Women on the Frontlines

Grassroots Movements against Environmental Violence in Indigenous and Black Communities in Canada

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Indigenous and Black women in Canada are disproportionately impacted by racial and gendered forms of environmental violence that are rooted in a legacy of colonialism, white supremacy, and patriarchy. Gender, race, class, and other social identities render Indigenous and Black women more susceptible and vulnerable to a web of inequalities that inflict violence on their bodies, lands, and communities. In response, Indigenous and Black women have been building grassroots social and environmental justice movements for decades to challenge the legal, political, and corporate agendas that sanction and enable environmental violence in their communities. This article examines the disproportionate social, economic, and health impacts of multiple forms of environmental violence in the lives of Indigenous and Black women in Canada, including low income and poverty, systemic racism in employment and law enforcement, and environmental racism and climate change. The article also calls attention to the transformative human agency of these women by illuminating their legacy of grassroots mobilizing and activism against the various forms of environmental violence in their communities.

Environmental Violence: Framing the Complex Web of Inequalities

Environmental violence provides a useful conceptual framework for understanding the site-specific and context-specific ways in which the lands, commu-

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nities, and bodies of Indigenous and Black people in white settler nations have been impacted by the cumulative intergenerational impacts of social, economic, political, and health inequalities that have their roots in white supremacy, colonialism, patriarchy, and racial capitalism. In their report *Violence on the Land, Violence on Our Bodies: Building an Indigenous Response to Environmental Violence*, Erin Marie Konsmo and A. M. Kahealani Pacheco examine the impacts of environmental violence on Indigenous women.[1] They characterize environmental violence as encompassing both the biological reproductive *and* social impacts of industrialization on Indigenous women, children, and future generations, arguing that it is not possible to foster healthy families, communities, and nations when people's bodies continue to be violated by industry that has as its end goal capitalist development and profit through territorial occupation, extraction, and exploitation of Indigenous land and resources, resulting in the contamination and destruction of the environment.

Konsmo and Kahealani Pacheco describe several forms of environmental violence in Indigenous communities, including loss of culture and self-determination; poverty; trauma and dispossession; divisions in families and communities; sexual, domestic, and family violence; child removal; the abduction and murder of Indigenous women; human trafficking for both labor and sexual exploitation; increased crime; increased rates of incarceration; increased drug and alcohol use; alcohol-related traffic fatalities; suicide (particularly among young people); reproductive health issues; cancer and other illnesses; HIV and other sexually transmitted infections; and mental health concerns.[2]

Critical race feminism asserts that gender is constructed by a range of interlocking inequalities, which Patricia Hill Collins calls a "matrix of domination": several fundamental systems that work with and through one another, such that people experience race, class, gender, and sexuality differently depending on their social location within these structures.[3] It also examines how patriarchy, class exploitation, and white supremacy intersect in uneven ways to structure relations among women and between women and men. Furthermore, it highlights the racialized sexism underlying all racisms. An intersectional analysis also helps us think through how heterosexist and binary constructions of gender do not allow for discussions on the diverse array of sexualized and gendered bodies and experiences.

Tiffany King observes that the "othering" and "sexualization" of Indigenous women and Black female slaves ushered in sexual violence as a tool of settler colonialism.[4] In settler colonial nations, the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality shaped ideological representations of Indigenous and Black women as nonhuman and, therefore, legitimated and ensured their violation through genocide and rape.[5] King also argues that ideological representations and the treatment of Black women are foundational to colonial understandings

of property and the production and expansion of the plantation as a settler space. For both the slave master and the settler, the Black female body represented an increase in the labor force (through childbirth) and thus an expansion of land, territory, property, and wealth. Similarly, Andrea Smith observes that an Indigenous feminist lens brings into view the ways in which gender hierarchies, sexuality, and heteropatriarchy intersect to enable colonialism and the othering and genocide of Indigenous women and Indigenous peoples in general.[6]

Therefore, while theorists such as Lorenzo Veracini and Patrick Wolfe argue that Indigenous land and genocide are the key variables in settler colonies, I draw on King's work to argue that settler colonial studies must begin to consider the ways in which settler nations have shaped and structured gendered forms of anti-Black racism during and after slavery.[7] As King observes, settler colonial studies fail to map slavery's geographies onto Black bodies, thereby erasing the specific experiences of Black female and male bodies.[8]

It is this settler/Indigenous binary in settler colonial theory that I wish to problematize here. This construction not only ignores how the Black female body is embedded within settler colonial spaces but also hinges on the material and symbolic separation of the settlement and the plantation, even when these spaces relied on the productive and reproductive labor of Black women. Therefore, as King observes, race, gender, and sexuality intersect to structure the relationship between the settler and the colonized and to legitimize racialized sexism and sexual violence as tools in the domination and violation of Indigenous and Black women.[9]

Understandings of environmental violence must move beyond a focus on the ecological impacts of industry and contaminants to a more inclusive and holistic analysis of how these issues connect to, are created by, and operate in partnership with other forms of state-sanctioned racial and gendered violence that harm Indigenous and Black women and communities. In subtle and often intergenerational ways, white supremacy, racial capitalism, class exploitation, and patriarchy enact violence toward racialized and Indigenous women and communities through the reservation system, housing segregation that restricts racialized peoples to neighborhoods with substandard housing, poorly resourced schools that limit access to higher education and postsecondary training, and, consequently, barriers to accessing better job opportunities.[10]

An analysis of environmental violence must also consider how the constitution and perception of the spaces, places, and environments where Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities live, work, and play are shaped by socially constructed ideologies about gender, race, class, and other identities; how the symbolic and spatial boundaries between these and other communities are created and supported by policy and law; and how policy and law enable the

spatial segregation of Indigenous and racialized bodies within spaces associated with poverty, crime, and waste and pollution.

As George Lipsitz, Cheryl Teelucksingh, Jeffrey Masuda, Katherine McKittrick, Sherene Razack, and Doreen Massey observe, space/environment is a social construct. Its materiality lies in how it maps inclusion and exclusion by organizing social life based on racial, gendered, and other differences; in how it produces and reproduces hierarchical social relations; and in how it creates and sustains inequalities intergenerationally.[11] For example, Razack's assertion about the importance of denaturalizing geography is one that guides me in thinking through how social spaces are created through ideologies and practices of domination that are shaped by gender, race, class, and other social identities.[12] It also provides a framework for understanding how these identities are spatially organized in ways that create hierarchies and relations of domination and subordination within the home, the workplace, and the community.[13] Similarly, McKittrick urges readers to consider the fact that space and place are never innocent, pure, or untainted; rather, these concepts are always inscribed with meanings shaped by socially constructed ideologies of gender, race, class, and other social identities.[14]

The spatial nature of environmental violence requires a place-based, site-specific, and context-specific historical analysis of the multiple incarnations of state-sanctioned racial and gendered violence, as well as a consideration of how violence is enacted and transmitted by the state through institutional processes, decision-making, and policy in ways that harm the lands, cultures, bodies, and spirits of Indigenous and Black women and communities.

For example, in Ontario, one in seven children were poor in 2011, with children from Indigenous, immigrant, and other racialized groups among the most likely to live in poverty.[15] In Toronto, the number of low-income racialized families has been increasing since the 1980s, as has their concentration in segregated neighborhoods.[16] Employment hierarchies locate Indigenous, Black, and other racialized women in the lower ranks of the labor market or in job ghettos in Canada. These jobs are unstable, insecure, part-time, low-paying, and often lacking in benefits.[17] These hierarchies can be attributed to racialized and gendered categories that structure the labor-market position of racialized and Indigenous women. These women experience racialized and gendered forms of class oppression simultaneously and are further disadvantaged within a gender-segregated labor market. In search of cheap labor, world market factories relocate to countries with unstable political regimes, low levels of unionization, and high unemployment. Therefore, it is young racialized women in developing countries who overwhelmingly constitute the labor force and who embody and personify the intersection of gender, class, and racial ideologies.[18]

The *Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator* found that growth in the inmate population in Canada is almost exclusively driven by the growing incarceration rates of ethnically and culturally diverse inmates. For

example, over the past ten years, the Indigenous incarcerated population increased by 46.4 percent, while other racialized populations (e.g., Black, Asian, Hispanic) increased by almost 75 percent. The population of white inmates actually declined by 3 percent.[19] Black and Indigenous populations were disproportionately overrepresented in federal penitentiaries. Black people constitute 9.5 percent of the federal inmate population, which is an increase of 80 percent since 2003–2004, despite the fact that Black Canadians account for less than 3 percent of the total Canadian population.[20] Four percent of Black inmates are women; Indigenous inmates constitute 23 percent of the federal inmate population, although they constitute 4.3 percent of the total Canadian population. One in three women under federal sentence are Indigenous.[21]

Over the last several years, Canadian studies have found that Indigenous and Black communities are disproportionately impacted by environmental risks such as climate change, water contamination, and pollution because they are more likely to be clustered around industries and other environmentally hazardous sites.[22] Lalita Bharadwaj et al. note that many Indigenous communities dispose of solid waste on their own lands due to lack of funding and infrastructure, as well their residence in remote regions with improper household disposal systems.[23] Since many of the solid-waste landfills have become potentially hazardous, wells of drinking water are often contaminated, leading to the transmission of disease.

Annie Rochette observes that women and girls in developing nations are the primary victims of climate change since they tend to be natural-resource managers as the gatherers of food, water, and firewood.[24] Therefore, since women are also the main catalyst for effective change, it is important that climate change policies take a gender-specific approach to climate mitigation and adaptation in ways that give women equal weight in decision-making.[25] Ecofeminism is a social movement that places a gender justice lens on environmental justice. It provides a useful framework for linking social justice with environmental justice and for looking at the interconnections among sexism and the exploitation of women, racism and other social inequalities, and the domination of nature (including animals).[26]

Greta Gaard notes that "a feminist ethical approach to climate justice—challenging the distributive model that has ignored relations of gender, sexuality, species, and environments—has yet to be fully developed."[27] Ecofeminism sheds light on how important it is for the climate change movement in Canada to make space for a deeper engagement with a "climate justice" framework that considers how race, gender, class, poverty, and other social identities intersect to disproportionately expose Indigenous and Black communities, other racialized communities, poor communities, women, persons with disabilities, and those living in isolated, rural, and hard-to-reach areas to the impacts of climate change. Furthermore, since "everything connected to the land is connected to our bodies,"

as Konsmo and Kahealani Pacheco assert, an analysis of the impacts of environmental injustices and other forms of environmental violence on Indigenous and Black women must consider the specific ways in which race, gender, class, and other social identities intersect to impact health and well-being.[28]

How Environmental Violence Gets Under the Skin

Until recently, frameworks in medicine and health research attributed racial disparities in illness and disease to biological, genetic, cultural, or lifestyle-choice differences between racial groups. However, it is now believed that an analysis of the social context of inequality is important for understanding why social, economic, political, and environmental inequalities represent different but intersecting manifestations of environmental violence impacting health and well-being. In other words, health inequalities that are the outcomes of disproportionate environmental exposures (i.e., environmental health inequities) cannot be understood as independent from the complex web of inequalities (poverty, food insecurity, poor-quality housing, etc.) that combine to create greater exposure and vulnerability to environmental risks, particularly in Indigenous and Black communities.[29]

Environmental violence offers a useful conceptual framework for understanding and articulating the ways in which space/place matters to health and how health outcomes and disparities are the products of where we live, the resources we do or do not have access to (jobs, housing, food, health services, public transit, etc.), exposure to environmental risks, and historical trauma. Historical trauma is a concept that is often used to describe the relationship between colonialism, present-day forms of state-sanctioned racial and gendered violence experienced by Indigenous and racialized communities, and poor health outcomes experienced intergenerationally in these communities. Konsmo and Kahealani Pacheco assert that generational poverty continues to harm Indigenous communities even though these communities are home to the most resource-rich territories in North America and the greatest extractive industrial development.[30] They emphasize how important it is to understand trauma through an intersectional framework, arguing that Indigenous women have a unique experience of trauma because their gender and Indigenous identity shape how they are impacted by environmental violence, by the legacy of colonialism in their communities, and by the dispossession and exploitation of their land.

Over the last several years, a growing body of Canadian studies have been examining the structural factors that render Indigenous and Black communities more vulnerable to poor health outcomes.[31] These studies argue that the main determinants of health are, in fact, rooted not in medical or behavioral factors but rather in a number of social and economic determinants, such as Indigenous status, race, immigration and refugee status, early life, education, employment

insecurity, unemployment, working conditions, social safety net, food security, neighborhood quality, housing quality, access to health services, access to other services and transportation, access to formal or informal childcare, exposure to violence, criminalization and racial profiling, racial/cultural stereotyping, access to information, and social exclusion. These compounded inequalities offer a useful lens to analyze the multiple, overlapping, and intersecting social, economic, political, and environmental determinants impacting health and well-being in Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities.

Patricia Rodney, Esker Copeland, Russell Wilkins, Jean-Marie Berthelot, and Edward Ng observe that higher rates of chronic disease, substance consumption and abuse, prolonged stress, anxiety, depression, and suicide in racialized communities in Canada can be attributed to high rates of poverty, poor-quality education, poor-quality housing, poor working conditions, and other determinants of health.[32] Elizabeth McGibbon, Ingrid Waldron, and Jennifer Jackson note that cardiovascular disease in racialized communities is an outcome of racism-related stress and intergenerational forms of trauma, often referred to as historical trauma, even in the absence of other risk factors.[33] The stress of racism overtaxes the body's physiological stress-handling systems, resulting in cardiovascular disease and several other health problems.

Canadian studies also show that Indigenous and other racialized communities are exposed to greater environmental health risks than other groups, again because they are more likely to be spatially clustered around hazardous sites.[34] Environmental health inequities describe the health impacts associated with the disproportionate placement of industries that emit pollutants and other environmental hazards near racialized communities.[35] For example, epidemiological studies are increasingly examining the relative risk of cancer, upper respiratory disease, congenital anomalies, cardiovascular disease, skin diseases, and allergies in racialized communities compared to white communities.[36]

It is also important to examine the racialized and gendered health effects of environmental exposures since men and women are likely to be exposed to and impacted by environmental contaminants in unique ways. For example, Konsmo and Kahealani Pacheco assert that the intergenerational inheritance of toxic contamination impacts the psychological, relational, emotional, cultural, and economic well-being of communities and that Indigenous women's reproductive and other bodily health systems bear the brunt of this type of environmental violence.[37]

Dayna Nadine Scott et al. observe that determinants of health such as race, gender, income, education, class, social support networks, and geographic location influence a woman's vulnerability to chemical exposures, the extent to which she can avoid or address these exposures, and her access to the resources, education, and support systems needed to do so.[38] Moreover, women's and men's exposures to environmental contaminants are influenced by gendered relations

of power and gender inequality that manifest in gender-specific roles, responsibilities, expectations, opportunities, and constraints. For example, the gendered division of labor operates in such a way as to expose women to contaminants in their daily domestic environments; paid work also exposes men and women to occupational exposures in different ways depending on the nature of that labor.

Studies also indicate that there are high rates of congenital anomalies and developmental delays in communities that are near polluting industries and other environmental hazards. A study conducted by Caitlin Holtby et al. used data from a province-wide population-based birth registry to examine the association between the nitrate concentrations in drinking water and the incidence of major congenital anomalies in Kings County, Nova Scotia, finding that nitrates at levels below the current Canadian maximum allowable concentration for drinking water may contribute to an increased risk of congenital anomalies.[39] In their review of forty-one papers, Wahida Kihal-Talantikite et al. found that the following congenital malformations were associated with proximity to pollution sites: an excess risk of reproductive morbidity, including intrauterine growth restrictions, small size for gestational age, preterm births, and low birth weights. In addition, the authors found that women living close to industrial sites were at increased risk of giving birth to children with overall congenital malformations and specific congenital malformations, including neural tube defects and congenital heart defects.[40] Abbey Poirier et al. used a superior geostatistical method to show that adverse birth outcomes associated with increased neonatal morbidity and mortality, such as preterm births, small size for gestational age, and full-term low birth weights, are linked to even relatively low concentrations of certain pollutants in Halifax, Nova Scotia.[41]

The Reproductive Justice Movement, which was led by Indigenous women who felt that they had no control over their reproductive choices, emerged in the late 1980s to address the ways in which environmental racism compromises women's reproductive rights, given that a woman's reproductive destiny is tied to the conditions of her community.[42] Reproductive justice refers not only to the right to have children or not but also to the right to parent them in a healthy and safe environment, given that a woman's exposure to toxic chemicals while pregnant will pose risks to the child's development during pregnancy and postnatally.

Industry also brings increased social and economic insecurity and instability, resulting in a shift in gender dynamics, a disruption of the social fabric, a diminution of women's social status, and increased marginalization and exclusion. Combined, these factors increase women's vulnerability and susceptibility to other forms of violence within their families and in their society. It is not a coincidence, then, that Indigenous and Black women in Canada, who are most impacted by the interlinked systems of colonialism, criminalization, environmental degradation, poverty, inequality, and family separation, have been at the forefront of social and environmental justice movements.

Building Grassroots Movements

Grassroots social and environmental justice movements led by Indigenous, Black, and other racialized women must be centered around the impacts of violence on women's bodies, women's autonomy, women's dispossession, and women's labor, particularly since white middle-class feminism has marginalized the leadership of Indigenous and racialized women. These movements must also start from a critical premise that justice can be realized through a recentering of anticapitalist and anticolonial organizing rooted in the counterknowledges of Indigenous and racialized voices seeking to amplify individual and collective experiences of resistance, opposition, and transformative agency.

For Indigenous people in Canada specifically, anticolonial and anticapitalist struggles have been centered mainly on land dispossession or the experience of being denied access to the land, resource exploitation, the legacy of residential schools, and extinguishment of rights. These struggles have been premised on a transformative resurgence that has focused on creating more options for justice 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 violence.[43] In the following sections, I provide an overview of some of the more prominent social and environmental justice struggles being led by Indigenous and Black women in Canada generally and in Nova Scotia specifically.

Idle No More

David Pellow's contention 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 antiauthoritarian agenda reflects the approach taken by Idle No More. Idle No More is a grassroots political movement initiated by four female activists in Saskatchewan that began on Facebook and evolved to peaceful street protests, teach-ins, and rallies.[44] Its main objectives are to affirm Indigenous rights to sovereignty and to reintroduce traditional laws and Nation-to-Nation relations. The movement is committed to resistance and the mobilization of all people against all forms of neocolonialism in Canada, including Indigenous collective rights, sovereignty, social safety nets, and environmental protections.

Idle No More is specifically demanding that Canada, the provinces, and the territories repeal provisions of Bill C-45 (Jobs and Growth Act). Of particular concern is how the amendments to the bill could potentially allow the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to have control over First Nations' lands, thereby permit-

ting the minster to exert influence over vulnerable communities. Idle No More is also demanding that Canada, the provinces, and the territories ensure the equitable representation of and consultation with Indigenous people on legislation that supports collective rights and protection from environmental harms; honor the rights of Indigenous people to oppose development on their lands; honor Indigenous title, which is characterized by their right to land or territory, as well their collective right to use and occupy certain areas; and revoke the Doctrine of Discovery and the doctrine of *terra nullius*, both of which have used racist justifications to exploit Indigenous land for profit. The Doctrine of Discovery permitted colonial dispossession of Indigenous lands based on legal and moral justifications, while the doctrine of *terra nullius* permitted a sovereign state to acquire any ostensibly unoccupied or unsettled land as a new territory and to govern this land under state laws.[45]

Treaty Truck House Against Alton Gas

The Sipekne'katik Band of the Mi'kmaq First Nation, local Mi'kmaq Bands, and Millbrook First Nation have been opposing the development of a brine discharge pipeline near the Shubenacadie River since 2014, when Alton Gas began developing such a pipeline.[46] Sipekne'katik First Nation, which is located in Hants County near Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, includes the communities of Indian Brook, New Ross, Pennal, Dodd's Lot, Wallace Hills, and Grand Lake. The project was subsequently halted, but it resumed in January 2016 after Alton Gas was given environmental approvals for several permits by the Government of Nova Scotia. Salt-cavern liquid natural gas projects have had high failure rates in the United States, and they are highly dangerous because of the risks of explosions, leaks, and emissions of poisonous chemicals like methane.[47]

In late January, the local First Nations bands sent a letter to Premier Stephen McNeil as well as the energy minister and the environment minister requesting that they suspend further approvals and provide up-to-date evaluations, research, and cumulative risk assessments. Several groups and organizations supported these demands, including the Council of Canadians, the Ecology Action Center, the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club Foundation, the Nova Scotia Fracking Research and Action Coalition, the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition, and Divest Dalhousie. Since the Alton Natural Gas Storage project was first announced, First Nations bands Sipekne'katik and Millbrook, along with non-Indigenous allies and organizations, have been involved in several other activities to halt it, including highway blockades, development site encampment, and educational events.[48]

Over the past few years, Treaty Truck House Against Alton Gas has become a gathering place for grassroots resistance activities. Led by Elder Dorene Bernard, a resident of Indian Brook, the Truck House (and its associated Facebook page) has become the site where planning activities are initiated to fight against

the Alton Gas project, where funds are raised to support the Truck House, and where educational activities are organized to educate and inform the public on ecological, anticolonial, and anticapitalist issues related to Alton Gas and other social and environmental justice struggles.[49]

On April 14, 2016, members of the Sipekne'katik First Nation held a demonstration against the project in front of the Nova Scotia Legislature.[50] Several others followed, including a demonstration on May 28, 2016. 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.[51] 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 percent of that amount. She also ordered that the remaining 35 percent be paid by Alton Natural Gas Storage.[52]

Alton Gas plans to move forward on the project, however, and hopes to start the brining process in late 2018.[53] The company has also been in touch with local authorities and provincial officials to discuss the ongoing demonstration, which they will continue to assess. They are also open to a discussion with activists and have been talking to members of Sipekne'katik First Nation about a possible benefits agreement.[54]

Lincolnville Reserve Land Voice Council

Lincolnville represents a longstanding case of environmental racism in northeast Nova Scotia. Situated in Guysborough County, Lincolnville is a small African Nova Scotian rural community that was settled by Black Loyalists in 1784.[55] 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 interest in providing a site for a second-generation landfill in the community 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. The decision to develop this landfill was based on the provincial government's need to decrease spending. In the second-generation landfill's first month of opening, it received 55,780 tons of solid waste.[56] According to regional environmental organizations, hazardous items such as transformers and refuse from offshore oil spills were deposited at the first-generation landfill. The African Nova Scotian community in Lincolnville has long been concerned about traces

of carcinogens, including cadmium, phenol, and toluene, being above acceptable limits in the community's surface and groundwater, from which residents draw their potable water.[57]

Led by Mary Desmond, James Desmond, and other members of the community, the Concerned Citizens of Lincolnville (renamed the Lincolnville Reserve Land Voice Council) formed in 2006 after the second-generation landfill was opened. The community alleges that the Municipality of Guysborough failed to properly consult them about this development. As one Lincolnville resident explained, her community has been organizing protests and demonstrations since the early 1970s to force the government to remove the landfills, despite intimidation from the police:

> We've had marches. We had the stand-off at the dump and a march in Halifax in 2006. We had all kinds of protests about this. And we protested in 1974 when they started just dumping the stuff in a hole. We had a big protest. The police were called on us and all that. I don't know how many times the police were called and how many demonstrations I've been to where the cops have been called on us just because we were walking, saying, you know, "take your garbage somewhere else and take the rats somewhere else". You know?[58]

Over a decade ago, an alliance of social justice and environmental groups in Nova Scotia called the Save Lincolnville Coalition created the Save Lincolnville Campaign to mobilize against the second-generation landfill and environmental racism in general. These partners included former residents of Lincolnville as well as organizations such as Bound to Be Free, African Nova Scotian Brotherhood, Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NSPIRG), African United Baptist Association (AUBA), Halifax Coalition against Poverty, and Halifax-Central Education Committee. The Save Lincolnville Coalition demanded that the Guysborough Municipality review alternative locations for the landfill and close and relocate it; redevelop and recover the land; implement an inclusive and transparent community consultation process before proceeding with municipal resource management programs and planned waste management infrastructure in Nova Scotia; provide the community with full reparations and compensation for displacement, health costs, and environmental contamination; ensure that mutual respect and justice are central to public policy; and ensure that that all people have protection against nuclear testing and the extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons.[59] Despite the considerable mobilizing the community has done over the last forty years, their requests continue to be ignored.

During the summer of 2016, I forged a relationship between members of the Lincolnville Reserve Land Voice Council and Ecojustice. Ecojustice, Cana-

da's largest environmental law charity, has been collaborating with Lincolnville community members to explore possible legal remedies to address the landfill, including examining overlap between human rights law and environmental law to determine if the government has violated residents' human rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, a bill of rights that is a central component of the Canadian Constitution. Human rights violations may include the exposure of racialized communities to harm, as well as the underprovision of clean drinking water and positive environmental services.[60]

South End Environmental Injustice Society (SEED)

Shelburne is a town in southwestern Nova Scotia that was settled by Black Loyalists in the late 1700s. It became one of the largest Black settlements in North America at the time and remains a prominent African Nova Scotian community today.[61] Shelburne's south end, which is home to the majority of African Nova Scotian residents in the town, is currently the only area in Shelburne without access to the town's drinking water supply, while hosting several solid waste facilities.[62] For the past several decades a landfill has been located on the southeastern outskirts of Shelburne, where the highest concentration of African Nova Scotians lives.[63]

Although accurate factual information is not currently available about the type and quantity of waste deposits made at the landfill over the years or about the background to its establishment, anecdotal evidence provided by community members suggests that it accepted municipal and medical waste from the adjacent hospital, the community college, the former naval base, and the Municipality's industrial park, with little record keeping or documentation.[64] In the mid-1990s the landfill was officially closed, and it operated with little supervision of its day-to-day administration and control by the Town of Shelburne, which is responsible for the location and operation of the landfill. In recent years, the town "reopened" the landfill, although it had failed to consult in any meaningful way with community members about this. Visual investigation conducted by community members, as well as photos taken by one community member in 2016, showed continued use of the landfill—for at least the past twenty years—as an uncontrolled or poorly controlled repository for assorted materials not intended for the facility.[65]

Led by Shelburne environmental activist Louise Delisle, members of the community formed the nonprofit organization South End Environmental Injustice Society (SEED) in 2016. Since then, SEED has collaborated with concerned citizens, a project I am leading titled the Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities and Community Health (ENRICH) Project, and federal, provincial, and municipal governments to ensure proper cleanup and closure of the landfill. In June 2016, Nova Scotia Environment, a government department that is

responsible for promoting a healthy environment, conducted an inspection of the landfill and identified a number of concerns, including a recent oil spill. This prompted them to issue an inspector's directive that the Shelburne Town Council was required to address. Nova Scotia Environment also hired engineers from the private sector to follow up and independently investigate the site. The landfill was finally closed in late 2016.[66]

Since 2016, SEED has also been collaborating with the Town of Shelburne to develop a database that would document the landfill's effects on the social, economic, and environmental well-being and health of the community; implement a remedial plan for addressing environmental, health, and community infrastructure issues; and identify funding for this remedial work.[67] There is also considerable interest from the members of SEED in documenting the development of the landfill over time, including how it has been used and administered; reviewing previous test results (if available); conducting soil and water testing to determine which pollutants community members have been exposed to; and conducting a study on the health effects of the landfill in the African Nova Scotian community. SEED is also interested in seeking reparations for residents who have contracted cancer over the last several decades and for the economic fallout from the dump, such as its impact on local property values over the years.[68]

The most significant challenge Indigenous and Black women leading grass-roots movements face in addressing environmental violence is the absence of legal tools that acknowledge, respond to, and address entrenched colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy. Transformative resurgence must aim to create more options for justice as well as legal tools that acknowledge, enable, and support Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination; value community-based organizing focused on healing in Indigenous and Black communities; recognize Indigenous and African-centered knowledge as transformative sites within which to respond to various forms of state-sanctioned racial and gendered violence; and honor female- and youth-led solutions-oriented grassroots resistance.

NOTES

1. Erin Marie Konsmo and A. M. Kahealani Pacheco, *Violence on the Land, Violence on Our Bodies: Building an Indigenous Response to Environmental Violence* (Berkeley: Women's Earth Alliance and Native Youth Sexual Health Network, 2015), landbodydefense.org/uploads/files/VLVBReportToolkit2016.pdf?.

2. Ibid.

3. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 18.

4. Tiffany King, "In the Clearing: Black Female Bodies, Space and Settler Colonial Landscapes" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2013).

5. Ibid.

6. Andrea Smith, "Native Feminism, Sovereignty and Social Change," *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 116.

7. Lorenzo Veracini, "Introducing Settler Colonial Studies," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1–12; Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409; King, "In the Clearing."

8. King, "In the Clearing."

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