 2020 interview with local investigative journalist Anjeanette Damon, she agreed that camps bring legitimate concerns over security. However, she acknowledged that this can sometimes be used as a justification to frame the issue in ways that legitimize police action. Also in 2020, I interviewed Nico Colombant, an international reporter and founder of the multimedia street reporting collective ‘Our Town Reno’. Nico made

clear that he was not enthusiastic about the encampments: “Encampments are not the solution to housing. Housing is the solution to housing”, he stated. That said, he was very critical of the securitization rethorics behind the sweeps. He recognized that murders and drug use can happen in the encampments, attracting the attention of the media, the public, and the authorities, but he did not see that as a justification for camp demolition. He argued that, while murders and drug use also happen elsewhere in the city, “they don’t blow up the entire neighborhood, do they?”.

Opposing encampment sweeps, homeless advocates in Reno argued that evicting the homeless from public space does not address the homelessness problem but its consequences. Looking for more overarching measures, they asked to spend money on resources, shelter spaces and homelessness prevention instead of paying companies for the bulldozing and cleaning up of encampment areas (Johnson, 2020). In 2021, when the sweeps ramped up after the opening of the Nevada Cares Campus, homeless people and homeless advocates united under the ‘Stop the Sweeps’ movement. As a measure of protest aimed at putting some pressure on the City to end the sweeps, the movement set up an occupy-type protest in the Believe Plaza, across from City Hall. Although this little camp was explicitly framed as a protest against the sweeps, the police reacted by offering the protesting advocates homeless resource services and handing out eviction notices. Five advocates were also given citations for camping in a city park after hours. Thus, in a turn of events not devoid of irony, the anti-sweeps protest was met with the same aggressive effectiveness that the City was using to undertake homeless encampment evictions all around Reno. Finally, the City of Reno dropped the citations against the advocates (see Conrad 2021b, 2021c; AP News, 2021 for a brief overview of the protest).

As briefly exposed in the previous chapter, the so-called anti-vagrancy or anti-homeless laws are among the classical punitive measures applied to homeless people in public urban spaces. Moreover, the number of local authorities embracing these laws has steadily increased over the years (Blomley, 2009). Historically, these laws and ordinances have been studied as means to control the homeless through criminalization (Blomley, 2009; DeVerteuil, 2006; DeVerteuil, Marr & Snow, 2009; DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs, 2009; Kawash, 1998; Mair, 1986; Mitchell, 1995, 1997, 2003; Mitchell and Heynen, 2009; Walby & Lippert, 2011). As Walby and Lippert (2011) argue, this legal regulation of the homeless may take the form of seemingly innocuous policies. Said differently, laws and ordinances not explicitly aimed at homeless people, are actually tailored to target homeless behaviors, routines, and aesthetics. In this regard, ordinances may not mention the homeless explicitly but criminalize the public performance of activities that, due to their lack of access to private space, they are forced to carry out in the open. That way, anti-vagrancy laws may criminalize drinking, urinating, making love, or even sleeping and sitting down in public (see the work of Mitchell, 1995, 1997, 2003 for detailed accounts of how anti-vagrancy laws target homeless activities and homeless bodies).

Following this idea, it is interesting to look again at Reno Municipal Codes 8.23.090 and 8.12.030. While they are not explicitly aimed at homeless individuals, these codes tackle public space campers, a group mostly composed by homeless people. Therefore, just like anti-vagrancy laws, anti-camping ordinances work as tools to criminalize the homeless' life-sustaining activities in public spaces.

Beyond anti-camping ordinances, contemporary policy in Reno has flirted with the idea of introducing more explicit anti-vagrancy laws. These ordinances, although not officially sanctioned, have been debated on several occasions. In 2017, the city put

up for discussion an ordinance banning, among others, climbing, sitting, or laying in public structures not designated for such purpose; spitting on public property; panhandling from the road medians; sleeping on public or private property without permission; and using a cell phone while crossing the street. As expected, the proposed ordinance brought mixed reactions. On the one hand, local organizations and homeless advocate groups such as RISE, Nevada ACLU, or ACTIONN openly criticized the measures (Cohen, 2017; Conrad, 2017). Josh Conrad (2017) collected the views of Jennifer Cassidy from RISE, who described the legislation as "both inhumane and ineffective". In a similar way, J.D. Klippenstein from ACTIONN feared that the needs of homeless people were given secondary attention: "I'm worried they are putting downtown and those businesses in downtown before people" (Damon, 2017a). On the other hand, real estate agencies and other businesses seemed to be in favor of the proposal. Developer Eric Raydon stated that "vagrancy and lawlessness impinges on our fellow residents' property rights, our rights to quiet enjoyment, and impinges upon our right as taxpayers to live in a clean, safe city free of filth, free of fear, and fear of harassment" (Cohen, 2017).

Briefly but loudly, anti-vagrancy laws were put on the spot again in July 2019. This time, everything started up north in Boise, Idaho, where ten years earlier a local legislation criminalizing public camping was brought to court in the case *Martin v. Boise*. Fast forward to 2019: the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals finds the law unconstitutional and overturns it. Not happy with the decision, the City of Idaho decided to appeal to the US Supreme Court. Is in this context that Reno City Attorney Karl Hall requested approval from the Reno City Council for a legal brief in support of the City of Boise's legal efforts. Advocates rapidly criticized Hall's proposition and called for its removal from the City Council meeting's agenda, starting a debate on homeless

rights and anti-vagrancy laws. Finally, contrary to Hall's desires, Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve removed the item from the meeting's agenda. There was no happy ending for Idaho either, as the US Supreme Court refused to hear the City of Boise's appeal some months later (see AP News, 2019a; Conrad, 2019; DeHaven, 2019; Reno News & Reviews, 2019 to read how the media covered the issue).

In the literature, we can see how anti-homeless laws and ordinances are often coupled with so-called anti-homeless or hostile architecture and design. This urban design creates urban homeless-hostile landscapes filled with micro-design features aimed at preventing homeless people from performing their daily activities. From barbed-wire-protected garbage bins to sprinkles that activate at night to prevent homeless people from sleeping in public gardens and green areas, a wide range of often imperceptible "manipulative architectural features" are deployed in our cities (Johnsen, Cloke & May, 2005, p. 788; Petty, 2014; Soja, 2014).

In this regard, Reno is no exception, counting with a wide set of these 'manipulative architectural features' scattered around Downtown. A great example of the deployment of hostile design is the plaza in front of the National Bowling Stadium, where the infamous anti-homeless benches —also known as 'bum-proof' benches— and the so-called 'human spikes' dominate the view. Anti-homeless benches are a type of public bench characterized by having rails that divide the sitting space in individualized compartments, thus making it impossible to lay down on them to rest or sleep (Bergamaschi, Castrignanò & De Rubertis, 2014). Similarly, 'human spikes' are spiky features that, like the spikes used for pigeons, are placed in flat street surfaces to stop unwanted people from loitering in public spaces (Williams, 2011). The City of Reno has been fairly open about the implementation of landscape design mechanisms aimed at controlling the interaction of homeless people with the spaces of the central

city. In 2016, for instance, public benches were removed from particular locations in Downtown. When asked for the causes behind this removal, the city Parks Manager responded:

> The benches at City Center have been temporarily removed due to the high level of homeless staying there all day and panhandling people passing by. City Hall had received complaints from the Downtown casinos and the bowling stadium. The City Manager, R.P.D. and Code Enforcement made the directive to remove them. They are being stored at the Corporation Yard. (as quoted in Olivares, 2016)

Thus, removing elements that favor the social use of public space, as well as incorporating anti-homeless design features, create homeless-hostile landscapes where exclusion is imprinted in the urban fabric. Moreover, Bergamaschi, Castrignanò & De Rubertis (2014) argue that the use of anti-homeless features is to indirectly control and regulate the way cities are used and interacted with, aiming at protecting the general public from undesirable behaviors and people.

Far from this latter aim, I think the consequences of deploying anti-homeless design features in the urban landscape —or removing design elements that favor social and human interaction with the urban space— affect everyone beyond homeless people. Let me explain this by returning to the example of the plaza by the National Bowling Stadium in downtown Reno. The plaza is an open space with shaded areas and trees. Anti-homeless benches, human spikes and boulders are deployed all over the place with the double goal of deterring homeless people from occupying the plaza while making it attractive to 'the public' (see Kawash, 1998 or Mitchell, 1995 for theorizations of who conforms 'the public' and how this conception tends to exclude homeless people). That way, the metallic bench dividers, the human spikes and the boulders —inserted in every single flat surface of the square— transform an otherwise nice open space into an urban environment that anyone, indifferent to their housing status, may perceive as

hostile. Hence, a plaza in the heart of downtown Reno that should be filled with social life is transformed into a bleak space that people just pass through or simply avoid.

3.2. Reviewing the Homeless Campus Model

By the end of 2020, Washoe County, the City of Reno, and the City of Sparks presented their intention to develop the Nevada Cares Campus, a facility with the potential to forever change the homelessness management landscape of Northern Nevada. As its name indicates, the facility was envisioned as a 'homeless campus'. A fairly recent concept, homeless campuses seem not to be as well defined or studied as homeless shelters could be, a gap in the literature that I will try to fill.

Let me begin by stating that my goal here is not to find or propose a fixed definition for what homeless campuses are. My aim instead is to provide a general understanding of the concept through the exploration of three examples of ongoing campus facilities. Every campus project has its own particularities, varying slightly from one to the next. However, drawing from these campus examples provides an opportunity to find the common characteristics and traits shared by these projects. By doing so, we can create a general sense of the campus model that may be helpful when the idea of the homeless campus is brought up for discussion.

Looking for examples of homeless campuses, there is a great chance that one may come across the Human Services Campus (HSC) in Phoenix, Arizona. The campus, described as a "national model" by a mental health and homelessness advisor to the Bush Administration, has been operational since 2005 (Hermann, 2005 as cited in Hennigan and Speer, 2019, p. 908). A 14-acre compound, the HSC concentrates homeless-related services as a means for optimizing accessibility. As captured in the local media: "the chronically homeless, many suffering from mental illness, have had

to go to many different agencies to find help, [but] today they are all on one campus" (Hermann, 2005 as cited in Hennigan and Speer, 2019, p. 914). This idea of service concentration inevitably makes the campus a 'magnet', a 'one-stop shopping' kind of facility for the homeless population where they can find "everything and everybody in one place".

Riverview Hope Campus is located in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Also formulated as a one-stop facility, the campus includes a dormitory area, men's and women's showers, kitchen and cafeteria, barber shop, laundry room, library, community room, classroom, dog kennel, and a full-service medical clinic (Our Story, n.d.). The campus opened in 2017 and, since then, has provided "nearly 100,000 beds, about 26,000 loads of laundry, more than 115,000 showers and almost 343,000 meals" while also helping "656 people gain employment and 512 people transition to self-sufficiency" (Smith, 2020). As with the HSC, the value of the Hope Campus rests in its concentration of services, which avoids homeless people the hassle of constantly moving around the city space to access much needed services and resources. This idea is embraced in their website by highlighting: "Offering so many services under one roof increases an individual's likelihood of gaining self-sufficiency. It's help for today and hope for tomorrow" (Our Story, n.d.). Also in their website, the Hope Campus is described as "more than "just a homeless shelter", which provides an interesting description of the campus model as a shelter complemented with a set of comprehensive services offered by various agencies and a set of on-campus facilities. This 'more than a shelter' approach is interestingly used by other campuses to self-describe their model. See, for instance, Haven for Hope (n.d.), whose site header reads as follows: "More than a shelter, it is a transformational campus".

GRACE Marketplace in Gainesville, Florida, is not usually described as a homeless campus but as a ‘one-stop’ homeless resource center. The facility is located in the former site of the Gainesville Correctional Institute. As a campus, it occupies a 25 acres space and features 15 buildings, including dormitories, kitchen and dining area, laundry room, mail room, storage, and administrative offices, among others (Decarmine, 2014). On their website, GRACE Marketplace says to have served more than 17,700 people since its opening in 2014, as well as helped house more than 2000 individuals and decreased the number of unsheltered population in Gainesville by 69% (GRACE, n.d.). As with the other campuses, GRACE Marketplace partners with different organizations and agencies to provide a comprehensive on-campus list of services including shelter, meals, showers, laundry, storage, medical care, job skills training, mental health services, case management, and outreach programs.

Observing the cases above, we can say that homeless campuses, although differing in sheltering modes or overall management practices, share three relevant aspects: size, provision of shelter and related facilities, and concentration of services. Interestingly, the big size of the campuses enables both the second and third characteristics which, in turn, enable a fourth one: the concentration and contention of homeless people. This can be better explained by returning to the case of the HSC in Phoenix, Arizona. Hennigan and Speer (2019) explored how the campus, beyond “pure, disinterested care”, functioned also as a buffer protecting other city areas and their property values by keeping homeless individuals “from walking a mile northward to gentrifying downtown Phoenix” (914). Moreover, in 2013, an overwhelming number of homeless people sought shelter at the HSC. Unable to accommodate them, local authorities decided to habilitate a makeshift camp in a parking lot next to the campus (Lee, 2013). Locating the temporary encampment just by the campus seems like the

logical solution, as it follows the compassionate rationale of proximity to service concentration intrinsic to the campus model. That said, the solution also provides a great example of how campuses and their adjacent areas become spaces of care that, directly or indirectly, may act as spaces of contention. The chief executive officer for the Central Arizona Shelter Services explicitly described this idea when discussing the makeshift camp solution as follows: "Our first outcome is to get everybody [referring to the homeless people] there [to the parking lot nearby the campus] tomorrow, nothing else, because if we know they're there, that means they're not somewhere else potentially causing problems to themselves, the people around them or properties" (as cited in Lee, 2013). Therefore, homeless campuses seem to work around the articulation of four principal aspects: size (a significant compound made of different buildings), provision of shelter facilities (homeless shelters, safe camps, transitional housing programs, etc.), concentration of homeless-related services (job skills training, medical and mental health care, case management, etc.), and direct or indirect contention of homeless people.

3.3. A silver bullet: The Nevada Cares Campus

The information provided in sections 3.1. and 3.2. help gaining an understanding of why the city envisioned the creation of the Nevada Cares Campus (also referred in this thesis as NCC or simply 'Cares Campus') as a powerful tool to wield in their fight against homelessness. Additionally, the availability of remaining

funds from the CARES Act[3] provided the perfect opportunity to undertake such a massive investment.

Is in this context that, with the thumbs up from the Community Homeless Advisory Board, the city of Reno passed on September 22, 2020, a resolution approving the acquisition of Governor's Bowl Park with the idea of dedicating the space to build a homeless shelter facility (Buschjost, 2020; Community Homelessness Advisory Board Staff Report, 2020; Conrad, 2020c). Later on, it was made public that the facility was envisioned to become a comprehensive homeless campus under the name of Nevada Cares Campus —note that originally 'Cares' was written all in caps as a reference to the CARES Act—. The site was projected to host a 45,900 square feet low-barrier[4], sprung-tent type of shelter, a safe encampment area, affordable and transitional housing, storage space, and a wide array of related services and offices (City of Reno, 2021b). As per the costs, the site acquisition and the construction of the shelter were originally estimated to be over $9,000,000 to be covered through CARES Act funds by Washoe County (23.52%), the City of Reno (54.21%), and the City of Sparks (22.27%) (Community Homelessness Advisory Board Staff Report, 2020).

After several delays, the NCC was inaugurated on May 17, 2021 (see Chadwell & Conrad, 2021 and Margiott, 2021 for some examples of media pieces covering the campus inauguration). At the time of the opening, the only operative facilities inside

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[3] The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) provided over $2 trillion of relief funds from the Federal Government to mitigate the effects of the public health crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic. (CARES Act, n.d.)

[4] Low-barrier shelters are usually defined as those shelters that reduce screening procedures, rules, and policies for those seeking emergency housing assistance without compromising the safety and security of staff, guests, and residents. The aim of low-barrier shelters is to reduce the number of people excluded from their services and ensure the maximization of service provision. In this regard, low-barrier shelters may not require their residents to show proof of adherence to mental health or substance abuse treatment plans, to provide evidence of having passed police clearance, or even to show a personal identification (J.D. Consultancy, 2021: 6; Evans, 2011).

the campus were the shelter (managed by VOA) and its bathrooms and showers, which consisted of four repurposed shipping containers located outside the big sprung tent. The initial plan was to develop the campus in three phases. Phase 1 included the building and operation of the homeless shelter, a safe camp area, bathroom and shower units, a cafeteria, shade structures, landscaping, and outdoor seating, individual and excess storage, medication services, and pet services. Phase 2 focused on the development of supportive and medical services including an intake center, housing assistance, counseling, laundry services, recovery services, and the construction of an on-campus clinic. Finally, Phase 3 envisioned the construction of transitional housing through a partnership with the Reno Housing Authority. The actual development of the campus has been more chaotic, with elements from different phases being discussed and developed while others were being relegated to oblivion. Although initially shared among the City of Reno and Washoe County, the latter assumed total leadership responsibilities over homelessness shelter and services in the region in August 2021. The agreement, thus, expanded beyond the Cares Campus to other service providers and shelters such as OUR Place (Conrad, 2021f; Oh, 2021a)

The shelter, initially estimated to be able to host more than 600 people in normal conditions and 900 people in case of emergency, was designed as a low-barrier shelter with room for couples and pets. These features, jointly with the massive size of the sprung-tent building, granted the place the ‘super-shelter’ nickname early on (Conrad, 2020). By early March 2022, the shelter had an assigned maximum capacity of 604 beds with extra overflow space in the cafeteria area (without beds). As told during my interviews with campus’ residents and a member of the VOA staff, the massive tent is divided into four different blocks or sections. Section A contains the cafeteria, warm room area and overflow space. Sections B and C hold the majority of the 600 people

staying at the shelter. These two sections consist of big indoor spaces filled with rows and rows of bed bunks and individual beds separated barely five feet apart from each other (see Figure 1 for a picture of the inside of the shelter). According to my interview with shelter resident John, Section B can host around four hundred people. Section D is the women's only section.

Just outside the big shelter structure, four shipping containers repurposed as two bathrooms and two shower rooms serve the almost 650 people staying at the campus, both from the shelter and the safe camp (see Figures 2, 3 and 4 for pictures of the bathrooms and showers). A trailer repurposed as a laundry facility was installed in August 2021 by the bathroom area (City of Reno, 2021c). The trailer accommodates six washers and six dryers and provides a much-needed service.

Figure 1

Inside of the 'super-shelter'

Picture courtesy of *Our Town Reno* (http://www.ourtownreno.com/)

A safe camp with a capacity of over 50 people opened in the campus in July 2021, operated by local organization Karma Box in partnership with Washoe County (see This is Reno, 2021b for an article and a video on the safe camp and an interview with Karma Box founder Grant Denton). Because of the region's climate, the safe camp had to be moved into a heated garage on campus during the winter. As of early March 2022, the safe camp is pending to be transformed into a tiny-home village able to accommodate 50 heated individual mod-pods (This is Reno, 2022).

Figure 2

Outside view of the shipping containers repurposed as bathrooms and showers

Picture taken by the author during a campus tour in early May 2021.

Future plans for the campus include the construction of new and permanent restroom and laundry facilities; a building prepared to host an intake zone, case management and training areas, a kitchen, and a new cafeteria; a resource center and an

overflow space; and a bridge housing building (Cares Campus Update, 2021). These plans, though, have still no determined dates or allocated funding.

Figure 3

Inside view of one of the shipping containers repurposed as a bathroom

Picture taken by the author during a campus tour in early May 2021.

Figure 4

Inside view of one of the shipping containers repurposed as a shower room

Picture taken by the author during a campus tour in early May 2021.

Chapter IV: Care and Control in the Nevada Cares Campus

As stated in the preface, my initial goal for this thesis was to study how care and control dynamics characteristic of contemporary homelessness management unfolded in the particular space of the homeless campus, paying special attention to how they were experienced by the campus residents. Studied in many different settings, from urban spaces in general (Murphy, 2009), to the sheltering spaces of the homeless shelter (Armaline, 2005; DeVerteuil, 2006; DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs, 2009; Hopper, 1990), the sanctioned encampment (Herring & Lutz, 2015; Speer, 2017), or Housing First Initiatives (Del Casino & Jocoy, 2008; Hennigan, 2017), the Nevada Cares Campus offered a unique opportunity to shed light on how care and control dynamics may reproduce in the understudied campus model.

In section 2.3. we have explored how care and control dynamics unfold in shelter spaces. The contents of that section help setting the theoretical backbone of the analysis of care and control dynamics inside the Cares Campus for two main reasons. First, the NCC provides today some of the sheltering modes studied in these analyses. Named, a homeless shelter and a safe camp that is soon expected to be transformed into a tiny-house village. Additionally, future plans for the campus contemplate the expansion of on-campus sheltering provisions with the development of transitional and bridge housing. Second, homeless campuses will forcibly share procedures, rules, and social dynamics similar to those of other spaces of shelter studied in the literature. Furthermore, the novelty of the campus model does not lie in offering a new sheltering alternative but in the concentration of services and, in the case of the Cares Campus, different shelter provisions under one enclosed facility. That way, studying the particular space of the campus may be useful as a way of linking the literature on different spaces of shelter and see which dynamics may unfold in the communal spaces

of the campus. Spaces that, we should not forget, are highly mediated by different sets of rules, staff, and security.

That said, there is a set of particularities that make the job of studying on-campus care and control measures difficult. As Murphy (2009) observed for shelters, the internal rules, policies, and procedures of the campus shifted with frequency. Understandably, an institution in its infancy stage such as the NCC was expected to be forced to adapt to different realities and add, erase, and change rules and policies on the fly while searching for its own institutional approach. For campus outsiders like me or the local advocates, though, it was difficult to grasp what was really going on inside the facility. The groups of campus residents we talked with, for instance, were often unable to provide consensual explanations of the campus rules. At the same time, it was soon made evident that the campus was not being governed as a whole body. Instead, the shelter and the safe camp operated in very different ways, each with its own particular set of rules and social dynamics (this idea of lack of internal campus cohesion and its implications is further explored in 4.1.). This latter point makes it even more difficult to study the campus as a whole.

The following sections and subsections explore which measures of care and control are governing the space of the campus. At the same time, their effectiveness is also discussed drawing from the experiences gathered during my interviews and participant observation with campus residents and clients. Two other sources of information relevant for my analysis are an interview I conducted with a member of the VOA staff and the recommendations and observations provided by Jon Decarmine[5] in his report to Washoe County (J.D. Consultancy, 2021; Washoe County, 2021)

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[5] Jon Decarmine is the Executive Director of GRACE, who operates GRACE Marketplace, the homeless campus in Gainesville explored in section 3.2. In 2021, he was hired by Washoe County as a

4.1. Explaining Care and Control in the Nevada Cares Campus

4.1.1 Control measures

As previously reviewed, scholars such as DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs (2009), or Speer (2017) discuss the ways in which institutional spaces of care and shelter implement sets of rules and policies aimed at curbing residents' behaviors and habits that could difficult the institution's functioning or compromise internal safety and security. Some examples of these regulations include early morning exits, evening curfews, bans on alcohol and intoxicating substances, background checks, thorough check-ins and screenings, regular drug and breathalyzer tests, etc. Other access-limiting regulations include segregation by sex and the refusal to accept pets in the facility. These, together with the fact that most shelters accepting couples do not accept the unmarried ones, motivates homeless individuals to avoid using shelter facilities and "take their chances on the streets" (DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs, 2009, p. 653; Donley & Wright, 2012).

As explored before, low-barrier shelters such as the one at the NCC, aim at lightening rules and regulations that may reduce the amount of homeless people refusing to accept shelter services. In this regard, it is important to stress that the lowering of barriers at low-barrier shelters should not be confused with passivity in safety implementation. Although accepting people with a wider range of profile backgrounds than more restrictive shelter provisions (e.g., not excluding people with severe mental health conditions or addiction issues) and having more relaxed behavior

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third-party consultant to produce a report regarding the state of the campus (J.D. Consultancy, 2021). In November that same year, he presented his report and recommendations at the CHAB meeting (Washoe County, 2021, 00:26:20-1:22:45)

regulations, low-barrier shelters should not compromise the safety and security of staff, guests, and residents (J.D. Consultancy, 2021; Evans, 2011). As we are about to see, check-ins and screening processes at the NCC are different for the safe camp and the shelter.

Designed as a low-barrier shelter, the NCC avoided the implementation of tight rules in an attempt to attract as many residents as possible and maximize the provision of attention and care. Moreover, the campus government was determined to welcome couples and pets, fully aware that rejecting these was keeping a large group of people from accepting services at the former shelter. The access and control measures in the campus include the filling out of an extensive application form prior to acceptance as a resident, the ban on weapons, alcohol, and intoxicating substances inside the property, and a checking-in/bag screening process every time a resident enters the facility through the access gate. The violation of campus' rules and regulations entails campus temporary or permanent expulsion.

As a concealed facility, the campus area is encircled by chain link fences that limit campus access to a dedicated gate. It is at this gate that the necessary entry and admission procedures are undertaken. Buck is a former resident of the shelter who is now taking his chances on the street while waiting for a spot at the NCC safe camp. During our interview, Buck mentioned something that, for him, had a highly symbolic meaning.

> It is the way you have the barbed wire designed. Usually, you have the barbed wire facing a certain way so you can't jump into the fence. They have it facing the opposite way where you can't get out of the shelter.

I think this detail is far from relevant for my analysis and probably has a simple explanation. However, I wanted to introduce Buck's reflection because it works as a good allegory of what we are going to explore in this chapter and the following one.

While bag checks and screenings are one of the main control measures in the campus, the reality is that they have a very limited scope. Security personnel, for instance, are not allowed to conduct personal screenings to the people entering the campus, limiting screenings to bags and backpacks. John, a long-time shelter resident, described this issue and its consequences as follows:

> [T]hey can't search you, you know? But if they see or they think you have a beer or something, they'll check you on that and tell you to pour it out or go drink it and come back. But a lot of people sneak stuff in there. … Alcohol, weed, meth, everything.

On the other side of the campus, control and security operate differently. In fact, the safe camp has its own access gate and is fenced-off from the rest of the facility. Emma has been a safe camp resident for a few months now. When asked for check-ins and general control and security, she says:

> So, as far as for the security people, they're there to obviously make sure there's no strangers coming in, because in the safe camp there's only the people living there who are registered. They make sure that nobody's sneaking in or whatever. They do check our bags now when we come back in ... So, if you're bringing a backpack, they just want to check it and make sure that you're not bringing any weapons or drugs or alcohol. Things that can trigger other people that are trying to do better for themselves, you know?

Similarly, long-time safe camp resident Billy points out at bag checking being a recent measure at the safe camp (interviews were conducted in early 2022):

> They check your bags when you come in. But they know you. ... You're not gonna smuggle in some alcohol or whatever. At the shelter, they've been doing this since day one. In our place [the safe camp], just a couple weeks ago. They used to never check our bags, we used to just come through.

This idea of staff, security and residents knowing each other and seeing safety and security as a function of trust was further discussed in my interviews and conversations with safe camp residents. Emma, for instance, answered the following when asked if she felt safe at the safe camp:

> Yes. Yes. I wouldn't say because of the security people. … I feel safe with the people I surround myself with. Seriously, there's two men there who I know would die for me. And I am not involved with either of them. These men are my friends.

Similarly, Billy put it in these terms “It's a safe place, yeah. You get to know everybody and everybody knows you, so things are pretty safe”. Interestingly, this idea was never mentioned by shelter residents, who usually share their section with hundreds of people. In this regard, I asked safe camp resident Emma if she thought she would feel as safe in the shelter as she is at the safe camp.

> I probably would for select people but I wouldn't feel it for five hundred of them. I know there's a whole bunch of people and it gotta be very stressful over there. Have you been there? … Because it's just, all you see is rows, and rows, and rows of beds. That's gotta be rough on you, you know? (sic)

Similarly, Julia, who is not a shelter resident but comes in regularly for the warm rooms, discussed the relationship of lack of safety and shelter capacity this way:

> You lock up a whole bunch of unhappy people and what is bound to happen? You’re gonna have a bunch of energies and a bunch of personalities crash. … One day someone says the wrong word and there’s war, you know what I mean? So, you take a bunch of miserable people, add some more misery, stir it all up, and what you get?

Apart from campus residents, I had the chance to interview a VOA staff member. When asked about their views on why the campus was not safe, they stated:

> I think just the number of people is a big issue, especially in terms of the staffing, right? We have so many people there and not enough staff to oversee everything. So, that means a lot can be overlooked by our staff.

While campus residents from both the shelter and the safe camp complained about theft being an issue, the general perception of safety was better at the safe camp. There, fights and violent incidents did not seem to be a concern for the residents. On the other side of the campus, though, things seemed different. When asked about safety complaints from the shelter, long-time resident John said:

> You can get into an argument with your neighbor and it can turn into zero to a hundred in a minute. Meaning that it can be words and, next you know, fighting. Usually security gets there pretty quick, but even when they come, they tell you: 'Well, you know, you have to leave or you call the police if that guy assaulted you'. They won't, I don't know why, but they won't call the police. … I don't know if that's all the workers, but yeah. I've gotten into a lot of incidents over there, man, and it sucks. … I don't blame them [the staff and security personnel], you know? They're pretty good, all in all, but safety is a concern over there, yeah. It sure is.

These safety concerns at the campus, especially on the shelter's side, had been openly voiced by campus residents and advocates, making it to the headlines of local media (see Conrad, 2021e, 2022a). These claims referred to assaults, drug dealing and use, and people smuggling weapons into the facility. Although shelter management repeatedly denied these claims (This is Reno, 2021c), an independent consultant reviewing the facility for Washoe County described the campus as not safe and seriously understaffed (Washoe County, 2021). Moreover, during the February 2022 CHAB meeting, Washoe County head of security confirmed crime as an "ongoing problem at the campus" (Conrad, 2022a; Washoe County, 2022), which finally seemed to confirm the resident and advocates' claims. During that same CHAB meeting, a shelter resident showed up for public comment and provided a very worrisome account of his experience. He described being personally berated and harassed at the shelter and knowing about sexual assaults happening. He also described having witnessed drug abuse, assaults, and knives and guns being smuggled into the shelter (Washoe County,

2022). In particular, he recalled an episode where a resident was stabbed in the neck by another resident. I had already heard about that incident from the campus residents I had interviewed or talked to. Billy, from the safe camp, recalled the incident this way:

> [A]t the shelter, a guy got stabbed in the neck. There's stuff happening over there every night.

When asked to expand on the incident, Billy continued:

> Yeah, it was last year. We were with a security guard when that happened. We heard them call it over the radio [mimicking a lapel walkie talkie]: 'SOMEONE GOT STABBED IN THE NECK!' Shit, that was crazy. (sic)

During our interview, I also asked John about the incident. At first he referred to the incident as a "supposed stabbing" but then he told me the whole background story that led to the violent episode. When I asked if all he was telling me happened inside the campus facility, he replied:

> Yeah. All kinds of stuff can happen inside there pretty quick. I mean, people get knocked out and nobody [from the staff] even knows because they [other shelter residents] don't want to go and say or report anything. It's rough.

Regarding the allegation of sexual assaults taking place at the shelter, it seems like no official reports have been filed to law enforcement, which makes it difficult to investigate them. The rumor mill these criminal incidents create do not facilitate that task either (Conrad, 2022a). Something that probably helps the spread of rumors and may give some credibility to the allegations is the fact that, up until the beginning of this year, there was no section exclusively dedicated to shelter women. As explained by John:

> No, before they were spread around. They were spread around and some of them were couples, and maybe some got raped, I don't know. I didn't hear about that.

The VOA staff member acknowledged that the shelter did not feel as safe for women as it feels now, right after establishing the females-only section. Moreover, he explained:

> [R]ight when the shelter opened, about a year ago, we were … only allowed to accept 25 women. … basically that was in our contract. But we had an issue where we had already accepted 25 women but we could accept more couples. So, we had an issue of women finding a random man to couple with so that they could get a couple of beds. And that was an issue because, you know, domestic violence was a really big worry there. These women were just finding a random man to get in the shelter with and then potentially being assaulted or being harassed or, you know, just being paired with this random man that they don't know. So, we increased the number of women that we could accept but, even then, being mixed with the men, probably not super safe. And in fact, the reason we opened this dedicated women section is because of an alleged sexual assault. Right after that had happened is when we opened that women’s section.

4.1.2. Care Measures

4.1.2.1. Care as safety, planning, and anticipation

Drawing from the quote above and the previous discussion about safety, we can infer that a failure of the measures of control (access screenings, bans of intoxicating substances and weapons, internal segregation of the dorms) may also act as a failure of care, as they may leave those vulnerable even more exposed. Additionally, the last issue showed that care does not only relate to the amount of services and attention provided but also to the ability to prevent and anticipate potential issues. Thus, the opening of the women’s section more than half a year after the shelter’s inauguration and only after rumors and allegations of sexual assault arose, highlights how the NCC failed at providing care; lacking any minimal anticipation and managing everyday life at the campus based on reacting and adapting to emergencies.

4.1.2.2. Care as space provision: facilities and common areas

Interestingly, this idea of lack of anticipation can be linked to the argument made by some advocates that the campus was not ready to open at the time of its inauguration. Their argument focused mainly on the inability to provide what is needed to the unsheltered population that was being swept from the streets indiscriminately, but I think this idea could apply also to the physical state of the campus, the readiness of the space. I first visited the campus during an open day before the inauguration. After hearing about the campus for a long time in the local news and the CHAB meetings, I could not conceive that what I was seeing was the final product. It may not be easy to describe, but the site lacked an actual sense of place. It was hard to imagine what things people could do there and even where. The campus, as a facility, was mainly composed of a barely paved, huge, empty lot with an immense sprung tent, four repurposed shipping containers and an old warehouse. My feelings were also shared by the VOA staff member I interviewed:

> [I]t was not prepared for so many reasons and I think the biggest one is the fact that the campus is not really finished. The County has a lot of plans to continue developing the Cares Campus … But again, none of that is done. All it is, is a tent, an old building where property is stored, and that's it.

In this regard, facilities and their state can be seen as a good measure of care. Providing adequate shelter is also providing good sanitation infrastructure, some privacy, and also some community spaces where links and bonds can be developed.

The Cares Campus today is formed by the big shelter, the fenced-off safe camp, the bathroom and showers, the trailer/laundromat, and a small outdoor dining area with a few tables covered by a canopy that remind more of those in prisons than those in public parks. Inside the shelter, in section ‘A’, there is a cafeteria area with tables and benches that is also used as a warm room during the winter. This space and the small

outdoor dining area are the only community spaces aside from the bathrooms and showers. No landscape elements beautify the rest of the big empty space. There are no trees, no shade areas, providing some space to just hang out or organize any social activities. "Well, you can sit around and smoke a cigarette", said Billy, "Sure, there's people from the shelter that like to hang out and drink beers on the street [outside the campus] but, you know, it's alright".

This idea of 'sitting around and smoking a cigarette' being the main pastime offered by the campus seemed unreal, especially when the facility conceals a large group of people with habits and addiction issues that the campus is trying to treat. In this regard, the day I met John we were outside the facility. He was hanging out just by the campus fence with his friend Mike, waiting for someone they knew. After chatting for a while, I walked with them to a liquor store nearby where they purchased a beer and a small bottle of whiskey. "I know I shouldn't be drinking but I'm an alcoholic and it's not like there's much stuff to do around here, you know?", said John. In this regard, the lack of on-campus activities and services, as well as the empty landscape devoid of any activity or community areas does not help keeping the residents motivated to escape old habits. "I tried to talk to my case manager", said John the day of our interview, "but, because I'm an alcoholic, I get impatient. Like, I start getting shaky." 'Getting impatient', as John describes it, is an allusion to the withdrawal syndrome, which is hard to go through when the days are long and you don't have that much going on.

The lack of community spaces was also reflected in the way some of the residents hoped for more areas dedicated to different activities. Places where, as safe camp resident Dom put it, they could "just gather":

> Something I would like to have is somewhere to relax, play games, watch TV, read books. We are not allowed to have visits. All of us are friends there [at the safe camp]

> but we are not allowed in other people's places to avoid people stealing things. So, if we could put a rec area where we all stay and do different things, that would be perfect. Like a TV room, game room, something like that.

Having these kinds of spaces will also help generate new activities and dynamics, which some of the residents like Emma see as positive and are willing to engage with. When asked about what the campus was missing, she said:

> Maybe some activities! You know? Like maybe have a day when... Actually, I was gonna start one because I just started painting again. I am an artist and I do some abstract painting. So, some of the girls over at our area were talking and said: 'It would be so fun if we just had a hobby day!' You know, a day to throw at different things and everybody could sit around and color and just do some creative thing. And that's good therapy as well! I think that would be fun. And do maybe like a volleyball day or badminton day. Something that's not too straining on some of the people.

On the other hand, when I asked John about his thoughts on having more common spaces, he reflected on the possibility of that being problematic, as they could make people feel too comfortable at the shelter: “I don't know. It's a shelter, it's not really made for you to be comfortable but it's made for you to get on your feet, you know?”

Another detail showing a need for common spaces was the fact that, when asked about the campus areas, most of the residents I talked to referred exclusively to their bed bunks, their tents, the showers, and the bathrooms. These last two were discussed in most of the interviews, often with complaints regarding their state.

> I got to tell you, they need some cleaning —said Billy about the showers—. When they first opened, I went there and it was immaculate, brand new. But I go there now to take a shower and it is trash. There's mold. They need to do something about that.

My interview with Billy was not the first time I had heard about the men’s showers being moldy. Moreover, on February 16 this year, local multimedia street reporting collective ‘Our Town Reno’ published a set of pictures of the men’s showers on Twitter

(Biggest Little Streets, 2022). The pictures (Figures 5 and 6) showed the terrible state in which the showers were after less than a year of use. To make things worse, just one day after Our Town Reno tweeted the pictures, the ceiling of the men's showers collapsed (Conrad, 2022b). Although no major incidents were reported, the ceiling collapse forced the campus to move all the clients to the women's shower area. That way, through rotating shifts, around 650 men and women were forced to share the showers of one repurposed shipping container. Washoe County announced that temporary showers were going to be installed in a matter of weeks. More permanent facilities, however, were not expected aside from the County's long term plan for the campus, which is set to start developing in 2023 (Conrad, 2022b).

Figure 5

State of the ceiling on the men's shower room before collapsing

Picture courtesy of Our Town Reno (Biggest Little Streets, 2022).

Figure 6

State of the men’s shower room before collapsing

Picture courtesy of Our Town Reno (Biggest Little Streets, 2022).

For the women, the complaints were not so much about the state of the showers but the lack of care and service. As Emma explained:

> [T]he women's [showers] are not too bad. I mean, you got nasty people, don't get me wrong, but it's not too bad. The one thing that's bad about the showers right now is that, when they first started, they had curtains hanging in every stall and there was always towels on a table with the staff, and they'd hand you one or two nice white towels. Well, they're out of towels now so, if you didn't have a towel that you saved

> for yourself, you even try to find one and wash it or you're drying off with a t-shirt or something.

Julia had similar complaints: “I've gotten a towel to dry off with two times in, say, like ten showers. So, that's horrible. They expect you to get out and shake off to dry and get dressed. That's horrible!”. Clint is a safe camp user I met through my work with ‘Laundry to the People’. He brought up the large number of people staying at the campus as a problem for, this time, using the only shower facility.

> There's too many people in the shelter and that's the only place to shower for us, though. They don't have shower units over at safe camp. … From what I understand it's not worth the hustle. I rather just go find a friend that has a place and see if they let me use their shower.

John, who is pretty happy about the campus in general, is also uncomfortable with the shower situation.

> [Y]ou're trying to shower with hot water and then the hot water is not consistent, and then the shower curtains are off and you got guys coming in and looking at you. So, yeah, I don't like the shower part.

And he added:

> I'm scared of showering over there … I just don't feel safe. You gotta watch your stuff, there's no curtain, people will steal your stuff. … I mean, I'm grateful for getting out of the cold at night but there's some serious problems with thievery, they're not responsible for your stuff, water is inconsistent, and you have people hanging out in the bathrooms and doing whatever they do.

In his list of complaints, John mentioned the showers not having curtains. As I learned from the residents and clients I had spoken to, curtains were provided when the campus opened but were removed at some point. Julia linked this to a lack of care by the campus management:

> [A]t the end of the day, they don't care. There's not even shower curtains on the showers. Come on! I don't have a problem. I'm not shy or whatever. But you know what? You have a human dignity and there's certain things that you should be able

> to do privately. And taking a shower is one of them (sic). But no, the doors are wide open, it's cold, and we don't even have a shower curtain? I mean, come on!

By his part, Buck linked the lack of curtains with the overall state of the men's shower room.

> [T]hey put shower curtains that didn't really fit. You would unwind like this from one side and will not cover the other side. Then they took them all. So now you're dealing with flood because everybody is taking a shower and all the water comes out of the shower. They're treating us like we're kids. I don't know what are they doing with the funds they're collecting, but definitely they're not doing what they're supposed to (sic). They should be taking care of what they're supposed to be taking care of. And because they caught a couple people doing drugs in our bathrooms, now we can't take a shit. I mean, we can but there's no doors anymore.

I asked him to expand on the issue of not having doors at the bathroom stalls anymore

> They removed them because people were getting high and this and that. They could have made smaller doors where you can see what's going on or apply some common sense: you walk in, you see smoke, BOOM, knock on the door and 'Hey, get out of there'. You know? Is different ways of doing things. But now everybody suffers for what some people do. And yet people are still getting high in the bathrooms, so what's the difference? (sic)

In my conversation with Billy, I asked him about this issue.

> Yeah. That's not good. I mean, someone can walk on to you while you're there and poke you on the head while you're taking a crap [laughs]. The other day this dude came to me while I was sitting there and tried to lift me up. I guess he was joking but that's not alright. This stuff should not be happening.

When discussing the decision of removing the bathroom doors and the shower curtains, the VOA staff member made an interesting reflection:

> I'm not sure if that was a staff decision, to remove those, or that was maybe a vandalism issue from the clients … But ultimately, I think that highlights the fact that there aren't enough resources, right? Even with all the money that's been poured into the Cares Campus, a door hasn't been replaced on a bathroom after being torn off. If that's the case, of course. And shower curtains haven't been replaced. So, I don't really know what that story is but I think that also just highlights the issue of this sprung tent shelter: not having an actual building as a homeless shelter. The bathroom and the shower facilities are kind of like transformed shipping containers

> … And you know, I guess it worked, kind of, but in my opinion is a very inadequate way to provide a basic service like a shower and a bathroom.

4.1.2.3. Care as service provision: concentration, availability, and staffing

Moving on from the facilities, it is time to address the main measure of care: service provision. Relevant in any space of shelter, services are particularly important for the campus model, as service concentration is the campus formula to serve as many people as possible while creating one-stop service points for all homelessness resources to pivot around. This idea of the service pivot seems to be the main goal behind the development of the NCC. As Mayor Schieve expressed: “There needs to be one central location where people can get all of the things that they need and not be expected to travel miles to get those” (as cited in Oh, 2021b). Interested in exploring if the region’s homelessness resources had been moved to the campus, I asked the clients and the VOA staff member for their thoughts on the issue. As expressed by the latter:

> No. Absolutely not, absolutely not (sic) I think a good way to put that into perspective is when you talk about all the resources and services that were available at [the old shelter in] Record Street. When that shelter was fully operational … Community Health Alliance had a clinic there for a while, Washoe County School District had offices there when we had the family shelter … Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission was next door and they provide a lot of homelessness services as well. Catholic Charities is across the street there too and they provide a lot of services including all the meals and all the food at the shelter. And there was a Resource Center at Record Street as well. The Resource Center is where clients can collect their mail, but also use a phone, use a computer, and even just ask for help, you know? … There were even more services than that at Record Street but currently at the Cares Campus none of that is there. There's no clinic, the Resource Center isn't there, the mailroom is soon to be moving to the Cares Campus but it's not there yet. You know, it's farther away from Catholic Charities, so they have to drive their food over to the shelter. Basically there’s no services at the Cares Campus right now. The only services that are there are the meals that are driven there from Catholic Charities and the VOA case managers that work for the clients. But there's nothing else there at the Cares Campus right now.

Similarly, John compared the services offered at the Cares Campus to those he used to get at the old Record Street shelter, which was located in downtown Reno. In fact, he still has to move around to get some of the services he needs. This is what he answered when asked if all the services had been effectively moved to the NCC:

> No, I don't think so. For example, you can't get mail over here. You have to go to Record Street to the Restart Program, there's a mail room there. … I mean, they got the laundry service and they got the showers [at the NCC] but it's just inconsistent, you know?

The lack of service concentration makes the campus act as a service directory more than a service provider. Pinkie and Abi are not shelter residents but they usually hang out in the warm room during the winter. Abi recalled that the shelter staff helped her with her food stamps: "They pointed me to the right direction", she said. And Pinkie continued: "They will point you to the right direction. They might not be able to answer you but they'll point you to the right direction."

As the VOA staff member explained, although fully operating and daily hosting almost 650 residents and a large group of clients, services are yet to be moved to the campus. Adding to this issue, the services offered are not enough to serve everyone needing them at the Cares Campus. This is principally caused by two issues. First, the massive size and capacity of the shelter. Second, a pressing understaffing problem. In this regard, Jon Decarmine saw the campus at risk of "getting too big too quickly". As a recommendation, he called for establishing smaller zones inside the shelter, whose size without partitions he described as "unmanageable". As for the staffing levels, Decarmine said:

> It would be generous to say there's half of the staff, I think, that is currently needed. The situation there, that the staff are dealing with, I don't think they can reasonably be expected to do anything other than jump from one crisis to the next and put out one fire after another. (Washoe County, 2021, 31:28)

The low levels of staffing and the immense size of the shelter, Decarmine explained, have created the current situation in which "four or eight or ten people … are just kind of running around from one flare up to another among 600 people". Therefore, partitioning the big shelter and adding new staff members, he argued, may create rotating teams of ten staff members taking care of different subsections of, at most, 100 residents. This system also allows the staff members to get to know the residents which, in turn, may improve security. In Decarmine's own words: "80 to 90% of conflicts can be de-escalated before they even start just by having staff that know and are familiar with the situations of the people in the shelter". This, of course, is not possible when "hundreds and hundreds" of people cohabitate in one huge space. The VOA staff member saw also the problem of understaffing and the shelter size as a major security threat.

> I'm sure you may have heard about cases of crime, either property being stolen, or even … alleged sexual assaults on the campus. And I think a really big issue is that, with many people in one location, you need a lot of staff to help manage everything. … Now our staffing numbers have increased a bit. But I still don't think we are the staffing level we need to be for 604 people. It's just hard.

The alarmingly low levels of staffing affect the provision of essential services such as case management. The number of case managers at the shelter at the time of Decarmine's report were way under his recommended standards. While his recommendations for a correct case management caseload was 1:30 (1 case manager per each 30 shelter residents), the shelter caseload at that time was 1:60+. This overload of the personnel causes a limited access to services that shelter resident John, with resignation, described simply as: "everything is a waiting game over there". As a former resident, I asked Buck if everyone had access to services at the shelter.

> No, no, not everyone … they don't have the capacity. … They're overloaded. They can't handle the capacity that they have. If everybody was to be dealt with their case workers, the case workers would be overwhelmed because they don't have enough. They need more.

And he added:

> Their thing is, when you first get your bed, the next day you get to see a caseworker. And if you don't see a case worker, you don't get to keep your bed, and that's understandable, but not everyone gets that. Not everyone gets to see a caseworker.

For the VOA staff member, these low levels of staffing and the major overwhelm suffered by staff and case managers had a side effect. When asked about staff having favoritism to some residents over others —an issue some of my interviewees had complaint—, they explained:

> I've heard that argument before, the staff favoritism. And I'm definitely not saying that's OK but, when you do have so many people to help, it's a lot easier to help the person who maybe it's more willing to accept the help or is more willing to deal with some of the work on their own, and is overall just easier to work with, you know? I'm not saying that's OK but, if you can easily get someone into housing, it makes sense to get that person into housing even if it means maybe giving them slightly more attention than some of those other clients.

The problem with staffing, though, is more complicated than just hiring new personnel. As highlighted by Decarmine, you need to hire the right personnel, "the well trained, well paid, professional staff" and create a general environment where both clients and staff feel comfortable (Washoe County, 2021). This complexity can be seen in the ways in which, as reported by Bob Conrad (2022a) in February this year, VOA had hired 65 new employees in the previous six months but 63 had left in the same period.

4.1.2.4. Care as campus management

Interestingly, the perception of the services offered changes as a function of where the residents are staying. As we have seen, shelter residents were not positive

about the availability of services for everyone staying in the big sprung-tent. On the other hand, safe camp residents cited a wide array of services available for them, from work to case management, and personalized attention.

> Over the safe camp, they offer a little bit of work to you if you want to work —said Billy—. You go pick up trash or something and you get a gift card.

When asked about the services and help provided by the Karma Box staff and other workers at the safe camp, Emma said:

> They come and they help out giving people rides to appointments and things like that … They have so many resources that are available to us. They are really all about trying to give you another chance to step up. And you're kind of doing it for yourself but they help you along the way. And there's a wonderful case worker there and she is amazing. She remembers what you should be doing … And they pay for stuff too. Like, I just got a new ID and she drove me to California to do it because that's where I'm from and it's easier than getting a Nevada ID. So we drove to Truckee and she paid for it. And substance abuse, anything. They do take some of the heroin addicts or opioid addicts to the methadone clinic every day. I mean, they are there to help.

Also drawing from a good experience, Clint noted:

> I recently acquired a job with them, so it does seem like, if you want to work and enter that realm of society again, they'll do what they can to help you.

Similarly, Dom, who is in the process of getting a job, got emotional talking about the help he receives from Karma Box staff and its founder, Grant Denton.

> They help people staying there. Is not like they push you out right away. They help you get on your feet and once you are on your feet that's when they tell you to get housing and stay on your own. When I get housing and move out, I will come back to visit. To see Grant and all the staff. Because I'm not kicked out of there, I'm just moving on to my own place. And if you need help, you can always go to them and they will help you

The idea of the different kinds of treatment and related services that the —less overwhelmed— safe camp staff is able to provide has its epitome in Dom’s experience.

Instead of being immersed in a 'waiting game', he has created bonds at the safe camp that are useful to keep him motivated to change his situation.

The differentiated perspective that campus residents have on the provision of services and attention is symptomatic of a larger issue affecting the campus: the lack of internal unity when it comes to policies and regulations. As already explained, the safe and the shelter are governed based on their own rules, which differ from one to the other. In his report, Jon Decarmine highlighted this issue as a worrying fact that needed to be corrected in order to prevent what he called "shelter shopping", where people move from one shelter provision to the another looking for the least restrictive one. From my interviews and participant observation, I confirmed that the difference in regulations from the shelter and the safe camp provided a different kind of resident-institution relationship. This relationship, at the same time, affected the way the campus, as a whole, was perceived by the residents. In particular, I found that safe camp residents rarely identified as campus clients. Rather, they saw themselves as safe camp clients. In this regard, the campus facilities outside the safe camp fence are 'the other side', the shelter side; the place where, incidentally, they go to eat, shower or use the bathroom. A good example of this idea can be seen in my interview with Dom, who described the shelter-safe camp difference pretty well:

> We call the shelter 'the zoo' because there's all these crazy people in there, drugs, I don't know, stuff that's not supposed to be there. There's fights, people with illness. At the safe camp, there's no fights, everybody gets along. It's like the shelter, because we are in a big building [the garages where the safe camp was moved to for the winter], but everybody has their little tent and the stuff inside is theirs. We have our stuff, everybody comes and goes and nobody gets into your things. Because everybody trusts everybody and we get along, we trust each other.

Dom referring to the shelter as 'the zoo' reflects perfectly a certain sense of otherness that some campus residents have about each other as a function of where they are

staying. The differentiation of one side and the other, though, is not exclusive from safe camp residents. When asked about the safe camp, John responded:

> Oh, the camp over there? I've never been there. People say they like it. I don't hear them complain about some of the things they complain over the shelter. Like things I said, like being only five feet apart and you have neighbors that are dirty, people peeing their beds, you know? It's just a different mix of people. You gotta lot of felons over there in the dorms. You got child molesters, you know, felons, violent people... It's challenging.

The differences from the safe camp to the shelter extend further than place perceptions, staff-to-resident ratio and, as hinted by John, resident profile. Maybe as a function of those, the figures of homelessness recovery differ greatly from one and the other. While 58% of the safe camp clients have attained permanent housing, only 5.6% of the shelter residents have received housing, having the latter a lengthier stay at the campus (Conrad, 2022a). Interestingly, both re-housing figures and the lived experience of the campus' residents validate how providing a service focused on building trust and personal relationships has proven to be more effective than just adapting and reacting to the clients' issues when they become an emergency. Making this management style the mainstream for the whole campus, as explained by Decarmine, needs an increase in the number of staff members in the shelter and the internal subdivision of the sprung-tent, currently too big to be managed.

As a final reflection, I think the general success of the safe camp's mode of government makes the failure of the shelter and, more generally, the campus as a whole worse. As I see it, the differences in overall perception and service provision from one side to the other reflect a very unequal access to social services based solely on having access to a fenced off space inside the campus facility. More importantly, these differences can only be worsened with the safe camp updates in the form of mod-pods and dedicated sanitation and community spaces. In here, though, the safe camp is not

to be blamed. On the contrary, their approach centered on focusing on fewer people to provide better services and, in turn, increase the success ratio and the clients' rotation, has proven to be far more satisfactory.

4.2. Making Sense of the Failure of the Care and Control Government

The topics explored in great length in section 4.1. provide an idea of how the campus government failed at providing effective control measures which, in turn, affected the perception of safety among campus clients and residents. Additionally, care measures are also far from being sufficient and effective. Neither the services and staffing levels, nor the state of the facilities and the lack of a common campus regulation seemed to highlight a planned and thorough model of campus government. In this regard, Jon Decarmine's comment referring to the overwhelmed staff's day to day as "running around from one flare up to another" may offer a description that could be used to describe the campus management. I would like to clarify that, when discussing the Cares Campus 'failure', I am referring to the failure of the logics of campus governance. In any case I am alluding to 'failure' as related to the particular goals of each of the agents involved in the development of the campus. Goals that I ignore and could perfectly relate to care and provide for the homeless or just remove or concentrate them in certain spaces.

What I call failure of care in the title of this section was described by Julia as a lack of 'human factor'. Precisely, it was this lack of human factor was the thing keeping Julia from moving into the campus.

> The human nature and the human love, and just the human factor have been all taken away. There's nothing left of that and it's a sad day there [at the shelter]. I say that because there's a lot of good people down there that deserve to be cared for.

When asked to expand on what she meant by ‘human factor’, she replied:

> There is no human factor, you're a number. Somebody [from the campus staff] happens to remember your first name because they’ve taken the extra time for it and it is just like an honor. And that's a sad thing to say!

My follow-up question was aimed at seeing how the campus would be if they considered the human factor.

> There'd be a whole bunch of people around you that care enough about you to see you go forward and not knock you over. Or not make another obstacle for you and your already struggling life, you know? People helping other people. That's the bottom line that it comes down to, right? That's the human factor.

Later in our interview, Julia went back to the idea of lacking care or human factor when recalling an experience at the warm rooms:

> I really do believe that some of the staff that I'm familiar with are nice and do care but then you get the other ones that are stupid on the rules. I was given a blanket and then told that the staff member that gave it to me was gonna be reprimanded for giving me a blanket. And I'm freezing, you know what I mean? I asked for it for that reason. So, for caring, basically, they can get reprimanded! Just for being a human being! I felt really bad because that person probably needs the job, you know? And all [they] did was caring for me, doing what's supposed to do as a human being. And for that I was reprimanded along with being told that they was going to be reprimanded or *talked to* [emphasis in speech]. Yeah, *talked to*, excuse me, I'm sorry, that's the correct word. … Come on! How stupid is that? So what about a stupid blanket? If that gives somebody a little bit of comfort, why do you have to be a jerk about it?

This perceived lack of care is not only detrimental to the Cares Campus from a moral or compassionate perspective but also from a practical and functional standpoint. In this idea, it is interesting to take a little dive into the notion of ‘shelterization’ developed by Grunberg and Eagle (1990) from the field of hospital psychiatry. They described shelterization as the process of adaptation to shelter life in which the homeless population gets incorporated into a culture of assimilation of shelter themes, ideals, and beliefs while developing an attachment to the shelter. This, they argue,

hinders the shelter residents' possibilities of rejoining society's mainstream. Grunberg and Eagle, thus, define shelterization as a sequence in which homeless people disaffiliated from society enter a process of shelterization that leads them to reaffiliate to the shelter instead of to mainstream society. Grunberg and Eagle's shelterization theory has been contested almost since its inception. Gounis (1992) characterized it as a "bogus theory" defined by sensationalist caricatures of the shelter life (p. 688-690). Shelterization, Gounis argued, "ignores the institutional structure and presents the residents as both perpetrators and victims" (p. 690). Marcus (2003) highlighted how shelterization theory overemphasized the shelter's impact on its clients' behavior while treating shelters as impermeable institutions, often abstracting shelter life from the shelter's urban surroundings. In a more recent account, Pleace et al. (2022) criticized how shelterization assumes an understanding of homelessness as a pathology. Following empirical studies on homelessness, they debunk the idea of an existing generalized culture of shelterization by pointing out the transient nature of shelter institutions. Said differently, only a minority of shelter clients stay for the long-term, which would arguably make impossible the existence of a generalized shelterization culture.

I definitely agree with these critiques of shelterization, especially those concerning its conceptualization of homeless people as inherently deviant (Marcus, 2003; Pleace et al., 2022). However, I think it might be interesting to rethink shelterization not as a subculture but as a possible consequence of a systemic failure of shelter institutions. In this regard, homeless shelters are to provide emergency assistance by covering basic needs (e.g., shelter and food) and providing resources to move out from homelessness (think of the so-called wrap-around services). However, if shelter institutions focus on the first and overlook the second, they risk creating a

context of immobility in which clients are assimilated into a shelter that offers no more than a roof over their heads. This situation of lacking a prospect of social assistance while offering a roof, may transform the nature of the shelter from an emergency service to a permanent institution, thus institutionally shelterizing their residents.

If we look at the way the shelter and the campus were framed during its inauguration, this kind of institutional shelterization of its residents was not bound to happen at the NCC. As Mayor Schieve described it, the NCC was built

> to make sure that all the people have all the services that are so critical to get their lives back on track. And so, I think we also have to understand that just because you put a roof over someone's head does not mean a lot of those circumstances that brought them here in the first place go away … We have to understand that mental health for me and for the governor have been really, really important. That is a massive priority for me: mental health and addiction (City of Reno, 2021a, 19:07)

But, as we have seen, services have not been effectively concentrated at the campus. This, together with the lack of adequate staffing levels, prevents campus residents — especially those of the 'super-shelter'— from accessing resources. The residents are thus left without an active service engagement through which they could "actually exit homelessness and get into housing of their own", as Jon Decarmine put it. In this sense, Decarmine described the shelter as "operating very much like a hostel". He went further to say that, without these services, "all we have done is create a place for six hundred or so people to live and there's no opportunities for this to be a tool to actually get more people off of the streets" (Washoe County, 2021). Defining the same issue but using very different vocabulary, shelter clients and advocates had been referring to this 'hostel' function of the campus as 'warehousing' (Arbatman, 2021). During our interview, I asked Julia that, if the human factor was not the goal, if the plan for the shelter was not to build from human relations, what did she think was the plan. Her answer was raw and straight to the point:

> To warehouse the homeless. To hunt down the homeless and get all the federal funding they can to warehouse us. That's what it's all about. The numbers and the money. They don't care about the lives. They don't care about what happens to anybody.

If we go back to the overview of the campus model I draw on 3.2. and contrast it with the Cares Campus, we can say that the NCC has the size and the sheltering mode but fails to provide a meaningful concentration and provision of services. Interestingly, this does not hinder the campus' ability to act as a tool for the concentration and contention of homeless people —the so-called 'hostel' or 'warehouse' function. Chapter 5 picks up this idea and explains which other measures support the ways in which the campus and its surroundings concentrate and contain homeless Renoites, independently of the campus' compassionate successes and failures.

4.3. 'Care' as a Narrative

Before jumping into the last chapter of this thesis, there is an interesting dimension of care that should be explored. My work for this thesis included the review of local media articles and reports, as well as official documents, promotional videos of the campus, and public statements made by city officials and public servants. This research work helped me disentangle the ways in which homelessness and the new campus were framed in public discourse.

Below, I will detail the ways in which different elements conforming the geographies of homelessness were framed and which codes were used to describe them. By doing so, I will show the different public narratives that were created and the logics they entailed.

4.3.1. Narratives defining homeless people

The first element of the geographies of homelessness to explore is, of course, the homeless people. Homeless people are usually referred to as a victimized population. As a city officer puts it, they are “our most vulnerable population” (City of Reno, 2021b, 04:10). As such, “they deserve a safe, clean place to lay their head at night and feel their stuff is protected, they’re protected” (This is Reno, 2021d). From discourses around homeless people it can also be distilled that they need special care and protection, although any specific measures of care and how they are going to be put into practice are barely mentioned. Although I would agree with some of the arguments made, there never seems to be room in these discourses for the agency of homeless people. In this regard, there is always a separation between the ‘us’ who needs to provide and the ‘them’ who may passively accept whatever the solution is.

4.3.2. Narratives defining homeless encampments and encampment sweeps

Following the idea of the victim in need of rescue, homeless encampments are often framed as “public safety challenges” (This is Reno, 2021e, 04:00) or, as Major Schieve posed it: “dangerous” and “public safety hazards” (as quoted in Conrad, 2020b). In terms of danger, they are even said to be more dangerous than “murder scenes” (as quoted in Chadwell, 2021b). Regarding the high risks of fires at encampments, these were also called “death traps” (as quoted in Mueller, 2020).

As we briefly mentioned in 3.1.2., the informal encampment sweeps are framed as sanitary operations aiming at improving safety and eliminating inadequate shelter, independently of the fact that institutional or safe shelter cannot always be provided afterwards. The use of the sanitation and safety rhetorics is thus not new (Speer, 2016a, 2016b), but it is interesting to see it unfold in Reno. In this regard, the City refers to the

sweeps as “cleanups” and are supervised by the City’s ‘Clean and Safe Team’. In line with this, the former City of Reno Public Information Officer defined the sweeps as follows: “It's safety first and foremost. If there's one thing in dealing with the Clean and Safety over the past two years, it's that we have incredibly vulnerable areas right through the center of our town.” (This is Reno, 2021f). Another public officer described the sweep operations this way: “At the core we're seeking to improve the health and safety of public spaces — that is the underlying mission of everything that we are doing” (as quoted in Mueller, 2020).

4.3.3. Narratives defining the Nevada Cares Campus

At this point of the discourse, we have established that homeless people are victims without agency that inhabit spaces more dangerous than murder scenes. Therefore, these spaces should be taken down and cleaned up. As already mentioned, then, our urge is to provide them a “safe, clean place to lay their head at night and feel their stuff is protected, they’re protected” (This is Reno, 2021d). Following this idea, the Nevada Cares Campus is projected as a silver bullet to fight homelessness in the region. Presented as “the crown jewel of our unsheltered population outreach” (This is Reno, 2021e), and “the most unique, comprehensive campus in the nation” (This is Reno, 2021d), the Cares Campus was expected to “bring everything under one roof in what City Council has named a super-shelter” (This is Reno, 2021e). Based on a “community centric feeling for them [the homeless] and safety”, the NCC has the goal of “doing something with them not necessarily to them” (This is Reno, 2020).

Inside the campus narrative, we can include the discourses that are specific for the shelter. Constantly referred to as a ‘super-shelter’ (Chadwell, 2021a; This is Reno, 2021e), the sprung-tent was claimed to be a “pretty unique building” (This is Reno,

2021d). Moreover, Pat Cashell described it as follows: "We have a clean, safe, healthy, brand-new shelter" (KTVN 2 News, 2021a). Comparing it with the encampments, the shelter was "a million times better. Just the cleanliness, the safety of it, the newness of it, the bathrooms". (This is Reno, 2021c)

4.3.4. Discourses of care

Based on the information exposed above, I argue that 'care' is the main code unifying the narratives on how homelessness and homelessness response are framed in Reno. From describing homeless individuals as vulnerable populations living in hazardous environments that need to be cleaned up for their safety; to moving them into a new, safe, and clean space where services will be offered to improve their situation and reinsert them into society; care seems to be the reason, the means and the objective of homelessness policy in Reno.

At this point, it is interesting to compare all these narratives to the actual development of the Cares Campus. As we have seen, many examples contradict the idea of the NCC being "the most unique, comprehensive campus in the nation" or the "crown jewel of our unsheltered population outreach" (think of the state of the men's showers and its collapsing ceiling, the lack of safety and the violent incidents that seem to be taking place regularly at the campus, the lack of services and service concentration, the alarming understaffing levels at the shelter etc.). Moreover, far from a silver bullet for actively helping people move out of homelessness, the campus shelter is acting as a 'hostel' in the best of cases or a 'warehouse' in the worst.

This idea of 'care' as a narrative was shared by the VOA staff member I interviewed. If you remember from the previous chapters, they thought the campus was

not ready to be operative at the time of its inauguration. If that was the case, I asked, why did they hurry to open it?

> Yeah, great question. I will tell you that, Volunteers of America, we were not really in a rush. We knew that it wasn't ready and we were willing to wait until it was ready to open but both the City of Reno and Washoe County really wanted to open it as soon as possible. … I think the City and the County were really trying to go for optics, you know? They wanted the community to know that they put all this money up for this great brand-new shelter and that it was going to open as soon as possible. … They just wanted to pat themselves on the back a little bit, and say that they did this great thing, when in reality maybe it wasn't that great of a thing and it definitely wasn't ready yet.

I asked them to expand on what they meant by 'going for optics'.

> by optics I mean, you know, the City officials thought it was a great idea and they wanted to take credit for it in a way. … So, they wanted to be in the media, they wanted to be applauded for opening this new shelter even if the shelter wasn't ready and even if, you know, maybe it wasn't really that good of a shelter. I guess that's what I mean by 'optics': them caring more about how they are perceived than how much they care about actually helping the homeless.

Returning to the care and control framework, through the comparison of public narratives and the actual development of the campus, we can see how 'care' in the context of the Nevada Cares Campus and the super shelter unfolded mainly as a public narrative, lacking actual materializations of care in the campus development. Moreover, as other scholars have explored before, the ways in which we use language to describe the homeless produces certain homeless subjectivities and shapes homeless discourse and policy (Speer, 2016a; Toft,2014). That way, the expressions of care as narrative helped solidify the public discourses upon which local and regional homelessness policy were built. Additionally, it settled the tone and ways in which policy was to be implemented, which usually entailed denying homeless people any sense of agency and providing on-size-fits-all kind of solutions to be passively accepted without contestation.

I think this exploration of care as discourse shows how looking at language and narratives opens the possibility of engaging with the way urban spaces are re-imagined and performed through speech. Moreover, it provides geographers an opportunity for unveiling new expressions of the care and control dynamics that may otherwise remain hidden.

Chapter V: Spatial Reorganization of the City: Revitalization, Downtown, and the Homeless

After exploring the ways in which the regime of campus government at the NCC generally failed at providing care to its clients, it is interesting to zoom out and see the impacts of the campus in the local homelessness policy. That way, this chapter will briefly explore how the Cares Campus might be one of different tools and measures aimed at spatially controlling homeless people in Reno. Moreover, by looking at recent local homelessness management measures, different developments in the downtown area, and the experience of homeless individuals, I will position Reno as an epitome of the post-revanchist city model and the NCC as the pivotal element of the local strategies of spatial reorganization of homelessness.

5.1. Urban Revitalization and the Homeless

As explored in Chapter 2, the revanchist shift is contextualized as a layer in a complex dynamic of economic competition and capital investment in the urban space (DeVerteuil, 2006; DeVerteuil, May & von Mahs, 2009). Through public-private partnerships, new dynamics of inter-urban competition for capital set off urban commodification (Harvey, 1989; Hennigan & Speer, 2019; MacLeod, 2002) and the claim of public spaces by urban upper classes (Smith, 1996). That way, urban centers

traditionally tolerant with shelter, services, activities, and even business aimed at fulfilling the needs of the urban poor gave way to gentrification agents that saw the devalued central city as perfect places for investment and redevelopment (Kawash, 1998).

One of the main ideas behind central-city redevelopment is that of 'revitalization', in which governments, businesses, developers, and other local actors produce strategies aimed at redeveloping inner city areas in order to increase property values (Mungin, 2016). For Murphy, (2009) the strategies involved in these revitalization processes push

> the urban frontier of gentrification steadily outward, giving rise to deeply uneven racial and economic geographies in which key central-city locales have morphed into sanitized sites of consumption and exchange, and the urban poor and other marginalized populations are relegated to small, often heavily regulated pockets of the inner city or remote, under-served regions far from the revitalized urban center. (p. 311)

Following Smith and Williams' definition (1986), gentrification can be understood as "the rehabilitation of working-class and derelict housing and the consequent transformation of an area into a middle-class neighborhood" (p. 1). This transformation is the product of the displacement of the urban poor as a consequence of the rise of rent prices derived from the pressure from affluent groups in the housing market (Atkinson, 2000). Moreover, Atkinson (2000) argues, the transformation also alters the social characteristics and services of an area as service provision changes to cater the newly higher income groups of residents.

As already mentioned several times, revitalization affects the urban poor, who are forcefully displaced from the central-city. The category of urban poor includes groups such as the homeless population, whose 'propertylessness' and particular aesthetics makes them a visible threat to property, property values, and redevelopment

(Blomley, 2009; DeVerteuil, 2006; Kawash, 1998; MacLeod, 2002; Murphy, 2009). As a threat to investment and property value, the homeless are thus doomed to be removed from public spaces in areas of investment and put into a state of constant movement (Blomley, 2009; Kawash, 1998).

In the exploration of gentrification and revitalization of the central-city, it is interesting to address the notion of the 'post-industrial city'. As described by Mair (1986):

> The post-industrial city is a spatially bounded concretization of post-industrial ideology, with its emphasis on consumption and leisure activities. Although entirely post-industrial societies cannot, of course, exist (see Walker and Greenberg, 1983), there are particular spaces in the built environment which materially reflect, and hence help legitimate and reproduce, post-industrial ideology. The particular activities which take place in these post-industrial spaces involve neither production nor poverty. (p. 352)

In this regard, the post-industrial spaces are those in which the post-industrial worker (e.g., the office employee) works, lives, and is entertained. Redeveloping the central-city as a site for post-industrial activities, Mair argued, is well known to result in the displacement of the urban poor. Moreover, Mair drew from Kasinitz's (1984) to relate the post-industrial city to gentrification processes, which not only affect private buildings but also public space. In this regard, redevelopment projects include the reappropriation of the public street in order to boost attractiveness through pedestrianization and beautification. In these revitalization efforts, Kasinitz explains, there is a promise of diversity that

> is limited; a 'safe' diversity. It does not extend to people who, for whatever reasons, make middle-class people uncomfortable. Ironically, that includes many of those who had traditionally, and during the 1970s increasingly, made downtown streets their home (Kasinitz, 1984: 10 as quoted in Mair, 1986: 363).

The post-industrial and redeveloped central-city is thus highly exclusionary. Interestingly, this exclusion not only affects the urban poor but the provision of social services. As argued by DeVerteuil (2011), the accessibility and visibility that characterizes central-city locations makes them attractive to social services facilities. At the same time, central-city locations may also render social services vulnerable to gentrification-induced displacement —and dismantlement— as rent prices and community opposition grow and service-dependent population is removed from gentrifying central-city areas.

5.2. Rebranding Reno

One of the main reasons why I interviewed Nico Colombant in 2020 was his experience and knowledge about Reno's housing affordability crisis. From an advocacy perspective, he had been covering the affordable and homeless crisis in Reno for some years with the help of UNR journalism students. From his point of view, the affordability crisis could be linked to a certain process of local identity change, a process of rebranding. "There's been a lot of buzz about Reno's rebrand that has been accompanied by a steady increase of rents and property prices", he argued. In short, the city's rebranding refers to its reconversion into a technological hub epitomized in the development of the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center (TRIC), where tech companies such as Tesla, Google, Switch, and Blockchains LLC operate (Hidalgo, 2018).

The presence of these tech corporations has attracted many out-of-state populations (especially from California) that moved to the Biggest Little City seeking lower living costs while maintaining their high paying jobs. This population shift has brought a radical change in the internal dynamics of the city ranging from housing and land values to politics (Naskar, 2018; Tolan, 2019), and has been reported by local,

state, and national media (Allhands, 2019; Damon, 2019c; Las Vegas Sun, 2019; O'Connell, 2015; O'Kane, 2019; Sisson, 2020; Weise, 2017). Even USA Today's 'The City podcast' dedicated its second season to Reno and the issues around its rebranding process (The City podcast, n.d.).

As you could already imagine, Reno is no stranger to revitalization and gentrification. Several parts of the city, especially those near the Midtown area, had been undergoing gentrification processes for a while. These processes are linked with the displacement of its most vulnerable residents, some of whom ended up experiencing homelessness (Gray, 2016; This is Reno, 2015). Current redevelopment and revitalization strategies seem to be focusing on downtown Reno, a traditional place for homelessness services concentration. As easy to imagine, the service concentration made it an activity area for homeless people which, in the long run, dragged property values down, attracting developers and investors.

The question now is, how bad is the affordability crisis? In 2019, the real gross rent in Reno in 2019 was $1,224, a number 19.50% higher than three years before, and an average $238 more expensive than in 2013 (Residential Rent Statistics for Reno Nevada, n.d.). Data from February 2022 show a major increase in the price of the average apartment rent, which was peaking at $1,580, a 14.9% Y-o-Y Change (Reno, Nevada Rental Market Trends, n.d.). For property purchasing, the cost of an average single-family home in 2017 doubled that of 2012 (Cohen, 2017). In 2019, the price hit a record high of $400,000 (Hidalgo, 2019). The record, though, did not last long. By March 2022, the median sale price for a home (including all home types) in the city was $554,000 (Reno Housing Market, n.d.). Closing the topic of the housing affordability crisis, the magnitude of the problem can be reflected with two facts. First, in 2020 RealtyHop placed Reno in the 18th position of their least-affordable housing markets

ranking in September 2020 (AP News, 2020). Second, statistics showed that, this year, less than a quarter of the city residents would be able to afford to buy a home in Reno (Conrad, 2022c).

Reno housing market has a particularity that is closely connected to the city's old self. Former US capital of gaming and express divorces, the city was used to regular 'night-goer' visitors. Consequently, little motels popped up all over the city, giving Reno its characteristic landscape full of vintage motel signs. With the city undergoing different revitalization processes, these motels grew in relevance for two reasons. On the one hand, the motels in the deteriorated downtown area attracted avid developers that bought the —at that time — cheaper land to redevelop it. On the other hand, as rent prices peaked, the weekly motels became housing of last resort for those at risk of homelessness, as well as housing of first resort for those exiting it. As discussed by Blomley (2009), urban gentrification targets undervalued pockets of housing, which may have as an outcome "the elimination of housing of last resort, such as welfare hotels" (p. 582). Just like that, developer Jeffrey Jacobs started buying and demolishing weekly motels one by one. As Anjeanette Damon described it:

> First the Carriage Inn and Donner Inn Motel. Then the Stardust Lodge. Next, the Keno, El Ray and Star of Reno fell. The motels, decades past their prime, had served as housing of last resort for hundreds of people with extremely low incomes and few other options. Jacobs was clearing the way for what he said will be a $1.8 billion entertainment district anchored by his two casinos. (Damon, 2021)

By 2022 Jacobs had already demolished 15 motels and was the owner of more than 100 parcels in downtown Reno (Damon, 2022). Moreover, local policies and federal tax breaks seemed to have fueled this property buying and demolition spree (Damon, 2021). Most of the empty lots at former motel sites are left as dirt piles. These lots, fenced-up and filled with debris and spare bricks scattered here and there, create a

landscape that reporter Richard Bednarski (2021) has described as “gentrification war zones”. Some others, though, are redeveloped as luxury apartments. For Nico Colombant “we try to make everything luxurious” while “there is this whole range of housing options that are being eliminated”. The major problem tearing down the motels, he explained, is that there are no alternatives offered to their clients.

> It’s not because you make [the motels] disappear, that the people who were living in them can automatically afford more expensive places. No, they can’t! (sic).

Regarding the criticism of the state of the motels and the rumors and news of certain illegal activities and violent events happening inside them, Colombant offered a similar perspective than the one he gave for the homeless encampments:

> Of course these things happen in the motels but, as I said with murders or mental health issues, prostitution and drug use also happen in other places that aren’t motels. Is just that poverty is very criminalized in the US and in Reno. These places get health code visits like no others, the motels.

For Anjeanette Damon, “some of them have built really good communities and they’re fairly well taken care of and are not an awful place. But many of them are just really, really decrepit. Awful, awful places (sic)”. In the binary between motels being housing of last resort but also places in really bad condition, she reflected:

> The best of all worlds would be to have certain ordinances where you protect the people living in these motels but you also ensure that certain safety standards are being met.

The reality, though, is that weekly motels are being demolished and replaced with the dream of a revitalized downtown Reno, a flamboyant entertainment district. In the case of Jacobs Entertainment, his projected vision is known as ‘The Neon Line District’, which the website Travel Nevada describes as

> Soon to be brimming with historic neon signs, Burning Man art, new hotels, retail stores and restaurants, the reimagination of downtown Reno continues with the Reno

> Neon Line. A vision of Jacobs Entertainment, this storied stretch of the Lincoln Highway is one of the largest redevelopment projects of its kind, transforming worn properties into a new pedestrian-friendly Reno arts district spanning an impressive 20 city blocks in downtown Reno. (Reno Neon Line District, n.d.)

Following the Neon Line District, other major investments in the downtown area include the complete remodel of the former Harrah's hotel-casino. The project aims at transforming the 980-room building into a mixed-used building combining housing, office, and retail space (Hidalgo, 2021). Similarly, the area between East 4th Street (on the Eastern side of this same street is where the NCC is located) and Record Street (where the old homeless shelter could be found) is being rebranded as the 'Brewery District'. Thanks to this development, Travel Nevada (Reno Brewery District, n.d.) argues, "Reno's East Fourth Street gets a new lease on life with flourishing boutique hotels, award-winning places to eat, and Reno's largest pocket of locally owned—and more often than not Nevada inspired—breweries and distilleries". Paralleling these revitalization projects, the City of Reno moved forward the Downtown Reno Partnership, a business improvement district (BIT) initiative aiming to "make the core of the city cleaner, safer and friendlier" (Welcome to downtown Reno, n.d.). Because of their focus on revitalization, BITs are usually linked in the literature to gentrification strategies and the displacement of lower-income populations (MacLeod, 2002; Smith, 1996). Among other programs, the downtown Reno Partnership has deployed the Reno Ambassadors, who patrol the downtown area in identifiable blue and black uniforms, usually riding black and yellow segways. The ambassadors patrol the streets to keep them clean and safe while providing social outreach and engaging with visitors and tourists. Some of the ambassadors contracted by the program are former homeless people and they have a direct line of communication with police officers (via walkie-talkie). The homeless people's reaction to the ambassadors, though,

is ambivalent. While some appreciate the help they may provide, others perceive them as control and surveillance elements, some kind of extension of the RPD. “They’re snitches (sic)” said Paul, an unsheltered man that had been homeless for fifteen years and used to sleep by the river in downtown Reno.

5.3. Not a Place for the Homeless: Removal and Concentration

Some of the elements already reviewed, shown a special interest in curving the presence of homeless people in public spaces in Reno, notably in Downtown. At this point it is interesting to observe which particular strategies are put in place to achieve this goal and which spatial reorganization results from them.

5.3.1. Creating Hostile and Exclusionary Urban Spaces

Herring & Speer (2019) reflect on how, despite the magnetism and “vast, superstore-esque expansion” of the HSC, it was not strong enough to contain the homeless individuals by itself (p. 914 - 915). In this regard, the campus needed for other modes of exercising spatial control over homeless people. As they state: “Indeed, criminalization and compassion have always worked together throughout greater Phoenix’s history of homeless management.”

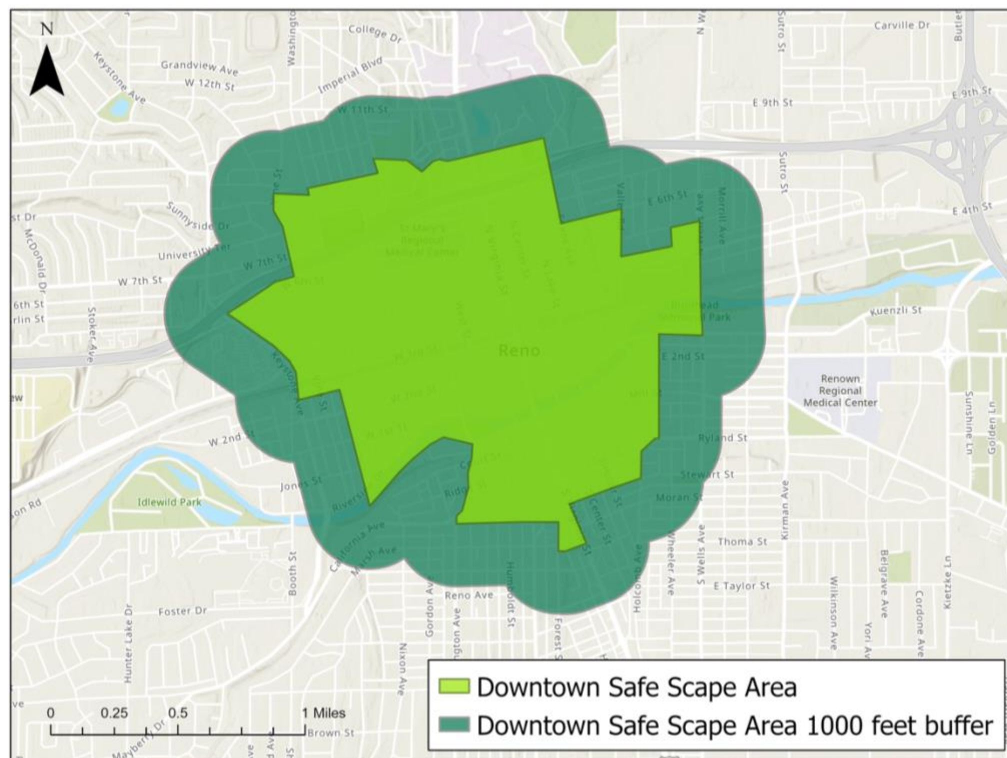
As explored in section 3.1., the City of Reno has had a relevant role in the creation of ‘stratified landscapes’ (Brinegar, 2013) and the displacement and control of the homeless. Anti-camping ordinances, deployment of anti-homeless architecture and design, or the constant shadow of anti-vagrancy laws discussion are just examples of this.

Interestingly, in November 2021, the Reno City Council proposed an ordinance that would effectively ban single-serve package alcohol in what they called the

'Downtown Safe Scape Area' (see Figure 7 for a map of the areas affected by the single-serve ban). An extra 1000-foot buffer zone would surround this Safe Scape Area through the East Fourth Street corridor, and all the stores within it would only be able to sell single-served alcohol from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. (Haddad, 2021; Margiott, 2022; Marier, 2021). The measure, as previous anti-vagrancy ordinances, did not mention the homeless but was openly targeting some of their activities and behaviors in Downtown, including drinking and panhandling in public space (Haddad, 2021). In this regard, a store owner complaint to KOLO 8 TV about the proposed ordinance. Interestingly, the measures he offered as an alternative to the new ordinance also seemed to target the homeless, this time more explicitly than the City: "ID everyone to sell the liquor, so if homeless people or anyone doesn't have ID, they don't buy". The law was approved in early January, 2022 (Margiott, 2022).

Figure 7

Map of the areas affected by the single-serve package alcohol ban ordinance



Again, laws tackling homeless people's behaviors, aesthetics, routines, and even their bodies, are implemented with the aim of limiting their presence and visibility in the centra-city. In this line, Kawash (1998) argued that the revanchist mode of urban management seeks not to eliminate or confront the root causes of homelessness but to eliminate the homeless people by rendering them placeless. She went further in her argument to say that

> Without a proper place, the homeless body is obliged to become small, to minimize its surface, its extension. Such a demand is reflected in urban policies for "containing" the homeless, which are based on the principle of constriction. If the homeless population cannot be eliminated or erased, then at least it can be shrunk down, isolated, and contained so that the public need not feel the pressure of its presence. (p. 330)

5.3.2. The 'game of Whac-A-Mole': keeping the homeless on the move

Homeless encampment sweeps are the quintessential tool for managing the problem of homelessmess visibility. As probably the greatest example of challenging the aesthetics of the post-industrial city, tent-cities and informal dwellings render homelessness in public space a visible urban problem compromising economic development and investment opportunities (DeVerteuil, 2006; MacLeod, 2002). In Reno, the opening of the Nevada Cares Campus was accompanied by a ramping up in the encampment sweeps, which ended with the closure and demolition of the city's largest camp, home of hundreds of unsheltered people (Conrad, 2021a). The sweeps did not stop once all the campus beds and safe tents were filled, though. This created a climate of anger and dissatisfaction versus the City and the County among the homeless people and advocates that led to the creation of the 'Stop the Sweeps' movement and the Believe Plaza protest encampment (Conrad 2021b, 2021c; AP News, 2021).

In this regard, encampment sweeps have been a constant element in the city homelessness policy, used as a tool for pushing homeless individuals into accepting services. In that line, the campus resident's I spoke to recalled their experience of the sweeps and the harassment they suffered before moving into the NCC. As Billy explained:

> When you're outside on the streets there's always going to be this 'You gotta go! You gotta go!', especially from the cops. But there [at the safe camp] you can rest easy. No one is going to say that to you should leave. The people are really nice, the way they should be. They treat you the way people should be treating you, you know? Just treat people with respect, that's all.

For Clint, putting an end to the harassment he faced on the street was the main reason to move to the safe camp.

> [T]hey all promised that they wouldn't bother me to move anymore and chase me down because that gets old too.

Is that something that used to happen when you were by the river? —I asked.

> Oh, yeah. I mean, they catch up to you eventually. Sometimes it took them longer than others but they're always making you move.

Buck is currently staying outside while waiting for a spot at the safe camp.

> [W]e don't have no freedom because you got the cops that are gonna move us around and they don't want us camping at all, you know? (sic) They want us all in that shelter. … I'm getting a citation because they want to give us spaces where they can help us. And I'm telling them; 'We're waiting to get into the safe camp thing. Why don't you let us prove that we're on the waiting list and then let us be until we get in?'

I saw Buck some weeks later. I was around the campus and he was hurrying down the street. When I asked him where he was going with such a rush, he replied:

> They're moving us again [referring to the place where he was camping]. And I told them I'm waiting to get into the safe camp.

And? —I said.

> They'll kick us out anyway. Even if there's no room in the shelter or the safe camp. Even if I tell them I'm already in the waiting list. They just don't want us to be camping in Reno. That's it.

The constant sweeping of tents entails keeping the homeless in constant movement, creating a paradoxical situation in which, as explained by Kawash (1998), “the homeless are forced into constant motion not because they are going somewhere, but because they have nowhere to go” (p. 327). This constant movement is time-consuming, mentally and physically exhaustive, and limits their access to services, thus reducing their chances to improve their situation (see Mullen, 2021 for an account of how the displacement after a camp sweep may throw back someone’s recovery process). In describing this idea of constant pursuit of the homeless, Nico Colombant referred to a local homeless writer that defined the situation as “the game of Whac-A-Mole”, where you punch down a mole emerging from one hole and another one goes up on the other side of the board.

> It just makes their life much harder, —Colombant argued—. You are sending them back a couple steps. They create these communities and when there’s kind of a cohesive community that functions, well, it tends to grow. Then, camps get too big, they attract attention, and then they get dismantled.

But dismantling does not mean disappearing. The displaced homeless people grab whatever belongings they can and set up somewhere else until the next sweep.

Apart from the homeless encampments, there are other elements that make homeless people visible. From shopping carts to the way the homeless look and dress, different elements render them visible in public space and thus susceptible of removal or harassment. In line with this idea of visibility and aesthetics, Billy reflected on being seen where homelessness is not supposed to belong.

> If you are in a neighborhood, they don't want to keep seeing you. They might think that you're going to steal or break into their house or something like that just because of the way you look or the color of your skin.

In a similar way, Dom recalled an event where he experienced being harassed by the police in a public park just for standing near his shopping cart.

> I was moving with a grocery cart, got tired and sat down for a minute. Because you sit down, they harass you. Even though it's a public place they say you cannot sit down at a public park. Even though the opening hours are from 5 to 10 pm. They gave me a ticket at 9:30 for standing in a park, relaxing. … That's what I'm talking about with 'harassing'. It wasn't closed, it was a public park. I can see that happening in private property but not in a public park.

5.3.3. "You Don't Want This Place to be Spread All Around Reno": Delineating the Homeless Place

It can be said that the 'unsightliness' of homeless bodies makes them the target of harassment and displacement in specific spaces, which disqualifies them from urban existence (Walby & Lipper, 2011). For the case of Reno, it is interesting to highlight this idea of 'specific spaces', as harassment and displacement seems to follow a certain geospatial pattern. Following this idea, I argue that, with the opening of the Nevada Cares Campus, the city of Reno completed a spatial reorganization of homelessness that delineated a series of areas of exclusion or control and an area of concentration or care. I make this argument based on two main points. First, the revitalization projects affecting downtown Reno and their revanchist dimension we have explored before (areas of control). Second, the apparent lack of control and contestation of homeless people in the public spaces of the vicinity of the NCC (spaces of care).

Precisely this latter point is what we are going to study in this subsection. In order to do so, I am going to draw from my interviews with the campus clients and their perception of the NCC vicinity as a place where their presence is not contested. In this

regard, it is interesting to recall my conversation with Don. When asked about his thoughts on the campus location, he said:

> It's the perfect location. It's better than out there in Downtown because there are all the tourists and all that stuff, and they don't want to be bothered by the homeless so they take them away. But I like it in here. Nobody bothers you, they leave you alone. I can just sit down and talk to my buddy and nobody bothers us now.

Julia expressed herself in similar terms:

> I understand why they kind of kept [the campus] down here. … Because it's visually, they're keeping people where they feel like they belong, right? (sic) Kind of hiding them away.

Similarly but using just a few words, Billy argued: “You know, you don't want this place to be spread all around Reno.” By their part, Pinkie and Abi linked the spatial relocation to the interests of the businesses in downtown Reno.

> I think it's better here than in Downtown —said Pinkie—. It's a lot quieter. So yes, I think is a better place to have it here because there's a lot less altercations that could pop up.

Abi jumped in:

> Yeah, and not a lot of businesspeople have issues now like they used to [when the shelter was located by Downton, on Record Street].

Also linking the businesses from Downtown to the removal of the homeless population from public space, the VOA staff member said:

> I really think the City was getting a lot of pressure from businesses to get [the homeless] out and especially when you look at the location of the Record Street [former] shelter. This part of Fourth Street is kind of being rebranded as the 'Brewery District'. We have a lot of breweries and restaurants opening up down here … So, that's a lot of kind of hip, fun businesses moving in. You know, you could definitely say, this is area is being gentrified. … I think it’s very obvious that the City wanted [the homeless people] out of Downtown but more specifically wanted them kind of contained in one area, you know? And I think that’s why all the sweeps have been happening: to get them out of parks and to get them to the Cares Campus.

The experience collected from the campus clients provides an interesting perspective. In Reno, it seems like homeless people are not simply being displaced out of Downtown and forced to spread across the urban space in what Lee and Price-Spratlen (2004) described as a “checkerboard form of concentration” (p. 4). On the contrary, after being displaced from investment areas, they are congregated in a very delineated space around the Cares Campus. Having the campus as an anchor point and pushing homeless Renoites out from everywhere else forces them to pivot around the campus, even though shelter and services might not be available for all of them. In this regard, the campus goal is transformed from the provision of care to the spatial organization of homeless people. Thus, the campus goal can be said to mirror “that of anti-homeless laws and anti- homeless architecture despite sharp differences in the given rationales (e.g. criminalization versus compassion)” (Hennigan and Speer, 2019, 914 - 915). Furthermore, those that, like Buck, refuse to be contained within that area are condemned to a perpetual state of movement.

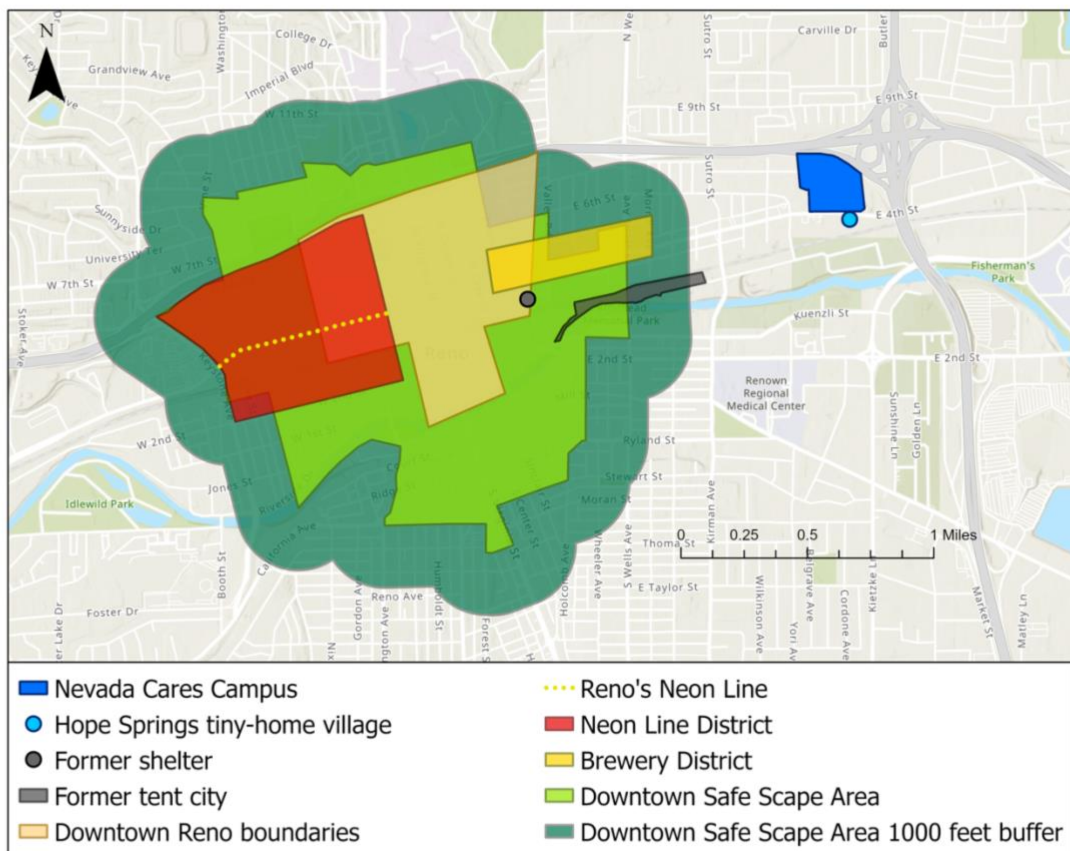
From the interviewees' contributions, it is also worth noting how homeless people feel the sense of otherness placed upon them and seek refuge in those spaces where they are not going to be harassed and their presence in public space is not going to be threatened. This sense of leaving them be in the delineated space of the campus and its surroundings is the final step in the creation of the campus’ space of care. The conception of this space, though, is based on an idea of care embedded in post-revanchist imaginaries, where the compassionate approach is at the same time confining but open, punitive but caring (Speer, 2017).

Highlighting the idea of spatial delineation of homelessness, Figure 8 shows a map containing several elements: the boundaries of downtown Reno, the revitalization districts explained above, areas of homelessness policing such as the Downtown Safe

Scape Area, former homelessness sites near Downtown Reno such as the former shelter in Record Street or the old tent city, and current homeless spaces such as the Care Campus or the Hope Springs tiny-home village. The intention behind creating a busy map with different superposed layers that could even be hard to read was to provide a visual representation of the stratification of urban landscapes in Reno. In this regard, the map shows how the downtown Reno area is filled with revitalization projects and anti-homeless ordinances. Additionally, the map also shows former sites of homelessness presence in Downtown such as the old shelter or the swept tent city (both in dark grey). At the same time, on the right side of the map, we can see the emergence of recently developed spaces of care for the homeless (in blue), which draw a general space where the public presence of homelessness is not persecuted or punished. In this regard, the spatial contrast between the grey and blue map elements acts as a witness of the displacement of homelessness spaces from the revitalizing downtown areas towards less central locations in 4th Street just by the highway overpass and the Spaghetti bowl.

Figure 8

Map showing a general view of the spaces of homelessness care and control in Reno



Chapter VI: Conclusions and Future Directions

This research project looked at Reno's local and regional homelessness policy from the lenses of the post-revanchist city. First, I explored how care and control dynamics unfolded in the context of the Nevada Cares Campus and how were they experienced by the campus' clients. In this regard, I discovered a general sense of failure for both care and control strategies of the campus management. Through the accounts of the campus inhabitants, I saw this failure being experienced as a general lack of accessibility to resources and services, lack of perceived safety, lack of adequate facilities, and an overall feeling of not being cared by the campus authorities.

Interestingly, the arguments made by some individuals experiencing homelessness in the city pointed out at strategies destined to spatially reorganize homelessness in Reno. Motivated by this idea, I zoomed out from the campus and focused on general homelessness policy practices in the city. By doing so, the campus emerged as an essential tool in the creation of heavily stratified landscapes. First, areas of investment and revitalization became spaces of control and displacement where the presence of homeless people is strongly contested. Second, the less desired urban areas in the vicinity of the Cares Campus are designed as spaces of care and shelter characterized by an apparent lack of control and contestation of the presence of homeless people. This argumentation was made gradually as follows:

This thesis started by exploring how contemporary homelessness management is based on a combination of care and control dynamics. As explored by the idea of the post-revanchist city, the articulation of these dynamics is contradictory by nature, as it aims at fulfilling the impossible task of mediating between the needs of capital investors and the urban poor.

Preparing for the analysis of a facility following the model of the homeless campus, I reviewed several campus examples in the United States to provide a general understanding of this relatively new concept. After observing these facilities, I found four common characteristics that seemed useful to contextualize the model: size (the campus is enclosed in a relatively big compound made of different buildings); provision of shelter facilities (these can be homeless shelters, safe camps, transitional housing programs, etc.); concentration of homeless-related services (job skills training, medical and mental health care, case management, etc.); and direct or indirect spatial control and contention of homeless people. Once the idea of the campus was established, I

explored the development of the Nevada Cares Campus and explained the different elements that, as of today, conform the campus.

The following chapter explored the ways in which measures of care and control unfold in the campus. Through the experience of campus clients, a member of the VOA staff, and the results from a report made by a third-party consultant, we could also explore where and how these measures failed. Interestingly, at the end of this chapter and through the review of local media articles and reports, official documents, promotional videos of the NCC, and public statements made by city officials and public servants, I investigated the production of 'care' as a narrative. This helped unfold the ways in which the geographies of homelessness are discussed and framed in public discourses which, in turn, shape the way homeless management policy is enforced.

Finally, I argued that the development of the NCC was embedded in a context of urban renewal and revitalization that Reno has been undergoing since it started a peculiar rebranding process some years go. This rebranding is transforming the city from a casino town into a tech hub with a post-industrial central city; dramatically increasing housing values and changing the city's economical, demographic, and physical landscapes. In this regard, I explored how, together with more revanchist measures such as constant encampment sweeps, anti-vagrancy ordinances, or anti-homeless design, the Cares Campus played a central role in the reconfiguration of urban spaces in Reno and the delineation of spaces alternatively punishing and welcoming homeless people.

5.1. Final Thoughts

After reviewing the thesis a few times, I thought that I should add this final subsection in order to clarify an idea. With this thesis, I cannot make the argument that

the governments of Reno and Washoe County are willingly or mischievously scheming to suppress the homeless people's right to exist in the city. In this regard, the decisions and actions shaping the landscapes of both homelessness care and exclusion are not uniformly taken forward by a centralized decision-making body. Rather, they are a function of different government levels, bodies, agencies, and departments, sometimes with contradictory means and objectives. Moreover, most of the spatial mediations and exclusionary dynamics highlighted in this thesis escape the control of the state.

fragmented policy landscapes

In these cases, the responsibility is often diluted in an ocean of private-public partnerships where the extent of who controls what and who decides what not is not easily determinable. As a point way beyond the scope of this thesis, further research should dedicate efforts to explore which particular agents are benefitting (and to what extent) from the exclusion and displacement of homelessness and the urban poor in Reno.

Going back to the idea of intentionality, my perspective on the Nevada Cares Campus is similar to that of the previous paragraph. If anything, the failure of the compassionate framework in Reno is not just to be blamed on particular policy actors but on structural constraints inherent to the post-revanchist city. What I mean by that is that, as shown in my interview with the VOA staff member, most of the individuals involved in the conversation on homelessness in Reno are trying their best but are tightly constricted by the politics of post-revanchism. In this regard, this thesis is further proof of the contradictions inherent to the impossible task of meeting and mediating the conflicting demands of capital investment and businesses on the one hand, and the urban poor and the displaced on the other. For the case of Reno, this contradiction translated into forcing homeless to either move into a half-developed campus way

before it was actually ready or suffer harassment and constant sweeps in any other space in the city. For the city, it also meant the development of a hostile urban landscape in downtown Reno (e.g., filled with hostile design features and empty 'war zone-like' lots) that, as of today, does not only repel the homeless but the general consumer public that is supposed to attract.

The future plans for campus expansion and the continued allocation of funds aimed at campus improvement (Conrad, 2021d; Tang, 2021) leave room for optimism. Some of these plans, for instance, include hiring more staff, improving the variety and quantity of services provided, and the construction of spaces of such as a clinic, offices for the case managers, extra sanitation infrastructure, and dedicated bridge housing. Far from ignoring the issues affecting the facility, then, it seems like there is an intention to pursue constant campus upgrading and the expansion of measures of care. These future projections, however, are still very far away. The reality of the campus today is that, apart from missing spaces of care and community, it is severely understaffed, which generates a cascade of issues altering its proper functioning and hindering the residents' ability to move out of homelessness. Additionally, it still lacks proper on-campus service provision (both in terms of diversity and quantity), defeating the whole purpose of concentrating homeless people and maximizing the campus capacity.

Fixing these issues will require the local and regional governments, as well as their partnering nonprofits, to step up over and over and not drop their guards. In this effort, it is absolute necessary that, once and for all, they open the discussion floor to the little independent organizations, the advocate groups, and the homeless people themselves. As advocates have asked for over and over, those directly affected by homelessness, those with the "lived experience" (as explained by Ilya Arbatman in

Washoe County, 2021), need to have a role in the decision-making processes. As Julia said:

> We are good people and we appreciate all the help they do offer us but … there could be things that are looked at and maybe even ask for our ideas of how they can be made better. We have a lot of great ideas. We are grateful but we are sick of being hunted. I will say that. We're sick of being told that we're going to be forced to either this option or that option.

Thus, settling for a 'just enough' or succumbing to the pressures of capital investment will not suffice, despite how few votes the investment on helping homeless people may grant and how glowing the neons of revitalization are.

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Appendix A: List of Interviews

Interview 1: Safe camp resident *Billy*: January 2022

Interview 2: Safe camp resident *Emma*: January 2022

Interview 3: Safe camp resident *Dom*: January 2022

Interview 4: Shelter resident *Richard*: January 2022

Interview 5: Shelter residents *John* and *Mike*: January 2022

Interview 6: Shelter clients *Pinkie* and *Abi*: February 2022

Interview 7: Shelter client *Julia*: February 2022

Interview 8: Former shelter resident *Buck*: February 2022

Interview 9: Safe camp resident *Clint*: February 2022

Interview 10: VOA staff member: March 2022

Interview 11: Anjeanette Damon, investigative journalist: November 2020.

Interview 11: Nico Colombant, founder of ‘Our Town Reno’: November in 2020.