The Colour of Policing in Lethbridge[*]

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ABSTRACT

This text aims to explore how racism operates in police practices with particular attention to Lethbridge. It is designed to provide a historical trajectory for the relationship between policing, racism, and colonialism. It examines the history of modern policing and its nation-state-building capacity and racialized policing in modern Lethbridge. This article deals with the concept of "racial profiling" through the carding practice in Lethbridge.

THE COLOUR OF POLICING IN LETHBRIDGE

The aim of this chapter is to explore the ways in which racism operates in police practices with a particular attention to Lethbridge. The chapter is designed to provide a historical trajectory for the relationship between policing, racism, and colonialism and is composed of two parts. First, I introduce readers with a brief history of modern policing and its nation-state building capacity. This part takes issue with the conditions that created modern police forces in Europe in the early nineteenth century as well as with the colonial roots of policing. Then, I focus on the coming of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) and its significance in Canada's nation-building process. This is exemplified in the NWMP's first assignment to Fort Whoop-Up in 1874 in what we now know as Lethbridge. Second, I explore racialized policing in modern Lethbridge through the concept of "racial profiling." I focus on the most obvious case to demonstrate the racial profiling done by police officers in the city of Lethbridge: the carding practice, where the police randomly stop and ask "suspicious" subjects for identification. In this part, I also look at police practices in the name of the "war on drugs" and demonstrate how the war on drugs has increased police surveillance and criminalization of racialized bodies in Lethbridge.

While tackling these issues, I rely on and make use of certain premises. First, I prefer to use the term *white supremacy* rather than racism wherever possible in order to emphasize the structural causes behind racialized policing and stress the fact that white supremacy is not only the ideology of marginalized, racialized groups; it lies in the very foundation of our societies.

White supremacy refers to a "political, economic and cultural system in which Whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of White superiority and entitlement are wide- spread, and relations of White dominance and non-White subordination are daily re-enacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings" (Ans- ley 1989, 1024). Second, I try to explore the advantages of white privilege rather than the disadvantages of racial discrimination—precisely because we have been taught about racism for so long as something that puts "others" (read as non-white) at a disadvantage and not to see its opposite: white privilege that puts white people at an advantage (McIntosh 1989). As Dyer (1997) has shown, whiteness has been exnominated, or made invisible, in Western culture so that it becomes simply the norm. Dominant groups still frequently present them- selves as beyond naming in relation to aspects of identity. In many contexts, white, male, and heterosexual "go without saying." It is therefore important to recognize and acknowledge that whiteness needs to be named. Third, my preference for the terms *racialized people* and *racialized practices* over *race(s)* is an intentional one. The term *racialization* "reflects that race is a social construction and not a biological identifier," and it also connotes a process "in which race is constructed by the dominant groups and institutions in our society" (Tanovich 2006, 5). However, the fact that race is a social construction does not mean that racism's impacts are not real. Race is a social construct, but racism continues to reinvent its power over, discriminate against, and kill people in the name of race. The chapter follows "racial literacy pedagogy" in order to unsettle individualized, moral accounts of racism that see it as out of the ordinary (Lentin 2020, 11). Fourth, I try not to take the police's own vocabulary (like homelessness, drug crisis, "a few bad apples") at face value and question this vocabulary and the processes through which it is created, in line with what Correia and Wall (2018, 2) call "copspeak"—"a language that limits our ability to understand police as

anything other than essential, anything other than the guarantor of civilization and the last line of defense against what police call savagery."

A Brief History of the Police: Modern Nation-State, Capitalism, and Colonialism

Today, the police seem inevitable in modern societies. When we ask the question "Why do we need the police?" or "What do the police do?" we often hear people talk about their role in fighting crime or providing security. However, historically speaking, the role of the police is much more complex and to a great extent different from fighting crime. In contrast to popular belief, research shows that majority of police work is not fighting crime (Ericson 1982). Rather, a huge chunk of police work is patrol work; whether on foot, in cars, on horses or bicycles, police officers patrol various urban places. Bayley (2005) contends that 64 percent of officers in Canada are assigned patrol work. A very small portion of this patrol work involves dealing with crime. John Sewel (cited in Comack 2012, 58) reveals "the average Canadian police officer can expect to make seven or eight criminal arrests a year, or one arrest every six or seven weeks. The majority of these crimes involve property, not violence to a person." Comack argues that "police are more likely to be engaged in 'social work' than in crime-fighting or law enforcement activities"

(59). How then should we understand the police presence on our streets? The history of the modern police may help answer these questions. In the next section, I elaborate these histories by focusing on first the European roots of the police, then the police in Canada.

The Arrival of the Modern Police

The term *police* first emerged from the French-Burgundian *policie* in the fifteenth century and referred to "a condition of order in the community" or "statute aimed at the institution and/or maintenance of order in the com- munity" (Neocleous 2000, 1). With the emergence of the "science of police" (*Polizeiwissenchaft*) in the seventeenth century, the content of the order as well as the ways to achieve this order were related to the *reason d'Etat (rea- son of the state)* and the new mode of production it perpetuates. Thus, the science of police in the seventeenth century linked the state to the economy. The main interest of those writing on the police in the eighteenth century was the development of commerce and the production of wealth. According to Adam Smith (1763), one of the tasks of the police was to maintain plenty and cheapness—a task of establishing and maintaining exchange and property relations on the national level where civil society (the market), families, and individuals are not reliable. They designed policing mechanisms to facilitate the growth of the money supply, population, foreign trade, and mining. The source of wealth was, as police scientists defined it, labour. This "precious commodity," Patrick Colquhoun (1795, 366) has suggested, "could only be appropriated from the poor." In order to get more from the poor, the states had to take good care of the poor. In England, Colquhoun played the most important role as the "architect" or "inventor" of modern police (Linebaugh 2003, 426). He was the London agent for the planters of St Vincent, Nevis, Dominica, and the Virgin Islands and worked for the West India Merchants' Committee in London. He worked on police schemes and the reformation of the London dockyards. He initiated the Thames River Police in 1800 to regulate the work conducted at the dockyards. The aim was to end customary takings and subject the dock workers to wages, and wages only. The products brought to London shores from the colonies, specifically

those from what they then called West Indies—that is, North America—were of utmost importance to Colquhoun and his fellow merchants to build up their capital. We can say that the notion of police connects the state, wage labour, capital holders, and colonialism. Colquhoun's plans were put into practice with the *Metropolitan Police Act* of 1829, and a centralized and unified system of police, or a "police force," was established in London. The aim was to create a professional, bureaucratically organized lever of urban discipline, to permanently introduce the police into the hearth of working-class communities, and to create a bureaucracy of official morality (Storch 1976).

From the very beginning, the aim of the police has rarely been to protect citizens. The coming of the modern police force was not a response to the increase in crime rates in the nineteenth century either. We do not know the crime statistics of the nineteenth century in comparison to the previous centuries, which could prove this argument. However, what we do know is that in the nineteenth century, crime was being redefined with the new mode of production, and the police had become the active agents of this redefinition. For example, as Emsley (1999, 8) describes, "Business fraud, for which the economic changes of the nineteenth century provided massive new opportunities, and various forms of corruption by members of the respectable classes, did not figure among the 'crimes'" the new police were concerned about. The crimes the police dealt with were related to "disorder" (also newly defined) among lower classes—that is, "plebeians, particularly those who were thought to prefer idleness and an easy life to honest labour" (Emsley 1999, 8). The police function is then inherent in class structure; the state "employed the police methods to accelerate the accumulation of capital by increasing the degree of exploitation of labor" (Marx [1867] 1990, 905). The exploitation of labour is only possible through wage labour. As Foucault (1965, 46) clarifies, police can be defined as "the totality of measures which make work possible and necessary for all those who could not live without it." In this sense, the aim of the police has been to establish a new order (Ericson 1982; Neocleous 2000) and to make those lower classes fit into that order serving in the best interest of the state and the capital holders. The ongoing dispossession on which capitalism relies heavily cannot exist without a combination of benevolent and violent police powers.

Similarly, the role of police in creating societies built on the premises of white supremacy is crucial. Policing is "modelled on existing racial hier-archies" (Crosby and Monaghan 2018, 193). As Comack (2012, 57) clarifies, "The 'order' that the police are charged with reproducing is decidedly 'raced' (as well as gendered and classed)." Racialized frames of reference, or stocks of knowledge, inform police work. Thinking about policing in Canada in this sense requires attention to settler colonialism. Settler colonialism as a structure (Wolfe 2006) enables us to see colonialism as an ongoing process penetrating social as well as state formations. Settler colonialism is not about replacing, or substituting, a society but about the construction of a new one. It is instead about establishing a new society on expropriated land and thereby brought forth the need for policing (Dafnos 2013). Policing in settler-colonial societies was built on existing structural inequalities and survives by constantly reproducing them. The issue of racism in policing is institutional and systemic. This is why Comack (2012, 15) calls this "racialized policing." All policing has been racialized since the inception of the idea of the police, and Canadian society is no exception. As Jiwani (2002, 69) describes, "The emphasis on policing certain groups of people and certain types of crimes is reflective of the social stratification system underpinning Canadian society. Those at

the bottom are considered to be the most prone to crime, are seen as less credible and deserving, and are often perceived by the dominant society as dispossessed and disposable." In Canada, this is also achieved based on settler-colonial motives. In a sense, "it is law and the police powers that made and makes settler colonialism possible" (Patricia Monture-Angus cited in Correia and Wall 2018, 6). Nowhere is this more evident than in the arrival of the police in Canada.

The Police in Canada: North West Mounted Police and Treaty 7

Needless to say, the First Nations living on the territories we now call Canada had a systematic, organized, complex, and sustained use of their resources learned from generations of living in these territories. They each had successful economic strategies, reliable political structures, legitimate leadership and authority, protected borders, legal systems, and controlled access to resources. Police as producers of order in the colonies had the missionary task of imposing European values and norms on Indigenous populations (Emsley 2014). In this sense, the emergence of the NWMP was crucial for Canada's nation-building process, part of which included asserting claims to the newly acquired western territories between Manitoba and the Rocky Mountains, keeping the borders between Canada the US in order, and extracting capital on newly expropriated land.

Before the arrival of the NWMP, Sir John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of the Dominion of Canada, contacted London for information about the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC; Emsley 2014). His explanation for requiring this information was rooted in creating a police force: "I pro- pose to organize a Mounted Police Force, under the Command of Captain Cameron, for Red River purpose" (Horrall 1972, 182). In December 1869, Macdonald wrote in a letter to Captain Cameron, an officer of the Royal Artillery,

> It seems to me that the best Force would be Mounted Rifflemen, trained to act as cavalry, but also instructed in the Rifle exercises. They should also be instructed, as certain of the Line are, in the use of artillery, this body should not be expressly Military but should be styled Police, and have the military bearing of the Irish Constabulary. (Macdonald cited in Horrall 1972, 181)

In England, police forces often followed the model of the London Metropolitan Police that was established through Colquhoun's initiatives in 1829. The London Metropolitan Police were unarmed and non-military in character whereas the RIC, founded in 1822 to control social unrest in Ireland, resembled a semi-military force. Its members were armed and under the central control of the Irish authorities in Dublin (Horrall 1972). When their mission of acquiring political control in the West and disciplining Indigenous populations is considered, it becomes clear why the more militarized RIC was Macdonald's preferred model (Brown and Brown 1973). The NWMP were an essential part of Macdonald's national policies.

While the substantive reason for initiating the NWMP was to build a white settler order in the newly acquired land, sending armed forces northwest at the time was justified with the intention to intervene and stop the whisky trade (Brown and Brown 1973). Settlers from the US had established this trade in Native communities, causing significant chaos at a number of trading forts. In 1874, the NWMP arrived after a long march west under Colonel James Macleod and tried to put an end to the whisky trade. Their first target was Fort Whoop-Up in today's Lethbridge. Nevertheless, when they arrived at Fort Whoop-

Up, the traders they were looking for had already left—most likely because of fears that the police were coming (Longstreth 1927, 48; Luckhurst 1974, 19). One of the earliest members of the force explains their intent in his memoirs:

> In 1874, three hundred green men, some very young without any experience of prairie life and few with the experience of discipline, were launched into this unknown country, told to put an end to the sale of whiskey to the Indians and to instill in the latter, some of the most savage tribes [*sic*] in North America, respect for law and order. This they accomplished well. (Kelly 1996, 24)

Smith (2009, 59) argues that "the primary role of the Mounted police was to facilitate the peaceful occupation of the west by Anglo-Canadians and to allay their fears of Indigenous people once they arrived." Macdonald also confirmed that "the business of the Mounted Police is principally to keep peace between White men and Indians" (cited in Smith 2009, 59). Peace here should be read as "pacification" (see Özcan and Rigakos 2014). In his critical reading of contemporary security studies, Neocleous (2010) refers to security and police jobs as a way of making war through peace. Peace in colonial con- texts almost always connotes war. In this sense, the role of the NWMP was expanded at times, contested, and negotiated, as is the case in each project. But this main function has never changed: encouraging future white settlement in the region while keeping Indigenous populations under control and making the land conducive to capitalist exploitation. As Smith (2009, 145) concludes, the aim was to "reconstruct the prairie west from a domain of fur traders to a space in which other economic potential, more hospitable to colonial expansion, might be exploited."

Accordingly, the NWMP became essential to controlling, eliminating, dispossessing, and displacing First Nations to construct the transcontinental railway. The First Nations' title to the land had to be extinguished to rapidly build the railway that was promised to British Columbia as a condition of their joining the Canadian Confederacy in 1871 (Tesar 2016). This required acquisition of the land from the First Nations with as little resistance as possible—that is, through a treaty making—which would also be in line with the 1876 Indian Act. The NWMP became "a major force in laying the ground work for the acceptance of Treaty 7 and were a presence, along with their cannon, at the negotiations for the treaty" (Smith 2009, 59). Treaty 7 was signed in 1877 by five First Nations: the Siksika (Blackfoot), Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), Stoney Nakoda, and Tsuut'ina (Sarcee). Negotiations lasted only three days, with significant cultural and linguistic barriers present and most likely deliberate attempts of government representatives to mislead the Nations' perception of the deal. The First Nations may not have dealt with the government of Canada before, but they were used to treaties, as they constantly made peace treaties among themselves. They wanted, and understood, how to make peace between themselves, the government, and incoming settlers, while the government needed to extinguish Aboriginal title to the land (Tesar 2016). Treaty 7 confined each nation on their assigned reserved lands. Only two years after signing the treaty, a local Catholic priest described the First Nations' extreme poverty: "I have never seen them so depressed as they are now; I have never seen them before in want of food. [. . .] They have suffered fearfully from hunger" (cited in Tesar 2016).

After the signing of the treaty and the First Nations' move onto their respective reserves, the task of the NWMP was to keep track of Indigenous people that left their reserves for certain periods of time. Large gatherings of Indigenous people practicing their customs and traditions were threatening to white settlers. Although the NWMP used vagrancy laws to keep Indigenous people away from the white settlers, they were not satisfied with the existing measures and asked for more authorities. In addition to the North-West Resistance, the Pass System established in 1885 was part of a response to the constant requests of the NWMP. The NWMP had already been asking for such measures describing the details of such a system to restrict Indigenous people to their reserves. They were particularly concerned about the Kainai. According to Superintendent Deane, "The Bloods think that they are the cream of creation, and it is time for them to begin to imbibe some modification of the idea" (cited in Smith 2009, 65). As such, the Pass System was part of coercive colonial practice in the interest of white settlers. The system itself and comments like Superintendent Deane's also demonstrate how racial hierarchies are shaped by settler colonialism. The NWMP in this sense not only aimed to wean Indigenous people from their customs and beliefs by enforcing laws but was also a mechanism through which to teach them their place in newly fabricated social order and hierarchy—namely, their inferiority to the white settlers. Crosby and Monaghan (2018, 193) argue that "most explicit in the policing of Indigenous movements are the normative beliefs that Canadian authorities have a duty to develop resources on Indigenous land, and that Indigenous Peoples are incapable of or hostile to economic development." The so-called superiority of the new order was described by one of the first members of the NWMP, ex–sub constable Maunsell on the fiftieth anniversary of the NWMP:

> Few people have seen our vast country change from a wilderness into what it is now. When I visit Calgary and stay at the Palliser Hotel I feel like a second Rip Van Winkle. To one who has not had my experience, it would require a vivid imagination to see Indian tepees on the ground now occupied by the hotel and envisage large herds of buffalo grazing on the town site of Calgary. This vast change could never have taken place if the Mounted Police, or some similar force, had not first established law and order. (Kelly 1996, 11)

Policing in Modern Lethbridge

Understood against this historical background, policing in modern-day Lethbridge deliberately targets bodies of the poor, Indigenous, non-white populations. This is not necessarily because the individual police officers are biased but mainly because the aforementioned continuities in policy preferences regarding policing resulted in structural inequalities that have been working to the disadvantage of these populations. Poverty disproportionately impacts certain populations because of pre-existing structural inequity. For example, non-European, non-white immigrant communities are more susceptible to poverty in Canada for various reasons, including second-language barriers, no or only partial recognition of their credentials, and financial responsibilities toward their families back home. Impoverished Black populations are also relentlessly targeted by police (Maynard 2017; Cole 2020). Political, social, and economic institutions in Canadian society are built on settler colonialism and white supremacy, meaning that the structures of power governing these institutions are shaped by presumptions about the inferiority of Indigenous and non-white populations. Institutional racism is

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structured by the laws and practices that institutions create in order to benefit white people at the expense of people of colour.

The flipside of institutional racism is white supremacy, the fact that white people have social advantages in things like getting jobs, getting into university, and running government and businesses. Whiteness in this way has been continuously produced and reproduced, refined and protected in diverse ways allowing for the persistence of disproportionate incarceration, poverty, unemployment, deportation, and shooting of Black, Indigenous peoples, and people of colour (Kitossa 2020). This partly explains how the discursive preferences in security policies such as "tough on crime," "war on drugs," and "war on terror" increase police surveillance and the criminalization of racialized populations.

In Canada, "images and ideas embedded in political, legal, judicial, educational, and cultural discourses are still contributing to common sense understandings of what constitutes 'difference,' 'deviance,' and 'danger' to White society" (Tator and Henry 2006, 54). It is this "white gaze" that acts as a filter through which non-white populations are constructed and differentiated from whiteness (Tator and Henry 2006). As Smith (2009, 18) describes, "Knowing colonized peoples in this way allowed the construction of new oppositions between 'the savage and the civilized' or between progressive modern Euro-Canadians and stubbornly retrograde and tradition-bound colonized peoples. If Indigenous people were dishonest, simple, lazy, prone to violence, promiscuous, and self-indulgent, then non-Indigenous Canadians were honest, intelligent, hard-working, reserved, morally upright, and generous." When whiteness is normalized, non-whiteness is "abnormalized" (Tator and Henry 2006, 27). It is somewhat easier to detect those abnormals through their skin colour, other physical attributes, and cultural behaviours. The his- tory of anti-Blackness, for example, "attaches Blackness to criminality and danger, rationalizes state violence against Black communities because Black people are presumed to be 'guilty in advance'" (Maynard 2017, 10). "Dangerous classes" rhetoric has historically functioned well as a justification for policing (Storch 1976). Rose (2002, 185) calls this "the politicization of danger." Through the discourse of dangerous groups, not individual offenders but portions of the population are identified as the risk factor, and "they" are disproportionately surveilled, disciplined, and punished. This is carried out in overt and more covert forms. In what follows, I will try to demonstrate overt racism in policing practices in modern-day Lethbridge by showing how the racial profiling used by the police materializes through carding practices. For a more covert example, I also explore the discourses around the "war on drugs" and how this discourse serves to further the criminalization and policing of racialized subjects.

Racial Profiling in Lethbridge: Carding Practices

The concept of "racial profiling" was not regarded as a problem in Canada until a public inquiry into the Toronto Police's biased treatment toward racialized populations was initiated through findings outlined in the *Toronto Star* that found that Black people across Toronto are three times more likely to be stopped and documented by police than white people (Rankin 2010; Meng, Giwa, and Anucha 2015). The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC 2003, 6) defines racial profiling as "any action undertaken for rea- sons of safety, security, or public protection that relies on stereotypes about race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, or place of origin, or a combination of these, rather than on a reasonable suspicion, to single out an individual for greater scrutiny or different treatment." Racial

profiling is a system of control and surveillance, and more importantly, it denies racialized people privacy, identity, place, security, and control over their daily life (OHRC 2019). In that sense, it is similar to other systems of control like slavery and segregation that made capitalist accumulation and colonialism possible. In Canada, studies focusing on racial profiling are increasing and expanding beyond Ontario (see chapter 10 in this book). Canada's first policy on racial profiling was released on September 20, 2019, by the OHRC. Until this detailed and extensive policy following on the preceding reports on racial profiling in Ontario (OHRC 2003), the issue was denied or attributed to the actions of "a few bad apples" employed in the police force. However, as Tator and Henry (2006, 17) argue, inscribed in the "a few bad apples" thesis is "the denial of racism as a set of institutional practices and patterned cultural behaviours that collectively support and reinforce racially different systemic outcomes." It is also important to note Comack's (2012, 57) warning that "the use of the term [racial profiling] has a decidedly individualized focus; specifically, on the exercise of discretion by individual police officers. [. . .] 'Racialized policing' implicates broader context."

The "a few bad apples" approach leaves the very structure and the core ideology of policing unchanged while trying to solve the problem by offering officers more training in race relations. Training is of course important and necessary, but not enough to address the issue of racism in any police force. More structural and substantial work needed to be done to eliminate institutional, systemic, and official racism inherent in criminalization practices. For instance, the Criminal Intelligence Service Alberta (CISA) facilitates the exchange of criminal intelligence between intelligence units, enforcement units, and the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada Provincial Bureau. CISA and its Alberta regular member police agencies (including the Lethbridge Police Service [LPS]) are also responsible for implementing the Provincial Organized and Serious Crime strategy (CISA, n.d.). Yet as Tanovich (2006, 16) observes, the official racialization of street crime takes place in the 2004/5 report itself. This is done through the naming of criminal groups like "Jamaican Organized Crime" and "Asian Criminal Groups" and the lists it provides under headings such as "Self-Identified Criminal Groups" and "Aboriginal Males Carrying Out Criminal Activities Relating to Drug Trafficking and Violence at the Street Level." The report also links poverty among Indigenous populations to the listed organized crime groups by emphasizing how "Aboriginal youth are feeding organized crime groups in Alberta." These stereotypes impact the way individual officers interpret their environment and how they conclude that there is objectively suspicious behaviour to suspect racialized individuals.

The practice of racial profiling by the Lethbridge Police is most manifest in the technology of carding. Carding refers to a police practice in which the police stop and ask "suspicious" subjects for identification and record their personal information in a database. It enables the police to "catalogue, com- modify, discipline, imprison, manage, surveil and, ultimately kill disvalued populations" (Kitossa 2020, 7). The Supreme Court has found that carding is in violation of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in multiple cases (Progress Alberta 2018); nevertheless, it is still practiced widely and makes all citizens "legible" for social control (Kitossa 2020). Lethbridge lawyer Miranda Hlady filed a freedom of information request with the LPS after a University of Lethbridge student complained that they had been stopped by local police and questioned for no apparent reason (Battochio 2017). The data Hlady obtained shows that Black people are nine times more likely to be stopped and asked by the police to provide identification and other personal

information. It also shows that Indigenous people are five times more likely to be carded. In his response to Lethbridge Police Chief Davis, who was discouraging public scrutiny into police work after Hlady's inquiry, Laurendeau (2018) emphasizes histories behind current racial profiling practices in Lethbridge, pointing to the hundreds of years of violent systems of colonization that resulted and continue to result in the dispossession, marginalization, and impoverishment of Indigenous peoples, mostly Blackfoot people in Treaty 7 territory.

Police work involves the policing of spaces as much as the policing of individuals. The policing of Treaty 7 territory, in conjunction with the history provided in the first section, reveals that what constitute "problem" spaces are those spaces occupied by Indigenous bodies in the city's downtown core. As Comack (2012, 64) argues,

> Inner-city communities populated by impoverished Aboriginal people and new immigrants are more likely to be seen as "disordered" and "dangerous" places, whereas suburban White middle-class neighborhoods—with their tree-lined streets, manicured lawns, and spacious homes—become spaces of "civility" and "respectability." In carrying out their task as reproducers of order, then, police concentrate their attention and activity on the former and not on the latter racialized spaces. In the process, they help to constitute and normalize particular spaces—and the people found within them—as "disorderly" and "dangerous."

This is also true for Lethbridge. When one wants to see the police in action, one should look at downtown Lethbridge, in particular Galt Gardens and vicinities of surrounding businesses. In her analysis of homelessness in Lethbridge, Kingfisher (2007, 95) reveals that the problem with Indigenous street people in Lethbridge was construed as "a failure on the part of the Native community to practice *kimmapiiyipitssini* (habitual kindness, taking care of oneself and one's family)." Blaming Indigenous people for their own impoverishment is also reflected in explanations of homelessness "focused on the structure of Native culture in isolation from the wider context of European colonialization and racism to invoke an essentialized Aboriginal culture that produces inherently lazy, addicted, parasitic, violent men" (102).

War on Drugs and Supervised Consumption Site in Lethbridge

N Less obvious policing that directly targets Black, Indigenous peoples and people of colour is the so-called war on drugs—"an established international legal norm, backed by a global system of militarized enforcement, at the centre of a worldwide network of police power and prison systems" (Koram 2019, 2). The concept of "drugs" cannot be separated from the historical law-making processes that first name and categorize certain substances as "drugs" and then prohibit them. When it comes to defining harms caused by drugs, the health impacts versus criminalization divide is a false one (Wohlbold and Moore 2019). Substances are not prohibited based on their physical or mental harms—nicotine, as Gordon (2006, 129) reminds us, is perfectly legal. What is considered a drug and what is not, or what is considered a less harmful drug, depends on white elite biases. The drug laws attempt to protect whiteness by regulating threats to the ongoing colonial project. Therefore, Wohlbold and Moore (2019, 24) argue that the war on drugs is "a response to particular and repeated crises of Whiteness." Considering the NWMP marching to Fort Whoop-Up in 1874 with the motivation to end the whisky trade among Indigenous people and the 1886 Indian Act banning Indigenous

people from buying and selling alcohol, it is safe to say that Canada's first attempt into criminalizing substance use was clearly linked to colonial tensions. Although there were more substantial reasons for the coming of the NWMP, the aim of regulating alcohol consumption provided colonial government with "an additional opportunity to exercise sovereign control over Indigenous bodies" (Wohlbold and Moore 2019, 27).

In terms of the more recent bans on drugs and police enforcement of these bans, one can observe that the government prohibits drugs selectively based on the substances' association with immigrant communities (Gordon 2006). As Wohlbold and Moore (2019, 26) explain, "Substances are signifiers and their cultural personas (drugalities) dictate their relative level of danger based not on pharmacological knowledge but rather on the populations with whom they are affiliated." The criminalization of opium in 1908 was a response to its use by Chinese immigrants, while cocaine, banned in 1911, and canna- bis, banned in 1923, were controlled because they were identified with Black immigrants (Gordon 2006, 130–31). The prohibition of "khat" took place in 1997 as a response to increased Somalian migration (primarily as refugees from the civil war) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Somalians brought with them a new language, culture, and customs alien to most Canadians, and furthermore, they were identified with Islam. The prohibition of khat gave the police a "convenient pretext for stopping people and removing them from public spaces, and for entering Somalian homes, restaurants and coffee shops" (Gordon 2006, 142).

Like the examples above, the problematization of drug use in contemporary Lethbridge is a result of moral panic among white settlers. Hall et al. (1978) document how a particular moral panic constructing the Black youth as muggers emerged in the 1970s in England. In much the same way, a particular moral panic is emerging in Lethbridge concerning Indigenous bodies and drug use in public spaces. The discussion around the supervised consumption sites continues in a concerted way including the mainstream media, the police, politicians, and shop owners in downtown Lethbridge to develop the image of "dangerous" drug users, who emerge as a symbol of property crime and other undesired disorders. In their four-year business plan for 2019–22, LPS identifies their policing priorities. Their first five priorities are drug-related issues (LPS 2018b, 10–11). They identify the "social disorder" that they intend to address as "disturbances, panhandling, vagrancy, public intoxication and drug addiction" that are said to "continue to plague primarily the downtown core." In referring to drug users, a dominant discourse about addicts is prevalent, bringing forward other assumptions about drug users. The safety of "drug users," for example, does not seem to be an issue for the police. Again, nowhere do these documents mention issues of racism and/or hate crimes despite the fact that, as Granzow (2017, 347) confirms, "Lethbridge has a long history of racism." Everyday acts of racism such as "the posting of a 'No Indians Allowed' sign on the drive-through window of a local Tim Hortons" and many other anecdotal (unreported) cases of racial discrimination that the racialized settlers and their allies are well aware of are absent in the discussion of substance use in Lethbridge.

What is described as an "ongoing drug crisis that leads to an increase in spin-off property crime and social disorder" continues to keep the Lethbridge Police busy according to their annual report (LPS 2018a, 3). In annual reports and Lethbridge Police Council meeting minutes, it is clearly indicated that the areas of focus for the Lethbridge Police are the Public Library, Lethbridge Centre Mall, Park Place Mall, and

Centre Village Mall. It is not unusual to read analyses in council meeting minutes that reckon "nicer weather will bring more people into the parks and issues in the malls will likely be reduced" (see LPC 2017). This language indicates that to them, the homeless or the poor translates mostly to mean Indigenous people. And their job is not to find a solution for the "problem bodies" but to push them around—preferably from profit-making places to non-profitable spaces. Despite the fact that bor- ders between the reserves and the city of Lethbridge were opened up in the 1960s, the city of white settlement still clearly remains segregated (Kingfisher 2007). Therefore, the Indigenous bodies occupying public or semi-public spaces in downtown Lethbridge are deemed as not belonging to the city, and the war on drugs works well as a justification that mobilizes settler residents of the city around attempts to push Indigenous populations out.

Conclusion

Policing is fueled with racist tendencies of settler-colonial policy agendas in Canada, and particularly in Lethbridge, because of the role of the police in the early days of white settlement in the city, the signing of Treaty 7, and the historic significance of Fort Whoop-Up. Racism in policing therefore cannot be blamed on "a few bad apples"; it is structural. Racialized policing in Lethbridge and elsewhere results in the disproportionate representation of racialized populations in the criminal justice system. For example, the police focus on Black communities under the fringe of the "war on drugs" has resulted in the mass incarceration of Black people. In 2010–11, "Black inmates accounted for 9% of the federal prison population although Black Canadians only comprised 2.5% of the overall population" (Khenti 2014, 190). The "war on terror" has similarly accelerated the policing of Indigenous communities (Crosby and Monaghan 2018). The flip side of this is white supremacy, as clearly laid out in the case of the acquitted murderer of Colten Bushie among many others (Friesen 2018). A vivid case of what the police (don't) do in Canada is demonstrated in the cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (National Inquiry into MMIWG 2019).

There is no doubt that policing means control over bodies and space. However, it is a contested practice, meaning it never goes without resistance. Since the early days of the London Metropolitan Police, officers encountered protests. In fact, they were seen as "unproductive parasites." People wanted to drive the police out, preserve popular recreations, prevent interference in strikes and political activities, protect wanted individuals, protest instances of police brutality, and rescue arrested persons (Storch 1981). Similarly, one of the intents of the North-West Resistance that shaped the fate of the region for many years to come was to struggle against the NWMP's control over the First Nations and Métis, and their anti-Indigenous agenda in general (Smith 2009). Years of resistance against the police, as an embodied form of settler- colonial agendas, is evident in the fact that the First Nations in the region could, and to a certain extent did, preserve their customs and identity and that the police had to change their tactics and strategies over the years, alternating between violent and more benevolent forms of control. From vagrancy laws to the Pass System, from the "war on drugs" (targeting Indigenous populations occupying the inner city) to the "war on terror" (targeting various Indigenous resistances), the police had to respond to crises because of this contestation. There are recent social movements that built on the experiences of past movements against racialized policing and the criminal justice system in Canada: Black Lives Matter, Idle No More, and Sisters in Spirit, to name a few. Indigenous resistance against police violence takes many forms, as does the increase in resistance

of other racialized and marginalized groups in Lethbridge. SAGE Clan is one community organization that aims to provide food and connection to those who are on the streets and using substances. In their mission statement, they emphasize that they "are not a policing force, nor are [they] addiction experts, [they] seek to provide a sense of community and support to those who feel neither" (SAGE Clan, n.d.). Another com- munity organization is Lethbridge Diversity and Inclusion Alliance (LDIA), "a community-based network addressing racism and discrimination to help make Lethbridge more welcoming and inclusive," which unfortunately has recently dissolved (LDIA, n.d.). The AIDS Outreach Community Harm Reduction Education Support Society (ARCHES, n.d.), a community organization formed in 1986 focusing on harm reduction, is another hub of resistance. Their supervised consumption services once provided a hygienic environment for people to consume pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of a nurse but have since been closed. Going forward, these and other emerging community organizations and resistance against racialized police practices in Lethbridge will contribute to social change.

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