

IWOC Conference

Environmental Racism and Work in a Warming World Workshop

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#EnvRacismCBTUACW



Territory Acknowledgment

Since long before explorers and conquerors from Europe arrived on the shores of Turtle Island, there were several distinct nations of people living on this land with thriving communities and cultures. The original stewards of this land, the Huron - Wendat, the Ojibway, the Anishnaabe and, the Mississauga's of the New Credit were also the first activists, resisters and educators. For tens of thousands of years, Indigenous people throughout Turtle Island have been managing the land, water and wildlife - ensuring that there was enough for all and that you only took from the land, what you would use. The rest was left to be shared amongst all.

Anishnaabe languages were spoken in these trees long before English or French was. For millennia people lived, learned, raised families and co-existed on this land all while respecting the earth as the Mother that sustains us all. We must remember and respect that.

The foundation of those cultures was the leadership of elders and the legacies of the ancestors. Elders played and still play a pivotal role in structuring communities and Elders are the keepers of knowledge and as such they had a responsibility to share and to educate.

Here, we continue that tradition of stewardship, activism, resistance and education. We understand that when we fight for one we fight for all. We also have a responsibility to protect the environment. When we do this work we ensure that those traditions of resistance and activism are carried on side by side with Indigenous communities.

We also want to acknowledge the Indigenous children that were forced to attend Residential schools throughout Canada and the United States, Turtle Island. These children were taken by force, tortured, beaten and in some cases murdered. We especially remember the children who didn't come home from those institutions. Just 100 kilometres west of where we are now was the Mohawk Indian Residential School in Brantford Ontario. This school, the first such school in North America, was operated by both the Canadian government and the Anglican church from 1828 to 1970. 142 years.

Alderville ON is located 141 kilometres east of where we are (just north of Cobourg). It is also where the Alnwick Residential school, run by the Methodist church and the Canadian government operated from 1838 to 1966 - 128 years. I encourage you to find out where the nearest Residential School was to your own community and learn about its history.

As we spend this day teaching, learning and practicing our activism we play a pivotal role in building the society we want. And we are happy to be doing so alongside the Chiefs, the Elders and the entire community.

Getting to Know Each Other

- ▶ *1) Introduce yourself to your group*
- ▶ *2) Why you choose this image?*
- ▶ *3) Why did you choose to participate in this workshop?*

The Problem

Environmental racism is a structural, historical, and ongoing fact of life for many Racialized and Indigenous people in Canada. Yet climate change discussions, lacking an anti-racism lens, have largely ignored how Racialized and Indigenous communities that are economically disadvantaged and socially marginalized are inequitably impact-ed by climate change.

At the same time, climate change provides an opportunity for positive transformation through the creation of good green jobs and addressing the unequitable access to good jobs for Racialized and Indigenous peoples in the green economy.

Racialized and Indigenous communities must be part of the fight for environmental justice and a just transition to the green economy. Otherwise, the green economic transformation will only further reinforce the structural racial economic inequalities present in Canadian society today.



ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM



Just one of the more than
100 First Nations communities
with no access to safe drinking water.

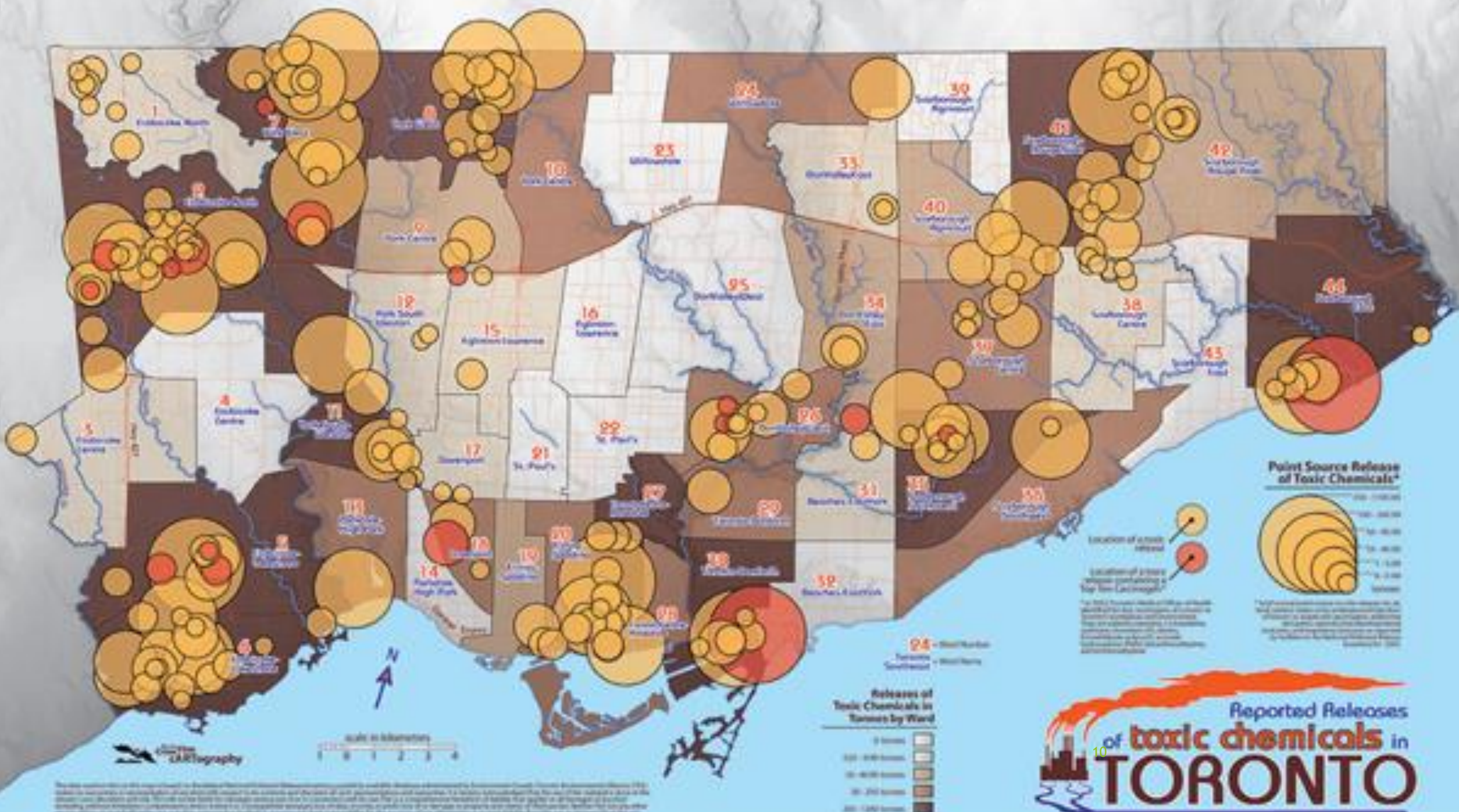
Types of Environmental Racism

- ▶ 1) Air Pollution
- ▶ 2) Clean Water
- ▶ 3) Climate Migration / “Climigration”
- ▶ 4) Extreme Weather
- ▶ 5) Food Production
- ▶ 6) Gentrification
- ▶ 7) Toxins

Question:

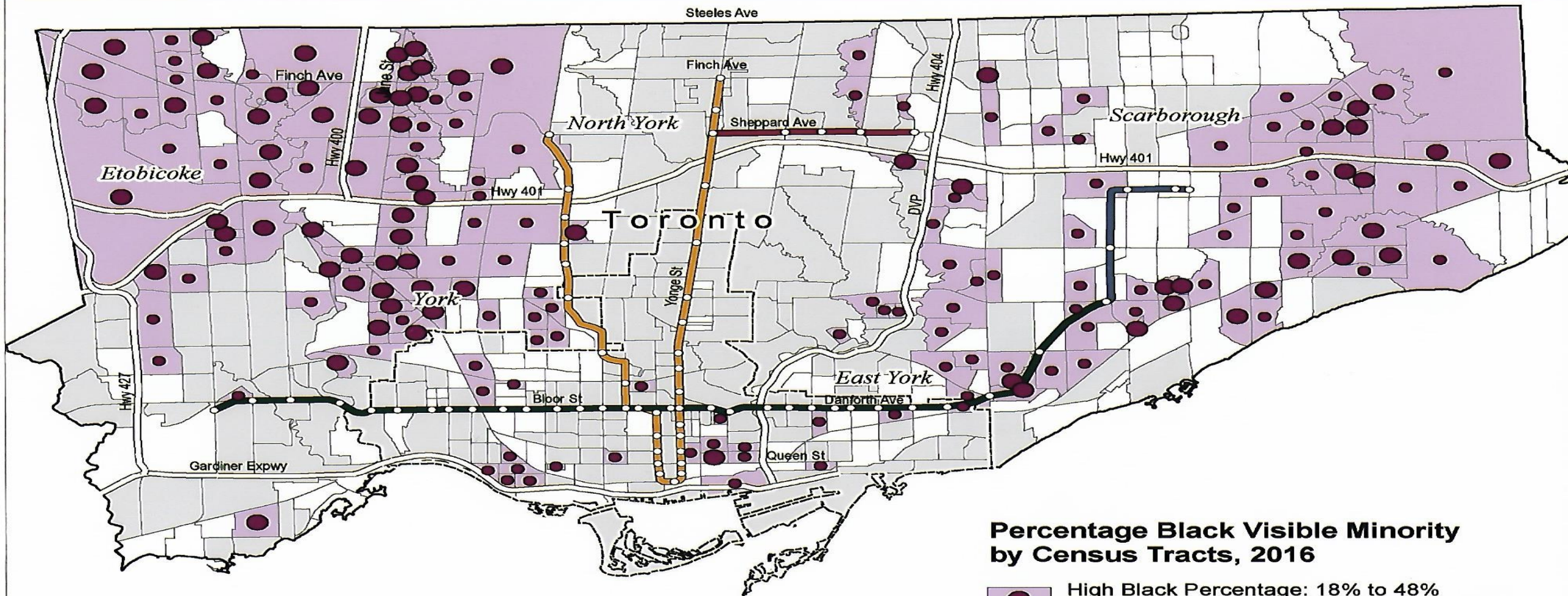
*How is ____ (your term) impacting Racialized and Indigenous communities in Canada?
Think about your home, community, workplace and/or union.*

A Canadian Case Study of Environmental Racism







Reported Releases
of toxic chemicals in
TORONTO

Black Population Percentage, City of Toronto, 2016



Percentage Black Visible Minority by Census Tracts, 2016

-  High Black Percentage: 18% to 48%
(2.0 or More Above the City Average of 8.9%)
-  Above Average: 9% to 17.9%
(1.0 to 2.0 Above the City Average of 8.9%)
-  Below Average: 4.5% to 8.9%
(Half to 1.0 the City average of 8.9%)
-  Low Black Percentage: 0% to 4.4%
(Below Half the City average of 8.9%)

Black Population	
2016	239,850; 8.9% of the City
2006	208,555; 8.4%
1996	192,400; 8.1%

November 2017

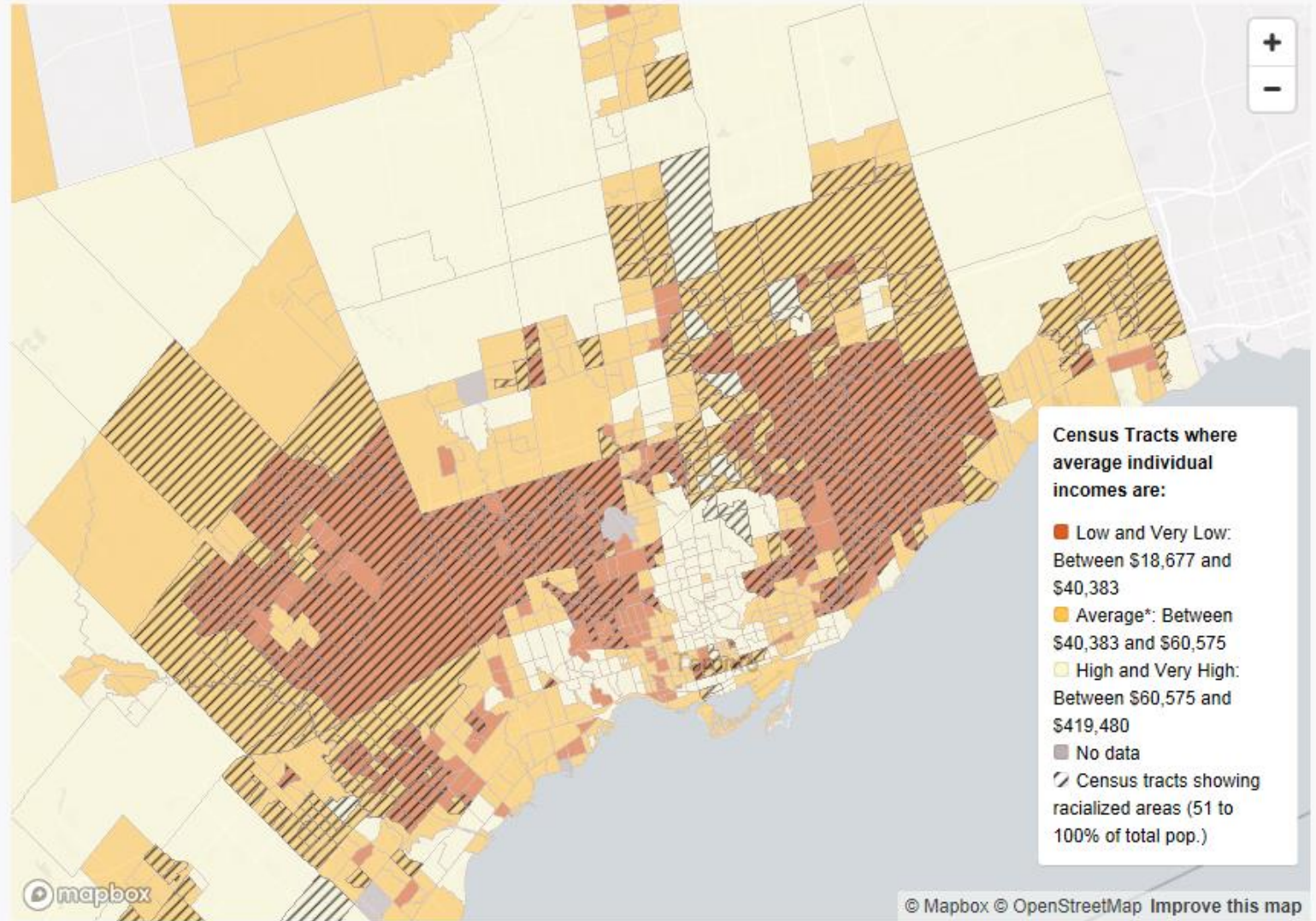
Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile Series, 2016

Racial inequality in Greater Toronto

Racialized residents made up 51 per cent or more of the population in most low-income neighbourhoods in Toronto, Peel and York in 2015.

“A Troubling Divide”
(Toronto Star,
Monday, May 6th, 2019)

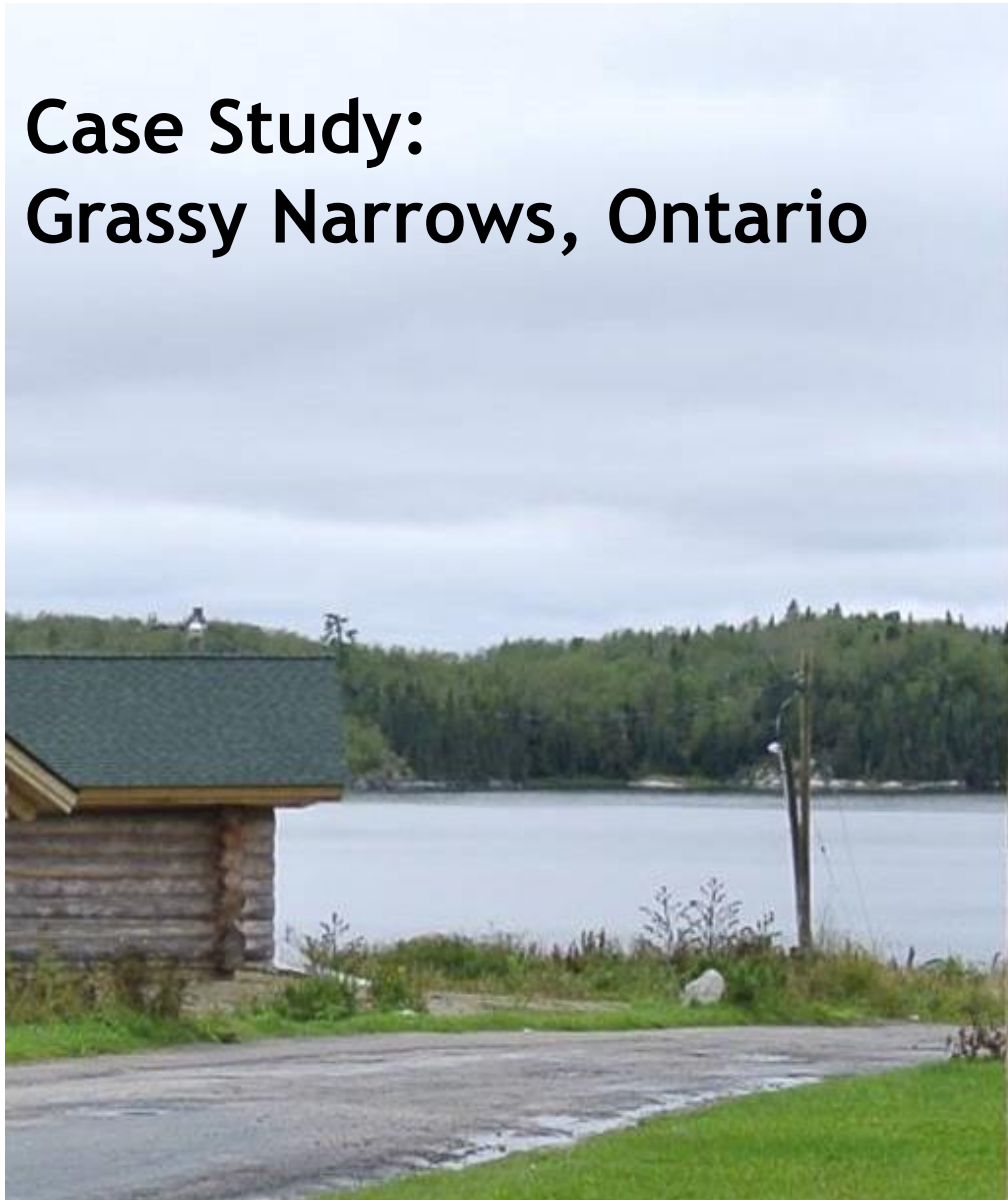
Racialized people in the GTA earn far less than white workers - and the income gap is getting wider, United Way research shows.



*Avg. individual income in Greater Toronto region in 2015 was \$50,479

Source: United Way Greater Toronto

Case Study: Grassy Narrows, Ontario



Not Safe to Drink

A brief snapshot of Canadian boil water advisories and do not consume orders.

IN 2008, the Canadian Medical Association Journal reported that there were 1,766 boil water advisories in effect across the country.

There is no official national database of boil water advisories in Canada. Many communities do not have the resources to develop reporting systems and must rely on posted notices, word-of-mouth, or local news organizations to make such announcements. Even with the best reporting technologies, there are bound to be several residents who might not receive such notices, putting them at risk of consuming what may possibly be contaminated water. Turn to page 34 for expanded details of two cases.



Boil water advisories



Do not consume orders

University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus For a few days in late March 2011, students and staff were cautioned to boil all unfiltered tap water due to increased turbidity.

Wicks For more than a week in April, residents had to boil their water after a watermain break affected the water supply.

Crespart Seasonal flooding halted operations at the district treatment plant. The possibility of bacterial contamination put into place a boil water advisory for at least four to five weeks, lasting for

Sault Ste. Marie Serious meltwater and

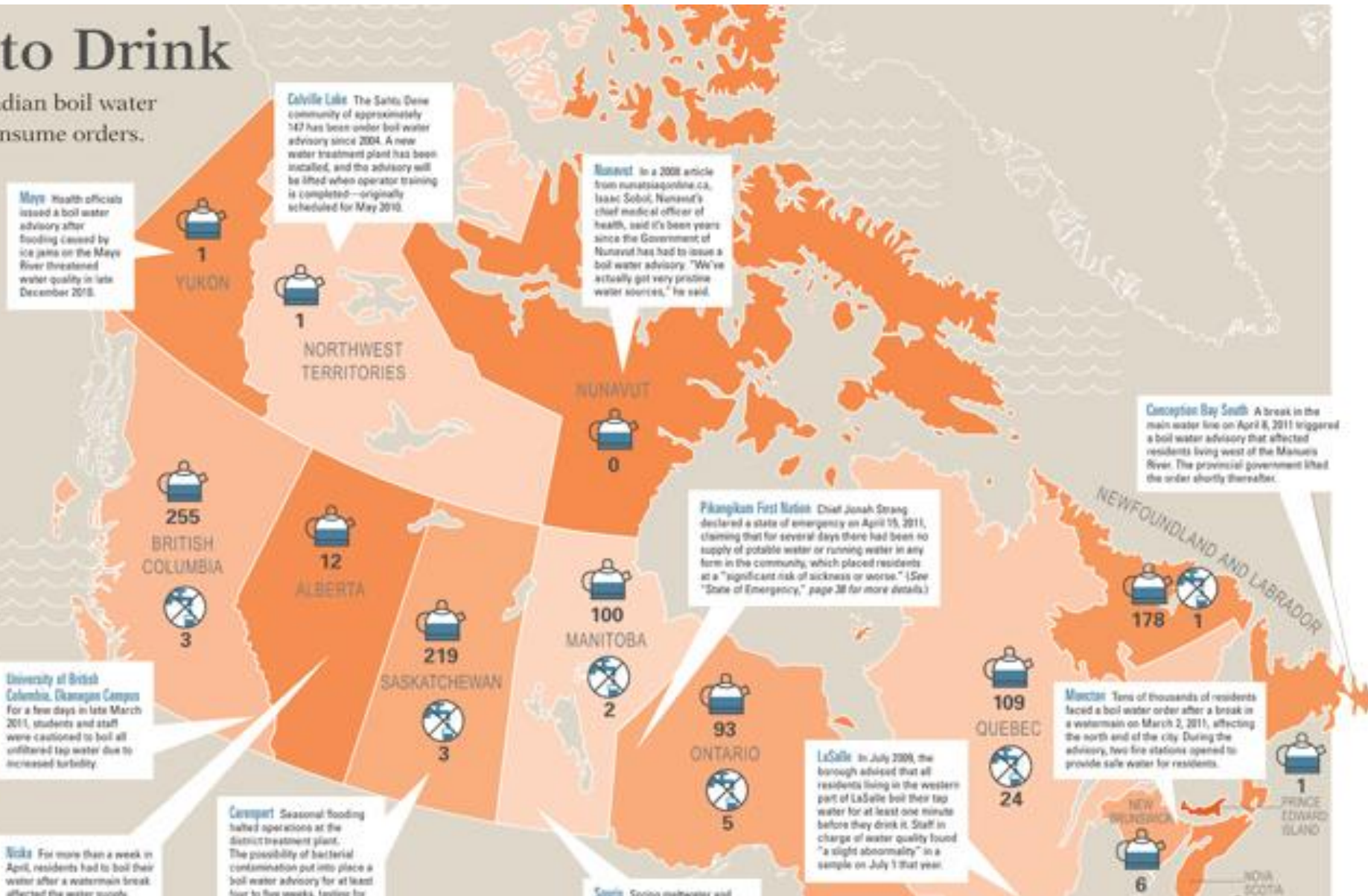
Calville Lake The Saitu Dene community of approximately 147 has been under boil water advisory since 2004. A new water treatment plant has been installed, and the advisory will be lifted when operator training is completed—originally scheduled for May 2010.

Nunavut In a 2008 article from nunatsiagonline.ca, Isaac Sobol, Nunavut's chief medical officer of health, said it's been years since the Government of Nunavut has had to issue a boil water advisory. "We've actually got very pristine water sources," he said.

Pikangikum First Nation Chief Jonah Strong declared a state of emergency on April 15, 2011, stating that for several days there had been no supply of potable water or running water in any form in the community, which placed residents at a "significant risk of sickness or worse." (See "State of Emergency," page 38 for more details.)

Conception Bay South A break in the main water line on April 6, 2011 triggered a boil water advisory that affected residents living west of the Mainville River. The provincial government lifted the order shortly thereafter.

LaSalle In July 2008, the borough advised that all residents living in the western part of LaSalle boil their tap water for at least one minute before they drink it. Staff in charge of water quality found "a slight abnormality" in a sample on July 1 that year.



Note: Due to reporting variances,



Case Study: Africville, Nova Scotia

“Canada’s economy and its labour market are increasingly stratifying along racial lines, as indicated by disproportionate representation of Racialized and Indigenous group members in low-income sectors and low-end occupations, underrepresentation in high-income sectors and occupations, and persistent racial inequality in unemployment rates, employment income, and the incidence of low income . . . Despite higher levels of educational attainment, disproportionate numbers of Racialized and Indigenous workers are confined to casualized forms of work in certain sectors of the economy, amplifying racial segmentation in the labour market and Racialized and Indigenous income inequality and poverty.”

- Galabuzi, Racializing the Division of Labour: Neoliberal Restructuring and the Economic Segregation of Canada’s Racialized and Indigenous Groups, 2004

► **Point #1:**

Racialized and Indigenous workers are underrepresented relative to the Canadian population in the sectors of the Canadian economy (Mining & Oil/Gas, Manufacturing, etc.) that produce the most greenhouse gases emissions.

► **Point #2:**

The sectors with the highest greenhouse gases emissions and underrepresentation of racialized and Indigenous workers also have the highest income

► **Point #3:**

Of the sectors where greenhouse gases emissions have decreased, there remains an underrepresentation of Racialized and Indigenous workers. Thus, there is no automatic link between the reduction of GHG emissions and reducing structural racial inequities.



Identifying and Challenging Assumptions

- ▶ Question #1:

What are the assumptions / attitude / beliefs underlying the statement?

- ▶ Question #2:

What would you say to that person / how would you respond?

Just Transition

“If Canada’s racialized and indigenous communities are not engaged in the struggle, the transition to a green economy will not be just. There can be no change without a struggle.”

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