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Ingrid Waldron

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## Re-thinking waste: mapping racial geographies of violence on the colonial landscape

Ingrid Waldron

Faculty of Health, School of Nursing, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada

### ABSTRACT

There is a perception in Canada that Nova Scotia has had a long and unique history with racism, and that the province has been more reticent than other provinces to address the structural implications of that history in Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities. The failure to acknowledge the unique histories and experiences of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities as historically disadvantaged communities enables Nova Scotia Department of Environment to continue to ignore the ways in which its policy actions disproportionately impact these communities. In this article, I lay out the limits of the current environmental justice narrative in Nova Scotia by highlighting the ways in which race has been decentered within that narrative. However, I also contend that an unwavering focus on race and other substantive structural issues must be accompanied by an analysis of the marginalized intersectionality of Indigenous and Black bodies and how this informs their spatial location, exposing them to varying levels of environmental risk. The article also calls attention to the transformative human agency of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities by illuminating their rich and varied legacy of activism against environmental racism historically and in the present day.

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### Introduction

It can be argued that the environmental justice narrative in Canada and Nova Scotia has long engaged with a strategic inadvertence approach (Dyson 2016) because it fails to make race explicit, obscuring it within discussions on class. This type of approach mutes the specificity of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian experiences with racism, and ignores how environmental policies today are rooted in a legacy of colonialism characterized by forced displacements, land dispossession, extraction of wealth, cultural genocide, social, economic and political marginalization and the greater exposure and vulnerability of these communities to polluting industries and other environmental hazards. Therefore, I agree with Bullard's assertion (Bullard 1993) that decisions about where to locate a waste facility involve complex interactions among government, as well as legal and commercial actors that are informed by historically constituted racist institutional policies and practices that ultimately sustain white privilege and protect the social, economic and political well-being of white people and the economic elite (Cutter 1995; Deacon and Baxter 2013; Fryzuk 1996; Pulido 2000; Robinson 2000; Waldron 2018).

Environmental racism, a subset of the larger environmental justice movement which originated in the

United States, refers to environmental policies, practices or directives that disproportionately disadvantage individuals, groups or communities (intentionally or unintentionally) based on race or color (Bullard 2002). However, while a race analysis has increasingly been the focus of the environmental justice narrative in the US for over 30 years, most environmental activists, organizations and government departments and agencies in Canada have engaged in a kind of 'racial procrastination', showing considerably more reticence in grappling with structural forms of racism underlying environmental policy and decision-making (Jacobs 2010; Morgan 2015; Waldron 2015; Waldron 2018).

Therefore, in this article, I assert that the ongoing significance and saliency of race in white-dominant societies require us to attend to the ways in which race provides a fundamental analytical entry point for understanding the spatial patterning of polluting industries in Nova Scotia. Furthermore, an unwavering focus on race in the environmental racism narrative must be accompanied by an analysis of the marginalized intersectionality of Indigenous and racialized bodies and make visible the ways in which experiences with environmental hazards in these communities are scripted by multiple narratives shaped by the intersections of race, culture, income and class. Such an analysis must acknowledge the complex

relationality of these multiple identities that frame individuals' social, economic and political lives. In addition, an intersectional analysis requires us to think through the historical, material and structural contexts and conditions within which social inequalities are produced, the meanings assigned to them and the interrogation of white privilege and power (African Nova Scotian Affairs n.d.; Cutter 1995; Deacon and Baxter 2013; Fryzuk 1996; Haluza-Delay 2007; Morgan 2015; Statistics Canada 2011a; Statistics Canada 2011b; Waldron 2015; Waldron 2018).

I begin the article by discussing the limits of the environmental justice narrative in Nova Scotia that has far too long decentered race. In so doing, I hope to redefine parameters of critique around the environmental justice narrative and movement in Nova Scotia and Canada by opening a discursive space for a more critical dialog on how environmental racism manifests within the context of white supremacy, white privilege and various forms of structural inequalities, and by calling attention to the ways in which the environment is experienced in specific ways by different bodies who hold varying levels of power.

Drawing on work by Lipsitz (2007), McKittrick (2011), Razack (2002) and Teelucksingh (2007), the article continues with a socio-spatial analysis of inequality that highlights how racial ideologies shape the constitution and perception of space, how race and class identities are spatialized, how spatial configurations of Indigenous and racialized bodies are enabled through boundary-making practices supported by policy and law and how the spatialization of racial and other identities inform the spatial segregation and containment of Indigenous and racialized bodies in spaces associated with poverty, crime and waste and pollution (Coates 1999; Fryzuk 1996; Jacobs 2010; McKittrick 2011; Morgan 2015; Nelson 2001; Pulido 2000; Razack 2002; Smith 2005; Teelucksingh 2007).

Next, I provide a historical context for elucidating the many ways in which social structures harm individuals, preventing them from meeting their basic needs related to employment, income, education and justice (African Nova Scotian Affairs n.d.; Correctional Investigator Canada 2013; Luck 2016; Office of Aboriginal Affairs n.d. a; Statistics Canada 2011a; Statistics Canada 2011b; Waldron 2018). Therefore, in discussing how historical patterns of race and class inequalities have resulted in the spatial patterning of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities in mostly rural and under-resourced communities, I shed light on the structural factors that collectively render these communities more vulnerable to social, economic and political marginalization and, consequently, environmental risks (Benjamin 2008; Deacon and Baxter 2013; Fryzuk 1996; Jacobs 2010; Morgan 2015; Waldron 2015; Waldron 2018).

This discussion is followed by a historical overview and demographic profiles of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities, setting the stage for six case studies of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities that demonstrate a legacy of environmental racism in Nova Scotia. These communities include Mi'kmaw communities in Sydney, Pictou Landing First Nation and Sipekne'katik, and African Nova Scotian communities in Africville, Lincolnville and North and East Preston. These case studies show the spatial patterning of toxic facility siting across the province and highlight the proximity of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities to waste disposal, thermal facility and pulp and paper sites (Waldron 2016; Waldron 2018).

The paper concludes with a discussion on how decolonization (Fanon 1963; Freire 2000; Memmi 1965; Waziyatawin and Michael Yellow Bird 2012) may serve as a useful conceptual framework for understanding the transformative human agency and oppositional politics of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities that have been at the forefront of anti-colonial, environmental and other social justice struggles for decades (Brannen 2014; Corfu 2016; Hubley 2016; Idle No More 2014; Thomas-Muller 2014).

### Strategic inadvertence and the limitations of Nova Scotia's environmental justice narrative

The environmental justice narrative in Canada and Nova Scotia has long engaged with a 'race by proxy' approach (Dyson 2016) in that it fails to make race explicit, obscuring it within discussions on class. This type of strategic inadvertence mutes the specificity of Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian experiences with racism and environmental hazards in Nova Scotia. Therefore, the province's failure to understand or acknowledge the complex and specific ways in which race is implicated in environmental policymaking is, perhaps, not surprising. The failure or refusal to acknowledge the role that race plays in the spatial patterning of industry was illustrated by Environment Minister Margaret Miller's response to journalist Jacob Boon's question in the January 21st edition of the *Coast* (Boon 2016) about the legacy of environmental racism in Nova Scotia, and how the province can better protect marginalized communities. Her assertion that the province does not have to 'look at any segment or any part of our community as different than another' is the kind of 'colour blind' ideology that is emblematic of broader attitudes in Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada. Not only does it enable Nova Scotia Department of Environment to continue to ignore how its policy actions disproportionately expose Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities to environmental and health risks, it also

legitimizes practices that maintain the racial order by failing to acknowledge the structural manifestations of racism in Nova Scotia historically and in the present day.

While environmental justice and environmental racism are often used interchangeably by environmental organizations and activists in Nova Scotia, they are distinct issues. While environmental racism is the *condition* or *problem* of disproportionality related to the placement of polluting industries and other environmentally hazardous activities in Indigenous and Black communities, environmental justice describes the *strategies for addressing the condition or problem* of disproportionality and envisions what is achievable when the condition is treated through a variety of targeted policies. In other words, environmental justice is the end goal.

More specifically, environmental racism refers to racial discrimination in environmental policymaking, in the greater exposure of Black and Indigenous communities to toxic waste disposal and the siting of polluting industries, and in the implementation of policies that sanction the harmful presence of poisons in these communities. Environmental racism is also characterized by a number of other factors: the history of excluding Indigenous and Black communities from mainstream environmental groups, decision-making boards, commissions and regulatory bodies; the lack of political power these communities have to fight against the placement of industry in their communities; the negative impacts of environmental policies that result in the differential rate of cleanup of environmental contaminants in these communities; and the disproportionate access to environmental services, such as garbage removal and transportation (Bullard 2002; Bullock 2015; Gosine and Teelucksingh 2008; Morgan 2015; Pulido 2000; Waldron 2015; Waldron 2018).

Environmental justice, on the other hand, describes tools, strategies and policies focused on eliminating unfair, unjust and inequitable conditions and decisions that contribute to and produce differential exposure to environmental hazards and unequal protection. This framework highlights such ethical and political questions as ‘who gets what, when, why and how much?’, and in so doing, places the responsibility for failing to give equal protection to racialized and low-income people on industry owners, regardless of intent (Bullard 1993; Bullard 2002). Cutter (1995) examines the ways in which environmental policy creates, upholds and sustains inequities in the spatial patterning of polluting industries, and in the consultation process. She conceptualizes environmental justice as having two components: distributive/spatial and procedural. The first focuses primarily on the inequitable distribution or spatial patterning of environmental burdens or risks; the second is

concerned with inequitable and noninclusive consultation and decision-making processes related to the siting of industry, as well as inequitable toxic waste management regulatory practices, evaluation criteria and enforcement.

Procedural justice or equity is a central component of environmental justice because it makes explicit the extent to which rules, regulations, evaluation criteria and enforcement are applied fairly, uniformly, and in a non-discriminatory way in all communities. It recognizes that justice is a process involving demands for broader and more authentic and inclusive public participation by affected communities, which is central to achieving distributional equity in the placement, distribution or spatial patterning of polluting industries. It also understands that a just process must be premised on democratic participation and fair, equitable and democratic rules and procedures related to decision-making. Several factors may account for why communities may not experience equal protection from environmental hazards. These include nonscientific and undemocratic decisions, exclusionary practices, public hearings held in remote locations and at inconvenient times and the use of English-only material when communicating and conduct hearings for a non-English-speaking public (Bullard 2002; Schlosberg 2003).

The kinds of structural arguments for environmental racism I wish to advance here require that one start from a critical premise that white privilege accords material, social and psychological advantages to whites simply based on skin color. Understanding the reality of white privilege involves moving beyond a focus on individual hostile acts to a consideration of how structures, institutional processes and policy actions protect and benefit whites materially, socially and psychologically, often to the detriment of Indigenous and racialized peoples. In other words, rather than asking if the landfill was sited near the African Nova Scotian community in Lincolnville because the owner was racist (an individual malicious racist act), it may be more revealing to ask why African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw people are disproportionately burdened by pollution in this province (structural racism).

The long history of government indifference and inaction around environmental racism in Nova can be attributed to the government's ahistorical stance – one that fails to appreciate how structural and institutional racism have manifested both historically and in the present day to inform environmental policymaking and practices. Therefore, it is important to make explicit how the muting of race and racism in the environmental justice narrative and movement serves to render invisible the racial character of environmental decision-making and, consequently, to sustain environmental racism in Nova Scotia. At the same

time, it is important to state that the symbolism inherent to the current environmental justice narrative in Nova Scotia must be tethered to profound substantive and structural issues, such as how environmental racism is enabled by white settler colonialism, racial capitalism and racial, income and class inequalities.

The intergenerational manifestations of these historically constituted substantive and structural issues are evident in inequalities Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities experience within employment, income, education, justice and other social institutions (African Nova Scotian Affairs n.d.; Correctional Investigator Canada 2013; Cutter 1995; Deacon and Baxter 2013; Fryzuk 1996; Gazso, MacDaniel, and Waldron 2016; Luck 2016; Office of Aboriginal Affairs n.d. a; Statistics Canada 2011a; Statistics Canada 2011b; Waldron 2018). For example, Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities are more likely to be targeted for polluting industries because their lower educational attainment, lower employment rates and higher levels of income insecurity and poverty mean that they have less resources and political clout to effectively challenge the siting of these industries in their communities.

For Indigenous people in Canada, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist struggles have been centered mainly on land dispossession or being denied access to the land, resource exploitation of Indigenous lands, the legacy of residential schools and extinguishment of rights. The 1876 *Indian Act* sought to assimilate Indigenous people by instituting elected rather than traditional band councils and making Indigenous people 'wards' of the federal Department of Indian Affairs. The impacts of colonization manifested in the federal and provincial government's failure to acknowledge their responsibilities to address land management and environmental protection issues, despite the fact it has a legal duty to do so under the *Indian Act* (Henry and Tator 2006). These discriminatory legislative decisions of the past provided the breeding ground for environmental racism to manifest today. For African Nova Scotian and other Black communities in Canada, the relationship to global capitalism originated during slavery when racial ideologies were used to justify labor and employment hierarchies and to distribute rewards unequally. Since environmental racism manifests within economic relations and exploitation inherent to capitalism and class systems, it will be those communities that are the most marginalized, the poorest and the most lacking in political clout that will pay a greater and disproportionate price for various forms of capitalist exploitation, such as economic development, resource extraction and industrialism (Martinez and Garcia n.d.; Nelson 2001; Robinson 2000; Robinson 2015; Shenk 2015).

These events point to the ways in which race and class intersect to shape Indigenous and Black communities' relationship to the State historically and in the present day. Therefore, this article aims to offer an oppositional re-reading of the environmental justice narrative articulated by environmental activists, organizations and government in Nova Scotia by examining how white settler colonialism, racism, white supremacy, class exploitation and other structural factors operate in partnership to create spatial arrangements today that expose Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian to environmental risks.

### The spatial patterning of environmental risks in Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities

Canada was founded on enslavement and dispossession. Eighteenth and nineteenth century Canada were characterized by displacement, assimilationist practices and policies, subjugation and oppression of Indigenous and Black peoples and cultures by Europeans. The long history of assigning value to race in the Americas means that property is inherently inscribed with racial meaning, that whiteness has historically legitimized possession of property, and that the practice of placing polluting industries in Indigenous and Black communities is an example of white supremacist use of space. Lipsitz's (2007) analysis of the 'racialization of space' provides an important analytical entry point for understanding how spatial relations of domination and, more specifically, spatial forms of structural inequalities or violence (spatial violence) are shaped by the simultaneous operation of multiple systems of domination to enable environmental racism. The racialization of space refers to how race, place and power manifest within social, economic and political structures, institutions and practices. The concept helps illuminate the multiple ways in which hierarchies of race, class and other social identities are imbued in the places and spaces where we live, work and play.

The racialization of space manifests itself in a number of ways: in the expropriation of Indigenous lands through legal means (Coates 1999; Smith 2005); in the formation of neighborhoods that are segregated by income and race (Bélanger 2012; McKittrick 2011; Pulido 2000; Silver 2008); in so-called 'neighborhood revitalization' projects that gentrify low-income, and often racialized areas by bringing in businesses and housing that ultimately push out long-term residents (Lees 2008; Roth 2013); in the greater challenges that Indigenous and racialized communities and communities experience escaping, surviving and recovering from natural disasters resulting from climate change caused by pollution (Bullard and Wright 2008; Ellis-Lamkins 2013; Rochette 2016); and in the

disproportionate location of polluting industries and other environmentally hazardous projects in Indigenous and Black communities (Cutter 1995; Deacon and Baxter 2013; Morgan 2015; Saxe 2015; Teelucksingh 2007; Waldron 2015; Waldron 2018).

Drawing on work by Cheryl Teelucksingh (2002, 2007), Teelucksingh and Masuda (2014)), George Lipsitz (2007) and others (McKittrick 2002; McKittrick 2011; Pulido, Sidawi, and Vos 1996; Pulido 2000; Razack 2000; Razack 2002) on the 'racialization of space' and the 'spatialization of race', I would like to unpack the larger socio-spatial processes of inequality that produce, reproduce and sustain environmental racism. For example, as Razack (2002), McKittrick (2002; 2011), Massey (1992) and Pulido (2000) observe, the project to denaturalize geography is concerned with illuminating the ways in which social space is imbued with a colonial and racial character that convey ideologies and practices of domination, hierarchies of difference and the spatial violence that underpins social relations. It also understands that policy and legislative decisions help create, normalize and sustain the relationship between racial and spatial processes, as well as hierarchies of race, class and citizenship. Similarly, Massey asserts that space is never apolitical or neutral, but, rather, imbued with 'a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and cooperation' (p. 81).

Canadian studies on environmental racism in Indigenous and Black communities have been emerging over the last few years (Atari, Luginaah, and Baxter 2011; Deacon and Baxter 2013; Gosine and Teelucksingh 2008; Haluza-Delay 2007; Jacobs 2010; Morgan 2015; Teelucksingh 2007; Waldron 2015; Waldron 2016). For example, over twenty years ago, Fryzuk (1996) isolated African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw population variables and concluded that environmental racism was, indeed, a reality in Nova Scotia. She found that 30 out of 65 waste sites (46.2%) were located near communities where African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw communities were higher in number than the provincial average. She also found that 5230 (28.5%) of the 18,355 African Nova Scotian residents within Nova Scotia lived either within geographic areas canvassed by a census representative (enumeration areas) that hosted a waste site or within a 5-kilometer impact zone.

In thinking through the significance of race, class and other differences in spatial theory as it relates to environmental racism and other forms of spatial violence, the following issues must be considered: how socially constructed ideologies about race, class and other identities shape the constitution and perception of space; how differences based on race, class and other social identities are spatialized in rural and urban settings; how spatial configurations of

Indigenous and racialized bodies are enabled through boundary-making practices supported by policy and law; and how the spatialization of race, class and other social identities informs the spatial segregation and containment of these bodies in spaces associated with poverty, crime and waste and pollution. Environmental racism opens a discursive space to unpack these and other socio-spatial processes that create disproportionate exposure and vulnerability to the harmful social, economic and health impacts of inequality in Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities.

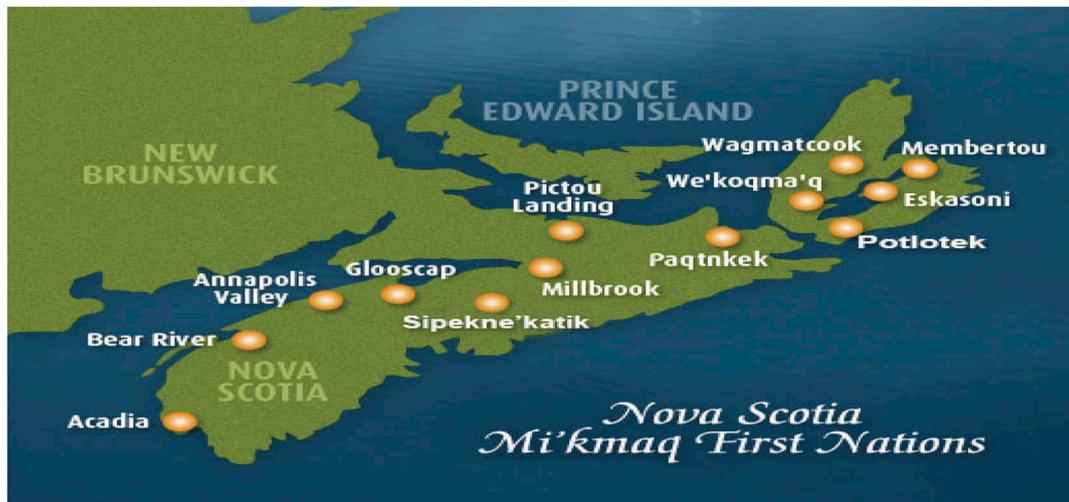
## Structural inequalities in Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities

### *Mi'kmaw communities*

The Mi'kmaw or Lnu are the founding people of Nova Scotia, having existed in Nova Scotia for thousands of years. They were originally part of the Algonquin nation, which was located on the eastern coast of what is now North America from Virginia to Labrador (Sipeknekatik n.d. a). Within the Algonquin nation, the Lnu occupied a territory including what is now Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, eastern and northern New Brunswick and the Gaspé area of Quebec. The Mi'kmaw nation known as Mi'kma'ki stretches from the Canadian Maritimes to the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec (Sipeknekatik n.d. a). It is comprised of 13 Bands/First Nations, each of which is governed by a Chief and Council. The largest of the 13 Bands in Nova Scotia are Eskasoni (4314) and Sipekne'katik (2554) (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada 2014).

The majority of Indigenous people in Nova Scotia is from the Mi'kmaw nation (Office of Aboriginal Affairs n.d. a). Map 1 (Office of Aboriginal Affairs n.d. b) shows the main Mi'kmaw communities across Nova Scotia and includes some of the communities I will be providing case studies on, including Pictou Landing First Nation and Sipekne'katik. Although not shown in this map, Sydney, for which I will be providing a case study, is the capital of Cape Breton island and is situated on the island's east coast. There is a total of 16,245 Mi'kmaw people residing in Nova Scotia (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada 2014). An increasing proportion of the Mi'kmaw population resides in Halifax (5666) (Statistics Canada 2011a; Statistics Canada 2011b).

Mi'kmaw communities across Nova Scotia experience various forms of structural inequalities that compromise their ability to fight back against the placement of environmentally dangerous industries in their communities. These inequalities are experienced in education, employment and criminal justice. A self-government agreement accorded responsibility



Map 1. Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia (Office of Aboriginal Affairs n.d. b).

for on-reserve education to Mi'kmaq people (Office of Aboriginal Affairs n.d. a; Statistics Canada 2011a). While 27% of Mi'kmaq people between ages 25 and 64 did not complete high school (compared to 19% in the general population), high school graduation rates in Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey (MK) schools are increasing, reaching 87% in 2012–2013 (Office of Aboriginal Affairs n.d. a; Statistics Canada 2011a). In addition, 12% of the Mi'kmaq population between the ages 25 and 64 held a university degree, compared to 20% in the general population (Office of Aboriginal Affairs n.d. a; Statistics Canada 2011a).

The unemployment rate for Mi'kmaq people living on reserve in the 2006 census was 24.6%, compared to 9.1% for all Nova Scotians (Office of Aboriginal Affairs n.d. a; Statistics Canada 2011a). Only 50% of people living on-reserve participated in the labor force, compared to 63% for the total Mi'kmaq population, the same rate as the general population (Office of Aboriginal Affairs n.d. a; Statistics Canada 2011a).

Statistics collected by the Nova Scotia Department of Justice found that 12% of youth sentenced to a youth correctional facility were Mi'kmaq and that 7% of adults sentenced to jail were Mi'kmaq (Luck 2016).

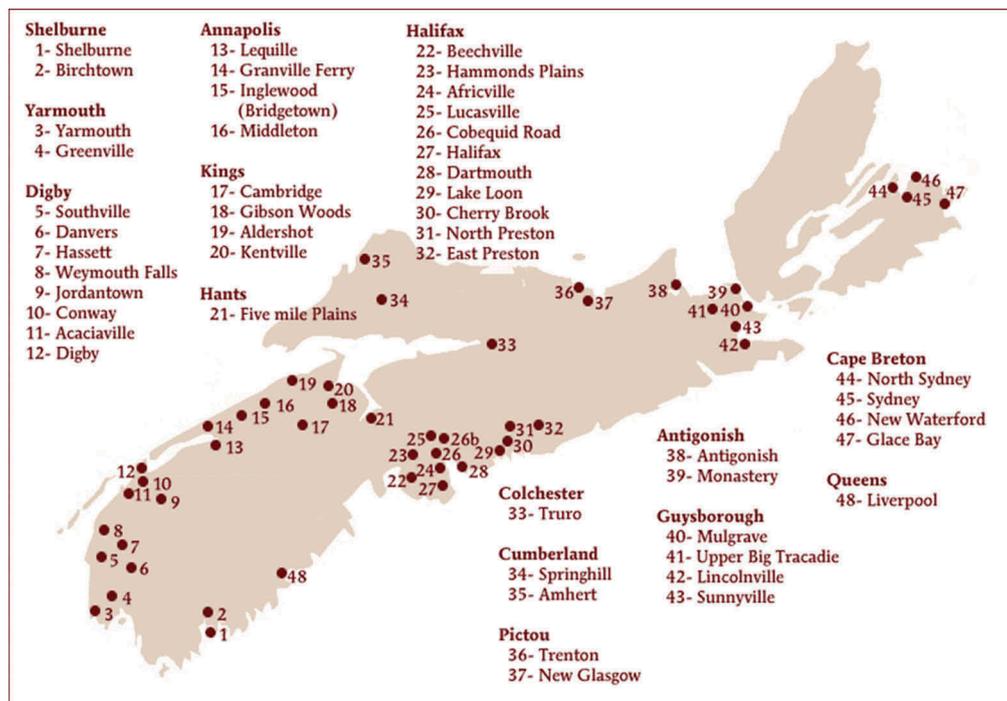
### **African Nova Scotian communities**

There are 21,915 African Nova Scotians residing in Nova Scotia (Statistics Canada 2017a). They represent the largest racially visible community in the province, constituting 2.4% of the total Nova Scotian population (Statistics Canada 2017b). Black people have been residing in Nova Scotia for almost 300 years. They are descendants of African slaves and freedmen, Black Loyalists from the United States, the Nova Scotian colonists of Sierra Leone, the Maroons from Jamaica and the refugees of the War of 1812. In Acadia, from the

early to mid-1700s, there were more than 300 people of African descent in the French settlement of Louisbourg, Cape Breton. Between 100 and 150 people of African descent were among the new settlers, now known as the Planters, who came from New England after the British gained control over Nova Scotia in 1763. Planters were slaves who were used by plantation owners to do field work and other jobs (Waldron 2010). Between 1783 and 1785, over 3000 Black people left New York and other ports for Nova Scotia as part of the Loyalist migration at the close of the American Revolution. They settled in Annapolis Royal and in areas such as Cornwallis/Horton, Weymouth, Digby, Windsor, Preston, Sydney, Fort Cumberland, Parrsboro, Halifax, Shelburne, Birchtown and Port Mouton.

African Nova Scotians were promised freedom in exchange for fighting for Britain. However, once in the Maritimes, they were denied equal status, such as being cheated of land and being forced to work on public projects such as roads and buildings. They were also taken to the West Indies, Quebec, England, Germany and Belgium (Black Cultural Centre for Scotia n.d.; Maddalena et al. 2010; Nova Scotia Museum n.d.; Waldron 2010). Map 2 (Canadian History Workshop n.d.) shows the historic African Nova Scotian settlements in the province today that were settled by Black Loyalists from the United States, the Nova Scotian colonists of Sierra Leone, the Maroons from Jamaica and the refugees of the War of 1812.

Similar to Mi'kmaq people, African Nova Scotian people experience inequality in every sector of society, including education, jobs, income and criminal justice. For example, in 2011, African Nova Scotians had a rate of unemployment higher (14.5%) than the rest of Nova Scotia (9.9%) and African Canadians (12.9%) across Canada (Statistics Canada 2017c). The employment gap was greater



Map 2. African Nova Scotian communities in Nova Scotia (Canadian History Workshop n.d.).

among males, with African Nova Scotian males experiencing an unemployment rate of 17.2%, compared to 10.7% for Nova Scotians and 12.9% for African Canadian males across Canada. According to the 2016 Census, the average total incomes for African Nova Scotian men and women are \$33,456 and \$29,622, respectively. In comparison, the average total income for Nova Scotia is \$41,479 (Statistics Canada 2017c).

With respect to educational attainment, African Nova Scotians are less likely to finish high school or attend university (African Nova Scotian Affairs n.d.; Statistics Canada 2011a); 77.7% of African Nova Scotians aged 25–64 years have some sort of certificate, diploma or degree, compared to 85.3% of all Nova Scotians (African Nova Scotian Affairs n.d.; Statistics Canada 2011a); and 18% of African Nova Scotians have a university degree, compared to 22% of all Nova Scotians aged 25–64 years (African Nova Scotian Affairs n.d.; Statistics Canada 2011a).

In Nova Scotia, statistics collected by the provincial Department of Justice show that between 2014 and 2015, 16% of youth sentenced to a youth correctional facility were African Nova Scotian and that 14% of adults sentenced to jail were African Nova Scotian (Luck 2016). A January 2017 report by the Halifax RCMP found that in the first 10 months of 2016, 41% of 1246 street checks involved African-Nova Scotians (Auld 2017).

Historical and present-day inequalities experienced by Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotians indicate that they are perceived as having little value to capital, lacking in worth, value and political clout, and, therefore expendable and disposable. Consequently, it makes

cultural common sense, as Mills (2001) argues, to place harmful industries in these communities. Therefore, it is important to expand the analytic lens of the environmental justice narrative and movement in Nova Scotia in ways that consider how environmental racism is enabled and facilitated by discriminatory state policies that create and drive social and economic inequalities.

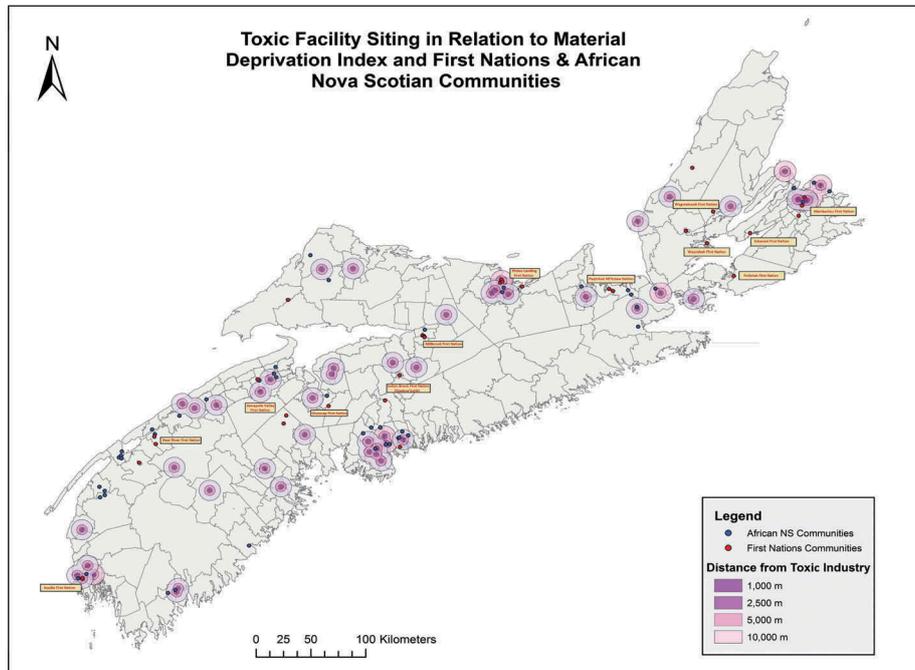
### Case studies: patterns of environmental racism in Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities

The six case studies I discuss in this section show a pattern and legacy of environmental racism in Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities over the last 50 years. These communities are listed in Table 1 and include Mi'kmaw communities in Pictou Landing First Nation, Sydney (located on Cape Breton Island) and Sipekne'katik First Nation, as well as African Nova Scotian communities in Africville, Lincolnville and North and East Preston.

Maps 3 (The ENRICH Project n.d. a) and 4 (The ENRICH Project n.d. b) show the spatial patterning of toxic facility siting across the province, and highlight their distance from Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities. These toxic facility sites include waste disposal, thermal facility and pulp and paper sites. The

Table 1. Case studies of six communities.

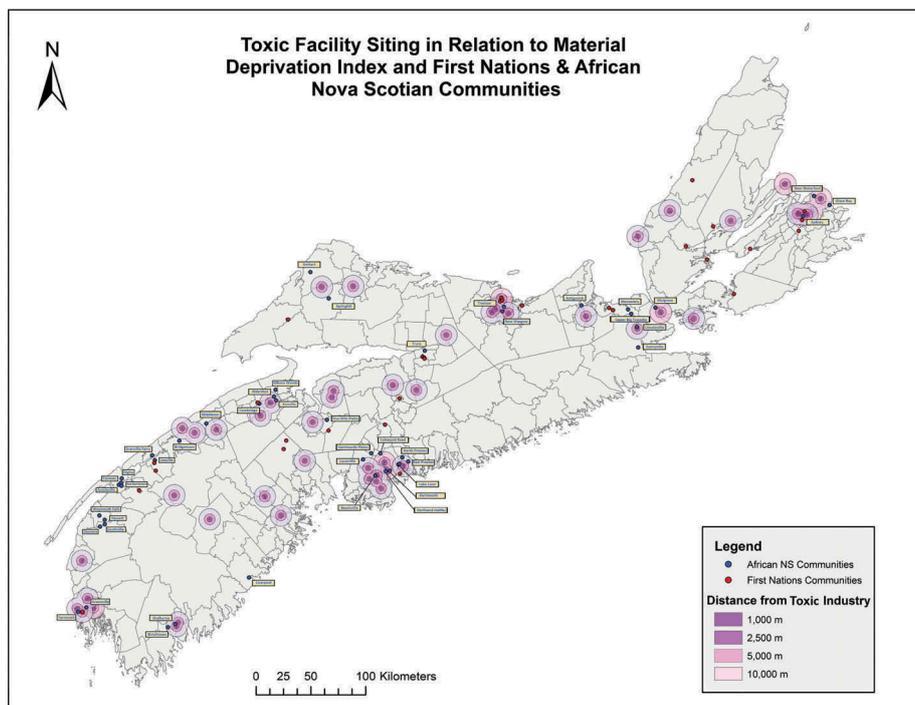
Mi'kmaw communities	African Nova Scotian communities
Sydney	Africville
Pictou Landing First Nation	Lincolnville
Sipekne'katik First Nation	North and East Preston



**Map 3.** Toxic facility siting in relation to material deprivation index and First Nations and African Nova Scotian communities (The ENRICH Project n.d. a).

maps also show material deprivation, which represents the relative socioeconomic conditions of the populations across communities. [Map 3](#) highlights the names of the following Mi'kmaq communities: Indian Brook (located in Sipekne'katik First Nation), Pictou Landing First Nation, Bear River First Nation, Annapolis Valley First Nation, Glooscap First Nation, Millbrook First Nation, Paqtnkek Mi'kmaq First Nation, Waycobah First

Nation, Potlotek First Nation, Eskasoni First Nation, Membertou First Nation and Wagmatcook First Nation. [Map 4](#) highlights the names of the following African Nova Scotian communities: Lincolnville, Sunnyville, Monastary, Upper Big Tracadie, New Glasgow, North Preston, East Preston, Lake Loon, Hammonds Plains, Shelburne, Lucasville, Beechville and the North End of Halifax.



**Map 4.** Toxic facility siting in relation to material deprivation index and First Nations and African Nova Scotian communities (The ENRICH Project n.d. b).

## Pictou Landing First Nation

The Lnu or Mi'kmaw people who lived in what is now known as Pictou Landing First Nation were fishers and hunters and gatherers throughout their territory. Pictou Landing First Nation is near Boat Harbour or what the ancestors called 'A'Se'K' (pronounced 'Ah-sag') which means 'the other room' in Lnu. A'Se'K was a small tidal estuary connected by a narrow channel to the Northumberland Strait. The estuary was an important source of food, including fish, eels, crustaceans and shellfish (Pictou Landing First Nation n.d.). In a treaty that the British Crown entered into with the ancestors of the Pictou Landing First Nation in 1760, the right of the ancestors to occupy, hunt, fish, gather and harvest on lands within their territory, including lands at A'Se'K, was recognized (Pictou Landing First Nation n.d.). However, despite the treaty of 1760 and the fact that no land had been ceded or surrendered by the ancestors of the Pictou Landing First Nation, settlers began settling in the area around A'Se'K beginning in 1777. Eventually, the land in the area was the subject of a Crown grant except for an estimated 34 acres of land containing burial grounds of the ancestors of the Pictou Landing First Nation on the eastern shore of the East River (Pictou Landing First Nation n.d.).

Pictou Landing First Nation remained a sacred burial ground until the late 1960s when Northern Pulp Mill began dumping 25 million gallons of toxic wastewater per day into the waters of A'Se'K or what is now known as Boat Harbour. Considered to be one of the most blatant examples of environmental racism in Canada, Boat Harbour subsequently turned into a waste site with a toxic cocktail of zinc, cadmium, mercury, dioxins, furans and hydrocarbons. The massive contamination of Boat Harbour continued uninterrupted due to an agreement Nova Scotia entered into 50 years ago during the logging sector boom. Despite repeated promises, the provincial government failed to address contamination in Boat Harbour until recently. In a historic announcement in April 2015, the province introduced a plan to close and clean up Boat Harbour by January 2020, setting aside \$52.3 million for remediation (Idle No More 2014; Thomas-Muller 2014; Withers 2015).

## The Sydney Tar Ponds

The Sydney Tar Ponds, often referred to as 'Canada's Love Canal', was a hazardous waste site on Cape Breton Island that sparked some of the first concerns about environmental injustice in Canada. The estuary at the mouth of the Muggah Creek where it joins Sydney Harbour used to be a hunting and fishing

ground for the Mi'kmaw people who are indigenous to the island of Cape Breton. From 1901 through to 1988, Sydney Steel Corporation's now decommissioned steel mill operated in the area with no pollution controls. Over a million tons of particulate matter were deposited and several thousands of tons of coal tar were released into the estuary over that period, including polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs), which are known to cause cancer (Auld 2013; Lambert, Guyn, and Lane 2006). As a result, Sydney area residents experienced a local cancer rate 45% higher than the Nova Scotia average, and the highest rate in Canada (Nickerson 1999; Saxe 2015).

The Cape Breton coal that was used to produce coke was of poor quality, producing significant amounts of toxic waste and contributing to the production of poor-quality steel. Very little money was invested to modernize the facilities or to address the health and safety concerns of the workers (Campbell 2002). In 1974, Environment Canada found that air pollution from the coking operations was 2800–6000% higher than national standards allowed (Barlow and May 2000). As Campbell documents (Campbell 2002), there had been several attempts over the years to remediate this former industrial site. Genuine concerns were raised in 1980 about the need to address the environmental risks of steel making in Sydney after the federal fisheries department discovered that lobsters in Sydney Harbour contained high levels of PCBs, and various toxic metals such as mercury, cadmium and arsenic (Campbell 2002).

In May 2004, the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia announced that they would commit \$400 million over the next 10 years to remediate the Sydney Tar Ponds site in order to reduce the ecological and human health risks to the environment (Walker 2014). The cleanup was completed in 2013 with the opening of Open Hearth Park, which is situated on the site of the former steel plant (Morgan 2015).

## Sipekne'katik First Nation

The Alton Gas project that is currently being opposed by the Sipekne'katik Band of the Mi'kmaw First Nation represents yet another example of environmental racism. Sipekne'katik First Nation is located in Hants County, Nova Scotia near Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia. It is the second largest Mi'kmaw band in Nova Scotia (Sipeknekatik n.d. a). It includes the communities of Indian Brook IR #14, New Ross, Pennal, Dodd's Lot, Wallace Hills and Grand Lake and has a total of 2588 band members, with approximately 1244 members residing in the community and 1344 members residing out of the community. Sipekne'katik is located a short distance of 68 km from Halifax, Nova Scotia (Sipeknekatik n.d. b).

Sipekne'katik First Nation is currently opposing the development of a brine discharge pipeline near the Shubenacadie River (Hubley 2016). Eight years ago, Alton Gas applied to the Nova Scotia government to implement a project that would allow natural gas to be stored in underground salt caverns near the Shubenacadie River. In the fall of 2014, they proceeded with the project, but halted the project as local resistance grew. The project resumed in January 2016, after Alton Gas was given government permits. Throughout 2016, resistance to the project grew considerably stronger, with Sipekne'katik and Millbrook Nations arguing that they were not adequately consulted, that they had never given consent for the project to resume, that they were not given enough time to review project proposals and environmental impact assessments and that they were provided with little-to-no notice about public meetings where they could express their concerns about the project before it resumed (Howe 2016; Hubley 2016). In response, the government has argued that it received approval for the project from the Mi'kmaw Rights Initiative (KMKNO), which claims to represent 12 of 13 Mi'kmaw bands' consulting authority. However, both Sipekne'katik and Millbrook Nations maintain that the government failed to properly consult with the community, an issue that has left them polarized from the KMKNO (Howe 2016; Hubley 2016).

### Africville

Perhaps no other African Nova Scotian community has served as more of a classic example of environmental racism than Africville. The community was located on the shore of the Bedford Basin and was first settled in the mid-1800s by refugee Blacks who came to Nova Scotia following the war of 1812. The community was subjected to injustices on many levels. For example, the City of Halifax neglected to provide the community with essential services, such as paved roads and sewer and water systems. By 1965, the City had embarked on an urban renewal campaign, resulting in the razing of the community and forcible displacement of its residents. The area subsequently became a host for a number of environmental and social hazards. These environmental hazards included a fertilizer plant, a slaughter house, a tar factory, a stone and coal crushing plant, a cotton factory, a prison, three systems of railway tracks and an open dump (Allen n.d.; Fryzuk 1996; Jacobs 2010; Nelson 2001).

The lives of residents were negatively affected by these industrial developments and by the City's reluctance to provide basic utilities and infrastructure offered to other parts of the City, such as sanitary water, sewage, fire protection and street lights. In addition, an investigation was never conducted into

the lack of provision of essential services to Africville residents and alternatives to relocation. Facing debt and family tensions, many residents were forced to rely on public assistance (Allen n.d.; Fryzuk 1996; Halifax Regional Municipality n.d.; Jacobs 2010; Morgan 2015; Nelson 2001; Tavlin 2013).

In 2010, some former Africville residents reached a multimillion-dollar settlement with the City. While no individual compensation was paid out, the settlement included an apology, a hectare of land on the former site to rebuild the Seaview African United Baptist Church and \$3 million to help build it. The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs was also established by the municipality. In November 2016, up to 300 former Africville residents and descendants were seeking to join a lawsuit against the City of Halifax over the loss of their land four decades ago, if the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia certified the case as a class action lawsuit for former residents (Borden Colley 2016).

### Lincolntonville

Lincolntonville represents both a historical and present-day case of environmental racism. It is a small African Nova Scotian rural community situated in northeast Nova Scotia in Guysborough County. It was settled by Black Loyalists in 1784, after a land grant promised to them by Queen Victoria was never honored. Driven from their promised land, they were forced to move inland away from the white population and to become squatters on a barren rocky piece of land (NSPIRG n.d.). In 1974, a first-generation landfill was opened one kilometer away from the community. As Guysborough County struggled to maintain its tax base, the County Council expressed their interest in becoming a site for a second-generation landfill in the community in order to generate needed tax revenues. In 2006, the Municipality of the District of Guysborough closed the first landfill and opened a second-generation landfill that accepts waste from across northern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. In the second-generation landfill's first month of opening, 55,780 tons of solid waste was received (Save Lincolntonville Campaign n.d.). In light of this, the African Nova Scotian community in Lincolntonville has long been concerned about traces of carcinogens, including cadmium, phenol and toluene, being above the upper limits in the community's surface and groundwater, from which residents draw their potable water (Benjamin 2008).

Deacon and Baxter (2013) conducted a study on the first- and second-generation landfills in Lincolntonville and concluded that the procedural process has not been inclusive, and that the public consultation process remains limited. They also contend that Lincolntonville was unfairly chosen as a site for the landfill, and that the proponents used intimidation

tactics throughout the siting process. These sentiments have been echoed by residents, who believe that the mandatory community consultation period for sharing their concerns about the environmental assessment process was neither accessible nor inclusive, that they were not adequately notified about the process or consulted about how the landfill project would affect residents, that they were denied the opportunity to reject the development, that they did not have a clear understanding of the terms used during the siting process and that the process reinforced residents' sense of powerlessness in the decision-making process. Therefore, residents perceived the consultation process as mere 'lip service' because the decision to site the landfill in Lincolnville had already been made by the Minister of Environment.

### North and East Preston

African Nova Scotian residents in North and East Preston, located in eastern Halifax Regional Municipality, have also expressed concerns about contamination over the past several decades. North Preston is a rural community located in eastern Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia and has a population of nearly 4000 people, most of whom are African Nova Scotians. North Preston is the oldest and largest African Canadian community, and has the highest concentration of African Canadians across Canada. Today, North Preston is a community with a high home-ownership rate, a stable population and a higher average income at \$33,233 a year, compared with the average of \$31,795 for Nova Scotia. Despite this, it remains relatively isolated from the rest of Halifax (Wikipedia n.d. a).

East Preston and North Preston are directly connected by a road. East Preston was predominantly an African Nova Scotian community in its early days. Like other African Nova Scotian communities, African Nova Scotians in East Preston descended from Black Loyalists who were relocated here by the Crown following the American Revolutionary War. Over the years, the community has become more racially mixed due to the demand for land and the growth of the city of Halifax. While North Preston currently has a nearly 100% Black population, East Preston currently has a Black population of about 80%. (Wikipedia n.d. b)

During the summer of 1991, the Metropolitan Authority was in search of a new landfill site for the Metropolitan Region of Halifax and Dartmouth. Included in the top choices were four areas that were close to historically African Nova Scotian communities: The East Lake and Wood Lake sites were near the Preston area, the third was close to Beechville and a fourth was near Pockwock. When Metro Authority eventually settled on East Lake as

the new landfill site, there was outrage by African Nova Scotian residents in East and North Preston, both of which were close to the site (Fryzuk 1996). Community members opposed the decision to site the landfill in East Lake by launching a formal complaint against the landfill site selection process, arguing that Metropolitan Authority failed to consider social, cultural and historical factors in their decision-making process. Political and public pressure subsequently led Metro Authority to conduct an investigation into the historical significance of the area, as well as the validity of the claims put forward by Preston residents. However, studies conducted found that there were no historical or archaeological resources at the East Lake site or in the Preston community, and that East Lake did not qualify as a national historic site (Fryzuk 1996; Jacobs 2010; Morgan 2015).

While the communities represented in these case studies have engaged in several actions over the last several decades to address environmental concerns, they have faced considerable barriers in getting the government to take action on these issues. This suggests, as Pellow (2016) argues, that progressive and transformative change on environmental racism must move beyond addressing entrenched social inequality and power (including state power) through legislation, institutional reforms and other policy concessions to a transformative and unapologetically anti-authoritarian agenda.

### Conclusion

Bell hooks observes in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*:

Understanding marginality as position and place of resistance is crucial for oppressed, exploited, colonized people. If we only view the margin as a site marking despair, a deep nihilism penetrates in a destructive way the very ground of our being. It is there in that space of collective despair that one's creativity, one's imagination is at risk, there that one's mind is fully colonized, there that the freedom one longs for is lost. (Hooks 1990, 150–151)

Real solutions to environmental racism in Nova Scotia and Canada lie in anti-colonial and anti-capitalist struggles. Therefore, dismantling colonial paradigms through an anti-capitalist approach must be central to any environmental justice movement premised on transformative change. A colonized people is one whose collective mind has been indoctrinated by a culture and value system that is at odds with their own cultural orientations, and that demands acceptance of and respect for the colonizer and his value system. Freire (2000) argues that decolonization is central to a transformative agenda because it is premised on colonized people's resistance to colonial structures, as well as liberation from internalized

negative stereotypes about their own history, culture and traditions. As a central tenet of an anti-colonial framework, decolonization must also lead to progress that involves societal transformation that is driven by colonized people's efforts to destabilize inequities in power, income and status (Brannen 2014; Corfu 2016; Fryzuk 1996; Halifax Regional Municipality n.d.; Hubley 2016; Idle No More 2014; Nelson 2001; Save Lincolnville Campaign n.d.; Tavlin 2013; Thomas-Muller 2014).

More alliances must also be forged between white-led environmental organizations and African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities in order to address in more immediate ways the lack of diverse and representative voices within their organizations. They must also be prepared to engage in courageous conversations about the relationship between environmental racism and settler colonialism, racism, white supremacy, capitalist exploitation, possession and dispossession, poverty and class.

However, it is important to state that environmental justice struggles must be premised on transformative resurgence that aims to create more options for justice and that acknowledge, enable and support Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, value community-based organizing focused on healing in Indigenous and Black communities and recognize Indigenous knowledge as a transformative site for responding to environmental racism and other structural inequalities (Konsmo and Kahealani Pacheco 2015).

### Idle No More

Idle No More is a grassroots political movement that is committed to resistance and mobilization of all people against all forms of neo-colonialism in Canada, including Indigenous collective rights, sovereignty, social safety nets and environmental protections. The movement began on Facebook and evolved to peaceful street protests, teach-ins and rallies. Idle No More is specifically demanding that Canada, the provinces and the territories repeal provisions of Bill C-45 (Jobs and Growth Act), as well as several other bills. Bill C-45 has lowered the protective threshold of reserve land 'surrenders' and dropped protected waterways from 2.8 million to less than one hundred in Canada. Idle No More is also demanding that Canada, the provinces and the territories commit to the following: deepen democracy in Canada by ensuring that there is proportional representation of and consultation with Indigenous people on legislation related to collective rights and environmental protections; recognize Indigenous peoples' right to oppose development on their territory; recognize Indigenous title and rights, including the inherent Indigenous right to land or a territory and the collective rights

of Indigenous people that flow from their continued use and occupation of certain areas; and officially revoke the racist Doctrine of Discovery and the Doctrine of Terra Nullius, both of which have been used to justify the exploitation of Indigenous lands for profit (Idle No More n.d.).

In eastern Canada, the movement has been focused on empowering youth through treaty education. Demonstrations on the east coast have included the 2013 hunger strike to halt treaty negotiations until communities were educated on what exactly is at stake when their leadership and the government make agreements, the march to Citadel Hill in Halifax and the anti-fracking protest in New Brunswick, among others (Jane, Young, and Peters 2013). The east coast movement has received support from and partnered with groups such as Solidarity Halifax, Council of Canadians, Clean Nova Scotia, NSPIRG, Federation of Labour Unions and Dalhousie Student Union.

Idle No More also seeks to ensure that free, prior and informed consent is no longer denied to Indigenous peoples by educating Indigenous people about their right to participate in decision-making processes, and engender in Indigenous youth an ongoing commitment to defend and protect Indigenous rights and govern future sustainable resource management (Jane, Young, and Peters 2013).

### Pictou Landing First Nation: Boat Harbour

Idle No More has been at the forefront of mobilizing efforts with community members in Pictou Landing First Nation to have an effluent spill at the Northern Pulp Mill near Indian Cross Point cleaned up. Pictou Landing First Nation, which has been actively opposing Boat Harbour for decades, began action against the federal government for breach of fiduciary duty in 1986. The federal government negotiated a settlement with the community in 1991, promising to minimize the negative effects of the wastewater when the agreement with Scott Maritimes expired in 1995. Although an agreement with the federal government was reached out of court in 1993, the government failed to identify an alternative site when the Scott Maritime agreement expired in 1995. When the government failed to keep its promise to close Boat Harbour by December 2005 and transferred Mill ownership to Neenah Paper in 2004, the band council chief informed the province in 2008 that they would not agree to further extensions. When meetings and other requests by the band did not result in a commitment by government, the band filed a lawsuit against the province and Northern Pulp in 2010 (Brannen 2014; Idle No More 2014; Thomas-Muller 2014).

After inquiries made by Chief Andrea Paul about how the Province and Northern Pulp planned to clean up the spill were not responded to, she and her First Nations government ordered a blockade on 11 June 2014. This peaceful protest sought a commitment from the Province to provide firm deadlines for identifying a more appropriate location for Northern Pulp's effluent, and for the remediation of Boat Harbour by June 2015. The band dismantled its peaceful protest after an agreement was eventually signed by Chief Andrea Paul and Minister of Environment Randy Delorey to shut down the Boat Harbour treatment facility by 2020.

### **Sipekne'katik First Nation: the treaty truck house against Alton Natural Gas**

Over the last few years since the Alton Natural Gas Storage project was announced, First Nations Bands Sipekne'katik and Millbrook, along with non-Indigenous allies and organizations, have engaged in several activities to halt the Alton Natural Gas Storage project, including highway blockades, development site encampment and educational events. Over the past several years, the Treaty Truck House Against Alton Gas has become a gathering point for grassroots resistance activities against Alton Gas. Led by Elder Dorene Bernard, the Truck House (and its associated Facebook page) has become the site where planning activities have been initiated to fight against the Alton Gas project, where funds have been raised to support the Truckhouse, and where educational activities have been implemented to educate and inform the public on ecological, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist issues. In January 2016, the province approved the application submitted by Alton Gas to store natural gas in three underground salt caverns near Stewiacke, Nova Scotia. Later that month, the local First Nations bands sent a letter to Premier Stephen McNeil, Energy Minister Michel Samson and new Environment Minister Margaret Miller requesting that they suspend further approvals, and provide up-to-date evaluations, research and cumulative risk assessments.

On 14 April 2016, members of the Sipekne'katik First Nation held a protest against the project in front of the Nova Scotia Legislature (Corfu 2016; Hubley 2016). A number of other protests followed, including a demonstration on 28 May 2016 that caused traffic delays on Highway 102 near Stewiacke. In early 2017, the Sipekne'katik First Nation won a court decision against the province and the operators of Alton Natural Gas after Justice Suzanne Hood of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court ruled that the province's decision to reject complaints about the storage proposal was unfair (Rhodes 2017). This was followed by a decision in September 2017

that ordered the Nova Scotia Government to pay most of a \$75,000 judgment to the Sipekne'katik First Nation over plans to implement the project. In a supplementary decision, Hood ruled that Sipekne'katik should be reimbursed for the court fight, arguing that the \$75,000 represents about half of what Sipekne'katik First Nation spent to mount its court challenge and that the province is liable for 65% of that amount. She also ordered that the remaining 35% be paid by Alton Natural Gas Storage (Rhodes 2017).

### **Africville: Africville Genealogical Society**

Following the forced relocation of Africville residents to Uniacke Square and other parts of the province, the daily stresses of everyday life made it very difficult for residents to focus on compensatory efforts. The Halifax Human Rights Advisory Committee was established to improve access to employment and good quality housing by advancing human rights legislation. Unfortunately, plans were already underway to remove residents, and arrangements for compensation had commenced without community consultation (Fryzuk 1996; Halifax Regional Municipality n.d.; Tavlin 2013).

Throughout the 1990s, the Africville Genealogical Society put pressure on City Hall to renegotiate with residents for compensation and other requests, including the employment of former Africville residents in Seaview Park and compensation to individuals who were not adequately paid for their homes. In 1996, after failed negotiation attempts, the Africville Genealogical Society launched a lawsuit against the City of Halifax, requesting compensation for the current value of their lands. Fourteen years later in 2010, Halifax Mayor Peter Kelly apologized to the former residents of Africville. This apology was supported by the allocation of land and \$3 million for the construction of the Seaview African United Baptist Church in 2011, a replica of the church that had been located in Africville. There was a split in the community over the final settlement, however, with the Africville Genealogical Society in favor of it and other individuals and groups representing residents or descendants of Africville opposed. Those not in favor believed that the political decision-making process that led to the settlement deal was discriminatory because it failed to promote public participation in the early stages of the decision-making process by those directly affected by the final decision (Halifax Regional Municipality n.d.; Nelson 2001; Tavlin 2013).

Twenty years after the statement of claim was filed against the City of Halifax (which is now part of an amalgamated municipality), the suit was revived in 2016. In November 2016, over 40 former residents showed up at Nova Scotia Supreme Court in Halifax

to hear lawyers argue the case and find out if the case would be certified as a class action lawsuit. The Halifax lawyer representing the plaintiffs was seeking compensation for their community since they had never received compensation for the loss of their community (Borden Colley 2016).

### **Lincolville: Lincolville Reserve Land Voice Council**

In 2006, the Concerned Citizens of Lincolville (now renamed the Lincolville Reserve Land Voice Council) was formed to oppose the opening of the second-generation landfill. The community alleges that the Municipality of Guysborough improperly consulted with them about this development. When the Concerned Citizens finally met with the Municipality, they discussed their desire to be compensated for the economic fallout from the landfill site, as well as the impact of the landfill on the community's health. They insisted that they receive a portion of the revenue if the landfill remained in their community. After persistent lobbying and a letter to the Minister of Environment, community members received a survey from the Municipality asking the community if they were willing to pay for a water well treatment and storage facility in Lincolville. Not surprisingly, community members responded that they should not have to front the capital costs for clean-up efforts associated with someone else's garbage from a landfill they never wanted (Benjamin 2008).

The Save Lincolville Coalition – an alliance of community partners comprised of social justice and environmental groups throughout Nova Scotia – assisted residents in mounting the Save Lincolville Campaign. The objective of this province-wide campaign was to expose and challenge institutionalized oppression in the province. The campaign also wanted to send a message to municipal and provincial levels of government (including the Guysborough Municipality and Natural Resources Canada) that they opposed the landfill, and that it was a clear example of environmental racism. The Save Lincolville Coalition demanded the following: that the Guysborough Municipality review alternative locations and commence the closure and relocation of the landfill site; that the land be redeveloped and recovered; that all municipal resource management programs and planned waste management infrastructure in Nova Scotia be preceded by an inclusive and transparent consultative process with all sectors of the community; that full reparations and compensation be given for land displacement, health costs and environmental contamination; that public policy be grounded in mutual respect and justice for all peoples; and that all people are guaranteed universal protection against nuclear testing, extraction,

production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons, regardless of race or class (Save Lincolville Campaign n.d.).

Since the summer of 2016, Ecojustice, Canada's largest environmental law charity, has been communicating with the Lincolville Reserve Land Voice Council to explore possible legal remedies to address the landfill, including examining overlap between human rights law and environmental law to determine if government has violated residents' human rights and the charter. Human rights violations may include exposure of racialized communities to harm, as well as under-provision of clean drinking water and positive environmental services.

### **The Prestons: the East Lake landfill**

In the 1990s, Preston and East Lake residents filed a complaint with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission against the Metropolitan Authority, Nova Scotia Environment and the Provincial Government after the announcement by the Metropolitan Authority that East Lake was selected as the site for a landfill. The community alleged that the decision to site a landfill in East Lake was a clear example of environmental racism. A second human rights complaint was launched by the Shelburne County Cultural Awareness Society to oppose the location of a landfill in Birchtown. After EAC, the African United Baptist Association, the Lawrencetown Citizens Committee, Porters Lake-Myra Road Residents Against Site H and the Lake Echo-Mineville Group joined the African Nova Scotian community's protest and growing community mobilization, the Metro Authority voted to reverse their decision and removed East Lake from the list of potential sites for the landfill (Fryzuk 1996). In addition to preventing the siting of the landfill near the community, the East Lake campaign united the entire community through strong political leadership. Despite these efforts, a toxic waste disposal site was eventually located near the community center.

More recently in 2015, a group of concerned citizens residing in East Preston, Porter's Lake, Lake Echo and Mineville came together to initiate the Dump the Dump Campaign. This campaign was opposing the application to rezone the 14.7 acre portion of the property on the north side of Highway 7, west of Parker Lane in Porter's Lake. Residents had learned that there was a plan in place to relocate this C&D-2 material processing facility or dump to a parcel of crown land near the African Nova Scotian community of East Preston. There was a general sentiment in the African Nova Scotian community in East Preston that the decision to relocate the dump in their community was made to squelch the uproar from the largely white communities of Porter's Lake, Lake Echo and Mineville. The plan to relocate the dump near East

Preston eventually failed, however, when area residents and the East Preston Ratepayers Community Development Association contacted local, provincial and municipal representatives about their concerns.

As the cases highlighted in this paper show, procedural justice must be an essential component of environmental justice because it provides affected communities with more opportunities and avenues for meaningful public participation and public consultation in decision-making processes related to environmental assessments and other environmental issues affecting their communities. These cases also indicate that the most significant challenge Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities face in addressing environmental racism is the absence of legal tools that acknowledge, respond to and address the entrenched white supremacy and colonialism embedded within government agencies and white-led environmental organizations. Therefore, addressing environmental racism in Nova Scotia must involve a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy designed to dismantle the underlying structural elements that drive and sustain it. This strategy must include an environmental justice narrative and movement that unapologetically centers race, environmental policies that address the procedural injustices that have long enabled the inequitable siting of polluting industries and noninclusive participatory democracy approaches and partnerships between white-led environmental justice organizations and Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities.

### Acknowledgment

I wish to acknowledge the limitations of this paper in analyzing the gendered dimensions of environmental racism and other issues. I will, however, be providing a full analysis of how gender intersects with race and class to inform Indigenous and Black women's experiences with environmental racism in my forthcoming book *There's Something in the Water: Environmental Racism in Indigenous & Black Communities* (Waldron 2018).

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### Notes on contributor

*Ingrid Waldron*, PhD, is a sociologist, an Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at Dalhousie University and the Director of the 'Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities & Community Health Project' (ENRICH Project). Her scholarship focuses on the social, economic and health

impacts of environmental racism and gentrification in Black and Indigenous communities in Canada.

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