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### *The Food Police: The White Possessive Securitization of Winnipeg Food Spaces*

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# The Food Police: The White Possessive Securitization of Winnipeg Food Spaces

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## Abstract

*Grocery shopping is one of the most necessary everyday practices when it comes to being food secure. Food security is frequently spatially imagined along two axes – access and health. I highlight the specific conditions of existence for food insecure citizens in Winnipeg to demonstrate the incommensurability of how food insecurity is imagined and intervened upon, or not, through municipal policy. Drawing on Critical Indigenous Studies scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson's theorizations of "white possession," I establish a framework of white possessive securitization to interrogate the dynamics between policy, policing, and the securitization of space that results in Indigenous people being subjected to multiple modes of policing when grocery shopping. With white possessive securitization, I trace how individual settler citizens operate as self-governing subjects to police Indigenous people in the city while carrying out the aims of white patriarchal sovereignty – to secure private property. I provide three vignettes of the intersections of municipal policy and the policing of food by focussing on municipal budgets, the securitization of public-private space, and grocery stores. These vignettes delineate how policing in grocery stores interferes with Indigenous food security and are inseparable from inflated municipal policing budgets, austerity measures that reduce community services, increased surveillance, threats of violence, and the indiscriminating implementation of the rule of law by individual settler citizens who through rationalities of governmentality are the police.*

What feels illegal, but isn't?

Shopping in Winnipeg businesses as an Indigenous person.

– @lovelyjess and @LenardMonkman<sup>1</sup>

White people are not simply "protected" by the police, they *are* the police.

– Frank B. Wilderson III<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Monkman, Lenard (@LenardMonkman1). 2020. "Shopping in Winnipeg businesses as an Indigenous person." Twitter, February 3, 2020, 1:02 p.m. <https://twitter.com/LenardMonkman1/status/1224407841278054400>. Monkman responded to a tweet by @lovelyjess that asked, "What feels illegal, but isn't?" It is no longer available on Twitter.

<sup>2</sup> Frank B. Wilderson III. 2010. *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. Durham: Duke University Press, 82.

## Introduction

I begin with these two epigraphs that succinctly cut to the core of the conditions under which one of the most necessary everyday practices – grocery shopping – occurs in Winnipeg. The feeling of illegality for Indigenous people under extreme conditions of surveillance and policing and the way in which non-Indigenous settlers turn to the police, and indeed *become* the police, are integral for understanding the intertwined processes of policing, policy, and food insecurity in an Indigenous city such as Winnipeg.<sup>3</sup> In this article, I connect the rationalities of white possessiveness as theorized by Goenpul critical Indigenous theorist Aileen Moreton-Robinson with governmentality to conceptualize a theoretical framework of *white possessive securitization* to illustrate the co-production between policy, policing, and the securitization of space in Winnipeg. White possessive securitization is an embodied practice carried out by individual citizens and operates to police Indigenous people when carrying out the most basic and essential everyday activities such as grocery shopping.<sup>4</sup> I use food as method here to trace how white possessive securitization operates through multiple modes of policing of food. Any social policy or intervention can be understood through the framework of white possessive securitization, as it is the cohering logic of colonial governance. However, this article will focus on how such relations of power cohere in the everyday spaces of downtown Winnipeg. I connect white possessive securitization to three empirical vignettes: municipal budgets prioritizing policing over other necessary life sustaining community services, securitization of space and the increase of securitized public-private spaces, and grocery stores as heavily policed and violent spaces. With these vignettes, I delineate how multiple modes of policing operating in grocery stores are inseparable from inflated municipal policing budgets, austerity measures that reduce community services, increased surveillance, threats of violence, and the indiscriminating implementation of the rule of law by individual settler citizens who through rationalities of governmentality *are* the police.

Food insecurity – how it is defined, how it is intervened upon, how research about it maintains a status quo – serves as an empirical and analytic flashpoint for understanding colonial relations of power (Daborn 2021). Existing research on food security tends to be aligned with some version of the World Health Organization (WHO) definition, which

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3 All cities are Indigenous cities, and there is a robust field of urban Indigenous studies that has theorized cities as Indigenous territories, spaces, and hubs of relations for decades (see Lobo 1998; Newhouse and Peters 2003; Ramirez 2007; Thrush 2007; Silver et al. 2008; Peters 2012; Peters and Andersen 2013).

4 I write this article as a white Indigenous Studies scholar, from my own embodied experiences as a white woman who lives in Winnipeg and lives in/alongside Indigenous worlds through my immediate and extended relations. Whiteness shapes the public spaces of Winnipeg and is “only invisible for those who inhabit it” (Ahmed 2004, para 1; Moran 2004, para 21) while, for racialized people, it is hypervisible (Moreton-Robinson 2015, xiii). Given these worlds that I embody and inhabit, I see how whiteness operates – although, the whiteness that I see is not synonymous with what racialized people see and feel on a daily basis. While I have seen the invisibility and capital my body affords me in the very spaces I interrogate later in this article, this is not afforded to my Indigenous relations.

defines food security as including access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that also meets the individuals' food preferences.<sup>5</sup> Previous conceptions of food security have been based on universal human rights or economic access (Maxwell and Frankenberger 1992; Constance et al. 2014, 28; Daborn 2021, 97). In the wider context of my research, I argue that interventions in food security are carried out according to the logics of healthism. Healthism includes the regulation and disciplining of bodies via normalizing discourses through the strategy of health promotion and self-regulation *at the level of the individual* (Crawford 1980). Food insecurity interventions that are framed through the logics of healthism require individuals to self-regulate their nutritional intake because of, and in spite of, their food insecurity. Food insecurity is understood through logics of healthism *because of* white possessive securitization, a process that foregrounds the security of white sovereignty, and therefore property, above all else; throughout this article, I demonstrate the everyday instances of this. However, when healthy eating is situated as the aim of food insecurity interventions, where people access "healthy" food (and under what conditions) is paramount.

Food insecurity in Winnipeg's inner-city has been geographically rendered in terms of it being a "food desert," "food mirage," and "food swamp."<sup>6</sup> The spatial placing of food insecurity is oriented towards policy recommendations, given the close ties to city planning, policy, and geography. Within these spatial reasonings of food insecurity, healthism is a cohering logic (del Canto, Engler-Stringer, and Muhajarine 2015; Lotoski, Engler-Stringer, and Muhajarine 2015; Engler-Stringer et al. 2016; Wiebe and Distasio 2016; Slater et al. 2017; Balcaen and Storie 2018). The predilection to prioritize interventions and solutions to food insecurity that require re-building environments to increase access to "healthy foods" as determined by dominant (white) nutrition guidelines is deemed the only respectable response to food insecurity. Spatial renderings of food insecurity through the metaphors of "desert," "swamp," and "mirage" do work in the world, in that they both reflect and constitute our social realities, particularly through the deficit-based understandings of food insecure people in Winnipeg's inner-city. Spatial renderings of the desert, swamp, and

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5 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO. 2019. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019: Safeguarding Against Economic Slowdowns and Downturns*. Rome: FAO.

6 Manitoba's household food insecurity rates were 14.4 percent in 2017/2018, which is the highest rate of food insecurity amongst the provinces, with the exception of the Atlantic provinces (Tarasuk and Mitchell 2020, 3). While these rates do not specifically reflect Winnipeg, they are telling. Moreover, research has shown that the prevalence of household food insecurity is higher for Indigenous people or people of colour – with 28.2 percent of Indigenous households experiencing food insecurity in 2017/2018 (Tarasuk and Mitchell 2020, 13). Winnipeg is home to the largest population of Indigenous people in Canada, with 92,810 calling the city home (see Statistics Canada, "Aboriginal Peoples Highlight Tables, 2016 Census"). In addition to the interrogation of Winnipeg's inner-city being imagined as a food desert, mirage, or swamp, it is also necessary to note the troubling ecological metaphors that are employed with these imaginings. The colonial logics at work with these ecological metaphors situate deserts as devoid of life and swamps as places of danger. However, both deserts and swamps are vital ecosystems, and scholars have been calling for a halt to such metaphors, which serve only to deepen misunderstandings of urban food environments and ecosystems and further the "colonial settler subjective understanding" of racialized ecologies (Snorton 2019; also see Elton 2018).

mirage obfuscate more than they reveal. Focusing on the lack of available food resources (the desert), the over availability of “unhealthy” foods (the swamp), and the availability of foods that are not economically accessible (the mirage) obfuscates what happens in space through processes of biopower, policy, and policing. In this article, I disrupt these taken for granted understandings and spatial renderings of food insecurity in Winnipeg through the theorization of white possessive securitization and the delineation of how municipal policy creates the conditions for the further entrenchment of food insecurity for Indigenous people. The title of this article – “The Food Police” – is meant to communicate that this fight over food is a fight over citizenship, over property, and is just one empirical node in a larger story about how whiteness is waged to police race and space in Winnipeg.

### **White Possessive Securitization and the Policy of Policing Food in Winnipeg**

Healthism, and its presence in food security policy interventions, is not the sole focus of analysis in this article. Nevertheless, healthism lingers through discourses of responsibility, self-regulation, and citizenship in the media, policy, and everyday interactions. I focus on securitization to understand what drives healthism and makes it impossible to attain for individuals who come up against the violent conditions of white possessive securitization. Healthism *is* securitization applied at the scale of the body through the subjectivities that it encourages. Individuals are expected to self-regulate as healthy citizens to cut down on government expenditures and thus further secure state sovereignty and resources and the property of businesses – in the case of my argument, grocery stores. This process is one of biocitizenship. The responsibilities of citizenship have shifted to include the self-regulating of our bodies to be “healthy” for the sake of all. Cree political theorist Jessica Kolopenuk has argued that such notions of citizenship require an interrogation of what it means to be good, to be healthy, and to be a citizen because these forms of belonging would not exist without nation-states, and without colonial ontologies and knowledge (Kolopenuk 2020, S28). To be a good citizen it to be healthy; however, in order to *be* healthy, one must be able to access healthy food. However, food considered “nutritious” continues to be policed *as* property that is surveilled through the normativity of white possessive securitization.

I theorize white possessive securitization to understand and unpack how policies of policing impact food security for Indigenous people in the city – specifically within the context of Winnipeg grocery stores. Food security, as it is conceptualized through healthism, pushes food insecure individuals to access particular foods – namely, healthy foods accessed at full-service grocers – yet, it simultaneously puts individuals at risk of encountering violent policing to do so. I identify and connect self-governing settler subjects to a municipal investment in policies of policing. Such policies set the social conditions and norms that foster the conditions through which individual citizens take up their own modes of policing in the form of surveillance, private security, and vigilantism, which occur in addition to the multiple existing modes of policing that already exist in the city, such as the Winnipeg Police Service, the WPS Auxiliary Force Cadets, and the Downtown BIZ patrol. In Winnipeg, the growing policing apparatus is funded by the municipality but

is also buttressed by volunteer agents invested in securitization. Securitization is further normalized for Winnipeg businesses and residents through the production of the volunteer policing agent: What separates volunteers from paid police? How do everyday residents of the downtown core distinguish between hired and volunteer police? How does the growth of a volunteer police force demonstrate the investment of Winnipeg residents in encouraging citizen policing? That is, the normalisation of policing as *volunteerism* further normalizes policing subjectivities amongst downtown residents and individuals. In the following section I establish a theoretical framework of white possessive securitization as a mode of interrogating self-governing settler citizen policing, which I then follow with vignettes to demonstrate how it manifests in everyday realities.

### *White Possession*

Whiteness and white possession underlie and structure the rationalities, programs, and technologies of colonial governmentality. Moreton-Robinson (2006) has defined “whiteness as the invisible norm against which other races are judged in the construction of identity, representation, decision-making, subjectivity, nationalism, knowledge production and the law” (388). White possession operates to maintain these constructions. American studies scholar George Lipsitz has theorized how a possessive investment in whiteness operates through logics of capital. Lipsitz uses the framing of possession to connect the relationship between whiteness and asset accumulation to individual interests, which then invest in and protect white possessions while actively denying such possessions and privilege to racialized people (2006, viii). Lipsitz argues that whiteness “is invested in, like property” but also operates to hoard and bar access to it from others, as we see in Winnipeg with access to food, housing, and public space (Lipsitz 2006, viii). White possessive logics require “perpetual Indigenous dispossession” (Moreton-Robinson 2015, xi). Moreton-Robinson’s conceptualization of *possessive logics* indicates that possessive logics are a governing rationality that work to reproduce and reaffirm patriarchal white sovereignty. White possessive logics are “operationalized within discourses to circulate sets of meanings about ownership of the nation, as part of commonsense knowledge, decision making, and socially produced conventions” (Moreton-Robinson 2015, xii). Possessive logics do not apply only to property; they operate in “white people’s daily lives” (Moran 2004, para 6), and perhaps most importantly, “subjects embody white possessive logics” (Moreton-Robinson 2015, xii). Possessive logics occupy a central role in healthism, especially when it comes to reaffirming and *securing* the state’s economic position by investing in forms of health governance that require citizens to become better biocitizens by self-regulating health and reducing the economic expenditures that the state needs to make to maintain a healthy population (Rose 2004; Rose 2007). In Winnipeg, we see the rationalization of such possessive logics, and their subsequent embodiment, in the efforts of individual citizens to retain and securitize their possession over resources.

Maintaining the *security* of the white possession is an integral undertaking of white possessive logics (Harris 1993; TallBear 2013; Moreton-Robinson 2015; Leroux 2019). Moreton-Robinson argues that, as a regime of power, “patriarchal white sovereignty



operates ideologically, materially, and discursively to reproduce and maintain its investment in the nation as a white possession” (2015, 139). Possession becomes produced through “a discourse of security” and what I would extend to include an apparatus of security, to support “the existence, protection, and maintenance of patriarchal white sovereignty” (Moreton-Robinson 2015, 139). Moreover, the colonial nation-state undergoes a constant remaking through various forms of security; it must constantly secure its possession (Moreton-Robinson 2015, 144–145). In the Australian context, Moreton-Robinson has argued that discourses of security are “inextricably linked to an anxiety about dispossession shaped by a refusal of Indigenous sovereignty with clear roots in white supremacy” (2015, 152). White possessive logics have been well theorized as operating to secure white possession, whether it is through property and white supremacist premises racial exclusion (Harris 1993, 1737), through the possession of Indigenous lands, lives, and biomatter (TallBear 2013; Leroux 2019), or simply through the hoarding of resources required for health to the exclusion of others (Rail and Jette 2015, 331). Securitization in all of its forms is inevitably at odds with Indigenous sovereignty and is a manifestation of white possession and white supremacy.

In the context of Winnipeg, it is essential to understand how *white possessive securitization* operates individually, structurally, and systemically. Racism and whiteness operate through the conscious efforts of individuals; however, it is also necessary to attend to collective behaviour (Lipsitz 2006, 20; Murphy 2017, 73). White possessive securitization is a rationality that circulates within the population, within bodies of subjects, and especially amongst those with investments in property; it does not cohere solely at the level of governmental apparatuses. Individually, citizens buy-in to logics of white possession and operate as agents of governmentality in the regulation of themselves and others; structurally and systemically, the everyday material interfaces citizens engage with operate white possessive securitization in ways that foreclose access for those deemed non-white. In the following section, I connect individual actions to larger systemic and collective operations of white possessive logics. Moreover, I argue that governmentality relies on a collective buy-in of white possession to maintain the health and economic security of the nation.

### *Securitization (and Surveillance)*

I build on white possessive securitization where it resonates with the dual concepts of “community” and “immunity.” Political philosopher Roberto Esposito has theorized the dual concepts of *communitas* and *immunitas*; both words derive from the Latin root word of *munus*, “which means ‘gift,’ ‘duty,’ ‘obligation’” (2013, 58–59). Esposito argues that communities are construed through logics of care and obligation whereas immunity indicates an exemption from such obligations of community (2013, 25; 59). While Esposito links *immunitas* to apparatuses of governmentality (law and the police), in our current colonial context, the process of immunization translates to the larger body politic in which it operates to eliminate the obligations of community to those who are excluded. At its most basic form of operation, *immunitas* works to protect members of a community from an outside risk, and an outside risk can also take the form of individuals who are not wanted

in a community. Esposito notes that “the risk of contamination immediately liquidates contact, relationality, and being in common” (2013, 59). If a community is subjected to a risk that threatens its very function, Esposito notes that the community must be “sterilized of its own relational contents” (2011, 13). As soon as the process of immunity is activated to protect a community, community as we know it is deactivated (Esposito 2013, 127). Of course, it is imperative to remember that contagion and risk are formed and rationalized through particular logics and structures of governmentality. It is here that we see the differential governance of populations through the technology of immunization and the way in which immunization protects the privileged and causes harm to those who are not folded into the protection of the community. What I really want to emphasize here is the role and purpose of immunization as a metaphor (and thus the exemption from and shielding from risk) as a way in which individuals are separated from the community to negate any possible obligations owed to them.

At its core, immunization serves a purpose of security: It secures the individual from the risk of an outside threat and the risks associated with community obligations. Immunization is a process of subjectification to delineate who belongs and on what basis that belonging is tolerated and managed as *risk* and *contagion*. It should not be surprising that Esposito’s theorizations of immunization do not radically differ from theorizations of the role of the individual within an apparatus of governmentality. Government operates through the creation of conditions that will shape the desires and habits of citizens, so that citizens will act accordingly, while thinking that they are merely acting in self-interest (Li 2007, 1). Governmental security is then activated through individual choices *within* a community, and, perhaps most significantly for our discussion here, community is “a *means* of government” that operates to enforce “the security of each and of all” (Rose 2004, 250). Individuals make up a body politic, a community, a means of government. Not all individuals are welcomed into this fold, and those who are excluded remain on the outside, the receiving end of disciplinary, differential governmentality.

Community establishes a form of security through government, but technologies of security in the form of law, policy, and police are also required for the aims of governmentality. An apparatus of security (the law or police) comes at the cost of violence, which Esposito poignantly describes: “this is what law is: violence against violence in order to control violence” (2011, 29). Esposito contends that the legal system operates through the very means that it is meant to regulate against – violence (2011, 29). Ultimately, “what law seeks to eliminate is not the violence, but the ‘external’” (2011, 30). These apparatuses of security that enforce immunization are part in parcel of white possession in colonial contexts. Much like white possession, security and immunization rely on a collective buy-in; they do not solely operate through a governmental legal apparatus. Moreover, with securitization, citizens are given license to reproduce particular forms of violence, securitization, and immunization if they align with the pre-existing goals already deemed legitimate through the law, police, and rationalities of white possession. In Winnipeg, this takes the shape of vigilantism, the securitization of food resources, and multiple modes of



policing. Theorizations of *immunitas* as governmentality prove useful in two ways: They direct us 1) to the apparatuses that employ immunization as a technology of security and white possession meant to cleanse the population and individuals of potential contagion and 2) to the larger body politic that employs techniques of immunization through their own self-governing citizenship, reinforcing the norms through which contagion is identified and then managed.

Collective enforcement of biocitizenship standards results not only in increased surveillance of some bodies more than others but also in the securitization of resources from undeserving individuals, as well as the policing of those who do not adhere to white biocitizenship norms. The intersection between the individual and the collective is where we can identify the process of citizen investment in governmentality. Governmentality scholars situate the individual subject as an integral component for the ongoing functioning of governance. The “individual” is one of the major points of the application of governmentalized power (Miller and Rose 1990; Gordon 1990; Rose and Miller 1992; Hindess 2001; Lemke 2002; Rose 2007; Dean 2015). Governing is carried out through individual citizens; individuals are activated to carry out the political, economic, and social objectives of their governments, which relies on a number of technologies to maintain and encourage citizen investment in self-governing (Miller and Rose 1990, 18; 28). Individuals become agents of governmentality and may end up employing the same techniques of possession, surveillance, immunization, regulation, and disciplining that their governments use, particularly because they see themselves reflected in the governing institutions from within which they operate. The normalization of white possessiveness as a set of cultural norms is paramount in order to produce and then identify an external contagion, and really “other,” to govern out of place. In the context of Winnipeg grocery stores, that “other” has mainly been identified as Indigenous.

### *Police/Policy State*

Police are integral to the maintenance, security, and justification of white possession. In his genealogy of police, Foucault (2009) noted that “the term ‘police’ does not signify (at least not exclusively) the institution of police in the modern sense; ‘police’ is the ensemble of mechanisms serving to ensure order, the properly channelled growth of wealth, and the conditions of preservation of health ‘in general’” (329). Police can thus signify policy and apparatuses of security that maintain order amongst the population. Police, in all forms, are a condition of urbanization (Foucault 2009, 336; Lippert 2014, 53). Police have always operated as a technology of a security apparatus to protect property and the interests of those with possessive investments in whiteness. For Foucault, “police” refers simply to any means employed that allow for governmental forces to be increased, while maintaining order (2009, 313). Much like the governmentality of health, policing in Winnipeg counts on a collective citizen investment in the police as a technology of security, as most viscerally illustrated by volunteer police, which exists to quell risks that threaten white possession.

In Canada, and specifically on the prairies, the police have served explicitly colonial purposes. Of course, in settler colonial contexts the demand for the securitization of white possessions is not a new phenomenon for Indigenous peoples, who have been the target of policing and surveillance in both historical and contemporary contexts (Monaghan 2013; Dhillon 2017; Maynard 2017; Nichols 2017; Crosby 2021). The police (specifically the North-West Mounted Police) along with other technologies of a settler colonial apparatus of security, employed surveillance (especially racialized surveillance) to eliminate Indigenous peoples' opposition to settler colonization (Monaghan 2013, 488; Comack 2019, 175). Racialized surveillance and policing have been integral tools of settler colonial governmentality historically and contemporarily to expand settler forms of governance through the management of Indigenous and Black populations – a process that is demonstrated through practices such as red zoning, starlight tours, and racialized policing (Monaghan 2013, 488; Maynard 2017; Comack 2019, 175). Police protection and surveillance (whether through the police or other security mechanisms) operate according to racialized logics that are meant to secure white possessions above all else, and, indeed, their existence is inherently anti-Indigenous.

Policing, as an integral tool of settler colonial governmentality, has to date been largely theorized and charted in relation to federal interests and security efforts. Police, particularly the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, have been deployed to protect settler government interests in “critical infrastructure” such as extractive oil and gas infrastructure (Crosby and Monaghan 2018; Maile 2019; Crosby 2021). When municipal policing is considered, it is often framed through the process of racialized policing, over-policing, and police violence (Dhillon 2017; Maynard 2017; Comack 2019; Rutland 2021).<sup>7</sup> While scholars have yet to acknowledge that the primary effect of policing is the white possession of Indigenous sovereignty through the discursive misrecognition of Indigenous peoples as statistical populations and individuals (Andersen 2008; Walter and Andersen 2013), these interventions are necessary areas of study for understanding the ongoing connections between policing, racialized violence, and settler colonialism. However, there is a clear need to contend with the enmeshment between municipalities and policing policies to understand the policy implications of the parasitic relationship between municipal police forces, citizens, and businesses for theorizing policing *as* governmentality. Community organizers and policy institutes are aware of the centrality of municipalities in policing and have produced incisive analyses on this topic (Dobchuk-Land 2019; Wilt 2019; Riddle 2020).<sup>8</sup> Such analyses have yet to be significantly engaged in academic literature, particularly

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7 Robyn Maynard employs a framework of state or state-sanctioned violence to contend with policing practices in Canada. Maynard notes that they use “state” to include all levels of government and government institutions (2017, 5-6). The extent of the reaches of state-sanctioned violence identified by Maynard are indicative of the need for a further interrogation of the varying contexts and actors that maintain racialized policing in Canada, particularly citizen policing and its historical contingency in relation to slavery.

8 See Board of the Police Commissioner’s Subcommittee to Define Defunding Police. 2021. *Defunding the Police: Defining the Way Forward for HRM*. Halifax: Board of the Police Commissioner.

in the fields of governmentality, policing, risk, and security (Lippert 2014; Molnar and Warren 2020; Crosby 2021). The ongoing diffusion of policing to “parapolicing” actors such as cadets and private security firms has meant that the relationship between public and private is further blurred and obscures the relationship between all forms of police and “the state” (Stenning 2009; Rigakos and Greener 2000; Lippert 2014; Mackinnon 2021). Governmentality scholar Randy K. Lippert has argued that “contemporary ‘police’ need not to be so tightly tethered to the municipal level,” and, while it could indeed be possible to untether from the municipality, this is not necessarily the case (2014, 54). I return to this point in the vignettes to argue that, in Winnipeg, we see the opposite of Lippert’s assertion: All modes of policing are tightly tethered to the municipality.<sup>9</sup>

The operation of white possessive securitization in Winnipeg manifests itself most explicitly in the multiple forms of policing and surveillance that Indigenous people in the city are subject to. In his article on the role of Manitoba’s NDP and unions in advancing a police state in Winnipeg, Winnipeg-based journalist James Wilt (2019) argued that, in the midst of “brutal austerity” and “relentless cuts” to community services, “ever-growing police power” is “emblematic of how colonialism, capitalism, and incarceration decimate communities and advance white supremacy” (para 5). Black Studies scholar Jackie Wang has contended that “municipalities develop a parasitic relation to the people they are supposed to serve” (2018, 175). Policing yields returns for municipalities, which is returned in dividends in the form of operating budgets. In addition to the parasitic relation of policing, through the implementation of tax increment financing (TIF) municipalities further drain the resources meant for citizens by redirecting substantial amounts of capital to private developers. TIF grants provide large grants to developers, which are essentially borrowed against future promised tax revenue (Toews 2018, 238). The power of municipalities to rationalize policing policies is significant and should not be underestimated as an arbiter of programs and technologies of racialized and differential governmentality.

In Winnipeg media, the police are often framed as being integral to responding to a “crisis” – whether it is the “meth crisis” or “theft crisis” (which are often linked in public discourse). However, this view has been sharply criticized (Blunt 2019). In the context of Winnipeg, I argue that police *are* the crisis and sustain the crisis. A state of “crisis” serves to usher in securitization and immunization. In *Policing the Crisis*, Stuart Hall et al. (2013) write about the police response to the “crisis” of mugging in British cities during the early 1970s. In their analysis of responses to the “crisis,” they contended that public anxiety triggered police to take “rapid steps to isolate the ‘virus’ and bring the fever under control,” with the courts providing inoculation (Hall et al. 2013, 21). The language of the “virus” here precedes and resonates with Esposito’s inoculation and immunization. Police and

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9 The 2020 Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) Annual Report notes that the WPS employs 1,356 police officers and 561 civilian members, which includes cadets (WPS 2020, 6). In comparison to the province of Manitoba, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police employs approximately 1,000 regular members and 450 civilian and public service employees. Royal Canadian Mounted Police. “About D Division.” *Royal Canadian Mounted Police*. Accessed October 15, 2021. <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/mb/about-ausujet/index-eng.htm>.

media shaping of “crises” works to give a certain amount of license to the general public to lean into anxiety and fears, and to implement practices of immunization that exclude individuals associated with the crisis (and thus a risk) from any community obligation. In Winnipeg, we see this in an increased securitization of spaces. In the following section, I provide three vignettes to demonstrate how white possessive securitization operates through the individual as a form of governmentality to immunize against the contagion: that which threatens the white possession of property, place, and space.

### **Vignettes of White Possessive Securitization**

The white possessive securitization of food, resources, and spaces in Winnipeg renders any policy solution promoting healthism inadequate, as healthism is further used as a discourse to offload the responsibility of health on to individuals, who are normatively assumed to belong to the white body politic. The failure to account for how an apparatus of healthism cannot operate under the conditions of a racializing settler colonial apparatus of security results in the reification of approaches to food insecurity that are divorced from local reality. In this section, I fully flesh out three scenes of white possessive securitization that speak to what Hall et al. would define as “conditions of existence,” which account for the relations between social forces and the wider historical context in which a phenomenon occurs (2013, 2). In this work, I aim to challenge an “unwillingness to focus on conditions of existence” as it relates to inner-city Indigenous food security and healthism in Winnipeg.<sup>10</sup> I situate austerity budgets, all forms of policing and securitization, and grocery stores within an apparatus of security that operates at odds with an apparatus of healthism and results in a disciplinary governing of Indigenous health. Municipal budgets, the securitization of private/public spaces, and grocery stores all have implications for Indigenous food security and highlight the impossibility of meeting the standards of healthism. The health standards that food insecure citizens are supposed to meet are increasingly impossible for Indigenous residents to meet within the securitized context of Winnipeg.

#### *Municipal Budgets*

Community groups like Winnipeg Police Cause Harm, Millennium for All, and Budget for All have organized against increasingly austere city budgets that consistently increase police funding while reducing funding to essential community services. In her Yellowhead Institute policy brief on police abolition, Nehiyaw policy analyst Emily Riddle indicates a need for an “analysis of public funds and how they are used to subsidize violence” (2020, 2). Much of this work has been taken up by policy think-tanks and community organizers. Winnipeg Police Cause Harm, for example, has drawn attention to the 2019 operating budget for the Winnipeg Police Service – a whopping \$301.4 million, an increase of 3.4 percent from 2018, which accounts for 26.8 percent of the city’s operating budget.<sup>11</sup> Win-

<sup>10</sup> I credit my friend and co-thinker Jacob Nikkel for his thought-provoking theorizations of settler “unwillingness” to focus on conditions of existence, particularly as it relates to police violence in Winnipeg.

<sup>11</sup> Winnipeg Police Cause Harm (@WpgPoliceHarm). 2019. “The Winnipeg Police Cost a Lot.” Twitter, October 25, 2019, 10:25 a.m. <https://twitter.com/WpgPoliceHarm/status/1187752045534765060?s=20>.

Winnipeg Police Cause Harm have argued that if the average police salary of \$104,485.02 was capped at \$80,000 a year the city could save \$50,835,846.00 per year.<sup>12</sup> Winnipeg Police Cause Harm have developed these scenarios to demonstrate that \$50 million of city funding could drastically alter the social landscape of the city. They compare police salaries to the budget of the West End 24 hour safe space for youth in the Spence neighbourhood, which “has offered a space for over 550 youth a year to sleep and eat at night on the weekends with a mere \$380,000 of public funding over three years.”<sup>13</sup> The 2020–2023 budget that was approved in early March 2020 has once again increased the Winnipeg Police Service budget while continuing to cut essential social services and grants.<sup>14</sup> The Winnipeg Police Service is slated to receive \$304.1 million, comprising 26.6 percent of the total budget, which makes it the sector that receives the most municipal funding.<sup>15</sup> By contrast, community services such as libraries and recreation services are slated to receive 10 percent of the budget.<sup>16</sup> At the time of writing this article in the fall of 2021, Winnipeg Police Service is expected to end the year \$9.6 million over-budget due to an increase in employer contributions to the police pension fund and reduced fine revenue from its parasitic fine-based relationship with citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic (Pursaga 2021). The City of Winnipeg Finance Committee has rejected Winnipeg Police Service Chief Danny Smyth’s request for an additional \$7.29 million in over-expenditures, but Smyth will return to City Hall with another request before year end (Snell 2021). City council later accepted the budget recommendation, and the increase in additional funding, in December 2021 (MacLean 2021).

It should come as no surprise that the police force continues to garner public support and economic resources, even during times of widespread austerity impacting almost every other sector.<sup>17</sup> Hall et al. (2013) have thoroughly explicated how the “ideological closure” that occurs between police, media, and courts works in conjunction to create social anxiety and affects for responding to social crises (67). Hall et al. note that police response to particular crimes invariably increases the number of such crimes reported, which is then used to justify further policing (2013, 41). Moreover, “public concern is

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12 Winnipeg Police Cause Harm (@WpgPoliceHarm). 2019. “The Winnipeg Police Cost a Lot.”

13 Winnipeg Police Cause Harm (@WpgPoliceHarm). 2019. “The Winnipeg Police Cost a Lot.”

14 Kavanagh, Sean. “Winnipeg Budget Passes as Political Business Winds Down at City Hall.” *CBC News*. March 20, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/city-winnipeg-budget-2020-passes-1.5505101>. Also see: Winnipeg. n.d. “Multi-year Budget 2020–2023.” Budget. Accessed May 15, 2020. <https://www.winnipeg.ca/interhom/Budget/2020Budget/default.stm#5>.

15 Winnipeg. n.d. “Multi-year Budget 2020–2023.”

16 Winnipeg. n.d. “Multi-year Budget 2020–2023.”

17 In online budget engagement sessions for the proposed 2021 budget, citizens who participated ranked golf services, parking, and police service as the three least important city services. The three most important services ranked were medical response, community liveability, and public transit. See Winnipeg. 2020. “City of Winnipeg Preliminary Budget: Volume 2 for 2021 Budget.” Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, 52.



itself strongly shaped by the criminal statistics (which the police produce and interpret for the media) and the impression that there is ‘wave after wave’ of new kinds of crime” (Hall et al 2013, 41). The Winnipeg Police Service 2020 Operating and Capital Budget presentation included statistics on citizen perceptions of crime and policing. Citizens were asked to indicate what actions should be taken to improve the quality of life in Winnipeg, and 51 percent of respondents cited crime/policing as an action area to improve quality of life.<sup>18</sup> The ideological closure of police and media has evidently been effective; a mere 6 percent cited housing, 4 percent cited poverty, and 2 percent cited health care as areas in need of improvement for the quality of life in Winnipeg. Police and those who support policing (ideologically and financially) operate in a loop to maintain white possessive securitization. The city budget then effectively prioritizes white possessive securitization and immunization over community services and programming that could also serve the well-being of Indigenous people in the city.

### *Securitization of Space*

The production of public-private space has had significant implications for the increased securitization of space in Winnipeg. Not only is the municipal policy and financing of public-private partnerships a concern for those who want to see municipal resources go to life-sustaining community services instead of private development, but the logics of security that come part and parcel with public-private spaces bleed and permeate to other city spaces. In 2017, Winnipeg’s city council voted in favour of providing “tax-increment financing of up to \$3.2 million for the first phase of True North’s \$400-million development” (CBC News 2018a, para 4). By 2018, the Manitoba government committed to \$11.95 million in TIF for True North Square (CBC News 2018a). Shortly after the province’s 2018 announcement, Winnipeg’s city council amended their initial TIF commitment to include “a provision for the developers to pay the city an affordable-housing grant estimated at \$185,000 to \$200,000” (Kives 2018, para 3). This amendment was a seemingly insignificant contribution in light of the amount of public dollars that were invested into a private development. In addition to the TIF that directly supported the private development of True North Square, the province and city also committed to an investment of up to \$17.6 million toward “the public space, parks, public skywalks and surrounding roads within the True North project.”<sup>19</sup> Critics of True North Square have argued that residents should be concerned about the priorities of both the city and province following millions of dollars of public funding being used to subsidize luxury housing (MacKinnon 2018). Moreover, True North Square has not been the sole recipient of TIF in Winnipeg; the sports, hospitality and entertainment district (SHED) was also a beneficiary of public dollars via TIF.

18 Winnipeg. 2019. “2020 Operating and Capital Budget: Winnipeg Police Service.” November 12, 2019. [https://www.winnipeg.ca/interhom/Budget/2020Budget/pdfs/2020-Multi-year-Budget-Presentation-Winnipeg-Police-Service\\_20191112.pdf](https://www.winnipeg.ca/interhom/Budget/2020Budget/pdfs/2020-Multi-year-Budget-Presentation-Winnipeg-Police-Service_20191112.pdf).

19 Manitoba. 2016. “Manitoba, City Partner with True North to Invest in Public Space as Construction Begins.” *Manitoba*. Accessed October 15, 2021. <https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=37328&posted=2016-01-18>.

In the context of what Owen Toews identifies as Winnipeg's racial capitalism, SHED was designed to be a mirage (Toews 2018). It was never meant to be anything other than a mirage for low income, racialized people. The SHED is an eleven-block area that Toews identifies as "a new zone of intervention" (251), which contributed to the "redrawing of the city's apartheid geography" (2018, 260). Toews notes that, in this redrawing, existing inhabitants would no longer be tolerated and that "politicians, journalists, and CentreVenture officials, demonized existing residents (widely understood to be Native but rarely acknowledged as such) as 'drunks,' 'panhandlers,' and 'vagrants,' and celebrated future inhabitants (widely understood to be white but rarely acknowledged as such) as 'families,' 'professionals,' 'students,' and 'tourists'" (260). Toews notes that then-CEO of CentreVenture Ross McGowan commented in the media that if citizens were too poor to afford a beer at an expensive bar in the SHED district, then they were likely not "responsible enough" to buy alcohol downtown at all (2018, 266). These logics of responsibility and citizenship are mirrored in healthism, and, for Indigenous consumers in Winnipeg's downtown, if they are not responsible enough to consume alcohol, or not be assumed to be shoplifting, such logics are used to exclude people from necessary resources and spaces (Amend 2018; Guthman 2011). The redrawing of what Toews dubs Winnipeg's "apartheid geography" led to the parallel process of vilifying existing residents and users of downtown space as non-responsible, while also seeking to remove "spaces of sustenance" for existing residents through the redevelopment of the city to remove unsavoury spaces such as dollar and bargain stores that were essential for sustenance (2018, 272).

The borders of the SHED district may delineate where city funds have flowed to development, but the logics that govern the space have permeated outwards to adjacent downtown core areas, resulting in increased white possessive securitization across the downtown core. True North aligned their development with the City of Winnipeg's "Our Winnipeg" policy in the areas of development and economy. True North specifically noted that their development would "attract additional commerce to the area, leading to active – and safer – Downtown streets" (Winnipeg 2018, 18). However, the spaces that have been created are mirages – not "spaces of sustenance" – that are economically and racially inaccessible to many inner-city residents. True North Square is home to a new grocery store – Mattola Grocery – that is heavily surveilled as part of the "public-private" property of True North and economically accessible only to the bourgeoisie who are looking to spend \$525.00 on a small jar of truffles. While True North brought additional commerce and "safety" to Downtown streets, these benefits are meant only for specific citizens. In fact, these measures have brought the opposite to racialized inner-city residents in the form of heavy policing, which contributes to their further exclusion from "spaces of sustenance" that food insecure residents seek.

The public space of inner-city Winnipeg has become increasingly securitized through multiple modes of policing and surveillance, particularly through the creation of private-public space. Downtown Winnipeg BIZ patrols the SHED with a volunteer force of Downtown Watch Ambassadors who "act as additional 'eyes and ears' for the Winnipeg

Police Service” and can “quickly report any criminal activity” to the police.<sup>20</sup> Downtown Watch Ambassadors are meant to promote “a safer and friendlier downtown,” and while this may be the case for white city goers who like to attend hockey games, it is hardly the case for Indigenous people who live and move through downtown every day.<sup>21</sup> Downtown BIZ pitches joining the watch as an excellent volunteer opportunity for anyone interested in criminology and criminal justice. Downtown BIZ adds an additional layer of securitization on an already heavily policed area. The Winnipeg Police Service also relies on Auxiliary Cadets – a group of salaried “peace” officers that are meant to “enhance the Service’s visual presence, build positive relationships in the community and allow police members to focus on core police duties.”<sup>22</sup> Conducting foot patrols is a key role of the cadets. Volunteer policing has become a process of subjectification that normalizes surveillance both amongst everyday citizens as well as the populations that they “serve and protect.”

The new Downtown Safety Partnership was announced in November 2019. The partnership will include Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, True North Sports and Entertainment, City of Winnipeg, and Winnipeg Police Service. The partnership aims “to see partners, like private security and Downtown Winnipeg BIZ Watch Ambassadors, work collaboratively and share information in real time” (Scarpelli 2019, para 5). This partnership further entrenches the legitimacy of Downtown BIZ patrol as a citizen police force. Lippert has noted that business improvement districts, or BIDs, “seek to intensively police members’ conduct and how objects and space are arranged” by implementing policing measures in the form of “ambassadors” or “hosts” to police BID spaces (2014, 58). The securitization of space in inner-city Winnipeg speaks to the white possessive priorities of the city, police, and citizens, who seek to negate obligations of being in common and would rather immunize themselves from perceived risks.

Increased security and police presence does little to increase actual safety in the inner-city. In the *Millennium for All Report on Securitization of the Millennium Public Library*, the authors argue that “increased securitization leads to increased criminalization – not higher incidents of crime, but higher incidents of people, most often poor and BIPOC communities, being marked as deviant and thus brought into contact with the criminal punishment system” (Cooper et al. 2019, 30). Flooding public spaces with security guards and police is counterintuitive for creating safety and “rather than making communities safer, they introduce opportunities for bias and harm” (30). Moreover, Cooper et al. (2019) argue that the increased presence of policing and security are mechanisms “that are meant to

20 Downtown Winnipeg BIZ. n.d. “Watch Ambassadors.” Downtown Winnipeg BIZ. Accessed May 15, 2020. <https://downtownwinnipegbiz.com/programs-services/safety/watch-ambassadors/>.

21 Downtown Winnipeg BIZ. n.d. “Volunteer Watch Ambassador.” Downtown Winnipeg BIZ. Accessed May 15, 2020. Downtown Winnipeg BIZ. n.d. “Watch Ambassadors.” Downtown Winnipeg BIZ. Accessed May 15, 2020. <http://www.downtownwinnipegbiz.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Volunteer-Watch-Ambassador-Job-Description.pdf>.

22 Winnipeg. n.d. “Auxiliary Force Cadets.” Winnipeg Police Service. Accessed May 15, 2020. <https://winnipeg.ca/police/policerecruiting/cadet/default.aspx>.

shape people's conduct" to ensure that individuals who have previously been profiled "make their own decisions not to come around in the first place," which disproportionately effects racialized, poor, and gender non-conforming people (31). The implications of increased security and policing in public spaces (downtown streets and millennium library), private-public spaces (True North Square), and private spaces (grocery stores) can effectively serve to put Indigenous people in those spaces at greater risk for criminalization and violence, or to attempt to remove them from those spaces entirely.

### *Grocery Stores*

In Winnipeg, the physical features of grocery stores are modified in low-income and racialized neighbourhoods to better surveil and criminalize the shoppers who are profiled. This takes many forms, including permanent parking for police, one-way turnstiles to enter and exit, locked doors, security guards, "special duty" police serving as store security, or chained cashier isles. A few Winnipeg grocery stores in particular warrant a deeper description of what it is like to move through these highly securitized spaces. Convenience stores, like the Colony Food Store or the inner-city Dollaramas, are villainized by many academics, nutritionists, and policy makers in the field of food security. Despite carrying a wide array of affordable foods, they predominantly sell processed foods and thus fail to meet dominant nutrition guidelines as per Canada's Food Guide. They also have the support of some food security advocates in Winnipeg. Donald Benham with Winnipeg Harvest has noted that convenience stores play a key role in inner-city food security (Nicholson and Marcoux, 2015). In Winnipeg, these stores are often surveilled by both security cameras and security guards. Alternatively, full-service grocers carry a wider variety of produce that is deemed much healthier by proponents of healthism, even though a wide selection of exotic or organic produce may not be what buyers want to spend their limited funds on. Unfortunately, these grocers are where white possessive securitization is on full display.

Full-service grocers like Safeway (now FreshCo) located at Sergeant and Maryland and No Frills located at Furby and Notre Dame are both well-stocked locations that have a large produce area (an essential for proponents of healthism who just want poor people to eat their vegetables), and they are extremely secure. Both locations have security guards posted immediately inside the entrances to surveil shoppers. Safeway and No Frills have also altered the physical geography of their stores to create better conditions for surveillance. In 2019 Safeway had signs posted indicating that their side doors would be permanently closed (and were barricaded on the inside of the store with excess grocery basket and sign stands to prevent any exits through them), and the only exit once inside the store was through the entrance/exit door by the posted security guard, once proceeding through a checkout. All checkouts that were not staffed by a cashier were barricaded. Similarly, the only exit at No Frills is through an open cashier lane. The entrance turnstile cannot be exited through, and all cashier lanes that are not in use are gated and chained. It is not possible to move through any of these spaces without being heavily surveilled, unless your whiteness affords you the privilege to avoid surveillance.

The geography of Downtown Family Foods, located on Donald Street, is one of the most immediately hostile grocery environments in Winnipeg's inner-city. The store has a collage of security footage screenshots of individuals who have been banned from the store. Almost all of the images are of Indigenous people. One image in particular on the massive collage has the caption "Do not buy food!" Indigeneity is put on visceral display as criminal. The store has no shortage of securitization features, including a security guard, theft detection devices at all exits, and four or five surveillance cameras with signs that say "smile, you're on camera" in the meat section. Even though this grocery store is stocked with a variety of affordable healthy foods, it would not come as a surprise that Indigenous people would want to avoid shopping here to avoid racism, profiling, and criminalization. In a contradictory engagement with privacy law, Downtown Family Foods follows regulations set out by the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), which requires businesses to alert customers that video surveillance is being conducted. However, despite complying with one PIPEDA regulation, Downtown Family Foods simultaneously violates PIPEDA privacy compliance laws by posting surveillance footage without the consent of the individuals (CBC News 2018b; OPCC 2013).

The white possessive geographies of grocery stores in Winnipeg have responded to "crises" in the city; increases in theft (of liquor and food) have consistently been linked to the "meth crisis" (Vanraes 2019). Some grocers have turned to hiring security guards or police, "changing store configurations," or putting an end to selling "small, easily concealable packages of meat" that can be stolen (Vanraes 2019, para 12). Many grocery stores have turned to bringing off-duty police officers into stores for security via "special hires."<sup>23</sup> Regarding this trend of grocery stores bringing in "special duty" police into their stores for added security, criminal justice scholar Bronwyn Dobchuck-Land has argued that "adding police to retail stores does little to address the root causes of why people are stealing from stores" and that "it shows just how far we're willing to go to not deal with the actual problems that the city is facing and how deeply punitive and vengeful our approach to problem solving is" (Monkman 2019a, para 41-42). In the month of December 2019 alone, it was reported that nearly 500 police officers were hired by stores to deter theft and make arrests (Thompson 2019a). In the same month an Indigenous couple were asked to leave a Michael's store because they looked like thieves (Caruk 2019); two Indigenous women were racially profiled by police working security at a Superstore (Monkman 2019a); a former Superstore employee spoke out about a policy of monitoring visibly Indigenous people in their stores (Monkman 2019b); and an Indigenous man filed a human rights complaint against Superstore after being removed from the store by police two times after being "mistaken" as someone who had stolen in the past (Monkman 2019b).

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23 Winnipeg. n.d. "2021 Fee Schedule." Winnipeg Police Service. Accessed May 15, 2020. [https://www.winnipeg.ca/police/pr/fees\\_info.stm](https://www.winnipeg.ca/police/pr/fees_info.stm). The 2021 Special Duty fee schedule indicates that the minimum cost for hiring Special Duty officers is \$127.05 per hour, and up to \$150.15 per hour. An additional \$35.70 per hour is added on top of these fees if a cruiser or paddy wagon is required.



In the midst of extreme measures of securitization and policing of grocery stores, citizen vigilantism has encapsulated the limits and bounds of white possessive securitization. Munther Zeid, the owner of the Food Fare grocery chain in Winnipeg, has publicly touted that he and his staff have taken a “proactive approach to tackling crime” (Thompson 2019b, para 2). Regarding his “proactive approach” to eliminating food theft in his store, Zeid has said, “It’s no secret. We approach them armed. We have baseball bats, and all we want is our product back” (Thompson 2019b, para 4). Zeid told the *Winnipeg Sun* that “there are several bats placed strategically through out [sic] his store, when they are notified of a theft in progress [they] will grab a bat and meet the thief at the front door” (Aldrich 2019, para 3). Zeid reported that if the customer refuses to “unload their pockets” and leave, “then the choice becomes break an arm or a leg” (Aldrich 2019, para 4).

Grocers who implement technologies of securitization are agents of governmentality through which the “collectivization of risk” is displaced in favour of individuals who “*take upon themselves* the responsibility for the security of their property and persons” (Rose 2004, 247). In contrast to security guards, video surveillance, and public criminalization, the extreme security measures undertaken by Zeid shift from governmentality to violence that are indicative of lingering forms of sovereign power in which the threat of violence for the protection of the grocery store as territory is legitimated. Zeid implements mechanisms of security outside of the law, yet such measures, however violent, are ultimately approved as a form of immunitary governmentality because it is largely accepted by the *communitas* as reducing risk (risk to his economic possessions). The Winnipeg journalists who have given Zeid airtime have presented his incitation of violence with little to no criticism of why thefts may be increasing, or whether Zeid possibly assaulting another citizen is an appropriate response to minor theft (Aldrich 2019; Thompson 2019b; Vanraes 2019). The absence of any denunciation of Zeid’s behaviour by the police alongside uncritical media reports together give license to this type of behaviour (Aldrich 2019). In an attempt to minimize the potential for injury, Winnipeg police have recommended that individuals who witness theft not video or photograph the incident or intervene in any capacity (CBC News 2019; McGuckin 2019). It is assumed that those protecting property are at risk of injury, yet Zeid and others are the ones to respond with violence. In 2009, a Winnipeg store owner allegedly assaulted Geraldine Beady with a baseball bat after he confronted her for allegedly stealing a can of luncheon meat worth \$1.49 (CBC News 2009). Beady died of her injuries less than a week later. Charges against the store owner were dropped after a key witness left the country (CBC News n.d.). In case it needs to be said, property theft does not give citizens license to assault someone else. However, in a social context where white possessive securitization is normalized, sovereignty, or the right to kill, becomes embodied by citizens: Citizens possess the sovereign right over life in order to protect their property.

Food theft points to larger conditions of existence in Winnipeg: high rates of food insecurity, decimated city budgets that fail to prioritize community services, and endemic, everyday racism. All of these conditions of existence, felt most acutely by Indigenous residents, make meeting the standards and expectations of healthism impossible. Healthism becomes an alibi for white possessive securitization – people just need to eat healthier,

but how they access such foods, or how such foods are policed, is not considered. When it comes to the “crisis” of food theft in Winnipeg, a substantial cognitive disconnect on the part of citizens, media, and store owners like Zeid about the social context of food insecurity and why people may steal food, is minimized. Moreover, in an inner-city that is already limited in full-service grocery locations, these limitations are further compounded if Indigenous people want to avoid explicitly racist and policed spaces.

### **Conclusion: On Police, Property, and Policy**

In the context of the “conditions of existence” in Winnipeg – austerity budgets, policing, and securitization of grocery stores – I suggest we need to seriously consider the following: What does this mean for food security policy, and what is the responsibility of municipalities in creating the space for food security? Food security researchers and municipal policy makers will be unable to sufficiently contend with the realities facing Winnipeg’s food insecure residents, particularly Indigenous residents, without interrogating, disrupting, and entirely reconceiving of how food insecurity is imagined and intervened upon through apparatuses of white possessive securitization. It will not be possible to achieve food security under the conditions of white possessive securitization and ongoing investments (through rationalities and funding) in the policing of public, private, and public-private property that constrains access to food for many Indigenous inner-city residents. Municipalities, policy makers, researchers, and citizens need to begin to contend with the fact that policing (in all its forms) must be disrupted, defunded, and detasked if we want communities to have access to food, housing, and other social services.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps what is needed are new discussions not of food, housing, or social *security*, a logic steeped in whiteness and the logic of property, but rather one of responsibility. As we approach a future marked by an ongoing pandemic and climate crisis, how might we shift our focus from thinking about how to *secure*, and how will we act to be more responsible for mitigating the continued ways in which whiteness and property configure our everyday social relations?

Interrogating the relationship between policing, property, and policy is an essential area of analysis for urban Indigenous policy studies. Urban Indigenous policy studies has contended with a number of key issues for understanding the development and deployment of policies impacting urban Indigenous people, including the messy and uncoordinated implementation of policies given “jurisdictional quagmires” (Andersen 2013, 56) and the inclusion of Indigenous peoples at policy tables (Walker, Moore, and Linklater 2011; Peters 2012; Newhouse and Peters 2003), and the importance of Indigenous led policy (Porter et al. 2017; Matunga 2013; Walker, Natcher, and Jojola 2013; Silver et al. 2008). However, little to no attention has been given to the policy priorities of many municipalities and the

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24 Activists and scholars in Halifax, Nova Scotia, comprising the Board of the Police Commissioner’s Subcommittee to Define Defunding Police have recently released their substantive report *Defunding the Police: Defining the Way Forward for HRM* that outlines how the Halifax Regional Municipality can not only defund, but detask and retask police. See Board of the Police Commissioner’s Subcommittee to Define Defunding Police. 2021. *Defunding the Police: Defining the Way Forward for HRM*. Halifax: Board of the Police Commissioner.

resulting impacts the municipal prioritizing of policing has on urban Indigenous policy. In *On Property*, Rinaldo Walcott states that “abolitionists argue that budget numbers tell a story of priorities: you can follow the money to see what politicians and the societies they represent consider important” (2021, 69). Winnipeg city council has and continues to view *securitization* as vital, even if this has meant the over-policing and elimination of Indigenous and other racialized people from space. If we consider the budget numbers in Winnipeg, and on the prairies more broadly, the budget numbers of municipalities tell a story of prioritizing policing. Prairie police budgets tell us that municipalities prioritize funding police over other social services such as housing and other social services. Calgary allocates 9.34 percent of their \$4.3 billion budget to police, Edmonton allocates 12.13 percent of their \$3.01 billion budget, Regina allocates 20.34 percent of their \$472 million budget, Saskatoon allocates 20.68 percent of their \$530 million budget, and Winnipeg allocates a whopping 26.55 percent of their \$1.15 billion budget to policing (Riddle n.d., 2). Such numbers, however, do not account for the rise of volunteer police forces that I have discussed. That is, apart from normalizing over-policing and surveillance, volunteer police also subsidize policing, further blurring the line between police, citizenry, and city budgets. Moreover, volunteer police may operate outside of and within rules of conduct that differ from those used by police paid for by municipalities. Still, police are clearly prioritized in the budgets of municipalities, but we can learn even more by looking at what forms of policing are prioritized by the police. Policing in Winnipeg occurs through several avenues – avenues that are either created via municipal policy or reinforced by the logics of a pro-policing policy. The Winnipeg Police Service 2020 Statistical Report indicates that 71.6 percent of the crimes police respond to are property crimes (2020, 5). Police receive inordinate amounts of funding to protect white property through white possessive securitization. These priorities come at the cost of social services and resources that could be invested in our communities.

Policy priorities that fund policing and white possessive securitization make other forms of policy less possible, less viable, and less prioritized. Governmentality scholars argue that we disperse the “state” through the process of responsabilization and self-regulation (Lippert 2014; Miller and Rose 1990; Rose and Miller 1992; Lemke 2002). However, when it comes to policing and white possessive securitization, citizens further entrench policing through governmentality by undertaking forms of citizen policing that are normalized by government rationalities and by reinforcing municipal priorities of policing. In *The Skin We’re In*, author Desmond Cole says, “If we can’t imagine a different outcome than the police’s violence, that’s on us” (2020, 60). I would extend this to consider how, if we cannot imagine how to not be the police ourselves, that is on us too. If food security researchers, municipal policy makers, community organizers, and everyday citizens in Winnipeg are concerned about food insecurity, future interventions will require an interrogation and disruption of municipal policy, policing, and white possessive securitization as the status quo. Indigenous food insecurity cannot be appropriately conceptualized or responded to under the current conditions of existence in Winnipeg through the existing lenses of economic access and healthism alone. Food here is policed.

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