No Dumping: Indigenousness and the Racialized Police Transport of the Urban Homelessness

On the 20th of May 2005 three Edmonton police officers removed nine Indigenous homeless persons from Whyte Avenue, a pedestrian-oriented commercial strip in the south-side Old Strathcona neighbourhood, and dropped them off in a north-side residential community. The transport infamously became known as the "sweatbox incident" because the homeless men and women were cramped inside a police van designed for only six persons and several spent up to an hour-and-a-half in these stuffy conditions (Edmonton police guilty 2010; EPS 2010a). When they were let out in a distant parking lot, some of the men were half-clothed and dripping with sweat (Simons 2007, B1). One individual immediately sought water from a local resident who was tending to his yard (EPS 2010a; Warnica 2010). Community members soon reported the presence of visibly homeless Indigenous persons to their local police detachment and eventually relayed the story to media outlets (Simons 2007, B1; EPS 2010a). Some homeowners in the area were upset that their community was used as a "dumping ground for derelicts from Whyte Avenue" (Simons 2007, B1) and several news reports suggested that the incident was "racially motivated" (Edmonton police guilty 2010; EPS 2010a, 2010b; Sands 2010; Wittmeier 2010).

During the police disciplinary hearing into the incident five years later, two of the senior officers involved were sanctioned for discreditable conduct and insubordination because they did not follow police policy that required them to take notes on all investigations and to ensure that intoxicated persons were either transported into the care of a responsible adult or taken to a local shelter (EPS 2010a). The presiding officer, alongside the defence counsel for the accused Edmonton Police Service (EPS) members, proclaimed that there was "no evidence whatsoever" to support allegations the event was racially motivated (Sands 2010, n.p.; EPS 2010a, 43). They

stressed that the officers came from teaching and social work backgrounds, held positive rapport with the homeless outside this incident, wanted to transport the individuals in order to protect them from intoxicated young persons who frequent the Avenue's bars, and came "from diverse ethnic and cultural roots" which "in the case of one individual" included being "part aboriginal" (EPS 2010a, 43).

Questions concerning race thus revolved around whether or not the individual officers were prejudiced. The investigators concluded that given each officer's own racial identity and prior dealings with Indigenous homeless persons, the sweatbox incident did not involved malice towards the individual homeless persons or their racial identities (EPS 2010a; Sands 2010, n.p.). The fact that all nine homeless persons were Indigenous was considered irrelevant to explanations of why the event occurred. In fact, the presiding officer felt that public accusations that the event was racially motivated unduly damaged the reputations of the officers. Consequently, he considered these accusations to be mitigating factors that lessened the disciplinary sanctions the officers received (EPS 2010b).

For police officials involved in the disciplinary hearing, the sweatbox incident was an isolated case of poor judgement, albeit a serious one. The seriousness stemmed primarily from the officers' failure to follow police protocol and the negative public reaction that stemmed from this transgression (EPS 2010a). Apparently, had police policy prevailed, the reputation of the EPS would have not fallen into disrepute. Indeed, despite the fact that the level of intoxication among the nine homeless persons was never established, investigators held that had the officers simply taken the group to an inner-city shelter as they claimed to be doing, then their actions would have been acceptable insofar as they aligned with the EPS protocol concerning the transport of adult inebriates to shelters (EPS 2010a).

Transports to shelters were both encouraged and common. The Staff Sergeant for Old Strathcona, for example, explained during the disciplinary hearing that the usual practice at the start of weekend night shifts was to "round-up" the homeless and relocate them to shelters. These move outs were apparently so frequent that the homeless would "casually ... load themselves" anytime the police van pulled up and opened its doors (EPS 2010a, 8). Furthermore, police officials claimed that transports to local shelters occurred out of "compassion" and were a genuinely benevolent effort to protect the homeless from other residents or to link the homeless with social services (EPS 2010a; Pierce 2010, n.p.). Officers explicitly denied that the purpose of the sweatbox incident and similar transports was "to get them [the homeless] off Whyte Avenue" (EPS 2010a, 26).

In this chapter I seek to unsettle some of the claims police officials make about transports of homeless persons. First, I challenge the idea that these types of police transports, which policing scholars King and Dunn (2004) refer to as "police dumping," are unproblematic so long as they deliver homeless persons to inner-city shelters.[1] Second, I counter the position that the racial identities of the homeless persons involved in such transports are an unimportant consideration. To do so I draw on twenty-two ethnographic interviews with street-involved Edmontonians to show how Indigenousness and the police dumping of homeless persons intersect. I argue that transporting homeless persons to shelters (or distant neighbourhoods) is not always as benevolent as the police suggest and is in fact implicated in issues of racialization. In particular, I contrast the stories of differently-racialized homeless adults in order to demonstrate how police dumping is racialized in ways that reinforce prime consumer spaces as "white spaces" and dangerous inner-city space as "spaces of Indigenousness."

By using a lens of "racialized policing" (Comack 2012), the analysis moves beyond concerns over the possible presence of racial prejudice among individual police officers and instead highlights how responses to homelessness must also attend to ongoing socio-economic, spatial, and colonial processes that policing both reflects and perpetuates. Using Edmonton as a backdrop to illuminate the intersections between policing, homelessness, and Indigenousness is particularly apposite because it is the Canadian metropolis with the second highest urban Indigenous population (Environics Institute 2010).

Racialized Policing

Attention to the racialized policing of homelessness is long over-due. Although a considerable amount of scholarship documents the growing dependencies of governments on law or police action to respond to visible homelessness (Beckett & Herbert 2009; Berti & Sommers 2010; Blomley 2007, 2011; Collins & Blomley 2003; Duneier 2001; Ellickson 1996; Feldman 2004; Gordon 2006 2010; Hermer & Mosher 2002; McNeil 2010; Parnaby 2003; Schaefer 1998, 2007), few of these analyses examine how the policing of homelessness intersects with race. Given the vast over-representation of Indigenous persons among the homeless in Canada (Belanger, Weasel Head & Awosoga 2012; Hulchanski et al. 2009; Lenon 2000), this oversight severely truncates knowledge of Indigenous homelessness and its relationship to state institutions of social control. To be sure, Herbert and Brown (2006), alongside O'Grady, Gaetz, and Buccieri (2011), note that persons of non-white racial identity are more likely to be homeless and so are more often subject to the policing of homelessness. While this observation points to how homelessness is "raced," it does not highlight how the policing of homelessness is "racialized" such that persons with different racial identities experience policing in qualitatively different ways.

If analyses of the intersections between Indigenousness and the policing of homelessness end at the observation that homelessness is raced, the claims of police investigators that attention to racial identity is unimportant are easily justified. The frequent occurrence of police encounters, benevolent or harmful, with Indigenous persons is apparently simply a product of statistics beyond police control. As in the disciplinary hearing to the sweatbox incident, the only pertinent question is whether or not individual officers hold racial prejudice and so are unfairly targeting (i.e., racially profiling) those homeless persons they identify as Indigenous.

Focusing on individual officers' biases, however, easily reduces concerns about the policing of Indigenous homeless persons to the actions of a "few bad apples" and so overlooks systemic racism and the various ways policing, intentionally or otherwise, draws on and reinforces racial inequalities (Comack 2012). In contrast, to adopt a lens of racialized policing is to discuss how police action creates and reinforces differences along socially-constructed racial lines (Comack 2012; Razack 2002a, 2002b; Goldberg 1993). This view acknowledges that race is a social construction and not a biological trait (Blackburn 2000; Green 2006) and that racialization is "the process through which groups come to be designated as different and on that basis subjected to different and unequal treatment" (Block & Galabuzi 2011, 19). The production of differences according to racial identity is not, in and of itself, a problem because differences can and should be celebrated. However, racialization is problematic and develops into a form of racism when the creation of differences establishes a hierarchy that disadvantages some groups (Comack 2012; Green 2006).

Policing contributes to racialization, and embodies a form of racism, whenever it serves as "one of the projects through which race is interpreted and given meaning" such that the inequitable "racialized order of a society is reproduced" (Comack 2012, 60). While the presence

of racial profiling and the actions of individual police officers are relevant considerations (James 2002; Tanner 2009), analyses of racialized policing in Canada demonstrate the much more nuanced ways police action contributes to racial inequality and the subordination of Indigenous persons (Comack 2012). For instance, Comack (2012), Mawani (2002, 2012), Gordon (2006), and Nettlebeck and Samandych (2010) separately document how policing contributes to racialization whenever colonial states use police forces (such as the North West Mounted Police) to settle regions and dominate Indigenous persons. It is also well documented that police have paved paths for the "white settler society" (Gordon 2006; Razack 2002a) by displacing and confining Indigenous persons to ostensibly "degenerate spaces" (Razack 2002a) such as the Reserve, the residential school, the inner-city, or the prostitution-laden "stroll" (Comack 2012; Goldberg 1993; Hogeveen & Freistadt 2013; Razack 2002a, 2002b; Mawani 2002, 2012). Moreover, as Razack (2002a, 2002b) observes, this confinement not only associates Indigenousness with spaces of danger and vice, it also allows individuals who are racialized as white to continue to have their identity privileged because they see prime spaces as their own and can more freely move in and out of spaces of their choosing. The racialization of space and policing, in fact, become mutually reinforcing when officers view the spaces in which they help concentrate Indigenous persons as dangerous and so patrol them more frequently (Comack 2012).

Analyses of the racialized policing of Indigenous persons in Canada thus draw attention to processes beyond individual officers and toward considerations of colonialism and spatial regulation. Nevertheless, it remains unclear if and how the contemporary urban policing of the visibly homeless is similarly racialized. The discussion that follows therefore brings together literature on racialized policing and scholarship on the policing of homelessness. It grounds this

merger in qualitative analyses of the lived experiences of twenty-two visibly homeless adult Edmontonians. Interviews were held over the spring and summer of 2011 and were collected in the same consumption-oriented areas the EPS identified as "hot spots" for complaints about homeless persons: Old Strathcona and Downtown (Elanik 2009). Eight of the respondents identified as Indigenous, one as East Asian, and the remainder as white. Contrasting the stories of these participants highlights that colonialism and racialization are ongoing processes that continue in the present through specific practices (Samuelson & Monture-Angus 2002; Mawani & Sealy 2011), including the ostensibly non-racial and benevolent act of police dumping.

Indigenousness and Racialized Police Dumping

Although interview respondents and secondary news data confirmed the existence and seriousness of police transports to desolate distant locales within or near Edmonton (Rusnell 2007, B1), these forms of police dumping were rare. Investigations into the infamous "Starlight Tours" in Saskatoon (Comack 2012; Green 2006; Reber & Renaud 2005; Wright 2004) have made officers and the public aware of the potentially deadly consequences of these types of police transports. Aside from the sweatbox incident, only one research participant mentioned an occasion where police dropped him off in a remote area. Rather, the accepted police protocol of transporting the homeless to local shelters was by far the most frequent transport encounter homeless persons had with officers. These police-sanctioned transports most often displaced homeless persons to shelters in Edmonton's McCauley and Boyle Street neighbourhoods, where the vast majority of homeless-serving agencies in the city exist. Debrah,[2] for instance, explained that police often pick her up from Whyte Avenue on the south-side of the North Saskatchewan River and take her "all the way down to the Hope" — an inner-city shelter in the McCauley-Boyle region. Russ relayed a similar occurrence. He said that when police saw him panhandling

in Old Strathcona, "They said they would take me up to the Hope Mission and drop me off there. And that is what they did." Darlene likewise explained that police frequently "pick [her] up" and "drop [her] off at Spady's," which is the colloquial term the street-involved use to refer to a shelter (the George Spady Centre) in the McCauley-Boyle region. The area was so familiar to homeless persons that participants who spent most of their time in Old Strathcona often referred to McCauley-Boyle simply as the "north-side."

This McCauley-Boyle "north-side" sharply contrast with the consumer-oriented areas of Downtown and Old Strathcona. The two abutting communities of McCauley and Boyle Street lie in the heart of the inner-city just north-east of Downtown and are among the city's most impoverished and dangerous neighbourhoods (Hogeveen & Freistadt 2013). In 2010 McCauley and Boyle Street witnessed violent crime rates that were over ten times the average rate for Edmonton (City of Edmonton 2010a, 2010c). Both neighbourhoods have median incomes that are less than half the city-wide average, with McCauley posting the lowest median income of all Edmonton neighbourhoods and Boyle Street recording the third lowest median income (Edmonton Social Planning Council 2011). Unsurprisingly, the region also contains a disproportionately high percentage of Edmonton's subsidized housing. While 4.8 percent of the housing across Edmonton is subsidized, 61 percent of housing in the McCauley neighbourhood falls into this category (Kleiss 2010, A1). Moreover, while city officials have plans to redevelop both Downtown (City of Edmonton 2010b) and Old Strathcona (City of Edmonton 2011) into even greater pedestrian-led consumer attractions, areas like Boyle Street are slotted for redevelopments that further concentrate poverty. In particular, the City of Edmonton, in what it terms the "Boyle Renaissance," plans to build an additional 550 low-income housing units. This redevelopment includes a "mega-complex" that combines 150 units of affordable housing with

rental spaces for more social services (Kent 2010, B3; McKay, Finnigan & Associates 2010; O'Donnell 2012).

Although many residents take great pride in these neighbourhoods and are working hard to improve their reputation (Filipski 2001; Kent 2009; Loyie 1997; Retson 1998), interview respondents confirmed the dangerousness of this inner-city region. Many tried to avoid the area as much as possible. Stan described the constant threat of victimization he felt in the area:

> Fuck, I lock my window. I put a blanket up and everything, I keep my lights on most of the time. People lurk around all night. They do, man. People lurk around all night and day.... Oh, robberies and everything, man. There are just so many people that hang around in front of the liquor store, they are all alcoholics, they are all drug addicts, they are hanging out in front of the liquor store. You know what they do...? They wait for people to come out of the liquor store and even though they got one little bottle or six pack, they will grab it and fucking run.

Stan's rooming house was in McCauley, yet the dangers of the neighbourhood led him to remain on the street. He avoided the area, which he referred to as a "ghetto," as much as he could "because there is crime everywhere." Instead he spent most of his time Downtown where he felt safer. Keith also explained that he avoided the McCauley-Boyle area as a means of ensuring safety. When asked if he felt safe on the streets, he replied, "Oh yeah. I don't make a habit of going down around the Bissell or the Co-op [two adult drop-in centres in the McCauley and Boyle Street neighborhoods] or any place where there is high crime rate."

Most participants recounted stories of victimization they witnessed or endured in the neighbourhood or outside the areas' homeless-serving agencies. Many had their few belongings

stolen from them in the neighbourhood. Several had been physically assaulted. Jason, for example, explained:

> It is not safe … I hate going to near the [inner-city shelters]. You see this mark here? [He takes off his hat to reveal a scar]. A guy cut me with a razor. I was in line, talking with a buddy of mine. We were waiting for lunch I think.... A guy comes along, tells my friend to move, elbows me ... and says, "This is not a good spot, bugger off you guys." And he took our place in line. My friend turns around and because of that and out comes the razor and swish, swish [gesturing that he was cut].

This attack, alongside other victimizations he witnessed, led Jason and many other interview respondents to avoid inner-city agencies altogether and live outside in consumer spaces. Although remaining on the street in consumer spaces does not remove the homeless from a high likelihood of victimization (Gaetz 2004), within these spaces they felt safer and frequently developed "street families" that helped reduce the everyday precariousness of their lives (Beckett & Herbert 2009; Tanner 2009).

While police officials frame the practice of police dumping to the shelters as an act of compassion meant to help the homeless integrate into services, the dangers of this area are real concerns for the homeless. Few of the respondents actually remained at the services police dropped them off at and so eventually had to venture through the McCauley-Boyle region to make their way back to the consumer spaces from which they were ejected but in which they lived. For instance, after Darlene explained that police routinely picked her up from Downtown or Whyte Avenue and dropped her off at the George Spady Centre, she laughingly added, "And I go right back." Stan likewise reported that after police escort him out of Old Strathcona he

simply turns around and returns. He chuckled, "You go to Whyte Avenue and panhandle, they [the police] throw you in the van and take you [to a shelter] and say, 'Don't come back.' …. Oh yeah, I go back there again." Indeed, all the research participants said that when they were left at inner-city shelters, they typically waited a brief period of time for the police to leave and then returned to the spaces from which officers had ejected them.

That many individuals did not remain inside the agencies police delivered them to must have been known by officers because they would eventually come back into contact with the same homeless persons. In fact, EPS officials unwittingly admitted that they were aware transports to shelters did not result in service use for many homeless persons. Testifying at the disciplinary hearing for the sweatbox incident, the Acting Supervisor for the officers involved explained that members of the EPS did not formally record these transports "because the drop-offs were so frequent" and "police would often have to transport the same individual two to three times in a single shift." He further explained that the homeless often saw the transports as "a game" and that when police would complete these escorts, most homeless persons would simply laugh and tell the officers, "See you in a few hours" (EPS 2010a, 8; Pierce 2010, n.p.).

This admission that police dumping seldom results in service use undercuts claims that service integration is the primary objective of the transports. Rather, if police know that few homeless people use the inner-city agencies to which they are transported, then police dumping to these locations is less an effort to find homeless persons help than it is an act (intentional or otherwise) that displaces the homeless into the dangerous inner-city region of McCauley-Boyle.

That displacement is among the primary concerns of officers who employ police dumping is evident in descriptions of how these transports unfold. For instance, the following

description by one homeless male was representative of stories involving police transports to shelters: "They [the police] drive me to the Spady Centre. Drop me off and say, 'We don't want to see you down here [Downtown] no more. You are banned off Jasper Avenue and you are not allowed to be down here no more panhandling because that is what you do all day.'" The actions of the officers in this typical transport emphasize that their dominant concern is not to integrate the homeless individual into the services the George Spady Centre offers. They do not remain at the facility to ensure the homeless secure assistance with income, personal traumas, or addictions. Rather, police simply leave homeless persons with the direction that they are "banned off Jasper Avenue." This valediction stresses where the homeless ought not to be —prime consumer spaces like Jasper Avenue or Whyte Avenue — not what they ought to do to access help. For the homeless, escorts to the shelters hardly appear as compassionate or benevolent as police officials suggest. Rather, the homeless experience police dumping primarily as an act of dislocation. It demonstrates to the homeless that they are not welcome in spaces of affluence and ostensibly belong in spaces of poverty, danger, and vice.

Research participants also demonstrated that despite police claims otherwise, race clearly shaped practices of police dumping to shelters within the dangerous "north-side" McCauley-Boyle region. To be sure, police transports to local shelters occasionally involve non-Indigenous homeless persons. Nevertheless, these policing measures were clearly racialized insofar as police more readily displaced Indigenous respondents to the inner-city. In fact, only one Indigenous participant, Carl, reported that police had never transported him to inner-city shelters. Carl, however, regularly spent the time he was not busking Downtown on the streets of the McCauley-Boyle region, thus making it rather unnecessary to transport him. All other Indigenous participants recounted at least one incident, often many more, where police dropped them off

outside or near inner-city shelters. In contrast, only one white male, Rick, reported being taken to the shelters by police. This exception might reflect the fact that, although most research participants preferred to avoid McCauley-Boyle, Rick often wanted to go to the region. He declared that he "would have went regardless of whether they [police] took [him] or not" because he did not "mind going to the Spady's ... or Hope Mission just to get off the streets, take a break once in a while."

While the generalizability of claims from this convenience sample remain indeterminate, the role race plays in policing dumping is obvious in the preferential treatment white homeless persons received compared to Indigenous homeless persons. It was common for officers to permit homeless white persons to remain in prime consumer spaces like Old Strathcona or Downtown so long as they did not cause disturbances along the busy strips of Whyte Avenue or Jasper Avenue. For instance, Jason, a white homeless man, conveyed how police allowed him to stay in the area of Whyte Avenue: "I said [to the officers waking him up in an alley behind Whyte Avenue], 'Guys give me a break, at least let me sleep a couple hours.' He said, 'I would if I could, but I can't. If we get a complaint, it goes on our system, we have to do something about it and chase you out.' He says, 'I will tell you what, though, between you and me, go a couple blocks that way away from Whyte and find a place to go to sleep.'" Many other white interview participants reported similar treatment.

In stark contrast, Indigenous participants reported that they were continually removed from these spaces and taken to inner-city shelters regardless of their actions or level of intoxication. For example, Darlene, an Indigenous woman, explained how she and her Indigenous partner, Keith, are quickly and commonly stopped by police on Whyte Avenue and escorted to the shelters: "Well ... for example ... one time, [Keith] and I, we weren't panhandling

at the time. I had gone to work and we were sitting on the street bench off Whyte Avenue. We ordered up [a] slice of pizza each. And the police van drove, comes storming right in, started accusing us of panhandling and drinking. And I said that wasn't what was going on. They threw [Keith] in the van, handcuffed him, threw him in, and they said, 'Come on, you too.' That was me. I got in and helped [Keith].... Well anyways, they brought us there ... to Spady's."

Police allowed Jason — a white homeless male whose behaviour drew an official complaint — to remain in Old Strathcona, yet they quickly accused Darlene and Keith — Indigenous homeless persons who are eating in public space and not obviously drawing public complaints — of engaging in social disorder and so they then take the pair to the McCauley-Boyle region. The fact that Darlene and Keith are neither intoxicated nor are they committing any illegal act suggests that police dumping displaces those who are simply guilty of being homeless and Indigenous in prime consumer spaces.

In some cases this disparity in treatment between white and Indigenous homeless persons was even apparent within a single police encounter. For instance, Debrah, an Indigenous homeless woman, and Kyle, her homeless white male partner, explained that despite the fact they were often together and engaging in the same activities, officers would frequently escort Debrah out of Old Strathcona but allowed Kyle to stay in the area.

Debrah: They [police] give us a ticket or then they drive me downtown....

Kyle: No, not me, I don't go.... [Police] give us a ticket and tell us to go on our own.... I tell them "no" [when they say they are taking him to the inner-city]....

Debrah: Well they take me downtown. I got to go to Hope Mission.

Neither Debrah nor Kyle wanted to go to the inner-city shelters or the McCauley-Boyle region and both would have preferred to stay together. Nonetheless, Debrah is not permitted to remain in the vicinity of Old Strathcona. Debrah explained that she once lived in McCauley and still held a bad reputation in the area such that she faced a high likelihood of victimization anytime she returned to the neighbourhood or went to the shelters. The transports, however, were so common for Debrah that she no longer tried to protest. She saw her removal as dangerous but inevitable and simply explained that she has "got to go." Yet as soon as police dropped her off she invariably began what she described as "the long" and "dangerous" walk through the inner-city and "across the bridge" back to the Old Strathcona neighbourhood where her social circle and safety network existed. While the police oblige with her white male partner's requests to remain in Old Strathcona, they seem to pay less attention to her desires and safety.

Policing Dumping both Reflects and Reinforces Ongoing Processes of Racialization

The contrasting stories of treatment between white and Indigenous homeless persons show that officer discretion obviously plays a role in the racialized nature of police dumping. The observed disparity among how frequently Indigenous homeless persons were displaced compared to their white counterparts, however, also suggests that there is more at work here than a "few bad apples" who choose to respond inequitably to Indigenous homeless persons. In particular, it is important to understand that policing itself unfolds in a social context beyond the control of individual officers. While the police might have designed questionable narratives of compassion and service use to justify police dumping, their central task is to reproduce social order (Ericson 1982) and they face immense pressures from business leaders to deal with the presence of visible homelessness in consumer spaces (Beckett & Herbert 2009). Investigations into the sweatbox incident revealed that concerns from area businesses about the homeless were

so frequent that Whyte Avenue businesses had a hotline they could use to bypass the regular

complaint procedure and phone beat officers directly (Pierce 2010). Moreover, shortly after the

sweatbox incident EPS authorities and local businesses joined forces to develop an integrated

response to the homelessness and panhandling in the Old Strathcona and the Downtown regions,

part of which included the development of an anti-aggressive-panhandling bylaw (Ho 2010;

Larson 2011).

Beat officers, then, faced intense pressures from both business leaders and their

supervisors to crack down on the visibly homeless in spaces of consumption. The tools at their

disposal, however, included tickets — which often lead to cumbersome paperwork and

additional processing since the fines are seldom paid (Beckett & Herbert 2009; O'Grady, Gaetz

& Buccieri, 2011; King & Dunn 2004) — or the use of police dumping under the EPS's policy

for the transport of adult inebriates. The pressure to do something about the visibly homeless,

combined with the limits of effective tools to deal with homelessness, result in significant

frustration for front-line officers (Beckett & Herbert 2009). One of the officers involved in the

sweatbox incident described his conundrum as follows: "Yeah, I could just leave them [the

homeless] where they are and then let the stakeholders continue to complain about them, but then

I'm looked at doing neglective [sic] duty, so the choice really is ... neglect our duty or to find a

solution. And this is a community problem that has been placed upon us and we are the ones to

blame, but nobody gives us the right options.... [W]e're the ones that are left with no choice"

(EPS 2010a, 23).

Faced with limited tools and continual demands from powerful agents, officers often

choose police transports as the most expedient and efficient way to deal with complaints (Beckett

& Herbert 2009; Comack 2012; King & Dunn 2004). It is troubling that police would see the

primary "stakeholders" they are responsible to as business leaders and not other members of the community, including the homeless. Nevertheless, given these pressures, it is perhaps understandable that for some officers the decision to either instigate the arduous process of ushering the homeless through the criminal justice system via the issuance of tickets or engage in police dumping to inner-city shelters appears as "no choice" at all. Moving the street-involved into less desired spaces relays the message to the business actors who constitute the visibly homeless as a problem that the police are doing something. It is easier to displace the homeless than it is to solve homelessness (Beckett & Herbert 2009).

That these police transports most often drop the homeless in the dangerous inner-city McCauley-Boyle region is also not entirely in the control of officers and is partly a product of Edmonton's pre-existing spatial organization and ongoing redevelopment agendas. Specifically, the concentration of social services and poverty in the McCauley-Boyle region and the city administration's drive to constitute larger sections of Old Strathcona and Downtown as bastions of consumption have bifurcated the city. Areas of consumption and leisure are being fashioned to attract footloose capital and consumers; yet doing so requires the expulsion of visible reminders of poverty that undercut the excitement of unbound recreation and spending (Mitchell 2004). Those persons unable to uphold the celebrated image of consumption are shunted into marginalized spaces where they remain hidden from the public consciousness of the privileged (Martin 2002; Mosher 2002). The consequence is that officers seeking to remove the homeless from consumer spaces, or even genuinely hoping to integrate them into social services, have few options as to where to place the homeless; the McCauley-Boyle region is the area that has already been designated as the appropriate receptacle for the marginalized (Hogeveen & Freistadt 2013).

However, while the reasons for police dumping to the McCauley-Boyle inner-city might be understandable from the perspective of officers, the dangers of casting the homeless into inner-city spaces are real. Moreover, the reasons this practice is so highly racialized require further consideration. In this vein, it is pertinent to note that police officers draw on the cultural frames of reference available to them when they complete their work (Comack 2012). Samuelson and Monture-Angus (2002), as well as Razack (2002a, 2002b), remind readers that stereotypes perpetuated by colonial processes continue to encourage many non-Indigenous persons to conceive Indigenous peoples as lazy, drunkards, disorderly, criminal, and dangerous. Sadly, many individuals continue to equate Indigenous persons (especially marginalized Indigenous persons, like women and the homeless) with these characteristics and so see them as most appropriately belonging in spaces of danger and disorder (Razack 2002a, 2002b).

These negative stereotypes about Indigenousness help justify the police displacement and confinement of Indigenous persons to marginalized spaces rife with poverty, drinking, and crime. Darlene and Keith's story, for example, reveals how police simply "started accusing [them] of panhandling and drinking" even though "that wasn't what was going on." Assuming the two are "drunkards," allows the police to quickly remove them from Whyte Avenue and take them to the inner-city. This stereotype of the "drunken Indian" (Comack & Balfour 2004) also comes to the fore in the investigation of the sweatbox incident. The presenting officer in the investigation notes that according to the testimonies of the officers and homeless persons involved "many of the people that were picked up were not intoxicated" (EPS 2010a, 30), but he then assumes repeatedly that all nine Indigenous persons placed in the van must have been "in various states of intoxication" (EPS 2010a, 31). Similarly, the defence counsel for the officers involved and the presiding officer hearing the case continually stressed that some of the persons

involved in the transport were "chronic alcoholics and substance abusers" (EPS 2010a, 38).

Assuming that Indigenous homeless persons are drunkards helps the EPS dodge questions about

unlawful confinement because it sets in motion the EPS-approved policy concerning the

transport of adult inebriates. The standard operation procedures of the EPS are thus racialized

insofar as they help tether Indigenous homeless persons to the spaces in which police usher them.

In particular, the dangerous and disorderly McCauley-Boyle area, where street drinking is plainly

visible (Bouw 1997; Gelinas 2008), appears as a legitimate container for marginalized

Indigenous persons who are racialized in ways that construct them as also disorderly and

dangerous drunkards.

Adding to the apparent grafting of Indigenousness onto dangerous spaces like the

McCauley-Boyle area is the fact that the neighbourhoods are also being explicitly crafted into

Indigenous spaces. Indigenous persons across Canada are overrepresented in inner-city spaces

(La Prairie 2002) like McCauley and Boyle Street. In fact, although the McCauley and Boyle

Street neighbourhoods are home to many racialized groups and encompass Edmonton's

Chinatown and Little Italy, the communities contain a vastly disproportionate number of the

city's Indigenous population. Although only five percent of housed Edmontonians listed

Aboriginal as part of their heritage in the 2006 Census, the percentage of census respondents

who identified with these backgrounds in the McCauley and Boyle Street neighbourhoods were

eleven and eight percent respectively (City of Edmonton 2006a, 2006b). Moreover, the

disadvantaged region's designation as a space of Indigenousness is growing. Many of the low-

income units and social services spaces being built as part of the Boyle Renaissance are reserved

for Indigenous clients and organizations. Additionally, the middle of the Boyle Renaissance

redevelopment will feature an urban park that is inspired by Indigenous symbols and will have a

designated "Aboriginal quadrant" with a "First Nations Welcoming Centre" (McKay Finnigan & Associates 2010, n.p.).

The construction of the McCauley-Boyle area as a space of dangerousness, disadvantage, and Indigenousness helps to justify the displacement of homeless Indigenous persons to the region. The area has already been constituted as a space of Indigenousness through urban planning and through socio-economic processes that concentrate poverty and specific racial identities in the inner-city. Dropping homeless Indigenous persons off in this region, then, is arguably preferable to officers because — in contrast to drop offs (like the sweatbox incident) that involve more affluent communities where Indigenous persons are less concentrated — these displacements are unlikely to generate further demands for police action given that Indigenousness and homelessness are already normalized features of the streetscape. The constitution of dangerous inner-city spaces as spaces of Indigenousness shapes police practices of dumping Indigenous homeless persons outside shelters in the region. Simultaneously, however, the racialized police practice of dumping perpetuates the racialization of space and its attendant racial hierarchies. The repeated displacement of Indigenous homeless persons to the McCauley-Boyle reinforces the ties these spaces have to Indigenousness while concurrently helping to establish the consumer spaces of Old Strathcona and Downtown as ideally white spaces.

Indeed, the construction of consumer spaces like Whyte Avenue as white spaces and dangerous spaces like the McCauley-Boyle "north-side" as Indigenous space was apparent among several white homeless persons that police permitted to stay in Old Strathcona. For example, Dan, a white recycler who worked the alleys behind Whyte Avenue, demonstrated how

he — and the EPS — tied Indigenousness to crime and dangerous "north-side" space. He declared:

> Yeah, we [his street associates who are white bottle pickers] are probably some of the better guys in Edmonton. On the south-side, you don't get the rowdies. But we are becoming a minority now. We are getting taken over by the Natives. There is getting to be too many of them.... They are gonna form a union and take over our routes.... I have informed the police already of it and told them what is coming down. They said, "Don't worry about it, we know who all the north-side guys are, and if we see too many of them over here causing problems, we will send them back where they come from...." They know we don't hurt anybody. We don't break into peoples' garages and stuff like that. But those people will, I know they will.

Despite the fact that many of the Indigenous people Dan referred to lived on the south-side, Dan equated all Indigenous homeless persons as "north-side guys" and blamed them for most of the problems in the Old Strathcona neighbourhood. To him, "those people" resorted to crime, unjustifiably invaded his bottle-picking territory, and did not belong in his neighbourhood. He had good relationships with local police officers and when he expressed concern to them about the "Natives" they too apparently felt these Indigenous homeless persons did not belong in Old Strathcona and promised to "send them back where they came from." The inner-city space of McCauley-Boyle was, according to the police and Dan, a space of Indigenousness and Indigenous homeless persons were criminals who belonged in that dangerous and crime-ridden space. Meanwhile, the prime space of Old Strathcona and Whyte Avenue were ideally white spaces and any ills within this space were apparently the cause of Indigenous outsiders.

Dan's comments suggest that Indigenous homeless persons in consumer spaces, by being both poor and having a racialized identity, threaten the white domination of these spaces and so face greater chances of being "dumped" by police in dangerous, crime-ridden inner-city areas that allegedly reflect their assumed characteristics. This clearly demonstrates how police dumping further racializes already-racialized consumer spaces and inner-city spaces. The racialized practice of police dumping thus both reflects the already-existing racialization of space and helps solidify the racial boundaries of these spaces. In so doing, it underlines Razack's (2002a) observation that race and space are central to policing and that racialized policing reproduces a long-standing hierarchy in which white persons can more easily enjoy, and exist within, prime consumer spaces, while Indigenous persons are confined to dangerous and marginalized spaces. Confining homeless persons, especially Indigenous homeless persons, to inner-city spaces allows prime consumer spaces to be represented as devoid of poverty, inequality, and racism without having to address the underlying causes of these issues. Accordingly, the status quo of consumption, investment, and white ownership in consumer spaces can continue unabated.

Among the many problems of this racialized police dumping is that it denies the legitimate claims Indigenous homeless persons have to white consumer spaces. Interview respondents strongly identified areas like Old Strathcona's Whyte Avenue and Downtown's Jasper Avenue as their home. For instance, when asked what he considered his home, Keith replied, "Right here, Jasper Avenue." Although Keith was an Indigenous man without shelter and slept in alleyways Downtown, he viewed his home, as many homeless persons do (Beckett & Herbert 2009; Mayers 2001; Pratt, Gau & Franklin 2011; Tanner 2009), as the space in which he struggled to meet his daily needs. He relied on the familiar pattern of office workers going to

and from work to sell his newspapers at prominent intersections along Jasper Avenue. He claimed a niche in a local alleyway as his own spot, referring to it possessively as "my cubbyhole" — a sort of semi-private bedroom where he was hidden from view within his Downtown home. Repeatedly removing homeless persons like Keith from consumer areas denies that they already have established these spaces as home. It suggests that they do not, or should not, live there and constitutes these spaces as devoid of inhabitants in ways that allow redevelopment plans aimed at consumption and leisure to unfold uncontested (Beckett & Herbert 2009; Hayward 2004).

Of course, denying the legitimate claims Indigenous persons have to desirable spaces is not new. Police dumping must therefore be further situated beyond the actions of individual officers and alongside historical colonial controls used to affirm white ownership of prime spaces. Just as colonial administrators claimed that the lands in which Indigenous persons lived were a *terra nullius* or "empty land" in order to support arguments that white settlers could claim these lands as their own (Goldberg 1993; Mawani 2005; Razack 2002b), police dumping removes Indigenous homeless persons from the desirable spaces in which they live so that new capitalist developments can lay claim to these spaces. Furthermore, the constant transport of Indigenous homeless persons to inner-city spaces attempts to confine Indigenousness to marginalized spaces of dangerousness in ways somewhat reminiscent of how Canadian colonists set aside lands for Indigenous settlement and then guarded entry and exit from these reserve lands through white Indian Agents and the pass system (Goldberg 1993; Lawrence 2002; Mawani 2005; Razack 2002a, 2002b; Samuelson & Monture-Angus 2002). Indeed, when Indigenous homeless persons refuse to remain in marginalized spaces, police agents quickly send them back to the McCauley-Boyle inner-city such that they struggle to achieve a sense of

permanent home and belonging within spaces set aside for consumer capitalism and those more privileged by it. Constantly escorting Aboriginal homeless persons out of consumer spaces ensures that if they want to settle in city spaces, they can do so only in the inner-city spaces *reserved* for them.

The Challenges a Lens of Racialized Policing Brings into View

The longstanding role policing plays in perpetuating racial inequalities and grafting racial hierarchies onto particular geographies rears its head once we look beyond individual officers' potential prejudice and instead focus on the experiences of those subject to this policing and the social, spatial, and historical contexts in which this policing unfolds. This broader view shows that race is, indeed, an important consideration when examining the relationship between homeless persons and state institutions of control. Moreover, foregrounding the experiences of those subject to the racialized practice of police dumping challenges existing police policy that unquestioningly encourages officers to transport homeless adults to inner-city spaces. Indeed, interviews with homeless individuals reveal that police dumping to inner-city shelters reflects and reinforces racial hierarchies that constitute prime consumer spaces as white spaces and marginalized spaces as spaces of Indigenousness. Contrasting the stories of interview participants clearly shows that Indigenous homeless persons have been more readily ushered into dangerous settings through police dumping.

Analyzing the policing of homelessness through a lens of racialized policing — wherein policing is understood as both unfolding in a context of existing racial inequalities and as a practice that helps produce these inequalities — demonstrates the limits of searching for and sanctioning individual racial prejudice among officers. Rather, this view demands consideration

of the systemic racism found in the spatial concentration of Indigenousness in inner-city communities, in wider cultural beliefs about Indigenous persons and the spaces in which they belong, and in ongoing colonial processes that attempt to constitute prime spaces as devoid of legitimate ownership claims from Indigenous persons and so available for white settlement.

These considerations do not completely dissolve the importance of attending to the actions of individual officers, but they do highlight that attending to the disadvantages Indigenous homeless persons face as state institutions attempt to address homelessness requires acknowledging the larger racialized and colonial conditions that policing both reflects and reinforces. As in the investigation to the sweatbox incident, many police agencies have concentrated on implementing individual cultural sensitivity training or have focused on trying to root out officers who hold racial prejudice (Comack 2012; Green 2006). The larger view of policing as racialized, however, shows that we must also attend to the ways in which Indigenous persons are perceived as dangerous and disorderly drunkards and, as a consequence, are seen to fit more readily in spaces with similar characteristics. The normalized practice of police dumping through which Indigenous homeless persons are escorted to such spaces must be questioned. It cannot remain standard operating procedure to employ the EPS policy of transporting adult inebriates to shelters without assessing the true sobriety of homeless persons or considering their preferences to remain in public spaces. These transport policies will continue to contribute to racial inequalities and racialized spaces so long as Indigenous persons continue to be unfairly constructed as disorderly drunkards and so long as addictions and homelessness disproportionately affect Indigenous persons.

At the same time, the urban planning processes that concentrate Indigenous persons in marginalized inner-city spaces and so legitimate Edmonton's racialized police dumping must be

challenged. In this context, the constitution of prime spaces as white spaces and the ongoing redevelopment of city-space in ways that exacerbate racial and class inequalities cannot continue unquestioned. To be sure, identity groups ought to have their own spaces to celebrate their differences, but such spaces ought to be spread throughout the city, should not enable the concentration of certain groups in dangerous spaces, and must not reinforce negative stereotypes of any group. The ongoing efforts of many inner-city residents to turn their communities into safer and less stigmatized spaces must receive the same level of support as efforts to redevelop consumer spaces. Urban development must allow the creation of spaces of diversity and inclusion rather than the continued bifurcation of city spaces.

The recommendations that follow from adopting a view of policing as racialized highlight the weighty challenges that face those who wish to address detrimental state responses to Indigenous homelessness. The complexity of the issue defies simple answers. It is certain, however, that race is an important consideration in police interactions with the homeless. Considerations of the importance of Indigenousness should not be simply swept under the rug by framing concerns about race in terms of individual prejudice. Rather, a view of policing as racialized is required. Such a view brings into sight different systemic forms of racism and the social, spatial, and colonial contexts through which racial inequalities and their geographies both shape, and are shaped by, policing. Understanding these contexts and identifying how the policing of homelessness is racialized further highlights that attending to Indigenous homeless is primarily a social justice issue, and not simply a criminal justice problem.

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[1] Adopting King and Dunn's (2004) term "dumping" is not intended to reify the notion that homeless persons are waste, but to simultaneously highlight how the homeless are constituted as waste by some authority figures and to underline the processes of "civic sanitation" that apparently operate through these transportations (see Berti & Sommers 2010; Collins & Blomley 2003; Feldman 2004; Mitchell 1997, 2004; Mosher 2002).
[2] All participants have been assigned pseudonyms.

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