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A History of Marginalization - Africville: a Canadian Example of Forced Migration

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A HISTORY OF MARGINALIZATION – AFRICVILLE: A CANADIAN EXAMPLE
OF FORCED MIGRATION

by

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A Major Research Paper
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts
in the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies

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ABSTRACT

The people of Africville, Nova Scotia were removed from their homes and had their community razed in the 1960s during an era of urban renewal. Africville, Nova Scotia will be explored as an example of forced resettlement in Canada. Specifically, this case study will display the extreme racism Black people in Nova Scotia have endured upon settlement and onward. This paper will trace their migration, while highlighting the exclusion from the dominant society – by the colonial government of Nova Scotia, through lack of access to quality land, hence denial of their livelihoods. The racialization of space and the dominance of whiteness theories will be applied to the case of Africville and Blacks in Nova Scotia. The migration of Black people to Nova Scotia is unique, in that they arrived in Canada during the same time as the early European settlers, yet are still treated as the *Other*.

Key Words: Africville, Black Nova Scotians, land access, racialization of space, whiteness theory

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to my Aunt, Pamela Elliott Rhodenizer.

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I would like to acknowledge and thank the people who have listened to my ideas as I patched them together piece by piece throughout the duration of this project. I appreciate your patience, time and friendships.

More specifically, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Michael Doucet, for taking me on as a student and guiding me where and when needed. I would like to thank Dr. Grace Edward Galabuzi for the valuable and encouraging feedback. I would also like to thank Dr. Myer Siemiacki for making that late Tuesday afternoon September phone call.

I would like to thank my parents for their continuing support and guidance in all aspects of my life.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to say, that in order to improve our communities, provinces, territories and country we must first acknowledge our pasts before an inclusive and fair society is to be achieved.

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Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Introduction

Canada is a land troubled by questions of race and space, whether we are speaking of First Nations land claims, Quebec nationalism, or the 'absented presence' of others.

(Walcott 1997, 37)

Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard, professor and director of the School of Social Work at Dalhousie University can trace her ancestry in Nova Scotia for over two hundred years. Yet, Dr. Bernard informed the public gathered at the Metropolis Conference held in Halifax in April 2008 that when walking the streets of downtown Halifax she is asked on a regular basis *where she is from*. In spite of my parents moving to Nova Scotia in 1980 and growing up as a daughter of 'come-from-away' parents, I can walk the streets of Halifax without being stopped and asked about my belonging to the province. What is the differentiating factor between myself and Dr. Wanda Bernard? I am White and Dr. Wanda Bernard is Black. It seems fair to ask, therefore, is the fact that I am White mean that my belonging is more legitimized and desired to be included in the Nova Scotian identity?

It was 1989 when I knew I was White, and it meant something. I was five years old in the winter of 1989 when Cole Harbour High School made national headlines following the outbreak of racial riots on school grounds. I did not know what a racial riot meant, but I intuitively knew that it somehow involved Black people. I also remember going to Oxford Street School where entering junior high meant being in the same classes with *the Black kids from the Square*. I remember before our teacher assigned our designated study *spaces*, there was a small group of Black students sitting on one side of the classroom, while the rest of us White students sat on the other side. I can remember the mention of the destruction of Africville, that 'it was done with good intentions', that it was 'slum-clearing' or that it was done for public safety (Clairmont and Magill 1999).

Yet, I now comprehend that I did not understand the issues at large that this community endured nor had I come to the realization that I was interacting with the aftermath and ongoing racial tension, racial fear and the descendents of Africville. As a student, I was exposed to these racial implications of Black students trickling into *my* school¹ but I had no true understanding of the political and sociological underpinnings of this process.

I remember being fascinated with the story of Africville in grade school, but my teacher spending little time on the topic. I remember in grade nine our principal asking trivia questions about Black Canadian history every day during Black history month and that I did not know a single answer. I believe my interest in Black Nova Scotians stems from my social location as a White middle-class woman. Nova Scotia is largely made up of White people descending from Irish, Scottish and English backgrounds. Our diversity mix is low² and our immigrant retention rate is even lower.³ As a child, my only interaction with non-White people was limited to interactions with Black Nova Scotians at Oxford Street School. My question here, is what makes my claim to Nova Scotia more legitimate than that of Dr. Bernard who must continuously explain that she does indeed belong here, pointing to her long history in the province?

I propose, referencing Nelson (2001, 2002, 2006 and 2008), that my whiteness legitimized my belonging to Nova Scotian identity despite my parent's arrival into the province only years before my birth. The notion of whiteness within Nova Scotia frequently implies that the members of the dominant group are often oblivious to their skin colour, and that whiteness often goes unexamined. In some cases, it is not even acknowledged that whiteness can replicate, as in my Oxford Street School experiences,

¹ I report *my* school because of the way Oxford Elementary and Junior High School was structured. At the junior high level students from wider schooling zones were directed to join our school. I had attended Oxford school for seven years before Black students began to join our school.

² Out of Nova Scotia's total population, 897,570 (2001), 34,525 residents were of visible minorities (Statistics Canada 2001).

³ Nova Scotia's immigrant retention rate is much lower than the national average it being approximately forty per cent from the last analysed Statistics Canada (2001) release on retention in Nova Scotia (Akbari 2007). In Fall 2007 the government of Nova Scotia signed a new immigration agreement to attract and retain a greater number of newcomers to the province to alleviate the future threat of labour market gaps (Canada 2007).

covert racism. Nelson (2001) regards the racialization of a group as a process in which racial minority groups become ‘marked’ by their race as their identity, thereby essentializing this quality. Nelson also aims to ‘racialize’ the dominant white group, not just minority groups of Nova Scotia. She suggests that the ‘un-marked-ness of whiteness’ is not neutral but is a category that is constructed rather than self-evident (Ibid, 42). The White dominant group must realize that they, too, are a race, and their actions can also be essentialized and analyzed by virtue of race or the colour of their skin.

The memories, actions and reactions that encompassed my childhood do, in fact, reflect the exclusive realities and dominance of whiteness of Black Nova Scotians. For example, my socialized reaction of knowing at five years of age that the Cole Harbour incident obviously included Black people mirrored the socialization of innocence and learned behaviour of racism conducted through whiteness in Nova Scotia. In hindsight, I realize my Canadian primary education (the actual education and racial interactions) was an extension of the colonial nation-building project within a Eurocentric framework that is the Canadian education system. Moreover, the Black students entering the space of Oxford Street School threatened the whiteness of the student body and the white nation-building project of the nation.

Skip ahead ten years, I remember arriving at university and working with a staff of international students where I was the only White person and thinking, *Wow, look at me, I get along with people who are not White!*

Peake and Ray (2001) note that few groups in Canada are “...presented as being so ephemeral and simultaneously as **a threat** to the nation;... that needs to be controlled, regulated, dispersed and erased” (183) than that of Black Canadians. The Black settlements of Nova Scotia are amongst the oldest Black communities in Canada. Yet, these communities have been economically and socially deprived through various forms of discrimination and a history of exclusion. For example, many Black communities were denied government-funded education from the time of their initial settlements that date

back over two hundred years ago. In 2008, the Black population in Nova Scotia continues to face everyday racism which marginalizes their lives and status within the province. As recently as June 2008, an alleged incident involving racial slurs from off-duty Halifax Regional Police (HRP) officers directed at Black youths in Digby, Nova Scotia has been reported. The behaviour of out-of-town, off-duty HRP officers is a prime example of racism directed towards the Black people that still exists throughout Nova Scotia.⁴

The early arrival of Black people in Nova Scotia was largely due to the forced migration of people to Canada. Abdi (2005) notes that the early Black presence in Nova Scotia was partly related to slavery. Slave masters brought people either directly from West Africa or from the United States and the Caribbean. Black people, in slavery or as free people, have been in Canada and contributing to Canadian society for over 350 years. In an attempt to break-down the myth of the nation as the *White settler society*⁵ and put focus on Walcott's (1997) 'tough geography'⁶ and the 'absented presence of others'⁷ within the white-nation-building project of Canada, I will spend a chapter tracing the

⁴ As recently as June 22nd 2008 two Black youths in Digby Nova Scotia were involved in a brawl with off-duty Halifax Regional Police. It is alleged that the police officer yelled to the two youths discriminatory remarks calling them the "N" word, as the youths walked by an unidentified police vehicle. This ultimately led to a fist-match with the first punch being thrown by the officer, which was determined by a surveillance camera. The brawl ended with one of the Black youths being tasered by an on-duty RCMP officer. To date, the Black community has requested the surveillance video be released to the public. Much media attention has been given to this incident and a protest was organized by Reverend Michael Alden Fells in Digby and Halifax. The tape has yet to be released (CBC 2008).

⁵ Razack defines the White Settler Society as a myth established by Europeans on non-European soil, with its origins laying in the "dispossession and near extermination of Indigenous populations by the conquering Europeans" (74). The white settler society tells through national myths that it is believed that white people came and that it is they who principally developed the land. The indigenous populations of white settler societies are presumed to be dead or assimilated, thus, making the European settlers the "original inhabitants."

⁶ Walcott (1997) references 'tough geographies' as the land grants offered to Blacks in Nova Scotia upon settlement in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century highlighting that indeed the land grants promised by the colonial government of the period were honoured yet much of the land made available was "suitable for more than housing plots" (36). Hence, the denial of a livelihood for the settlements of Black communities scattered throughout Nova Scotia.

⁷ Walcott (1997) has used the phrase the 'absented presence of others' to reference the removal of Black spaces, like in the case of Africville or in the renaming of the road Negro Creek Road to Moggie Road in Holland Township near Owen Sound, Ontario. Walcott highlights that removing and renaming Black space is "yet another paragraph in the continuing and unfolding story of the ways in which Canadian state institutions and official narratives attempt to render blackness outside of those same narratives, and simultaneously attempt to contain blackness through discourses of Canadian benevolence" (36).

migration patterns of Black Nova Scotians to demonstrate their long-recorded existence in this province and country.

In chapter two I will look at the four main Black settler groups in Nova Scotia, starting with the free Blacks and Black slaves who came between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, followed by the arrival of the Black Loyalists who arrived after serving with the British forces in the American War of Revolution. Next, I will look at the Jamaican Maroons who arrived in 1796, and whose stay in Nova Scotia was quite short. Finally, I will trace the migration of the Black Refugees who migrated to Nova Scotia following the War of 1812. The goal of this chapter is to 1) display the pattern of marginalization, mainly through their spatial management through the denial of valuable land and livelihood and 2) display that Blacks have been part of the Nova Scotian and Canadian landscape as long as their white counterparts.

This paper then moves to a more current incident, in chapter three, with the access to quality land by the Black population of Africville. The space of Africville was valuable, desired, water-front land on the Halifax Harbour. During the lead-up to the community's removal from that land, the city council had been discussing the use and value this land could add to the industrial development of Halifax (Clairmont and Magill 1999 and Nelson 2008). To connect this with the previous notion of the denial of valuable land, thus denial of livelihood, the people of Africville occupied valuable land in contrast to many Black Nova Scotians who did not, due to their settlement patterns upon entry into the province. Since this land was desired for industrial development, and due to the racial hierarchical power held by the governing white group, the government was able to successfully remove the residents of Africville, Black Nova Scotians, from this land. Hence, the marginal state of some Black Nova Scotians has been perpetuated by their lack of access to good land and the power that the governing group held over them, which was demonstrated by its ability to remove Blacks from the land.

In chapter three, I provide a detailed narrative of this community, Africville, beginning with its settlement and concluding with its removal and the initiative to continue the memory of this Black community. To provide a more in-depth study of the extreme but not atypical treatment of Black communities, I will apply the theories of racialized space and white dominance to this case-study. In chapter four, I argue that Africville was a racialized space and this is the principle reason the Black community was removed. I borrow from Foucault's theories of space and power, which have been echoed in the work of Sherene Razack (2002) and Jennifer Nelson (2001, 2002, 2006, and 2008).

This paper will also highlight the general exclusion of Blacks in the Canadian landscape with other examples that have occurred in Nova Scotia's history other than Africville, hence I will attempt to reveal other examples of Canada's "hidden Black histories" (Donaldson 2008). The exclusion of Black settlers can be extended to their exclusion from being identified as one of the founding members of Canada. Interestingly, the official two founding groups include the British settlers and the French settlers, but not the Black settlers, despite their similar dates of arrival into the province. Nor does it include the Aboriginal people, even though their existence on the land predates any of these groups. However, a Black presence has been in Canada for over three hundred and fifty years, yet, Black people have been identified as the *other* and their belonging to the landscape of Canada has been made to be questionable by the actions of renaming, re-designing, or in the extreme, removing Black histories.

The contribution which this document will make to our understanding of Black Nova Scotian communities comes from its attempt to combine literature on Black migration patterns to Nova Scotia with the tracing of select examples of marginalization and exclusion of this demographic. In regards to Black migration, most authors agree there has not been enough research completed on the migration of Black people to Eastern Canada (Borden and Clarke 2008). In more recent research, many scholars have

come to agree that the marginal state of Blacks is largely due to their treatment from the governing group, hence White domination, and their settlement upon the poor land which was given to so many Black settlers instead of valuable land. Winks (1997) associates the unsuccessful settlement of the Black refugees to their former state of slavery. He emphasizes the once traditional belief of all Blacks as poor, and argues it is only to be blamed on the Blacks themselves for their poverty, and referred to the Black refugees as a “disorganized, pathetic, and intimidated body who seemed unable to recover from their previous condition of servitude, their sudden voyage up the Atlantic to Nova Scotian shores and their persistent lack of leaders” (114). With regards to the literature to which I refer for the case study of Africville, many authors identify that the feature of racism was involved in the community’s relocation. However, Nelson (2008) identifies racism as the quintessential process that instigated Africville’s relocation. Additional to the racialization of space, my document will largely reiterate Nelson’s argument, because much research on Africville does not directly label racism, the racism from white dominance, as the driving force behind the removal as directly as Nelson did, but rather labels it as a by-product of the removal.

I wish to provide an additional perspective on Africville as a Canadian example of forced migration, using the definitions of forced relocation and development-induced displacement by referring to Penz (2006), Bose (2003) and Cernea (2000). In chapter five, I identify the core definitions of displacement, forced migration and development-induced displacement, and link these definitions to the case of Africville.

This paper will argue that the marginal state of Black Nova Scotians is directly related to the lack of access to quality land, furthermore the denial of livelihood. In the case of the Black migrants, the majority were coming from rural settings, their lives controlled by slave labour in the United States. The lack of access to quality land upon arrival to Nova Scotia hindered fulfillment of their skilled labour, hence their livelihoods. Upon arrival, many Black migrants were unable to secure the land which they were

promised by the British after fighting for their cause against the Americans in the War of Independence and later in the War of 1812. In some cases, these Black migrants were unable to access any land. In many cases, those who did access land received much smaller plots of land than their White counterparts and often on non-arable soil. Moreover, many Black settlers were given land on the periphery of White townships, keeping them segregated from the dominant society. The second argument of this paper includes the case study of Africville. In that instance, when a Black community did, in fact, obtain valuable land, the dominant white group removed them from this land, disavowing/lowering their status within society because they were removing them as land-owners.

1.1 Writing About Race

It has been suggested by some scholars (Montagu 1964, Miles 1982, and Satzewich 1999) that the continued use of the term “race” contradicts the general consensus that no real race actually exists, hence it being defined as a social construct evident in various societies (as quoted in Mensah 2002, 13). It is believed that the term “race” entered the English language in the fifteenth century as a way to interpret and classify the “variety of human life” (Elliott and Fleras 1992, as quoted in Mensah 2002, 11). Some bodies of work call for the end of the usage of “race”. Notably Vic Satzewich (1999) states that “race’ should be explicitly and consistently confined to the dustbin of analytically useless terms” (as quoted in Mensah, 13). Yet, some have argued (for example, Mensah 2002), it is detrimental to suggest that we should not study race, when one’s race determines so many variables in a person’s life. Removing the term race has the potential to obviate the reality of racism. Mensah (2002) highlights this and argues that whether or not “race” (or whatever it is) is constructed as a social or biological concept or is referred to at all, it must be analytically observed and studied as long as race has significant implications and consequences in societies. In the case of Africville,

where acts of racism are yet to be acknowledged, the analysis of race and acts guided by race is crucial. In this study, I accept the term race as I do racism.

The United States, Canada, Australia and other parts of the West have become accustomed to articulate language and meanings of concepts (code words) such as colour-blind, racial equality and race neutrality to suggest that our societies are free of racism (Mensah 2002). In Canada, multiculturalism policies suggest that we embrace one another's 'deep diversities' (Taylor 1992) and that racism does not exist. This is a problematic notion for a country where, some would say, that racism does exist, although not always in an obvious and overt manner. We must continue to pay attention to the implications that race ascribes to a person. To categorize, there are several types of racism: systemic racism, individual racism, overt racism and covert racism. Systematic is racism performed through institutional forms within a society. Individual racism involves acts of racism completed by the individual. Overt racism is done by intentional actions and covert racism is expressed through unintentional and often on unknowing terms. Nova Scotian society exhibits all these forms in one way or another.

1.2 Terms: Afro-Canadian, Afro-Nova Scotian, Black Canadian, Black Nova Scotian, African-Canadian, African-Nova Scotian

First, it must be explained that engaging in the terms and identifying terms for racialized groups is ultimately a process of naming and "Othering" where White becomes centre and everything else is measured from this social construct (Weis and Fine 1996, as quoted in Mensah 20). Carl James (1998) states that much of the "Othering" and marginalization of minority or racialized groups is done so through language (as quoted in Mensah 2002). For example, the word "black" has been associated with notions of dishonesty, crime, anger or evil, hence the terms, for example, "black lie", "black sheep" or "black market". Due to these negative associations with the word "black", many scholars in the field choose to use the terms "Afro-Caribbeans", "West Indians" and

“Caribbeans” instead of Black. However, Mensah (2002) notes that the terms “Race” and “Black” have such a large impact on people of African descent in Canada, that in shying away from these terms, we gain nothing. Those who write about people of African ancestry living in Canada have referred to this group as Afro-Canadians, African Canadians, or Black Canadians.

I have selected to refer to this demographic as Black Nova Scotians. I have capitalized Black when I am referring to Black Nova Scotians. I recognize within this umbrella term there is a wide range of diversity amongst these people of black skin colour. Within the Black Nova Scotian communities there is the range of people who are descendants from Africa, the West Indies, and the United States. To explain my use of the capitalization of **Black** Nova Scotians I will refer to another group of non-white Canadians. For example, when referring to the population in Canada who are either from China or are of Chinese descent, one refers to this regionally diverse group as Chinese Canadians and capitalizes the “C.” Although “Black” may not be considered an ethnicity per se or something that ties people to one specific region of the world, Black is a category which includes people from regions all over the world such as Africa, West India, or North America who are socially categorized as Black (Borden and Clarke 2008). Additionally, an interesting fact to note is the *Employment Equity Act* of 1986 which defines those who are included in the category of visible minorities as persons, other than Aboriginal people, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-White in colour. The Act identifies visible minorities as: Chinese, South Asians, Blacks, Arabs and West Asians, Filipinos, Southeast Asians, Latin Americans, Japanese, Koreans, and Pacific Islanders. Mensah (2002) notes that the groups mentioned are all based on a geographic location except for “Black,” which is the only category that is based on skin colour. Some authors have chosen to refer to “Blacks” by stating “blacks” when listing the visible minorities the Canadian government has identified. However, Mensah emphasizes to authors who do choose not to capitalize “black” that it is only fair to capitalize “Black” for “the sake

of parity and also to avoid possible allegations of condescension” (2002, 22). Yet, as Mensah (2002) highlights, terms like “Black” or the term “visible minorities” have received a range of criticisms. Rinaldo Walcott (2003) states that Blackness for him, like Black Canadian, “allows for a certain kind of malleability and open-endedness which means that questions of Blackness far exceed the categories of the biological and the ethnic” (27-28). Also, the umbrella term Black has been criticized for its homogenizing practice (Bannerji, Brand and Carty as quoted in Mensah 2002). I do acknowledge these considerations but, for the reasons stated above, Black Nova Scotians is the term I see best fitted to refer to this demographic. Additionally, I have been influenced by Walter Borden and Dr. George Elliott Clarke (2008) as they see Black Nova Scotian as the best term with which to refer to themselves. They note as time passed after the arrival of the first Blacks in Nova Scotia, a Nova Scotian who had any Black ancestry was socially constructed as a Black person⁸.

Jennifer Kelly (1998) states that the terminology used when discussing and researching race is problematic, contentious and ambiguous. She offers the questions “what is meant by the term Black and who should be included within a group defined as Black?” (8). Kelly answers this by looking at Statistics Canada and how it is an illustration of theoretical ambiguity and confusion in categorization (8). Statistics Canada uses “Black origins” and “Caribbean origins.” However, what is meant by Black or Caribbean? If it is meant to decipher skin colour, some people would identify as being of both Black and Caribbean origin. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper Black Nova Scotians will be the category that will encompass all people who identify themselves as descendants of the Black migrant groups in Nova Scotia or who have been socially constructed as Black.

⁸ A notable number of people in Nova Scotia have ancestry from Mi’maq and Black people, yet according to Clarke (2008) these people are socialized and treated by society as Black people.

1.3 Whiteness and White Civility – Canada’s fictional national identity

Understanding white normativity, is to recognize that it shapes people’s perceptions of themselves, their families and their relations to social legitimacy (Coleman 2006). Coleman, in his book *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada*, attempts to disrupt the composition of British whiteness that has claimed the foundation of Canada’s national identity. He uses the allegorical figures of the Loyalist brother, the enterprising Scottish orphan, the muscular Christian and the maturing colonial son to trace a history of “Canada’s fictive ethnicity” (Ibid, 7). Yet as Balibar notes,

No nation possesses an ethnic base naturally, but as social formations are nationalized, the populations included within them, divided up among them or dominated by them are ethnicized – that is, represented in the past or in the future *as if* they formed a natural community, possessing of itself an identity of origins, culture, and interest which transcends individuals and social conditions (as quoted in Coleman, 7).

This disruption of Canadian national mythical identity will allow the reader to see that the nation building project of Canada, thus white civility, has an agenda to exclude those who are not desired in Canada’s national identity, hence the Black migrants to Nova Scotia were deliberately excluded from Canada’s nationalism and identity. Nor were the Aboriginal peoples, who populated the land long before any white settlers arrived on the shores of Canada, included.

To further emphasize who has been included in this nation-building project as time passed, for example, as British migration to Canada began to cease, the expansion of who was to be included in this national identity shifted to include white migrants from central, southern, and eastern Europe. It was during this period when Ukrainian settlers, Italian settlers or even Irish settlers were included in the Canadian identity (Kelley and Trebilock 2000).

In 1971, when the multiculturalism policy was introduced to fix the widening gap within Canada’s national project and deal with the newly arriving immigrants from *non-traditional* countries, the policy was intended to celebrate Canada’s differences. Yet, the

policy was constructed within the framework of a white dominant value system (Peake and Ray 2001). Bannerji argues that the civil ideals that the multiculturalism policy presents, emphasize that still "...the central organizing problematic of English Canadian whiteness is a specific form of civility modelled upon the gentlemanly code of Britishness" (as quoted in Coleman 2006, 10). Many authors have conceded that the policy has generated a framework and vocabulary whereby people of colour must work within a system framed by the white-dominant culture, therefore, still excluding their belonging and asking them to (un)belong once again.

Moving this discussion to space, Bannerji (2000) argues that Canadian identity is founded on the concept of "other" to legitimize what is Canadian identity. Bannerji labels Canadian identity as something based on the two-solitudes of Canada; the descendents of the British and the French. In terms of space, spatial demarcations outline and divide between those who are "insiders" and those who are "outsiders", which Peter Li outlines in his article "The Politics of Difference in Territorial and Social Space" (2003). Nelson (2002) reflects that many space theorists have "described the way in which both marginalized groups and peripheral space signal an existence "beyond" society, apart from civilized norms, and as separate space in which undesirable activities could take place in order to preserve the purity of dominant ruling space" (219). In the early nineteenth century, Black refugees were refused land within the existing communities of Nova Scotia and were forced to settle in isolation away from the dominant white society.



Figure 1: Map of Africville and peninsula Halifax.

Examples include the community of Preston, located twenty kilometres away from the centre of Halifax, the community of Birchtown located on the periphery of Shelburne and the community of Weymouth Falls located outside of Digby. In the case of Africville, it was considered to be ‘in’ but not ‘of’ the city Halifax (Clairmont and Magill 1973 and 1999). Africville (Figure 1) was situated within the city limits, on the peninsula, but did not receive the same services that the rest of the city received. (Map – Clairmont and Magill 1999).

1.4 Human Geography – The Conception of Space

Taylor, Peter and Flint (2000) ask their readers to “consider all spaces and places as socially constructed, the results of conflicts and accommodations that produce a geographical landscape” (43). Geography, space and landscape ultimately always have implications for power relations of the past, present or future. Hence, the space of Africville in the nineteenth century was far enough away from the city of Halifax for the dominant society not to feel threatened by the Black community, the *others*. However, as the city expanded, the land became valuable and desired, thus leading to the forcible removal of the land from this Black community. The space of Africville is currently the location of a pillar for the Alexander MacKay Bridge, completed in 1970, and a public memorial park, Seaview, which more resembles a dog-park for the neighbourhood than a commemoration of a significant historic community. The future use of the space of Africville is controlled by the city officials, and it is they who will determine what will occupy this land and as Nelson (2002) notes after a visit to Seaview, “Unless one knows, nothing in sight speaks to the history of this space” (228).

Michel Foucault is quoted in *Space, Power and Knowledge* (2007) as arguing that “There is a relationship between the material organization of space, life practices, values

and discourses” (161). In other words, the power hierarchies and dynamics created by spatial set ups are not innate, for example the *slum* of Africville did not automatically evolve into a *slum*.

It can be suggested that the meaning of *space* in Canada is best understood as part of the mythical white-settler society. However, in reality, the space was not empty for white settlers to come to develop, but Aboriginals did, in fact, occupy much of the land. The notion that the settlement of White Europeans to Canada was peaceful is false. Instead, a key feature of the white-settler society myth is the “disavowal of conquest, genocide, slavery and the exploitation of the labour of people of colour” (Razack 2002, 2). Canada as a nation did not simply evolve into these notions of the *great white north* or *the true north strong and free* but was developed out of the “dispossession and the near extermination of the Indigenous populations” (Ibid, 1).

This paper will argue that the Black population in Nova Scotia has been marginalized and oppressed by methods used by the dominant governing group which have had the implications of disavowing the Black population of their belonging to Canada and the landscape. In Nova Scotia, discriminatory acts have gone unacknowledged by the dominant group through the operation of Whiteness and White Dominance. This paper will name *why* and *how* these social processes occur and are directed towards Black Nova Scotians. The marginalization process will be explored using the theoretical frameworks of White Dominance and the racialization of space theories used by Foucault, Razack, Nelson, and Peake and Ray. The enterprises of renaming places, re-designing them, or to the extreme, removing them, as in the case of Africville, are all part of the processes that have marginalized Black Nova Scotians. Katherine McKittrick (2002) has labelled these processes as an attempt to “throw out black geographies” (28).

Chapter 2 The Historical Context of Black Settlements in Nova Scotia

The migration of Black people to Nova Scotia, stretching over two centuries, has created 45 Black communities scattered across the province (Bernard Project 2008, Figure 2 on page 37 - Map of Nova Scotia with Black communities). Whitfield (2006) notes that the concept of migration for the Black population of Nova Scotia, particularly the Black refugees, is an essential tool to understand their experiences. Migration was an integral part of their lives, with their search for freedom, loved ones or economic opportunities. In reality, this meant many Black migrants had several migrations. For example, during the War of 1812, they migrated to farms and plantations that were occupied by British troops for safety from their slave masters. Later, they travelled on board British navy vessels up the Atlantic to Nova Scotia, with many then migrating to the various Black settlements around the province.

The historical migration pattern of Black settlers reveals a pattern of discrimination that is pervasive and deep-rooted in Canada. Nova Scotia is home to some of the oldest Black settlements in Canada, yet, prior to the late 1960s and 1970s, little published history was written about this group. In addition, their histories disclose their long-term exclusion from belonging through Canada's conceptual nation-building project of a white-settler society. To some extent, much of Black history in Nova Scotia has been recorded through oral histories and folklore (Sparks 2001). In an attempt to retrieve some of the undocumented accounts, Frances Henry (1973) published *Forgotten Canadians: The Blacks of Nova Scotia*, which was the first intensive, socio-anthropological study of this group. This study revealed the appalling conditions of Blacks in Nova Scotia as "a people trapped in the wasteland of economic deprivation and social neglect; locked out from the resources of the country by White racism and the isolation of a subculture of poverty" (Henry 1973, vii). Indeed, the Black populations have been marginalized since their arrival in Nova Scotia. They were granted undesirable land as a reward for their

loyalty to the British crown. Furthermore, they were excluded from the dominant society by “Jim Crow”-like laws with which Nova Scotia was governed (Sparks 2001, 33) which segregated Blacks and Whites in public places like churches and schools. Finally, they lived under almost constant threat of the removal of their land, and, in some cases, that threat became reality⁹.

The origins of Black Nova Scotians can be traced to four main groups which include descendants of the Atlantic Slave Trade, the Black Loyalists, the Jamaican Maroons and the Black Refugees. The Black population in Nova Scotia is the largest indigenous Black population in the country and was the largest Black population in Canada before the onset of the point system in the 1960s, with the *recent* arrival of Black migrants from the Caribbean and continental Africa (Walcott 2003). In Nova Scotia, there have been three general periods of the Blacks existence: 1) the period of neglect (1815-1960); 2) the period of discovery (1960-1980); 3) the period of co-existence (1980-onwards) (Pachi 1993). This paper will largely focus on the period of neglect by tracing the migration pattern of Blacks to Nova Scotia and the case study of the Halifax-area community known as Africville. However, this paper will link the early histories of marginalization of Blacks with the more current state of Blacks in Nova Scotia. To illustrate the current situation of Blacks in Nova Scotia, in 2008, the Black communities continue to face everyday racism and marginalization. For example, it has been noted that only 53% of Black students in the Halifax Regional Municipality School District graduate from high school (Bernard 2008) or the fact that few Black public servants of the province hold managerial positions (Nova Scotia Government 2005).

James Walker notes that, “ a student of Canadian history can go right through our school system, university courses and even graduate school without ever being exposed to the history of Blacks in Canada” (as quoted in Mensah 2002, 43). This is in spite of the

⁹ By the removal of land I am referring to the example of Africville, Nova Scotia. Under the threat of removal I am referring to the Black communities who had the threat of a landfill located near their settlement, for example Preston.

fact that Black settlers have had a history in Canada as far back as the early European settlers. Mensah (2002) states that White-European explorers and settlers are glorified in the Canadian elementary curriculum, while the Black, Chinese, Japanese or Aboriginal histories and the oppression and marginalization of these groups by the dominant White governing peoples are largely ignored. Much of the relatively recent literature published in the later part of the twentieth century and onward has been produced to correct the misconceptions of Canadians about the place of Black people in Canada (Mensah 2002, Pachai 1993, Winks 1997, Walker 1985 and Boyko 1998).

2.1 First Black Settlers and the Slavery of Black people in Colonial Nova Scotia

It is known that Blacks existed in Canada as early as they did in the United States, in both instances arriving through the Atlantic Slave-trade. Yet, Canada has not consistently thought of itself as a slave-holding society, but rather prides itself as a partner in the accomplishments of the Underground Railway. Perhaps, those who are not yet convinced slavery did indeed exist will be convinced by advertisements, such as those that appeared in the *Boston Evening Post* in September of 1751, offering the sale of ten Blacks from Halifax Harbour (Pachai 1993, 11) or in the *Halifax Gazette* in 1752¹⁰.

Although slavery was not a formal institution of Nova Scotia, as stated previously, slave practices have dotted the recorded history during the province's colonial period. Clairmont and Magill (1970) disclose that Nova Scotia was indeed a slave society through the various documented evidence of Black registration in townships or in the advertisements listed previously (Henry 1973, Pachai 1993 and Mensah 2002). They argue that Nova Scotia, as a slave-owning society, is an important consideration in any attempt to understand the current socio-economic conditions of Black Nova Scotians. It

¹⁰ "Just arrived from Halifax and to be sold, ten strong, hearty Negro men, mostly tradesmen, such as caulkers, carpenters, sailmakers and ropemakers. Any person wishing to purchase may enquire of Benjamin Hallowell of Boston.... "(T. Watson Smith cited in Pachai 1990, 32). Or from the *Halifax Gazette*, 1752, "Just imported, and to be sold by Joshua Mager, at Major Lockman's store in Halifax, several negro slaves as follows: a woman aged thirty-five, two boys aged twelve and thirteen respectively, two of eighteen and a man aged thirty" (Grant 1980, 6).

has been estimated that there were about 500 slaves in the province at the time of the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776, and approximately 1,500 slaves in Nova Scotia after the influx of White Loyalists 1782-1784 (Mensah 2002). Records reveal that Matthieu da Costa (or Matthew de Cost) was the first Black person on Nova Scotian soil with his arrival dated as early as 1606 through the evidence of his registration in the Nova Scotia community of Port Royal (Grant 1980, Bernard-James Research Project 2008, Whitfield 2006).

Da Costa was brought overseas with explorer Pierre Du Gua de Monts, and it has been suggested he had contact with Samuel de Champlain (Boyko 1998 and Abidi 2005). Notably, Da Costa was not transported directly from Africa. He had been a free “naigre” in Europe, however, it has been suggested that in 1607 Da Costa entered into a contract with the Dutch requiring him to be an interpreter and translate 195 books from Mi’kmaq languages into French and Dutch (Whitfield 2006). The circumstances surrounding Da Costa’s arrival are unclear. For example it is suspected that he was once a slave under the Portuguese but it also has been speculated he was forced into a one year contract that included sailing across the Atlantic to “Cadie” (Nova Scotia), specifically Port-Royal (Johnston, as quoted in Ibid). Da Costa’s interpretation services for the Mi’kmaq language(s), suggest that he had previous contact with the Mi’kmaq, likely through an earlier trade mission in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries (Whitfield 2006). It is known that he received a substantial amount of money for the translations, and that he did not leave Nova Scotia following the conclusion of his contract. Johnston (as quoted in Whitfield 2006) notes that Da Costa’s name appears in court records in the following ten years after his arrival. Although Matthieu Da Costa is widely acknowledged as the first Black person in Nova Scotia, it is thought that Olivier Le Jeune was the first Black person brought directly from Africa to Nova Scotia, during the invasion of New France in 1628 (Abdi 2005, 50 and Winks 1997, 1-2). The history

surrounding Olivier Le Jeune's arrival is unclear, yet it is documented that he was in Nova Scotia in 1628, was around the age of eight years, and originated from Madagascar.

Following the arrivals of Da Costa and Olivier Le Jeune, in chronological order there is mention of a slave named La Liberte, "le neigre" as having spent time on Cape Sable Island in 1686 (Pachi 1993 and Mensah 2002). It is thought that La Liberte was a run-away slave from the United States. The French governor of Louisburg in 1739 was recorded to be in possession of a Black slave from the island of Martinique (Bernard-James Research Project 2008). In 1767, a census of the population of Nova Scotia revealed that out of the total of 13,374 residents, 104 residents were Black slaves, most of whom resided in and around Halifax (Grant 1980). The number of slaves in Nova Scotia tripled following the American Revolution, when White Loyalists left the United States and headed north, to what were still British colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Ontario (Bernard 2008).

2.1 Black Loyalists

Historian James Walker notes, the "ideal of the Black loyalist went far beyond freedom: it was to become a small proprietor, self-sufficient upon land of his own and secured by British justice in his rights as a subject of the crown (as quoted in Whitfield 2006, 19).

The arrival of Black Loyalist migrants into Nova Scotia began as early as 1782 during the American Revolution. The influx of 3,500 *free* Black Loyalists continued into the 19th century during the gradual elimination of slavery in the United States (Walker 1985). Black Loyalists were encouraged to migrate north by military leader Sir Henry Clinton of the British forces. He offered freedom to any slave who would flee their masters to fight for the British against the American troops (Grant 1980).

Following their participation with the British forces, the *free* Blacks were promised equal treatment to their White counterparts, and were encouraged to settle in

Central and Eastern Canada if they wanted their own land. However, the hundred-acre land grants which were promised never materialized. Rather, many of the Black Loyalists either received small plots of land, on non-arable soil in isolated areas of the province or on the periphery of White townships, or no land at all. For example, the Black Loyalists who were given plots of land outside of the White township of Shelburne created the community of Birchtown on barren land.

The majority of Loyalists (Black and White) came in 1783 in 81 vessels departing from New York City (Pachai 1993). Out of the 2,775 Black Loyalists who came to Nova Scotia, 1,423 sailed under the category of “Black Companies” which recognized them as previously registered soldiers. Alternatively, some Black Loyalists came as hired, indentured or apprenticed persons attached to White Loyalist civilians or disbanded officers” (Pachi 1993,11). It should be noted that at the height of the arrival of both White and Black Loyalists, this migration group outnumbered the resident population of Nova Scotia. Settlement needs and accessibility of materials to build housing and community infrastructure was so great that many White settlers, in addition to Black settlers, experienced wretched deprivation (Henry 1973). However, the deprivation amongst the Blacks was more intense and extensive. At the time of arrival of the first wave of Loyalists, in 1783, it has been estimated that there were some 14 million hectares (26 million acres) of land in Nova Scotia, with half of this land already granted to earlier settlers to the province¹¹ (Pachi 1993). The system of distribution of land to all Loyalists (Black and White) deemed that the available land would first go to those who had lost the most land upon resettlement from the United States into the northern colony, hence White Loyalists were served first. White, military-serving Loyalists received grants according to rank, ranging from 1000 acres for a field officer to one hundred acres for a private. Less prosperous White Loyalists, who may or may not have served in the British forces, received one hundred acres for the head of the family, plus 50 acres for each family

¹¹ Note - no reference to Aborigines on land prior to Europeans.

member, including slaves (Pachai 1993). Mensah (2002) notes that up to sixty per cent of the Black Loyalists arriving in Nova Scotia did not receive any land; only 500 Black Loyalists received land, predominantly on the edge of White townships. Additionally, the actual amount of land received per person compared to White Loyalist settlers differs. To compare quantity of land grants, the average allocation of land to White Loyalists was 74 acres, while it was only 34 acres for Blacks Loyalists. Further, if a White family wanted to have a Black family's land they could take the land without compensating its owner (Boyko 1998, as quoted in Mensah 2002, 46).

Specific Examples of Settlements of the Black Loyalists

Birchtown, Nova Scotia was the biggest settlement of Black Loyalists with some 2,700 settlers. Like many Black settlements, it was located on the periphery of a White township, in this case, Shelburne. It has been suggested that the settlement was one of the largest Black urban centres outside of Africa in the 18th century (Pachai 1993, 12). However, despite its large size, the Black Loyalists had to wait until 1787 for land grants to be distributed to them, five years after their arrival into the colonial province. According to Pachai (1993), out of the 649 Black Loyalists who applied for land grants in this region, only 184 of the men received any land in or around Shelburne or Birchtown. This meant that only one third of the community's inhabitants received any land from the colonial government, despite the promise of land in return for their military services. Finally, out of the 184 men who received lands some were granted only small town lots which were not suitable either to maintain a livelihood or provide for their families (Ibid, 14).

Other Black Loyalist settlements included Brindley Town and Digby, whose residents had similar experiences in their attempts to obtain land as those in Birchtown. A third Black concentration of Loyalists was Little Tracadie near Guysborough county. The leader of this community, Thomas Brownspriggs, "successfully petitioned for land grants

for 74 Black families who were still unattended to as late as September 1787 – 40-acre grants were at last issued to each family” (Ibid, 14). The fourth largest community of the period was Preston, where White and 29 Black families originally settled in 1783. When lands were allocated to White settlers a year after their arrival, the average amount of land distributed was 204 acres, but when land was allocated to Blacks it was 50 acres with only 10 Black recipients receiving any land at all (Ibid).

Many Black Loyalists remained landless, and, as the evidence revealed above shows, this was not because there was a shortage of land but rather, it was due to acts of discrimination and unkept promises. The designated government funds to survey the land and determine the cost for the layout of individual lots were withdrawn before the distribution of land to the Loyalists has been completed (Ibid, 15). This affected the Black settlers drastically as the colonial government withdrew the funding before land was distributed amongst them. Many individual Blacks were left to do the surveying on their own, and, in most cases, could not afford to pay the costs themselves. Of course, the White Loyalists had been served before government funds were withdrawn.

Lack of appropriate land impeded successful settlement for the Black Loyalists. However, this was not the only barrier the group faced. Discrimination based on race appeared throughout the province. Nova Scotia at this period was still a slave-holding society, and attitudes of racial superiority were the norm. Black Loyalists were entitled to three years worth of provisions, like the White Loyalists, to help sustain themselves as they established homes and farms, but, in the case of Annapolis County, Blacks received only eighty days’ worth of assistance. Rather, they were expected to sustain themselves by earning income by working on the roads of Nova Scotia (Bernard – James Research Project 2008). George Elliott Clarke (2008) has argued that following the American Revolution, the Loyalists, both Black and White, arrived largely in the Maritime Provinces, essentially making Nova Scotia a settlement of Americans. Therefore, as Clarke (2008) emphasizes, the race relations between the Blacks and the Whites in Nova

Scotia were similar to those of the United States. The difference in the relations that Clarke highlights was that violence directed towards the Black populations in Nova Scotia was not a “naked” violence as in the United States. The violence and oppression that occurred were done in the name of the British King, instead of in the form of mobs as in the United States. Clarke identifies this parallel between the United States and Canada as an unexamined portion of Nova Scotian, Maritime and Canadian history. This fact, in itself, can be classified as a form of marginalization and *misrecognition*¹². More disturbing though was that when “...the first few Black Loyalists [began] to arrive, it was suggested that they should be used as ransom for the British prisoners held by the Americans” (Walker 1980 as quoted in Mensah 2002, 46). Another example of racial tension occurred in 1784 when racial riots erupted between the Black and White residents of Shelburne and nearby Birchtown over a belief that, from an early date, wages for everyone were being lowered because of the presence of Black employees (Winks 1997). It is apparent that economic issues began to significantly separate and create division between Blacks and Whites in the colonial society.

Emigration of Loyalists

In 1792, 1,196 Black Loyalists left Nova Scotia in search of better opportunities in West Africa, especially in Sierra Leone in response to initiatives by the Sierra Leone Company. Whitfield (2005) claims that the exodus of this group had a negative impact on both the Black Loyalists who stayed and future Black migrants to the colonial province. He argues that the community lost many of its teachers, preachers and other leaders, one of them being the prominent leader of Brindley Town, Thomas Peters. The exodus of nearly 1,200 people and later 550 Jamaican Maroons (Grant, Whitfield 2005, 2006,

¹² Charles Taylor configured the phrase *misrecognition* in his thesis statement in *Multiculturalism and the 'Politics of Recognition': An Essay*, it being, “that identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others” (1992, 25).

Pachai 1993, Walker 1985 and Winks 1997), many leaving the specific region of Halifax, left many of Nova Scotia's Black communities depopulated and struggling to survive.¹³

2.2 Jamaican Maroons

The Black migrants from the Caribbean known as the Trelawny Maroons of Jamaica, began to arrive in Nova Scotia in 1796. It is believed that the Maroons were descendants of Black slaves brought from West Africa to Jamaica who procreated with the Arawak Native women of Jamaica (Grant 2002, 17 and Winks 1997). Winks highlights that the Jamaican Maroons were great warriors. Living up to their reputation, the Maroons had escaped from the Spanish in Jamaica before the British conquest of the island. The Spanish had taught the Maroons to fight the British invaders, which left the Maroons free and hidden away within the interior of Jamaica for over a century. In the late eighteenth century, approximately 550-560 Maroons were forced into exile from their Jamaican home after breaking a peace treaty with the British colonial government (Grant 2002).

Following the long journey from the Caribbean to the shores of Halifax, Nova Scotia, the Maroons were not immediately permitted to disembark from their ships. However, the British were at a war with France in 1796, and there was suspicion that a French squadron was off the coast of Nova Scotia and was expected to invade Halifax harbour. Because of the anticipated invasion and the decaying state of Halifax's fortifications defending the harbour, the Maroons were allowed to disembark following an arrangement that was made for them to "voluntarily [work] as labourers on the fortifications..." (Grant 2002, 37). In 1800, only four years after their arrival, many of the Maroons chose to out-migrate from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone, taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the Sierra Leone Company. Unfortunately, the records of this group are, at best, ambiguous. From the information that is known, most Maroons arrived

¹³ For a fictional narrative of the Black Loyalist account see Lawrence Hill's recently published book, *The Book of Negroes* (2008). *The Book of Negroes* won the 2008 Overall Common Wealth Writer's Prize for best book.

in Nova Scotia and then out-migrated four years later. Unfortunately it is not known why they decided to leave en masse. It has been suggested that the Maroons found the contrast of Nova Scotian weather to Jamaican weather difficult to bear, and were troubled by their subordinate treatment from White Nova Scotians as unwanted and unsuitable to create a successful settlement (Grant 2002). However, what is known, despite their short stay in Nova Scotia, is that this group made a significant impression on the landscape of Halifax. Through their labour on the various forts throughout Halifax, in particular their work on the heritage site of Citadel Hill, they participated in creating a recognized historical piece of Canadian landscape. This detail is pivotal in that the Maroons, who are the ancestors of some of the Black population of Nova Scotia, do in fact, have an unchallengeable place in Canadian history through their work on Citadel Hill. This fact will be important later in the paper as I discuss actions by the Canadian dominant group and their various attempts to “throw out black geographies” (McKittrick 2002, 28), or in other words, de-legitimize Black people’s claim to belonging to Canada. Amazingly, one may detect in the present-day speech of Black Nova Scotians the accents and word-phrasing from the small group of Maroons who chose not to leave Nova Scotia (Grant 2002).

2.3 Black Refugees

It would be impossible for any persons to support families on [the Refugees’ land] – And no class of settlers, lest their habits be ever so industrious could possibly maintain their families on lots of the same size and quality (Memorial of John Chamberlain, Alexander Lyle, Alexander Farquharson, Fredrick Major, and Allan MacDonald...Reside in the neighbourhood of the people of colour settled in Preston, 8 June 1838, RG 1, vol.422, doc. 49, NSARM as quoted in Whitfield, 2006).

Large numbers of ex-slaves began to arrive on the shores of Nova Scotia during the War of 1812, after risking their lives by deserting their slave-masters and fighting for the British forces in the hope of finding freedom and securing the opportunity of promised land. This meant that large groups were arriving on the shores of Nova Scotia who were poverty stricken people and in need of food, clothing and shelter (Whitfield 2005).

Between 1813-1818 over 2,000 refugees deserted their masters and arrived on the shores of Nova Scotia, with 400 continuing on to New Brunswick (Whitfield 2006). Like the Black Loyalists, the Black refugees were unable to access the promised land on par with White settlers arriving in Nova Scotia. Since many Black Loyalists and the Maroons had abandoned their lives in Nova Scotia, the colonial government spent more time attempting to discourage the refugees from settling in Nova Scotia rather than on assisting them with their resettlement. The colonial government of Nova Scotia wished to remove the refugees upon their arrival because the 1,600 ex-slaves seemed unsupportable for the colonial treasury. It was desired by the government to resettle the refugees in a “warmer climate” before they began to settle in Hammonds Plains and Preston (Whitfield 2006).

The majority of the Black refugees remained in Nova Scotia after their initial settlement, unlike their predecessors. Thus, many Black Nova Scotians are descendants from this specific migrant group. Some historians have suggested that the refugees have had the most difficulty settling compared to their earlier counter-parts. Winks (1997) blames their further difficulties on what he claims is their self-induced segregation by developing communities apart from white communities. Yet, as revealed in the previous discussion of Black settlements, in many cases Black settlers had little choice in where to settle and were often only given the option to settle apart from White communities. Whitfield (2005) suggests that by the time that the Black refugees arrived in Nova Scotia, the experiences of the Black Loyalists and Jamaican Maroons had left a “two-pronged legacy that the Blacks [refugees] inherited” (3). That legacy included a notion held by many in the colony that people of African descent were unable to survive in Nova Scotia, an idea they claimed was supported by the fact that many Loyalists and almost all the Maroons had exited the colony. Second, the influx of Black slaves entering the colony with the Loyalists informed racial attitudes in the late 18th century and early 19th century. Whitfield (2005) explains the relations between the Blacks and Whites in the colony as

an extension of the dynamic relations of slavery, whereby Black communities were ranked at the bottom of the racial hierarchical order. This image was used to argue that Black Refugees were not fit to settle in Nova Scotia. Emphasizing this theme was a letter from Lord Dalhousie to Lord Bathurst in 1816 in which Dalhousie stated:

Permit me to state plainly to Your Lordship that little hope can be entertained of settling these people so as to provide for their families and wants – they must be supported for many years – Slaves by habit and education, no longer working under the dread of the lash, their idea of freedom is idleness and they are therefore quite incapable of industry (as quoted in Whitfield 2006, 112).

Whitfield reveals that many Nova Scotians viewed the Black Refugees as a group that was characterized by depravity, dependency and idleness, and the conventional opinion from the colony suggested that Blacks did not belong in the colony and should be removed at the earliest convenience.

Whitfield (2006) notes that critical time was wasted during the initial refugee resettlement due to the belief that the refugees would only be in Nova Scotia temporarily, like their predecessors. Finally, in 1815, colonial policy was readjusted to meet some of the needs of the refugees after the government realized they could no longer resist refugee settlement. These revisions, under Lord Castlereagh, the supervisor of the collection of custom, included establishing Melville Island, an old prison, as a place to disembark. This island was conveniently located on the west side of the Northwest Arm off the peninsula of Halifax, near the major harbour of the city. Melville Island acted as a place of quarantine for the flood of refugees before the colonial government decided where to send them. For example, over 700 refugees arrived between April and July of 1815. Whitfield notes that as a temporary shelter, Melville Island was a success.

Finally, the refugees began to be moved to settlements such as Preston, Hammonds Plains, Halifax and many other smaller Black communities. Whitfield (2005) notes that the Black refugees were treated in a somewhat similar fashion as White European settlers, in that they were given land and food rations upon settlement. However, the refugees, regardless of their family size or military service, if given any

land at all, were only given ten-acre land plots, in contrast to the 100-acre land plots European settlers received. Also the refugees were given a ‘ticket of location’ for land to settle on instead of ‘freehold grants’ (Colter 2006). This meant ownership of land was not granted, which, in itself, served to marginalize and disadvantage from the beginning this group in comparison with the dominant White group. The problems that grew out of the lack of unclear land ownership intensified later in the history of marginalization that is the legacy of Black Nova Scotians. Ambiguous land ownership has been a quintessential factor of the poverty-stricken state of Blacks.

Group	Date of Arrival	Quantity	Settled	Notes
Black Freeman and slaves	Documented as early as 1606	In 1767 it was recorded that 104 out of the 13,374 residents of Nova Scotia were Black (Pachai 1993). Yet, Mensah (2002) states that in 1776 there were approximately 500 slaves and by 1784 after the influx of the Loyalists there were 1,500 slaves in Nova Scotia.	Louisbourg, Ile Royale (present-day Cape Breton), around Halifax	Mattieu de Costa and Olivier le Jeune have been documented as the first recorded Blacks in Nova Scotia
Black Loyalists	1782-84	3,500	Birchtown, Little Tracadie (near Guysborough), Brindley Town, Digby and around Halifax (Preston and Hammonds Plains)	Exodus to Sierra Leone: in January 1792 1,196 Black members left the Maritimes
Jamaican Maroons	1796	550-600	Maroon Hill (currently	The majority of the Maroon migrants exited Nova Scotia in

			Sackville, near Halifax)	1800 after the arrangement of the Sierra Leone Company brought the Maroons to Freetown, Sierra Leone
Black Refugees	1812-16	2,000	Many went to Preston (924) and Hammonds Plains (504)	The refugees were initially held at Melville Island in the Halifax Harbour as a quarantine and holding place

Figure 2: Black migration groups

It has been recorded that this group of migrants did worse in settlement than the previous wave of the Black Loyalists. One suggestion for this poor result was because most arrived from southern states, such as Virginia and Maryland, while Black Loyalists tended to originate from the northern United States which had a climate similar to that of Nova Scotia (Grant 1980). Also, as a group, the Black Refugees held minimal skills, which is credited to their previous state of slavery, in comparison to Black Loyalists, some of whom were *free* men. Winks (1997) further emphasizes that the refugee struggle was related to their previous state of slavery. He suggests that upon gaining freedom, they were more vulnerable than the Black Loyalists and Maroons because they were not accustomed to defining their own destiny. They were familiar with being dependent and taken care of by their slave-masters. Unfortunately, the Black Refugees arrived in Nova Scotia during a time when White labour was relatively cheap, which made it more difficult to find stable wage labour to survive. For example, post-1832 some 16,000 white European immigrants arrived in Nova Scotia looking for wage labour with another 60,000 arriving over the next 25 years (Henry 1973). Frances Henry (1973) notes that by 1824, many Blacks from the various migrant groups were reduced to petty thievery and begging. This was compounded by racist attitudes of the White settlers that further demoralized the Black settlements. An example of an oppressive measure taken by the Nova Scotia government was the School Act of 1811. This Act supplied financial support only to schools that were already built, had a teacher hired and had a certain amount of money available for the expenses of a school. In most cases, Black communities could

not meet these standards and, therefore, many Black children received little to no schooling (Henry 1973).

2.4 Conclusion

Nova Scotian Blacks were anything but a homogenous group. As has been revealed, there was a recorded difference between the Black Loyalists, the Maroons and Refugees, such as a variation of religious practices, the level of skilled training and the level of successful resettlement. Yet, the common experience of racialization of Black migrants has led to this group's homogenizing factor and as time passed these groups began to merge, living together in communities such as Preston and Hammonds Plains, and became socially categorized as one group: *Black Nova Scotians*. The *Black Nova Scotians* common migration pattern was a driving force of the formation of this group and 'the Black experience.' Additionally, the common of racialization Unclear land ownership and control of Black space by the dominant group was common in Nova Scotia. The next section of this paper will look more directly at more recent forms of discrimination and exclusion of Black Nova Scotians by looking particularly at both the access to quality land and unclear land ownership. The specific case study of Africville, Nova Scotia will be used as a focal point to demonstrate the devastation that land removal can cause on a community. The theoretical framework of the racialization of space and whiteness theory will be introduced as it relates to the situation.



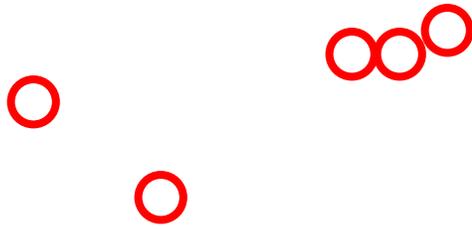


Figure 3: Map of Nova Scotia Black communities

(Geology.com 2008).

Communities circled: Weymouth Falls, Birchtown, North Preston, East Preston, Cherry Brook, Hammonds Plains, Halifax, Beechville, Guysborough and Whitney Pier (Cape Breton)

Chapter 3 The Story of Africville: Literature Review and the introduction of Theories

Where the pavement ended and the dirt road began...that was where Africville was... (CBC Archives Broadcast 2000).



Figure 4: Africville

Africville was within the city limits but as the photo shows was detached from Halifax, survived without city services and had a rural feeling (Clairmont and Magill 1999).

At its height, Africville was a community of 400 inhabitants, 80 families. Its residents were relocated in the 1960s, in most cases without proper compensation for the loss of their homes and property. Sadly, many former residents had difficulty providing documented proof that they owned their homes because of the history of ambiguous land transfers to Blacks in Nova Scotia. Those who could not produce deeds to their properties were compensated with only five hundred dollars, a limited furniture allowance and most of them were placed into city-owned public housing at Uniacke Square and Mulgrave Park (Saunders et al 1992, 70). In the worst cases, some former residents were unable to access any compensation at all. Howard McCurdy (2001) argues in *Africville: Environmental Racism*, that the Black people living in Africville lived under horrendous environmental conditions and the reason for it was racism. McCurdy further argues that the environmental attack started almost as early as the population of Africville settled on the land, with the construction of the railway, built directly through property owned by Africvillians in 1855. In the original research produced about Africville, the *Africville Relocation Report*, Clairmont and Magill (1973) concluded that,

Throughout their settlement in Nova Scotia, blacks have had to carry a special burden, the burden of the white man's prejudice, discrimination and oppression. The result is that Nova Scotia's blacks became marginal people in a relatively depressed region (31).

3.1 The Settlement of Africville

The people who settled on the Africville land had experienced discrimination before they arrived on its shores, therefore, life in Africville was simply an extension of the way in which discrimination already had encapsulated the lives of Black Nova Scotians. Some of the examples of discrimination in Africville were striking. A central discriminatory theme reinforced that Africville was 'in' but not 'of' the city of Halifax. For Africvillians, their payment of municipal taxes never equated into services extended

into the community such as, running water, indoor plumbing or garbage collections that other tax-paying neighbourhoods received (Clairmont and Magill 1973 and 1999, Saunders, et al., 1992, CBC Archives 1962 and 2000 and Nelson 2008). Other forms of discrimination and exclusion included the rejection of building permits from residents to improve properties, minimal police services to the area and the placing of undesirable industries on the periphery of Africville (Clairmont and Magill 1973 and 1999, Saunders, et al., 1992, CBC Archives 1962 and 2000 and Nelson 2008). Over the years a slaughterhouse, an infectious disease hospital, a prison and a landfill site were allowed to locate on the periphery of the community. Africville, like many other Black communities, was a community that represented a symbol of the struggle against racism from the White-dominant society and segregation in Nova Scotia (Saunders, et al., 1992). Much of Africville's history was associated with domination from the white society of Nova Scotia. More specifically, domination was exhibited by the governing Halifax city council, whose members exercised their racial position in the hierarchical order. Nelson (2001) applies the theory of spatial order to the relationship between the city of Halifax and Africville. By doing so, she highlights "how white dominance and subjectivity are secured through the incitement to place, re-place and displace people in particular spaces, as well as to make and re-make the space themselves" (23). In essence, Nelson is stating that the dominant group can decide to take desirable land away from marginalized, racialized groups because of their dominant and powerful position in the spatial order of the relationship. Nelson states that the application of this analysis to the relocation project of Africville disrupts the common assumption that the removal of Africville was completed with good intent, but disastrously failed.

Through the available histories of Black Nova Scotia, it is widely thought that the descendants of the four Black migrant groups, former slaves in Nova Scotia, the Jamaican Maroons, the Black Loyalists and the Black refugees, made up the settlers of Africville. The exact details pertaining to Africville's settlement are not specifically known, the

official purchase of property deeds by William Brown and William Arnold date to 1848 (Clairmont and Magill 1999, Spirit 1992, CBC Archives 1973 and Nelson 2008). However, various theories of Africville's settlement have been derived through the available documented histories, oral histories and folklore. Many have said that there was earlier settlement in Africville prior to 1848, perhaps dating to the 1700s (UN Report 2004). For example, it is thought that William Brown moved to Africville land in 1838 (CBC Archives 1973) from the rocky land of Hammonds Plains. William Brown likely migrated to Africville from Hammonds Plains after being assigned to the location of Africville for better opportunities (Sparks 2001 and CBC Archives 1973).

As stated before, William Brown and William Arnold were the first to own land at the site of Africville with the purchase of 16 five-acre lots on the north shores of the city of Halifax. However, it is believed that Black settlers had occupied this land before the date on the purchase deeds in 1848 (Clairmont and Magill 1999). It is widely suggested and accepted within the descendants of Africville, the Black community and the allies of Africville that the residents of Africville occupied the land as early as the mid-eighteenth century, a full hundred years before the issuance of deeds. Official city records state that the land was previously owned by Whites but not occupied. It has been speculated that the gentry of this period living in Halifax who owned slaves and engaged in slave commerce permitted occupation of some portion of the Africville lands by their slaves or Black servants. It has also been suggested that the land could have been for special slaves who had achieved good favour with their masters, or that the settlement could have been the outcome of the proliferation of the slave families, and after some time it became too difficult to resettle the community (Sparks 2001)¹⁴.

Other theories have stated that there could have been sexual entanglements between Blacks and Whites and that the land was occupied by the offspring. Or, it has been noted that the land was a "stopping grounds" for migrant workers arriving on the

¹⁴ Corrine Sparks (2001) received her information (for the next three citations) from an interview with Henry Bishop.

shores of Halifax from the Caribbean. Folklore even suggests that William Brown was rewarded by Prince Edward for his service, and it was he who granted him this land. Accounts of the origins of the Africville land, therefore, have ranged from Crown grants to specific bequests from Prince Edward and later Queen Victoria (Ibid). Although oral histories indicate that the land of Africville could have been granted to Black settlers by royalty, this is not supported by documented evidence. However, Sparks (2001) notes these accounts should not be entirely discounted because they were not unknown to Black communities. Regardless of how the settlement of Africville materialized, the people who came to settle on the Africville land are suspected to have moved closer to the shores of the Halifax harbour from the rocky land of Hammonds Plains and Preston by choice. The land on the shores of the Bedford Basin proved to be valuable because it provided a more stable mode of survival by way of fishing and the proximity to wage labour in the Halifax area (Saunders, et al., 1992, Clairmont and Magill 1999, Nelson 2008 and CBC Archives). One could suggest that Africville's settlement was an attempt by Black Nova Scotians to better their racial status on the racial hierarchical order (Nelson 2008) by settling on better quality land.

The lack of services to the community was not the only form of discrimination Africville faced during its existence. On many occasions, residents tried to obtain building permits from the City to improve their property. However, the city rejected these petitions at every submission. William Brown, (one of the founding members of the community), petitioned the city for financial aid for a school, but this was also turned down. Specifically the School Act of 1811 excluded the community from access to government funding for education. Throughout Africville's existence, complaints and petitions continued for police services, building permits and garbage services, but again all these services were denied (CBC Archives). Instead, and out of necessity, Africville built its own church, school, post-office, penny store and acquired some employment (Clairmont and Magill 1999). During the early period of Africville, livelihoods were

comprised mostly of fishing and farming small vegetable gardens, and raising goats, chickens and horses. In addition, there was some wage labour outside of Africville in occupations such as porters, servants or labourers at the nearby industries. As a result, throughout the community's existence Africvillians were self-sufficient and independent from the city, with very few of them relying on social assistance (Gary and Mackenzie 1991, video-recording).

Relocation of the community was a certainty from practically its beginning. A petition from William Brown dated, March 21 1860, requesting compensation for land that had been expropriated for the railway, was denied. The city had expropriated the land six years earlier in 1855 and in some cases the city had moved families but had not re-assigned the land to them (Nelson 2008), which later led to uncertain land ownership when the entire community was relocated. Again, in 1901 the City forced another five families to move for the further development of railway tracks that ran directly through the community, making residents cross them in order to get to the school or visit each other (Ibid). By 1907, the city had purchased properties on all sides of Africville which were auctioned off to manufacturers and factories that were deemed undesirable to be located elsewhere in the city limits, especially near the affluent, white, south-end neighbourhoods of Halifax (Ibid). Nelson reveals from city council minutes that Africville living conditions were consistently ignored because the city had always intended to expand the north-end of Halifax, where Africville was located, into an industrial zone. She notes that in 1915, a city-engineer emphasized this intent by stating, "...we may be obliged in the future to consider the interest of the industry first" (81). As the city of Halifax expanded during the late 19th century, more industries reached the outskirts of the city which was on the periphery of the land of Africville. The construction of industry near Africville and Halifax's North-End added to the class and race divisions within Halifax as former white residents of the north-end flocked to the southern neighbourhoods (Ibid). Yet, to a certain degree the industries benefited the

residents of Africville because some found employment at the nearby factories, or became porters with the railway, or collected scrap metal at the local dump to resell. Some residents of Africville did, in fact, commute into the city to find work. My point is two-fold; to highlight that this small community at many attempts tried to improve their living conditions through petitions and letters written to the municipal government. They did not act as passive victims of racism. Yet, upon the numerous denials of services, the residents coped and out of necessity found ways to survive in the oppressed society they were forced to endure. Africvillians, despite their efforts, lived in a state of uncertainty throughout the community's existence. They were unsure of whether their community would receive services or be relocated. In 1964, an official decision was made to evict the residents.

3.2 Africville Relocation/Removal

It has been suggested that two developments made the proposal of Africville's relocation a reality. These developments were the Stephenson Report of 1957 and the creation of the City's Department of Development in 1961 (Saunders, et al. 1992). The city of Halifax, following World War II, experienced significant population and economic growth. Because of the limitation of space on the peninsula of the city and the "pushed to its limit" notion (Clairmont and Magill 1999), the hiring of a city planner was encouraged by the City Council, the Halifax branch of Community Planning Association of Canada and both senior levels of government. Gordon Stephenson the newly hired city planner, produced the Stephenson Report in response to a request to do something about the "long standing problem of Africville" (Saunders, et al. 1992, 56). This was during the same era, the 1950s, that cities across Canada were engaging in urban renewal and public housing construction which occurred in places such as Newfoundland, the Canadian North and elsewhere, with Africville being no exception (Ibid). It was a period when people of low-economic status or people of racial minorities were displaced by the process of *slum-clearing* for commercial and industrial development (Ibid). The persons

displaced by these projects were often placed in rent-subsidized public housing projects which were owned by municipal housing commissions. In addition, against the fate of Africville, major Canadian pioneering urban renewal projects were received as successes, such as Toronto's Regent Park, (Rose 1958). The city followed Gordon Stephenson's guidance, when he advised the city that, "There are only two things to be said: The families will have to be re-housed in the near future. The land which they now occupy will be required for the future development of the City" (Saunders et al. 1992, 56).

The precipitating events directly leading to Africville's relocation began in 1954 with the city council's ongoing discussion of the development of the City-owned property that surrounded Africville and a report, *Africville*, also suggesting what should be done with the land. The report outlined the city's intentions for the site of Africville. It stated,

The area is not suited for residences but properly developed is ideal for industrial purposes. There is water frontage for piers, the railways for sidings, a road to be developed leading directly downtown and in the other direction to the provincial highway (Clairmont and Magill 1999, 137).

The initial relocation terms were under the jurisdiction of the newly established Development Department and its director, Robert Grant, who wrote the 1962 *Africville* report which, like the earlier Stephenson Report (1957), considered relocation as the only viable solution. Like the authors of many of the Africville 'consultation reports,' Grant wrote his report without directly interacting with the people of Africville; rather, he consulted with a man who had lived in Africville as a child, years earlier (Nelson 2008 and Saunders 1999). Grant had previously witnessed the relocation of hundreds of fishing outposts in Newfoundland and saw no value in "rebuilding a coloured ghetto on the same land" (Ibid, 140). Grant's new position's portfolio included redeveloping central downtown Halifax, the Uniacke Square Public Housing Clearance Program and Africville. Within the *Africville* report he estimated the cost to remove the homes from the Africville site to be \$40,000-70,000. The report suggested that the residents of Africville could be relocated southwest of the Africville site into 32 newly constructed

two-story townhouse lots, which would be sold to them for \$7000, with \$6000 in mortgages. It was proposed that residents who could provide proof of ownership to their land and housing would be properly compensated for their property. Those who could not provide clear ownership would receive five hundred dollars (Saunders et al 1992 and Nelson 2008).

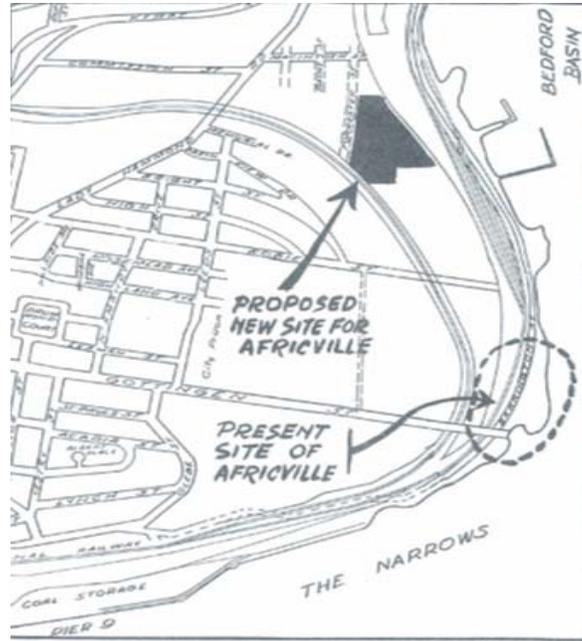


Figure 5: A proposal of a relocated Africville (Clairmont Magill 1999).

3.3 The Removal

If you ever watched someone you love die slowly, day-by-day, hour-by-hour, then you know what it was like being in Africville during the relocation (Charles Saunders as quoted in Nelson 2008, 90).

In 1962, the relocation of Africville was one step closer to reality with the city council planning board approving engineering and cost studies for the development of the north shore of the Bedford Basin, through a document called the North Shore Development Plan (See Figure 5 – Map of NSDP on page 48). This plan, separate from Grant’s *Africville* report, yet, echoing it, highlighted the blight of Africville as an obstacle

to the development. Assistant planner, D.A. Baker of the Development Department in a 1962 memorandum echoed Grant, stating:

Africville stands out as the greatest problem in this study area, and a lengthy legal and administrative problem is likely to stem from establishing ownerships, etc., and forestall an early development of the 'shanty town.' City council must also clarify its position and policy in relation to the rehousing of the Africville population (Clairmont and Magill 1999, 138).

If the North Shore Development Plan had been approved, it would have required the city staff to finalize decisions about the 'Africville problem'. Nonetheless, it acted as a key catalyst for initiating the chain of events which eventually did lead to the Africville relocation.

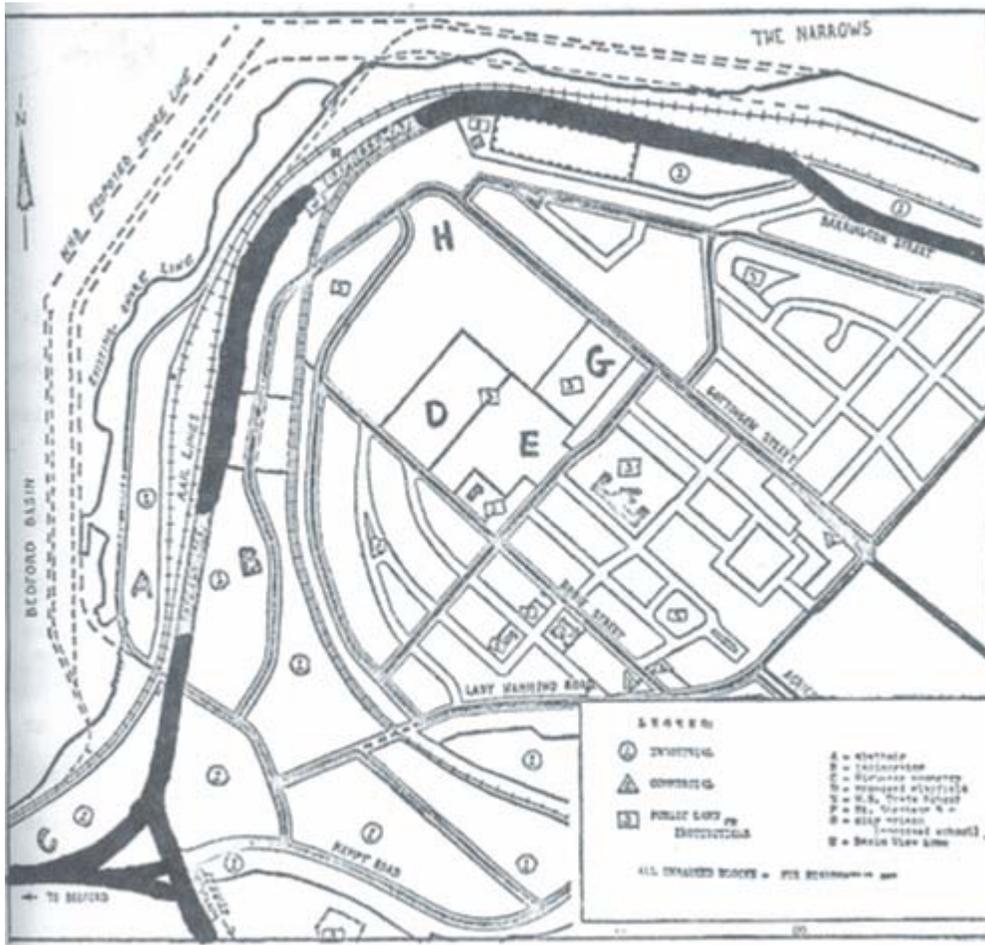


Figure 6: Map of the North Shore Development Plan

By mid-1962, local media were publishing articles claiming Africville would be relocated.¹⁵ On October 24, 1962, the city council met and discussed *Africville*, Grant's report, with the Black-White Caretaker Alliance, also known as Halifax Human Rights Advisory Committee (HHRAC). However, at this meeting the alliance representing Africville, yet not residents of the community, had little negotiating power to convince the city council that alternatives to relocation were still an option. The chairman of the alliance, however still addressed the aldermen of the city council to attempt to divert the relocation plans:

The impression the Africville people have of you is a big white brother pushing the black children around, and they resent it. If they were a majority group, you would have heard their impression first (Ibid,150).

The following day the city council met again, but without the alliance, and made the final decision that the residents of Africville would, in fact, be removed from the land to allow for potential city development. The unanimous vote to relocate was adopted after voting on the recommendations of the *Africville* report¹⁶ (Ibid). This left the alliance in a difficult position, yet they kept looking to negotiate other options. The alliance explored many alternative options, such as co-operative housing or extending water and sewage services into the community. The Alliance remained uncertain about which to act upon because of the nature of their "liberal belief in rational decision-making to solve problems" (Ibid, 153). In the end, they decided to consult a specialist, Dr. Albert Rose from the University of Toronto. Rose was a recognized Canadian urban expert and author of *Regent Park: A Study in Slum Clearance*. Near the end of 1963, Rose was invited to visit Halifax to review Africville and provide his expert opinion. The city paid Rose five hundred dollars for a ten-page report which echoed the already existing views and plans of the city council (Nelson 2008). Rose spent only a few hours in the community and did

¹⁵ Africville Settlement Must Go in the *Mail-Star* on August 11, 1962 or Africville Awaits the Wreckers in the *Mail-Star* on August 26, 1962.

¹⁶ Note, the proposal to build housing for Africville residents southwest of its location never materialized. This recommendation was never endorsed.

not speak with local residents of Africville. He did consult with city officials and university reviews from Dalhousie University to gather a consensus for his report. Clairmont and Magill (1999) reveal that only after the removal of Africville was Rose made aware that his report would be the deciding factor for the Africville relocation. He claims he would have approached his report entirely differently if he had known of its likely importance.

The Development Model, which was used by the city of Halifax to relocate Africville residents, was a type of relocation that was justified for its supposed benefits for the city and society as a whole (Saunders, et al 1992). The Development Model was normally incorporated by political authorities along with its underlying ideology as being system-oriented and neo-capitalistic (Clairmont and Magill 1999). A city's design would typically focus on "...beautification, zoning and structure, and was usually intended to increase the city tax base and achieve civic pride or attract industry" (Ibid, 5). Beautification was a priority for the city of Halifax during the 1950s-1960s, and Africville, by no fault of its own, had received national and international attention because of its 'slum-like' conditions and was known worldwide as Halifax's embarrassment (Nelson 2006, 267).

3.4 Literature Review and Commemorations

The *Africville Relocation Report* was conducted by Dr. Donald H. Clairmont, (Dalhousie University, Department of Sociology) and Dennis W. Magill, (University of Toronto, Department of Sociology). It is still a significant piece of work on Africville in that it was the first study produced during and following the destruction of the community. It is the reflection and starting point for much subsequent research produced regarding Africville. The research began in mid-1967 when Donald Clairmont put forth a proposal to develop a comprehensive study of Africville's history and follow up on the relocated. The motivation to produce this 450-plus page study was out of a need to

examine the thousands of Canadians who had been affected by government relocation initiatives during the 1950s and 1960s.

In the post-1945 era, relocation initiatives have affected thousands and many were carried out without consultation, adequate funding and programs available for the relocated populations. Specifically, the *Africville Relocation Report* was conducted to first look at what happened to the people of Africville. Second, the study was done because of the symbolic importance that Africville represents not only to Halifax but to Nova Scotia and beyond. According to Guy Henson, director of the entire study, this study was important for its “obligation upon government and the general community to record, interpret and evaluate their action in expropriating property and forcing the removal of people” (Clairmont and Magill 19973, x). Finally, the *Africville Relocation Report* was completed because the theory and practice of relocation at that time had not sufficiently advanced to provide the criteria to evaluate the relocation of Africville (Ibid). In addition, this study acted as *action research* to address the problems the relocatees endured after their removal, in that it brought together the Africville relocatees collectively for the first time since they had been forced to leave Africville (Ibid). This research gives valuable insight because it began as the removal of Africville was ongoing, thus the initial emotions of the relocated residents would be fresh in the minds of those who participated in this study. This study does not necessarily include the hindsight expression that much research on Africville includes today. Finally, the report is the largest source on Africville compiled into one document. It took twelve years in total to complete. Subsequently, information from this report has been incorporated into the book, *Africville: the Life and Death of a Canadian Black Community* (Clairmont and Magill 1999).

Author Jennifer Nelson, who has written extensively on the topic of Africville, has made a conscious effort in her writing to avoid using the term ‘relocation’ when referring to the removal of Africville. She declares that the term misrepresents what was

done to the people of Africville because the community was not transported collectively to a new location. Instead, Nelson highlights that Africville was destroyed and the people were spread out and forced to live neither in places they chose nor together as a community. Nelson chooses to use the terms ‘dislocation’, ‘forced dislocation’ or ‘destruction’ (2001, 14).

In addition, Katherine McKittrick (2002), using examples other than Africville, has argued that the renaming of Black geographies, such as the renaming of Negro Creek Road in Holland Township, Ontario to Moggie Road after a white settler (Peake and Ray 2001) invites certain questions about how Canada is spatially produced. She states that discarding and rewriting geography according to racial, white-dominant hierarchies requires acknowledgement by the dominant group that such actions disrupt geo-political landscapes such as Africville. McKittrick also argues that “black Canadian geographies are permanently linked to the Canadian landscape, both historically and presently” (2002, 28) despite Canada’s attempts to banish their existences. The existence of citations of folklore, narratives, histories, songs, novels and events of Black Canadians is evidence, which McKittrick presents, that Black Canadians do, indeed, hold a long presence in the geography of Canada. Specifically in Nova Scotia, the Jamaican Maroons participation in the construction of Citadel Hill is an example that demonstrates Black belonging that dates back to the late eighteenth century.

3.5 Memory with the attempt to reclaim space

Efforts by former residents of Africville have been made to maintain the community and ‘spirit of Africville’ in essence, to resist McKittrick’s tag-phrase, “to throw out Black geographies” (2002). In 1989, Mount Saint Vincent University, located on the shores of the Bedford Basin, and within a few kilometres from the former site of Africville, hosted an exhibition that displayed the stories of former residents, depicting their daily lives through photos, artifacts, audio-visual aids and written documentation. It was called *Africville: A Spirit that Lives On*. This exhibit toured nationwide in the early

1990s, and now is a permanent exhibit at the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia. The National Film Board produced a documentary entitled *Remember Africville* in 1991 which depicts the way of life in Africville through photography, storytelling and live footage shot of Africville during the community's final days. The film also includes interviews with residents concerning their feelings about being forced to move from their community, particularly from Irvine Carvery, current president of the Africville Genealogical Society (Gray and Mackenzie 1991, video-recording). In the film, it shows a meeting where former residents of Africville were interrogating former City Councillors about their actions during the destruction of Africville. The former residents attested to the great emotional loss and physical fear surrounding relocation. In reply, the former mayor of Halifax, Alan O'Brien, responded with rhetoric strikingly similar to that used in the 1960s. Reading directly from a transcript, he tells residents that the City officials merely followed the advice of experts in the field of urban renewal, and the removal was not done out of systematic racism, again reinforcing the pain of stolen land. Yet, the mayor failed to reveal to former residents of Africville that the "expert" advice was largely based on information provided by the Halifax city council.

These documents underscore the ongoing efforts to reproduce the memory and spirit of Africville, and the slow struggle to gain recognition as a community which needs to be remembered in Canadian history and deserves reparations. Recently, the Toronto-based organization, *Stolen From Africa Movement*, Hip Hop artists *Logikal Ethix* and *Unknown Mizery* travelled to Nova Scotia in the summer of 2007, funded by Canadian Heritage Foundation. To date, they have produced phase one of the documentary *Stolen From Africville* to preserve the "forgotten and hidden history of Blacks in Canada" (2008). Additionally, the song *Africville* has been recorded by *Logikal Ethix*, *Unknown Mizery*, *Papa Grand* and *Mr. 902* describing some of the hidden histories of Black Nova Scotians and Canadians. Other notable contributions have been the compilation of

Africville Suite by jazz musician Joe Sealy, the creation of the Africville Genealogy Society in 1981, the annual Africville picnic and the publishing of *The Spirit of Africville*.

A particular theme that former residents focused on was that the land they occupied was deemed too valuable to remain 'black space' (Nelson 2008, 10). In 1985, Seaview Park was created on Africville soil as a tribute to the community. It cost the tax-payers approximately one million dollars. However, it has been asked by some, that if this amount of money could be spent on a park that was on Africville soil and no major industrial development occurred on the land, then why could this money not have gone towards upgrading the homes of Africville. The park bears no resemblance to what the community once was. Without knowing the history of this space, a visitor to the park could think that the park is simply a park to honour the founding Black families and communities. Nelson notes after a visit to Seaview, "Unless one knows, nothing in sight speaks to the history of this space" (Nelson 2002, 228).

The further affront to the significance of the land to Africvillians took place fifteen years after the last home was bulldozed, when this former Black space became a public park, open to all. It became a public domain, declared by the mayor, at the opening ceremonies of the park as a space "for young and old, a place to dream their dreams," (Nelson 2008, 23) open to everyone. The city was able to control the destiny of the space to make it "public space" (Ibid, 22). This was one more defeat for Africvillians because the park served to disavow the former residents' claim to the land. For several years, the Africville Genealogy Society was actively pressuring City Hall to re-build the Seaview African Baptist United Church on its former site, Seaview Park. Other demands included employment of former residents or descendants at the park and consideration for compensation for those who were inadequately compensated. Brothers Eddie and Victor Carvery, the older grand-nephews of "Pa" Carvery, practiced a more aggressive form of lobbying by camping on the former land of Africville for six years (1994-2000) (*The Chronicle Herald* 2008) to protest the inadequate compensation of the community

following another report from the Halifax city social planning director Bob Britton in November 1994 (Saunders 1999). The report echoed previous city reports suggesting the community was properly compensated. Yet, again through the power of city council, camping overnight in public parks was made illegal in March 1995, by Mayor Walter Fitzgerald (Ibid, 212) forcing the Carvery brothers off the land. A by-law was passed in 1995 shortly before Halifax hosted the then - G-7 summit in 1995, once again removing Halifax's *embarrassment* and showcasing its power over the management of Black space.

To assist in further developing McKittrick's themes and the city's continual effort to resist Africville as a Black space, Robert Osbourne (2005) provides an analysis of Seaview Memorial Park and the sun-dial monument that have both been erected on parts of the former site of Africville (Figure 6 –Sundial). Osbourne, in his dissertation *Africville: Place of Memory*, argues that an additional culturally symbolic and functional gesture should be erected to speak to this community's sense of loss (69). This has not been done.



Figure 7: The Sundial

The sundial is a monument to remember Black settlers. It is on the former site of Africville, now Seaview Memorial Park (Saunders, et al. 1992).

3.6 Opinions of Relocation

Local opinions over the *space* of Africville and the city's treatment towards relocated residents are still divided and controversial. Addressing whether or not the relocation of Africville was the correct decision is a question that varies depending upon whom one asks. Nelson, a native of Nova Scotia, opens her book, *Razing Africville*, with the notion that the word Africville elicits impassioned responses. As an example, an early opinion from a former City Council official on the removal of some Africville residents that was made in 1968 suggests that the relocation was a local success. At a city council meeting, it was stated:

The social significance of the Africville program is already beginning to show positive results as far as individual families are concerned. The children are performing more satisfactorily in school and they seem to take more of an interest in their new surroundings (Clairmont and Magill 1999, 3).

The comments regarding Africville children performing more satisfactorily in school is superficial because the City was never interested in the education and well-being of Africville children, hence the exclusion from government funding for schooling through the School Act of 1811 and the legislated segregation of schools based on skin colour that governed Nova Scotia until the 1954 (Colley 2008).

Anger and discriminatory responses have been expressed at every point of Africville's relocation, in addition to the continuous attention Africville has received in the aftermath of its removal. During the relocation era, the media fuelled the portrayal of Africville as a *slum* and a social problem that could be fixed only by relocation. Racist or uninformed attitudes, unaware of the power of White dominance, which allowed for the removal of Africville have fuelled many ignorant remarks by Haligonians regarding the community, and, in actuality, are indeed racist. Some current opinions of Africville still argue that its residents were squatters and held no legal titles to the land. The situation was also treated by the governing body as a humanitarian effort, for which the residents of the community should be grateful. For example, the following local newspaper titles

provide the tone of the media coverage: “Africville Settlement Must Go” in the *Halifax Mail Star* August 11, 1962, “Dwelling at Dump not very Historic” in the *Halifax Mail Star* 1963, “The Black Ghetto that Fears to Integrate” in *MacLean’s* magazine July 1965, or “The Slow and Welcome Death of Africville” in *The Star Weekly*, 1966. As Nelson (2008) notes, White perspectives on Africville include shame, pity, regret or anger. Yet, the stance I take rejects that Africville was removed from Halifax’s landscape based on a humanitarian effort.

Local Halifax-based journalist Stephen Kimber has reported and written extensively on Africville since its relocation and is a long-standing ally of Africvillians. In 2004, following the United Nations Report regarding Africville,¹⁷ Kimber compiled local opinion responses from the ‘Hotline.’¹⁸ The following are some of the recorded remarks Kimber collected which provide the flavour from some current local opinions. To start, one newspaper headline read that “Africville Was Compensated”. However, Kimber notes that this specific headline was “blandly benign” compared with the more “vitriolic quotable quotes from 41 of 67 Hotline” callers (Saunders 1999 and Kimber 2004). The following responses were found: “shouldn’t get a dime more”; “It was a place with no roads and hardly any indoor plumbing and was torn down and replaced with new homes for all”; “Would [Africville residents] want it restored to its original state instead?” Another caller argued that Africvillians were “given nicer homes than the ones they had. If they messed them up, that’s their fault, not the government’s.” The call concluded, “It was a rat-infested place that had no sewer or water or anything” (Kimber 2004). These comments were made over forty years after the decision to relocate the community. Even former Halifax Mayor, Walter Fitzgerald (1971-74, 1994-6 and 1996 - 2000), believed the City of Halifax acted appropriately and concurred that Halifax did

¹⁷ In March 2004 the United Nations released a report following the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia and Related Issues in Durban South Africa. The report condemns the Canadian government for the overall treatment and lack of compensation of Africville’s residents. It urges Canada to pay compensation to the former residents of Africville.

¹⁸ The ‘Hotline’ was a column in the former *Halifax Daily News* that would pose issues to the public, requesting local responses by calling in and leaving their opinions to be published.

pay former residents of Africville proper compensation for their loss of land. In 2000, he stated,

The City, according to the records, paid everybody for their land they took in the Africville area and it was all done without expropriation. So we do not owe anyone anything. The deal was made, signed, sealed and delivered. People took their money and left. Game over as far as I am concerned (CBC - Radio).

It is apparent that some voices in Halifax still view the ‘Africville program’ as one without extreme flaws.

Chapter 4 Whiteness Theory and Racialization of Space Theory

The removal of Africville, Nova Scotia located on the shores of Halifax harbour is one example of what Katherine McKittrick calls Canada’s attempt to “throw out black geographies” (McKittrick 2002, 28). In the summer of 1970, Aaron “Pa” Carvery was the final resident of Africville to be expedited off his land, have his home destroyed, his belongings transported by dump trucks and be moved into city-owned social housing projects (Saunders, et al 1992)¹⁹. For many former residents of Africville, producing property deeds proved difficult in spite of their history of 200 years of settlement on this land. As noted, ownership of transferred land to Black migrants upon initial settlement was not always an option. Following the 1962 decision by Halifax City Council, the Black Nova Scotian community of Africville began to be dismantled. In the 1960s, it was claimed that the removal of Africville was executed out of necessity in order to improve social living conditions and to foster integration of Black and White Nova Scotians (Gray and Mackenzie 1991). However, research has indicated that Africville was, in fact, removed from the Halifax landscape as a product of racism and White domination. Nelson has named this process as a ‘geography of racism’ (2008, 62) which she defines

¹⁹ Many residents of Africville who could not afford to purchase real estate nor rent an apartment and after the removal were moved to Uniacke Square and some were moved into Mulgrave Park. Both housing projects are under four kilometres south-east of the former site of Africville.

as “a set of strategies by which spaces are organized to both express and determine racialized relations. It rests upon the tenet that spaces both reproduce and reflect identities – dominant, subordinate and their confused entanglements” (Ibid, 62).

Sherene Razack, in *Race, Space and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society* (2002), examines the spatial and legal practices that have made and maintained Canada as a white-settler society. She contends it was that these practices that allowed a scenario like Africville to occur. Razack states that the white-settler society of Canada continues to exist and is maintained by a racial hierarchy. In fact, she suggests, as does Nelson (2001, 2002, 2006 and 2008), that in order to contest white people’s primary claim to the land of Canada, it is necessary to make them visible. Razack (2002) states that in order to understand, unmap, deconstruct or make the dominant group visible, one must move beyond the concept that space is simply space and filled with objects that evolve. Rather, she insists that there is *symbolic meaning* of space, that the philosophies of space and power can be implicated in cases like Africville. Like Nelson (2008), I am reiterating that Africville was removed from the landscape based on its constructed symbolic meaning and the power of the constructed racial hierarchy.

Razack suggests that there are two theoretical frameworks of *materiality of space* and the *symbolic meaning* that explain space as something other than a place that evolves. Echoing the philosophies of Michel Foucault, Razacks states that space can be defined by its *materiality*. To illustrate, she uses the example of labourers (or workers) who must be housed in rooming houses close to where they work. She contends that this particular kind of space is shaped by capitalism. Capitalism creates a class structure. If the workers are of a class which can afford only housing near their work places, the space they occupy is defined by their materiality status. The second approach to explain space is to apply a *symbolic meaning* to space. Using the same example of workers and labourers housed in rooming houses within close proximity to their workplace, these people symbolically represent the replication of power (or lack thereof) and space when put into

the theoretical concept of space. Housing projects or rooming houses could represent poverty. Razack claims that a group is located in the social system, racial hierarchy or order, and forms the symbolic meaning of the space they occupy. Razack's second theory of space can be applied to the example of Africville and the implications of labelling this community as a *slum*. Prior to the removal of Africville in the 1960s, the city officials of Halifax, who ultimately made the decisions to take the valuable land of Africville, neglected to provide services to the community such as water and sewer lines. In turn, the City used its power in the hierarchy of spatial and racial order, and began to call the community a *slum* and claimed that social change and relocation were the only viable solutions (Gray and Mackenzie 1991). Therefore, by calling the space and the residents of Africville a *slum* it strengthened the racial hierarchy between Black and White people in Halifax, leaving the space and people of Africville at the bottom of the order and the city officials at the top. Therefore, the City's actions of not extending services to this community, ignoring its needs and then naming it a *slum* brought symbolic meaning to the Africville space. Africville as a *slum* gave the City officials the power to do whatever they wanted with the land.

Linking the symbolic meaning of space to Africville, explains *how* and *why* the process of removing Africville from the Halifax landscape could occur. Applying this theory means that Africville did not just evolve into a *slum* that required relocation, but it was this specific label, *this naming of slum* that led to the process of removal. Goldberg (1993) describes the connotations of a slum as,

...by definition filthy, foul smelling, wretched, rancorous, uncultivated and lacking care. The *racial* slum is doubly determined, for the metaphorical stigma of a black blotch on the cityscape bears the added connotations of moral degeneracy, natural inferiority, and repulsiveness...the slum locates the lower class, the racial slum the *underclass* (Goldberg 1993, 191-2).

The City desired to reduce Africville to a place that was thought of as a *slum*. Their socially constructed presumption of white racial superiority allowed them to do so. To answer *how* and *why* this social injustice occurred is to apply Razack's theory of

space and to reject the notion that space is innocent and simply evolves. Rather, it is a construction of social order, racial geography, and White dominance which allowed the process of the removal of Africville to occur.

To once and for all reject the notion that the removal was completed with good intentions and with a humanitarian effort in mind, Nelson attempts to racialize the dominant group –the White group - not as innocent by-standers but as agents in the process of the Africville removal, which forces the dominant white group to take responsibility for it. In her doctoral dissertation, Jennifer Nelson (2001) applied the theory of spatial order to the relationship between the City of Halifax and Africville. By doing so, she highlighted “how white dominance and subjectivity are secured through the incitement to place, re-place and dis-place people in particular space, as well as to make and re-make the space [to meet the needs of the dominant group] themselves” (23). In essence Nelson is stating that the dominant group can decide to take desirable land away from marginalized, racialized groups because of their dominant and powerful role in society. Nelson states that applying this analysis of spatial order to the relocation project of Africville disrupts the common assumption that the removal of Africville was completed with good intentions. In addition, by naming the removal of this Black community from the Halifax landscape as a racial act, Nelson challenges the dominant White group of Halifax. She identifies them not as innocent bystanders but also as a racialized group who used their superior power to take the desirable land away from those in a constructed inferior position. She explains the racialization of a group as a process in which racial minority groups become ‘marked’ by their race and the essentializing of this quality constructs a collective identity for their racialized group. Furthermore, Nelson aims to *racialize* the dominant group, because if groups are to be racialized, it should not apply to only visible minorities, but to the dominant group as well. She racializes the dominant group in order to reveal that the ‘un-marked-ness of whiteness’ (42), which deneutralizes the category of whiteness, is actually constructed

rather than self-evident. She does this to challenge the fact that White people are not essentialized by their race, nor by their actions.

Jennifer Kelly (1998), in *Under the Gaze: Learning to Be Black in White Society*, highlights the implications of whiteness and white dominance and what they do to those who are not white. Kelly emphasizes that being Black within a society constructed as white accentuates Black people's presence and reinforces a sense of *otherness*. In relation to Nelson's argument that Black Nova Scotians are essentialized, Kelly agrees and states, "Blacks within a White society come to be seen by the dominant group and other groups as marked and not representative of the "norm," which is centred in Whiteness" (17). In addition, Peake and Ray (2001), in *Racializing the Canadian Landscape: Whiteness, Uneven Geographies and Social Justice*, state that adequate attention has not been given to the discourses surrounding social justice for non-white people and the way in which people of colour produce spaces within the Canadian landscape. Also, they state that not enough attention has been given to the unbalanced relationship of how "whiteness produces Other spaces and identities via racism..." (Peake and Ray 2001,1).

Unfortunately, acts of everyday racism by the dominant group often go unnoticed or are unconsciously produced by the dominant group, particularly in the case of Halifax. For example, Preston native pro-boxer Kirk Johnson successfully won a human rights complaint in 2003 after experiencing repeat racial profiling from the Halifax Regional Police in the late 1990s. Johnson was stopped in his vehicle twenty-eight times over a five year period in the Halifax area and had his car impounded (CBC 2004).²⁰ Peake and Ray state that the practice of 'normalized racism' is not reproduced by the dominant group of White people in acts of hatred, but is practiced and exists in the everyday "normalized qualities of racism in our culture and geographies" (2001, 2). 'Normalized racism' is practiced or justified and unnoticed by the dominant group through the institutions that direct Canadian society or the governing processes that manage the

²⁰ Johnson withdrew from a competitive match with heavy-weight component Lennox Lewis to follow through with his inquiry with the Halifax Regional Police.

nation, and which too often, do not include or reflect the totality of Canadian or Nova Scotian society. For example, in relation to the relocation process of Africville, the final decisions were made only by the Halifax city council which consisted of White men, and did not reflect or include anyone from the Africville community (Nelson 2008). Further, in the discourse of Whiteness, Kobayashi and Peake (2000) argue in *Civil Risk and Landscapes of Marginality in Canada* that:

[it] is indicated less by its explicit racism than by the fact that it ignores, or even denies, racist indications. It occupies central ground by de-racializing and normalizing common events and beliefs, giving them legitimacy as part of a moral system depicted as natural and universal (as quoted in Peake and Ray 2001,2).

An example of the natural and universal legitimization of racism is the curriculum found in public schools in Canada. The schools follow a Eurocentric curriculum not reflecting Canada's demographic diversity or providing inclusiveness to any *Others* who do not belong to the White dominant group (Borden and Clarke 2008). Therefore, the "psychic negotiation of whiteness" (Peake and Ray 2001, 2) in the White Canadian landscape (and classroom) is asking people of colour to internally and externally (un)belong to [their] society (Ibid, 3). In the case of Africville, the fact that certain details and actions of the removal have not been acknowledged by the city illustrates that explicit racism still exists and even has been normalized. One former Deputy Mayor, Pat Pottie, stated, "The City of Halifax stands strong and proud that we're a good corporate community, and I don't think the city would treat their people unfairly I don't think it's ever happened"²¹ (as quoted in Nelson 2008, 125). It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the city has yet to issue any formal apology to the entire community of Africville or its descendents.²²

²¹ This was a response issued in 1994 by Deputy Mayor, Pat Pottie, to the Africville issue.

²² Some former city councillors and city mayors have commented that in hindsight, Africville should have been handled differently. Many also conclude that mistakes and misunderstandings regarding Africville's destruction did occur, yet an official apology has not been addressed to this dispersed community. And uneducated statements by city officials, as those of Deputy Mayor Pat Pottie reinforce the city's denial of taking responsibility of their actions during the Africville process.

Africville is not the only example to which these theories apply. Many examples exist throughout the province of Nova Scotia. Before moving onto this project's additional perspective and argument related to Africville, I will highlight a select sample some of the incidents and occurrences to which these theories apply in the marginalization of the Black communities of Nova Scotia.

The oppression, and particularly exclusion, endured by Black Nova Scotians included the “Out of town by sundown” enforcement that existed in some White communities throughout Nova Scotia (Borden and Clarke 2008). George Elliot Clarke supplied the example of the White community of Digby, Nova Scotia in which the Black settlement of Weymouth Falls was located on the periphery. The unofficial, but enforced clause was that Blacks were not allowed in Digby following sunset and, if caught, they would be subject to violence and harassment (Borden and Clarke 2008). Another form of discriminating action linked to Black space in the province was the potential location of the top three Halifax Municipality landfill sites that were set to be placed nearby Black communities in the early 1990s. One specific location was East Lake near Preston, the largest Black community in Nova Scotia. The community of Preston was outraged by this choice because it is believed that East Lake may be the original site of Preston (Saunders, 1999) and possibly one of the lesser known forgotten terminals of the Underground Railroad²³. At the very least, the site of East Lake deserves research, not rubbish from a landfill (Saunders, 1999). The other two sites that were threatened with the potential of a landfill were the sites of Pockwock, near the Black community of Hammonds Plains and Sandy Lake near Beechville. To qualify the outrage expressed by these three Black communities, it was in response to the thought and fear by community members that their

²³ Charlie Saunders (1999) reveals an educated guess-work of Nova Scotia's involvement in the Underground Railroad. He reveals that in 1850 the United States Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law which meant that the owners of escaped slaves could reclaim their “property” anywhere within the United States (35). Therefore following this legislation the routes of the Underground Railway were extended from the once safer northern United States to areas of southern Ontario by way of Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. However, Saunders reveals that there is real potential that the lesser known, more secretive route, from Boston to Nova Scotia existed by way of the fact that African-American runaway slaves were aware of Nova Scotia as home to Black settlements, many being former slaves.

homes could potentially become the Africville of the 1990s. Indeed, prior to Africville's destruction, the Halifax City landfill had been located on the periphery of the community. It has been argued that this may have acted as a catalyst for the removal of Africville.

Another significant form of institutional racism which the Black communities of Nova Scotia experience is the fact that out of the three long-existing minority groups of Nova Scotia, the other two being Acadians and Aboriginals, only in 2001 did Blacks witness the creation of a governmental department to represent their affairs (Nova Scotia Government 2005). The Acadians have had the office of Acadian Affairs to address their needs for over eighteen years and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs was created in 1997. Yet, prior to the creation of the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, in the 1990s, the provincial electoral ridings that divided Preston were reconstructed so that Preston became one riding which, theoretically, would enhance the opportunity for Nova Scotia to elect its first Black MLA to sit in Province House (Saunders 1999). Yet, when the reconstruction of the Nova Scotian provincial election ridings was redesigned, much racially-fuelled negative media attention focused on the legitimacy of the riding change and the elected member. Within days of the election of Nova Scotia's first Black provincial member, Wayne Adams, editorial writers of the *Globe and Mail* and other newspapers questioned his legitimacy and questioned the manner in which the Preston riding had been formulated.

Chapter 5 Additional perspective: Forced relocation, specifically development-induced displacement

With the possible exception of internments during the World Wars, the image of displaced people within Canada is not one that many would necessarily identify as an occurrence within this country. Rather, the image of displaced people is often associated with persons from the developing regions of the world which have been ridden by war, famine, shortages of resources, natural disasters or by projects in the name of development. Further, displacement in the name of development is often thought of as large-scale projects that have been occurring in China or India. India's largest dam project in the Narmada Valley, consisting of 3,200 dams built over the span of three different states, is an example of such displacement (Robinson 2003). However, in the 1960s, the people of Africville were displaced from their homes and regardless of the small scale of this population, its relocation illustrates the principle of forced resettlement. People were expelled from their land in Africville, without adequate compensation, thereby destroying the sense of identity with, and ownership of, their land.

I will argue that Africville can be categorized under these definitions because it was a racialized community, its residents were evicted and the community was completely demolished to allow the city to further develop its industrial shipping port, clear an eyesore and to develop the Alexander MacKay Bridge. Africville had received national and international attention because of its 'slum-like' conditions and was known worldwide as Halifax's *embarrassment* (Nelson 2006, 267). Due to the authority of their racial order, white dominance and space-power framework, ultimately Africville's removal was almost inevitable under these circumstances. I would like to add a further perspective in hindsight. I believe according to the definitions of development-induced-displacement and forced migration, Africville can qualify as a Canadian example. In this chapter, I will present some of the definitions related to displacement and risks to which

dislocated people are subject, and, finally, I will apply this analysis to the situation of the former residents of Africville.

According to sociologist Micheal Cernea (2000), forced migration can be the result of the need to build new infrastructure for industries, irrigation, transportation highways, power generation, or for urban developments such as hospitals, schools and airports. It is obvious that these types of developments do indeed improve people's lives in that they supply essential services. Yet, on the other hand, the land and space that is required for a city's development forces some members of the population to vacate their land and puts lives at risk. The unfortunate outcome of development is that "some people enjoy the gains of development, while others bear its pain" (Cernea as quoted in Robinson, 6). Rajagopal Balakrishnan notes that:

...most forced dislocations of people do not occur in conditions of armed conflict or genocide but in routine, everyday evictions to make way for development projects. This "development cleansing" ...so often turn[s] out to be from minority ethnic and racial communities (as quoted in Robinson 2003, 1).

Development-induced displacement specifically can be defined as:

...the forcing of communities and individuals out of their homes, often also their homelands, for the purposes of economic development. Such geographic displacement can be within a city or district, from one village or neighbourhood to another... (Bose, Garside and Oddie 2003, 4).

Peter Penz (2006) notes that the aims of development include poverty reduction, environmental conservation and urban development (63). Echoing Cernea, the rationale for "development" is that "it benefits society and its members and alleviates deprivation" (66). However, in the case of Africville, I would argue that it did not alleviate deprivation, but, in a major way, worsened a community's well-being by separating its people, removing them from their familiar lifestyle and homes and taking away their church which was the cornerstone of the community. Penz notes that once the decision is made to move forward with development, there

is a shift to displacement which he notes is forced migration. Hence, this is why I suggest we can label the removal of Africville as a Canadian example of forced migration.

Penz notes that there is a distinction between the types of development displacements. Direct displacement occurs where development agents deliberately displace people, the agents of development being business organizations and state organizations. In the case of Africville, the agents of *development* were the members of the local municipal government. Indirect displacement is secondary to development because it occurs by ecological, economic or socio-cultural processes (for example the tsunami, Chinese development or the Palestinian refugees are examples of indirect displacement). I am of the opinion that the forced dispersal of Africville was completed under the definition of direct development-induced-displacement, in spite of any official suggestion that Africville was relocated for humanitarian purposes because of its so-called *slum* conditions.

The argument that Africville was relocated in the name of urban renewal actually lends itself to development-induced-displacement, according to Penz. He states that urban development will normally fall under “development” for two reasons. Similar to Cernea, Penz (2006) states:

- 1) It is supposed to serve to improve productivity, by either improving - to the extent that it improves productivity, a transportation system or efficiency of land use; 2) to allow development goals to be articulated in such a way that they represent the public interest or social justice (66).

Reason one relates to slum-clearing, which often has as its goal the renewal of an eyesore on the city’s landscape, usually under the pressure from the more affluent and privileged parts of the city (Ibid, 66). In the Africville case, one could suggest the powerful voices of Halifax were the city officials who represented the affluent south-end of the city. And, indeed, Africville was Halifax’s world-wide eyesore as noted by city council.

On the other side of this argument, one could suggest that the *development* that involved removing Africville would benefit society as a whole. For example, some argued that the city of Halifax would benefit by accessing water-front land so that a bridge could be built between the sister-cities of Halifax and Dartmouth. Additionally, the area known as Fairview Port now could be extended onto the Africville land if needed. This paper does not choose to necessarily agree or disagree with legitimate urban development, but, infuriatingly, the City has never officially stated that Africville was removed in the name of *development*. Fairview Port actually did not fully extend onto the former site of Africville despite city council approval of a proposal for the development of Fairview Cove in the 1960s. It could be suggested in a counter-argument that Africville is not a case of development-induced-displacement because the only obvious development over the land was the bridge connecting the two cities. Yet, the very fact that the site of “Pa” Carvery’s house is now home to the foundation of the Halifax-side pillar of the Alexander McKay Bridge should be sufficient to halt any counter-arguments that the land of Africville was not used for furthering the development of Halifax.

Penz (2006) states that looking at displacement in conceptual terms always involves personal loss of some kind. This loss does not have to mean the loss of life, but it could involve the loss of one’s social capital, economic opportunities, home, identity or culture. This loss, a social change that occurs, is inherently part of development (67). In the case of Africville, economic opportunities for its residents were indeed lost following the removal of their land. Also, one could even suggest that being removed, away from the local dump, proved to be the loss in livelihood of some residents of Africville who were scrap metal collectors. But, also, many Africvillians survived off the land or through the resources of the community- such as fishing and then community cooking (Clairmont and Magill 1999). As Penz (2006) notes the term “displacement” in conceptual terms suggests that something more specific has been lost, which he states as the loss of place

and home. I suggest that although the residents of Africville did not hold a powerful voice in Nova Scotia during its existence, its community members had a *place* and home (namely *space*) in Africville. Indeed, they were segregated and did live in conditions that were not up to standard in comparison to the homes in Halifax, but they had their own *space* in their possession. Moreover, they had a space that was largely free of every-day incidents of discrimination.

The loss of home, in the sense of loss of an actual dwelling, was experienced by those who had homes, but, as well, the loss of *home* as identity can be applied to many former residents of Africville. Africvillian families had lived on the land for over 200 years in some cases. The loss of the closely-knit community has been reported in the studies following Africville's relocation. In spite of the fact many residents were relocated close to one another, either in Uniacke Square or Mulgrave Park, the heart of the community was lost by separating the community and razing its church. Although the memory and *Spirit of Africville* has been carried on by its residents and descendants, the actual community of Africville was lost and distributed around parts of Halifax, the province and beyond. For a people who were descendants of slavery, to be coercively forced to migrate again is one more reinforcement of *othering*, unbelonging and marginalization based on race.

The process of the actual migration that makes the displacement forced is the factor of coercion included in the migration (Penz 2006). However, coerced migration can be executed in more than one way. Penz notes that there are two practices to force people off their land and out of their homes. There is physical force to remove people from land, which is less typical, and there are threats, which are more typical. A threat can be as drastic as death, but sometimes is as mild as being excluded from certain community affairs (Ibid 2006). In the case of Africville, forced migration was managed by threat and arguably by actual harm. I suggest harm because the Seaview African

Baptist Untied Church, which was the community's focal point was bulldozed.²⁴ Many residents were threatened with no compensation at all if they did not agree to settle for the five hundred dollar compensation that had been offered to them. The threat of limited, or no, compensation was made to Africvillians.²⁵ A former Africville resident recalls, "We were threatened. They put threats on our heads: If you don't move at a certain time we'll bring out the bulldozers and push you's over – push your shacks over" (CBC Archives Broadcast 1976). Penz continues stating forced migration often involves "a restriction of choice" – which was true in the case of Africville. Some of its residents protested for years while the community was being razed to the ground. For example, "Pa" Carvery's house was the last to be removed from the former space of Africville in 1970. The city council of Halifax went so far as to summon Carvery to City Hall to offer him a briefcase of money at a private meeting for him to move out of his property in return (Nelson 2008). Carvery refused the suitcase, however, he was eventually forced to move.

No doubt there is a possibility for some displaced people to benefit from displacement. In the case of Africville, it was believed that all Africville residents were being relocated for *their own good*, to improve their social conditions. It was thought that providing housing with indoor plumbing and electricity, closer to the downtown core would assist the socio-economic status of Africvillians. Being close to wage labour in the city would provide a stable income, and it was thought that the integration of this Black community into the greater White community of Halifax would benefit everyone.

Shifting focus to the risks to which relocated people are subject, I will introduce Cernea's framework, of Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR). The IRR framework was the product of the failure of the theoretical model of settlement processes

²⁴ Death was a near occurrence for some Africville young boys. Irvine Carvery recalls being in a shed, along with friends, waking up to a bulldoze demolishing the very building they were occupying. (CBC Archives Broadcasted 1989).

²⁵ However, in the end many received little or no compensation, still seeking reparations, which the United Nation has suggested the provincial and federal governments address.

by Scudder-Colson which was formulated in 1982 and a series of studies conducted in the 1990s. Cernea acknowledges that compulsory (forced) displacement that occurs in the process, or as an outcome, is ultimately a contradiction in the context of development. It leads to the ethical question of who is benefiting from the *development*, just as Penz revealed. It raises the question, of the inequitable distribution of a development's benefits and costs.

The IRR is a model that is both empirical and theoretical. Cernea notes that it is “empirically derived from the extraordinary accumulation of factual findings during the last quarter century that was reported by resettlement studies in many countries” (9). The IRR model can be applied to different types of displaced people, those who had to flee their land because of armed-conflict, as well as those displaced by development projects or urban renewal, as in the case of Africville. By applying the IRR model to the former residents of Africville, I am not attempting to call members of this demographic refugees or internally displaced people – that is not my argument. Rather, my goal is to demonstrate that regardless of the label or reasons for Africville's removal, these people were subject to post-resettlement risks similar to those which Cernea associates with groups that are involuntary displaced. Essentially, this framework assists in understanding what can go wrong in the resettlement of displaced people, and the challenges that these people endure - “it captures the dialectic between *potential* risk and *actuality*” (Ibid, 11).

Listed below are some of the risks to which displaced people are subject, and which the IRR model identifies:

- 1) Landlessness;
- 2) Joblessness;
- 3) Homelessness;
- 4) Marginalization;
- 5) Food insecurity;

- 6) Increased morbidity;
- 7) Loss of access to common property;
- 8) Violation of Human Rights;
- 9) Community disarticulation

I will link and demonstrate the potential risks Cernea has highlighted in the IRR model as best suited to relate to the risks of relocated Africvillians.

1) Landlessness:

‘Landlessness’ is the “principal form of de-capitalization and pauperization of displaced people” (Ibid, 11). Africvillians were self-sufficient upon the land they occupied. (They held jobs at nearby factories, as porters or grazed the nearby dump for resalable items.) However, once removed from their homes into public housing, many became dependent on social assistance (Gray and Mackenzie 1991). Cernea states the “[e]xpropriation of land removes the main foundation upon which people’s productive systems, commercial activities, and livelihoods are constructed” (Cernea as quoted in Robinson 2003, 11). Joseph Skinner, resident of Africville and porter on the railway was interviewed in the early 1960s about being removed from the land he owned. He responded with: “This has been our property for the last two hundred years” (CBC Archives, Broadcast 1962). When asked by the interviewer if he would like to move into Muggrave Park, Skinner responds:

No sir because I want to live on a place that I own than go live on a place I *gotta* pay rent for all the rest of the days of my life. [He continues]: It is one thing in this country when you own a piece of property you are not a second class citizen. That’s why my people own this land. They worked for it, they tow for it and they worked to get this little piece of land that they own and they try to hang on. But when your land is being taken away from you and you ain’t offered anything for it then you become a peasant in any man’s country (Ibid).

Landlessness can snowball into other risks in this IRR model.

2) Joblessness:

There is the risk of losing wage employment due to lack of available employment in the proximity of the new location. Creating new jobs for displaced people is difficult, and requires substantial investment. Cernea (2000) suggested unemployment and underemployment among re-settlers often endures long after physical relocation has been completed (15). It was noted by Cernea that displaced people who have been employed before resettlement may lose in three ways:

1) In urban areas, workers lose jobs in industry and services. 2) In rural areas, landless labourers lose access to work on the land owned by others. Or people lose the use of assets under common property regimes. 3) Self-employed, small producers-craftsmen, shopkeepers and others lose their small business (Ibid, 15-16). The risk of 'landlessness' includes the risk of 'joblessness' because they both relate to the loss of livelihood. When the residents of Africville were moved, adequate employment was not available for them, nor were training programs available - despite City promises offering such programs (Clairmont and Magill 1999).

3) Homelessness:

Residents of Africville (according to my research thus far) were provided with public housing, if they were unable to buy suitable housing. Still though, the risk of 'homelessness' results in the "...loss of a family's individual home and the loss of a group's cultural space [which tends] to result in alienation and status deprivation" (Cernea 2000, 11-12). For Africville, the dispersal of their tight-knit community meant former neighbours were split between two separate housing projects and elsewhere, and this created broken kinships and friendships. Also, homelessness can be interpreted as a sense of 'loss of home' which existed within the community of the former residents. Losing land that their ancestors had occupied for over two hundred years was a large factor in the Africvillians' struggle upon relocation.

4) Marginalization:

According to Cernea, marginalization occurs when families lose economic power and spiral on a “downward mobility path” (17). They become landless, and many cannot use their earlier employable skills at the location of their new homes, thus their human capital is lost (Cernea 2000) Marginalization is interconnected with the other risks in that loss of employment, land and home and the relocation all can lead to massive marginalization. Highlighted throughout this paper, the Black population in Nova Scotia already had become marginalized because of the land designated to them and their treatment from the governing dominant group. In the case of Africville, the community was segregated from the White population of Halifax and did not need to venture into the core of the City on a regular basis for their daily needs. Joseph Skinner of Africville noted that in the space of Africville, “Life is fair, we are free there. We are not mixed up with this environment of prejudice or anything. We are people by ourselves” (CBC Archives broadcast in 1962). Thus, they were self-sufficient and had the shelter of Africville from everyday normalized racism. Upon relocation they became immediately dependent and marginalized based on the nature of municipal public housing projects – they no longer owned land or their homes. Now they paid the city instead of building equity.

5) Food Insecurity:

Cernea (2000) states that uprooting people increases the risk for people to temporarily or chronically fall into undernourishment. I have not found accounts of relocated residents mentioning malnourishment, nor mention of this in any studies completed about Africville. Yet, malnutrition, in many instances, is an integral and identified part of poverty, and some former Africville residents have experienced poverty since relocation due to the changed nature of their lives amid the cycle of social assistance. Furthermore, Cathy Crowe (2008) states that “Hunger, is perhaps the most vicious outcome of poverty, it leaves children without energy to focus in school or even play, and adults to succumb to numerous ailments, frustration and despair” (377). She states that hunger or food insecurity is probably the most immediate result of poverty (379). In Africville the break

down of shared cooking, community meals, grocery shopping and the communal growing of small vegetables and berries disrupted their access to food sources.

6) Increased Morbidity and Mortality:

It has been suggested that removal can create a “displacement-induced social stress and psychological trauma” (Cernea 2000, 12). Statistically, young children and the elderly are among the demographic groups most prone to a decline in health. Irvine Carvery, president of the Africville Genealogy Society, stated in a film produced by the National Film Board called *Remember Africville*, that because of the relocation, years of life were lost by some elders in the community (Gray and Mackenzie 1991). Dr. Ruth Johnson, former resident of Africville, has noted that an entire generation has been affected by the dispersal of the community (CBC Archives 2002).

7) Loss of Access to Common Property and Services:

Cernea states “For poor people, loss of access to the common-property assets that belonged to relocated communities (pastures, forest lands, water bodies, burial grounds, quarries, and so on) result[s] in significant deterioration ... and livelihood levels” (2000,12). In contrast, when they lived in Africville they made use of resources along the shore, arable land and they had communal areas in which the community could congregate. Africville residents fit into this definition because many families were relocated to the downtown district of the city in apartment complexes with concrete recreational areas (See Figure 7 and 8– photos of Mulgrave Park and Uniacke Square, page 71). Cernea notes that, generally, any loss of common property typically is not compensated by governments. The loss of common land could lead to the loss of cultural freedom. The link between loss of common land and the loss of values and cultural identity can be illustrated in the relocated residents in Mulgrave Park or Uniacke Square. In Africville, when community members would congregate in the open spaces or at the church they were, in some way, practicing their cultural identity. When the community was moved, they became subject to a cultural shift. Congregating in the concrete areas of

their new neighbourhoods could be interpreted and seen as a threat to the surrounding community. For example, a group of young Black men congregating on a street corner or in a park may automatically be recognized by some as a threat of criminal behaviour such as drug dealing

Taking a community and putting it into another sense of values – in this case, white values- may well serve to purposely destroy a community’s cultural values. To emphasize that Africville residents who were moved were expected to behave within the new cultural values that surrounded them in their new location, one white Halifaxian stated, “They are given and puttin’ them in the same privileges as what the white people have. Now it’s up to themselves to turn around and do also...doing the same as the White people” (CBC Archives, Broadcast in 1962).



Figure 8: Mulgrave Park (Clairmont and Magill 1999).



Figure 9: Uniacke Square (Clairmont and Magill 1999).

8) Violation of Human Rights:

When a community is forced to resettle without adequate compensation, this can be viewed as a violation of human rights (Robinson 2003, 13). The violation of human rights during the process of Africville's removal was acknowledged by the United Nations in 2004²⁶. The U.N. report emphasized that the removal of Africville was emblematic of the situation of Blacks in Nova Scotia. It notes that Blacks in Nova Scotia are overrepresented in prisons, and dependent on the welfare system (14). During the removal, the City failed to include Africvillians' participation in planning for the relocation. When moving companies within Halifax refused to be hired to assist in the moving, the City used garbage trucks, which had never serviced Africville, to move the residents' belongings to their new locations. This is one of the many disrespectful treatments the residents faced (Nelson 2006, 254).

²⁶ In September 2003 the Canadian Government hosted the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations following the mandate and implementation of the Programme of Action of the Durban Conference to look at contemporary issues of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in Canada. From this visit the report of the Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and all Other Forms of Discrimination – Mission to Canada was released in March of 2004. The report stated that the results found that the Aboriginal communities and Black and Caribbean communities experienced consistent discrimination and prejudice against them (2).

9) Social Disarticulation:

This accounts for the dismantling of social networks due to the scattering and dispersal of communities. Through this process, “life-sustaining informal networks of reciprocal help, local voluntary associations and self-organized mutual services are disrupted. It is the loss of ‘social capital’ which is compounded with the loss of natural, physical and human capital” (Cernea 2000, 22). In the case of Africville, it was reported that residents began to be removed from Africville before the entire community was informed of the decision to relocate Africville. In the early stages of the destruction of Africville, the City had chosen to bulldoze the community’s Church, the Seaview African Baptist United Church, in the middle of the night (Donaldson 2008). The community members awoke to find that their beloved church and community focal point was a heap of rubbish on the ground. For Africville, the church was the community, and loss of access to such a gathering point represented the loss of the retention of the community. The loss of the church was included in loss of common property because the dispersion of the networks of individuals of the community who looked after one another was destroyed upon relocation. For example, Irvine Carvery remembers as a child,

when picking blueberries with Terry (Dixon) and I fell down on a bottle and cut my hand. Well, I didn’t have to go all the way back home to have my cut mended. I went to the very first house that was there and I was taken care of. That was one of things that was very important to me as a person living in Africville – the closeness and the oneness of the people (Saunders et al, 1992, 86).

Cernea (2000) states that dislocation breaks up living patterns and social continuity. He highlights that “It dismantles existing modes of production, disrupts social networks, causes the impoverishment of many of those uprooted, threatens cultural identity...” (10). Perhaps social disarticulation was the ultimate goal of the municipal government in dispersing Africville. In fact, integration of the Black community into the rest of White Halifax has been heavily referenced by city officials as one of driving forces behind the relocation. In addition to Cernea’s IRR framework, Robinson (2003) states that

development-induced displacement and forced population movements are always crisis prone.

Africville as a Canadian Example of Forced Resettlement

During the same time period as the razing of Africville, many studies have revealed that similar events of forced relocation took place in North America. The literature surrounding this topic area reveals that many of the cases held similarities to the relocation process of Africville. For example, in Chicago many south-side Black communities surrounding the University of Chicago were removed in the 1950s. In Charlottesville, Virginia, the city demolished the Black community of Vinegar Hill in the 1960s. In the city of Atlanta, over 55,000 Black residents had their homes destroyed during the city's downtown regeneration program (Nelson 2008, 4-5.). The removal of racialized communities and landmarks in Canada is not specific to Africville either. For example, Hogan's Valley in Vancouver, which was home to the city's only Black church (African Methodist Episcopal) and the city's only and last black community, was mostly destroyed in the 1970s (Peake and Ray 2001, 5). Today, only one city block remains, but it has no resemblance to the old community. In Montreal, the community of Little Burgundy, that was home to a large Black community, went through a period of gentrification in the 1980s. Other examples of disregard for Black space and the notion to "throw out Black geographies" (McKittrick) include: 1) the lack of preservation of a slave cemetery in St. Armand Quebec, which was almost ploughed over; 2) the site of East Lake, which is thought to be the original site of Nova Scotia's largest Black community, was threatened by almost being turned into a landfill site (Saunders 1999); and 3) the renaming Negro Creek Road, in the Holland Township near Owen Sound, to Moggie Road, after a white settler (Peake and Ray 2001).

Conclusion

Space is not a scientific object removed from ideology and politics; it has always been political and strategic. If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents and thus seems to be “purely” formal...it is precisely because it has been occupied and used, and has already been the focus of past processes whose traces are not always evident on the landscape. Space has been shaped and moulded from historical and natural elements, but this has always been a political process... It is a product literally filled with ideologies (Henri Lefebvre, as quoted in Nelson 2008, 29).

The focal point of this project was to be a case study of Africville to determine both how this removal occurred and to what extent racism contributed to the community’s destruction. However, upon researching this topic, this project evolved into looking at the migration pattern of Black people to Nova Scotia and the ways in which the lack of access to quality land was a key feature of the Nova Scotia Black experience. It can be suggested that valuable land throughout the province was not intended for Black occupants, an outcome which was orchestrated by the governance of the White dominant group, disavowing this group of their livelihoods - of living off the land.

Past premier Robert Stanfield, recognized the concern over unclear land ownership titles amongst the Black Nova Scotian communities (Colter 2006). On March 18th 1964 Stanfield’s government created the *Community Land Titles Clarification Act* with the intention of facilitating the process of granting clear titles to land to fix problems that, in some cases, were over two hundred years old. The Act read:

Where the residents of an area of a municipality are in necessitous circumstance as a result of a lack of property development in the area and where there appears to be confusion as to the ownership of land, the Governor in Council may designate the areas as a Land Titles Clarification Area...A person who resides in the Province and claims to own land in a Land Titles Clarification Area may apply to the Minister for a Certificate of Claim in respect of a lot of land in the Area which he claims to own (*The Statutes of Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Queen’s Printer 1964, 14-19 as quoted in Colter 2006).

At the time, the area with the greatest concern regarding unclear land titles was the area of North Preston (also known as New Road). The residents based their claims

to the land on thirty years of occupancy, however, during this period rumours suggested that sixty years of occupancy for the head of the family were needed. However, *The Dartmouth Press* reported in early 1963 that the land grants in this area were settled (Ibid). Efforts were made fervently by the HHRAC (Halifax Human Rights Advisory Committee) to apply this new legislation to those being removed by Africville's deconstruction to acquire better compensation for their housing and land. Reverend Oliver stated that "had that land [titles] been cleared, their situation would be much better now and they [Africville residents] would be in a vastly different bargaining position" (*Dartmouth Free Press* 20 December 1962 as quoted in Colter 2006). It appears this piece of legislation was too late for the residents of Africville. Or perhaps this piece of legislation was never intended for the former residents of Africville, because the dates of the removal and the release of this piece of legislation were awfully close.

The most current published work on Africville is the book *Razing Africville: A Geography of Racism* by Jennifer Nelson (2008) which applies the theories of racial order, specifically the dominance through which whiteness can control non-white groups, and the racialization of space. She argues that, by virtue of the white dominant government of Halifax and the labelling of Africville as a *slum*, city officials were able to justify removing the community from the landscape. Nelson identifies the acts of racism and white dominance as the reasons Africville was removed. Applying Sherene Razack's (2002) use of racialized space strengthened my argument to demonstrate that the province of Nova Scotia was spatially managed by way of race.

Peter Penz (2006), echoing Cernea (2000), notes that the aims of development include poverty reduction, environmental conservation and urban development (63). The rationale for "development" is that "it benefits society and its members and alleviates deprivation" (66). However, in the case of Africville, development did not alleviate deprivation but in a major way worsened a

community's well-being by separating them, removing them from their familiar lifestyle and homes and taking away their church which was the cornerstone of the community.

The ruggedness and beauty from the pictures documented when the physical Africville existed did not look out of place for a shore-side community of Eastern Canada. From growing up in Halifax, Nova Scotia and spending many of my childhood summers on the shores of Newfoundland, the image of rugged seaside communities is one with which I am familiar. The small fishing community of Quidi Vidi, located *within* the city of St. John's, would look quite similar to Africville physically– with the colourful painted houses piled close to one another while jutting out from the jagged terrain. I realize that Africville did exist with hazardous living conditions, primarily through neglect by the City of Halifax, with which other shore lining communities may or may not have had to cope. Also, I do acknowledge that the wells built in Africville were shallow, cess pools existed and exposed pipes were in definite need of attention, and some form of *social change* or *development* was probably needed in Africville to improve the living conditions of its residents. Nevertheless, no clear official answer from the City of Halifax, planners or officials was given to the residents for the destruction of Africville (Gray and Mackenzie 1991). And still, in 2008 no official answer has been released as to why the relocation of Africville occurred.

The Africville situation remains unresolved, yet it is hoped that the lessons of Africville have lent themselves to other future communities threatened with removal and relocation. A sign that the province of Nova Scotia is beginning to react positively to racial incidents is that the RCMP have hired race expert, Raymond Winbush, to meet with the Black community of Digby regarding the racist behaviour exhibited by off-duty police officers in June 2008 (*Chronicle Herald* July 23 2008). Notably this process has included the Black community affected by the incident and additionally the Black

community of Digby, and the communities throughout the province have rallied together against this inexcusable behaviour from law enforcers (*Chronicle Herald* July 20 2008).

In the twenty-first century, it will be crucial for Nova Scotia to attract and retain immigrants if it is to maintain living standards and move forward to create an economically healthy province. It will remain a 'have-not' province if it cannot retain immigrants to maintain the province regardless of how many oil reserves it may have²⁷. Thus, Nova Scotia is in dire need of a shift in attitudes regarding what constitutes a Nova Scotian and the spatial arrangement of non-white people. Nova Scotia must embrace diversity and eliminate normalized racism because the newcomers who will be arriving on its shores are not going to be from European backgrounds, but likely from African and Asian ancestry. Nova Scotia must become the welcoming, inclusive and non-discriminatory province its rhetoric proclaims it to be, if the province hopes to reach its immigrant retention goal of seventy percent. I point this out because the longer the province denies some of its own citizens equitable status, namely Black Nova Scotians, the more difficult the province's dominant group will have in attracting and retaining newcomers.

Additionally, hopefully future migrants to Nova Scotia, particularly migrants categorized as *Other* will not have to endure a similar fate as the Black migrants, especially the denial of livelihood. Presently many newcomers who arrive in Canada face difficulty when attempting to get credentials recognized; similarly to the Black migrants who were denied quality promise-land, hence a denial of livelihood. Hopefully Canadian institutions and employers will begin to recognize current and future migrants' credentials in a larger capacity so that they too are not denied their livelihoods.

In regards to the Africville case, further research is indeed required to find the current state of this dispersed community. There is a need for a comprehensive study of the former residents and their descendents to find their current socio-economic status and

²⁷ For example, the Sable Oil Project.

make official conclusions of what the long-term effects of the removal of this community have been. The pressing fear and process of the gentrification of Halifax's North-end has the potential to push public housing projects (i.e. Uniacke Square) to a different location, hence dispersing portions of the community again. Threat of razing *The Square* has engulfed Halifax for years, yet this demographic and people who occupy this *space* would have absolutely no claim to this space since the city does indeed own this land, without a doubt. The very creation and the nature of housing projects always places the power (and often racial) hierarchy in the hands of the governing group.

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