

*Dérangement* and the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute: A New Acadian History of  
Nationalism, Identity, and the Maritime Fisheries

By

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## ABSTRACT

Between September and November of 2020, Nova Scotians witnessed the most violent resource-based conflict in the province's recent history. Following the launch of the Sipekne'katik Nation's livelihood fishery on the Saint Mary's Bay, many white settler fishers expressed militant and sometimes violent opposition, questioning the legality of the Mi'kmaq fishery and its potential impact on health of the Bay's lucrative lobster stock. Waving flags of red, white, blue, and yellow to contrast with those of the Mi'kmaq fishers, Acadian fishers (a minority francophone group native to the region) identified themselves as a distinct stakeholder group during the conflict, a unique development within the context of Acadian history and past settler-Indigenous fisheries disputes in the region. To capture the nuance of this recent conflict, this study took an interdisciplinary approach. This thesis argues that the display of Acadian nationalism during the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute was motivated by the group's own identity as a regional settler minority. More precisely, the study concludes that the increased agency of Indigenous fishers operating on the Acadian shore was perceived as a threat to not only Acadian hegemony in the Maritime fisheries, but overall Acadian livelihood and agency. To reach this conclusion, this thesis traced the persistent relevance of the Maritime fisheries to Acadian self-perception and cultural preservation. The Maritime fisheries are shown to have conclusively allowed the Acadians to increase their political and economic agency as well as preserve a national identity after their deportation and diaspora, providing a comprehensive account of how the fisheries shaped Acadian nationhood as it exists today. In turn, the study provides a new understanding of how nationalism and identity is related to the Acadian fisheries, the 1999 Burnt Church Conflict, the Acadian-Mi'kmaq relationship, and twenty-first century Acadian identity politics. The thesis also shows the value of exploring stakeholder self-perception to better understand how history, memory, identity, nationalism, and settler colonialism can drive group positionality and threat perception in resource conflicts, particularly those between settler and Indigenous groups.

*Key Words:* Acadian, Mi'kmaq, Sipekne'katik, Lobster, Nationalism, Media Analysis

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAMS: Association of Acadian-Métis Souriquois

BDLM: Bras d'Or Lake Métis Nation

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

DFO: Department of Fisheries and Oceans

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: *Example of the Manual-Style Coding Framework Used.*

Figure 2: *Theme map outlining the key messages, problems, and solutions reported in 60 news articles covering the 2020 Mi'kmaq Lobster Dispute. Key messages are represented in blue, problems in green, and solutions in pink.*

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The French word *dérangement* is difficult to precisely translate. Its English counterpart is commonly used when referring to a disturbance, an upset, particularly in relation to a person's mentality (Merriam Webster, 2021). The French meaning, however, is much more nuanced. It can be used in friendly conversation to express a disturbance to daily life, a change of plans, and most strikingly, a profound trouble of the mind or one's ability to reason (Larousse, 2021). Beyond its linguistic uses, *dérangement* has an even more esoteric association for those located within Canada's Maritime provinces. Coined *Le Grand Dérangement*, the forceful 1755 expulsion of the area's native French Acadian population remains a major historical event for the region. The 1755 deportation encompassed all aspects of the French *dérangement*, including a stark change in life and landscape as well as profound troubles for Acadian culture, memory, and identity. For those with ancestral connections to the former colonies of Acadie, it can be said that the use of the term *dérangement* can trigger thoughts of the deportation, making the word emblematic to Acadian history.

In autumn 2020, the landscape of Nova Scotia's South Shore saw some Acadians initiating a quite different *dérangement*. Between September and November, the most violent resource-based conflict in recent history erupted across the communities of Digby, New Edinburgh, Middle West Pubnico, Saulnierville, and Yarmouth. White settler fishers reacted in anger upon the launch of the Mi'kmaq moderate livelihood fishery by the Sipekne'katik First Nation. Fishers cited the conservation risks of fishing from the Saint Mary's Bay lobster stocks outside of the federally regulated season, claiming it could adversely impact the species lifecycle (Fowler, 2020). To further this claim, fishers argued that the Sipekne'katik fishery was illegal under the

1999 amendment to the *Marshall Decision*, which clarified that the federal government could regulate Indigenous commercial fisheries should they pose a conservation risk (King, 2011). When fisheries officials in turn stressed the legality of these moderate livelihood traps and their innocuousness, militant and sometimes violent protests ensued. Settler fishers spilled onto wharfs and into storage facilities, initiating direct confrontations with Indigenous fishers. The protests reached their fiery peak when large crowds began to flood facilities in New Edinburgh and West Pubnico. Throughout the following thirty days and nights, vehicles and buildings were pelted with rocks, tires were slashed, windows broken, thousands of pounds of livelihood lobster were destroyed, and a Mi'kmaq lobster pound was burned to the ground (Fowler, 2020). In the ashes of the destruction, the relationship between Indigenous and white settler fishers was further complicated, leaving a difficult path towards future inter-group collaboration.

The 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute is but one example of the long and tumultuous history between Indigenous and settler fishers on the East Coast of Canada, often based around this idea of a perceived injustice. As some have already pointed out, the events of fall 2020 were eerily similar to those of the Burnt Church crisis in 1999 (Fowler 2020; Mercer, 2020). Though separated by two decades, these two instances of settler violence against Indigenous fishers were related to and centered around the same issue, in similar landscapes.

## **1.2 Purpose and Objectives of Study**

In the minds of many, the 2020 dispute marked an escalation of tensions brewing since the contentious Marshall Decision twenty-one years earlier (Fowler, 2020; Mercer, 2020). However, when compared to other fisheries conflicts (including Burnt Church), the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute had a unique feature. During the height of the violence, fishers stood face to face



proudly bearing the flags of their nationhood. Acadian flags of red, white, and blue flew strongly against the Mi'kmaq flags on the other side of the docks. This is compelling for the historian. Why was Acadian identity and nationalism mobilized as part of the fisheries conflict, and how can looking at the group's history help to answer this question?

While a large group of commercial licence holding settlers played a part in the 2020 violence, Acadian fishers can be separated as a distinct group and desired to be. Acadians chose to mobilize their minority cultural identity to spark and fuel protests, all in the name of defending larger settler fisheries claims. In doing so, several key contradictions were created between public history depictions of Acadian-Mi'kmaq relations and the Acadians as the "gentle settler" (Wysote & Morton, 2011), which this thesis seeks to unpack.

Acadian historiography has long framed the Acadians as tragic victims of British persecution (Wysote & Morton, 2011). Since the Mi'kmaq were also displaced by British colonialism, some historians have highlighted the preceding alliance, trade, and friendship between Acadians and Mi'kmaq to portray the Acadians as peaceful by nature across time and circumstance (Dunn, 2000; Griffiths, 2005; Massicotte, 2005; Ross & Deveau, 1995; Wysote & Morton, 2011). Evidently, the events of the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute do not reflect that history of friendship or custom of collaboration. Still, the Acadians are a minority group that has historically been governed by the subversive powers of the British, a characteristic they share with the Mi'kmaq. Both groups have endured displacement, violence, and assimilation from this common enemy. In that sense, the Acadians who mobilized their identity against the livelihood fishery were paradoxically fighting in the war for cultural preservation from the opposite side of the battlefield. Moreover, the 2020 dispute saw a great deal of destruction of natural resources, including hundreds of pounds of harvested livelihood lobster. Yet, settler fishers claimed that

their position was primarily as advocates for the enforcement of laws and regulations as well as greater conservation of the health of marine resources in the Saint Mary's Bay (Fowler, 2020). Their actions during the dispute largely contradicted their stated support for the law and for conservation. Lastly, there is a discrepancy between fishers insisting that everyone follow the same rules and regulations yet waving the Acadian flag. This equal rights argument does not create any obvious appeal for the display and assertion of particularly Acadian rights. Visibly, the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute was complex, politically fraught, and subject to interpretation based on personal bias and identity.

In the face of these numerous contradictions, as well as the somewhat dubious conservation or legal grounds for settler fisher protest, this thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach to parse out the nuances of Acadian settler fisher positionality. The objective of this thesis is to argue that the display of Acadian nationalism during the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute was directly related to their own livelihood and identity as regional settler minorities. More precisely, the thesis concludes that the increased agency of Indigenous fishers operating on the Acadian shore was perceived as a threat to not only Acadian economic affluence in the industry, but Acadian livelihood and agency as minorities, supported by the persistent relevance of the fisheries to their self-perception and plight against assimilation. To form this argument, this thesis turns to history, tracing how the Acadian Maritime fisheries conclusively allowed the population to increase their political and economic agency as well as foster and preserve a national identity. It also unpacks how nationalism has perpetuated somewhat mythical and romantic Acadian historic narratives, primarily relating to the Acadian-Mi'kmaq relationship, the "victim story" marginalization of the Acadian population, and their deep ancestral connection to the land, all relevant to the dispute. In doing so, the study furthers the work of the "New Acadian Historians" by recontextualizing the

past through the present, allowing for a new understanding of the Acadian fisheries, the 1999 Burnt Church Conflict, the Acadian-Mi'kmaq relationship, and twenty-first century Acadian identity politics. The study also demonstrates how historical narratives, nationalism, and settler colonialism shape group positionality and threat perception in resource conflicts, making a case for the value of exploring stakeholder self-perception to better understand the drivers of resource disputes in the absence of scientific or legal precedent.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This unique and interdisciplinary approach, involving a synthesis of public history, threat perception as related to historically contingent identities, and media analysis has yet to be applied by scholars of environmental conflict or Acadian history. Similar resource conflicts across Canada have been evaluated through historical analysis, positionality critiques, or critical discourse analysis, but few have integrated these perspectives. While this is partially due to the recency of the conflict, there is a lack of correlation in scholarship between the cultural identity of Acadian fishers and their perceptions towards social-ecological management. Notably, there is a gap in research on the Acadian involvement during the 1999 Burnt Church crisis or their modern relationship with the Mi'kmaq. Scholars such as Clarke (1998), Daigle (1978), Fowler (2020), and Thériault (1982) have noted that Acadian fisheries are an essential part of their heritage and identity, yet no explicit connections to using nationalism or ethnicity as a political tool in the industry have been made. On the other hand, some scholars have more broadly identified how lucrative resources are often difficult to govern when they are shared by various groups with distinct histories, positionality, and social agency (Harper et al., 2018). In the wake of the 2020 violence, an examination of how Acadian identity, nationalism, and involvement in

the fisheries have progressed in tandem with the increased agency of Indigenous fishers in the Maritime provinces will aid in contextualizing how group membership (and that groups history of settler colonialism) can influence positionality during complex resource conflicts.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review various streams of literature relevant to the outlined purpose and objectives of this study. The first section will provide an overview of the history, memory, identity model by looking at its applications and merits, especially with respect to ethnogenesis and identity formation among minority groups. The chapter then reviews the trend in recent Acadian historiography of considering how memory and nationalism has impacted dominant understandings of the group's history. The chapter concludes by discussing the role of settler colonialism and minority nationalism in resource disputes with a particular focus on how history can influence the outcomes of group-based resource conflicts.

### 2.1 History, Memory, Identity

Many historians have examined the ethnogenesis of cultural groups as related to their contemporary political and social identities through the use of the history, memory, identity framework. The framework has been used to examine numerous historical events and has appeared throughout a variety of scholarly publications, including literature anchored in North American studies (Lacapra, 2016; Redclift, 2016; Rees, 2008). The framework was first developed by French scholars in a bid to understand the relationship between history and identity (Rees, 2008). Tangible historical evidence was believed to be the most valuable when separated from the influence of collective memory, avoiding any divergences from the truth due to personal emotion or affect (Winter, 2010). Some scholars who have used the framework acknowledge that history is essentially memory seen through documentation (Megill, 1998; Redclift, 2016; Winter, 2010). Others emphasize that history is an extension of memory, and can therefore be understood differently by individuals (Rees, 2008). However, most scholars reject

the notion that affect is purely subjective and thus not useful or accurate (Lacapra, 2016). Since the early 2000s, the model has been increasingly employed to complicate histories and how they play a role in contemporary cultural identities (Lacapra, 2016). Most notably, the framework has been successfully used to examine events involving trauma or cultural amnesia.

Trauma has only recently emerged as a concern for scholars considering the interrelation of history, memory, and identity (Lacapra, 2016). These scholars observe that trauma can impact memory formation and historical narratives, even if those memories and narratives arise in dialogue with archival sources rather than lived experiences (Lacapra, 2016; Redclift, 2016). Memory is caught up with the identity of those crafting, or consuming, historical interpretations. False memories or an absence of memories complicates the historian's position as a storyteller, often leading to conflicts between realities and memories. Scholars such as Alexander (2012) and Redclift (2016) have begun to explore how the process of forgetting and remembering history can shape cultural identities. As Redclift notes "The telling of history, or the not telling of history, has a profound impact on the mobilization or demobilization of diasporic ties" (2016 p. 501).

Moreover, scholars such as Alexander (2012) have contended that individual and group claims are often tied to place, forming a true or authentic memorialization. This sentiment is mirrored by scholars such as Winter, who point to the importance of populations being "back in the place they've lost to time" in order to fully realize their contemporary identities (Winter, 2010, p. 20). Rees argues that different meanings of landscape are imposed by different groups, especially in areas of colonial domination (2008). As such, alternative narratives about land sharing or historical truths can be overshadowed by the dominant memory (Rees, 2008). Moreover, Rees' research carefully concludes that trauma-based landscapes can play a major

role in identity formation, noting how “cultural revitalization leading to themes of freedom, self-sufficiency, and resistance” (p. 341). As North American historians unwind the complexities of settler colonial history that has dominated many historiographies, there is a growing movement towards critically looking at interactions between history and identity instead of holding the two in opposition (Lacapra, 2016; Rees, 2008). Through this approach, the history, memory, identity model has been molded into a tool for uncovering historical consciousness – one of the most difficult and complex endeavours of the field.

## **2.2 A New Acadian History**

In the field of Acadian history, scholars are taking new approaches to conceiving the past and how it has been remembered. Since the 1970s, historians have leveraged the work of the previous generations of to provide new insights, mainly by critiquing the influence of traditional Acadian nationalism in these writings (Massicotte, 2005). Julien Massicotte has identified that a great deal of Acadian history published in the 1960s was written by neo-nationalists including Michel Roy, Régis Brun, and Léon Thériault (2005). According to Massicotte, these authors and their political views have played a crucial role in crafting the monolithic interpretation of the Acadian past that continues to dominate public history of the twenty-first century (2005). Massicotte argues that nationalist historians have perpetuated a “mythical image of Acadie” which has since been “too often confused with historical knowledge” (2005, p. 151). Along with others, Massicotte’s proposed remedy for this muddling of Acadian history is to distance the field from past ideologies and myths to guide the focus towards synthesizing political, religious, and cultural histories (2005). In doing so, new Acadian historians can engage in empirical

research on the Acadian past without taking more recent nationalist assumptions as a starting point (Couturier, 1987).

The revisionist work of Naomi Griffiths has long been studied by “new” Acadian historians looking to reinterpret history. Using an identity-based approach, Griffiths wrote multiple articles and books since the 1970s that deconstruct how “a particular vision of history underlies today’s Acadians’ self-worth” (Griffiths, 1982, p. 118). Griffiths notably called for a greater diversity in the study of interactions between the Acadians and other minority groups in the region, mainly the Mi’kmaq (1982). Others have supported Griffiths in this call for diversity, including Léon Thériault who joined in criticizing the work of his own generation. In a 1973 article, Thériault introduced several themes that guided (and in turn limited) previous Acadian historiography. According to Thériault, the research problematically over relied on the portrait of Acadian triumph against adversity, causing many to ignore the diversity of Acadian past, creating an “ideological imperialism” (Thériault, 1973; Massicotte, 2005, p.148). To mediate this, Thériault called for a greater study on the role of other minorities in Acadie, as well as the reframing of Acadian social, economic, and political history within the larger contemporary realities in the Maritimes (Thériault, 1973). Régis Brun applied these principles by studying the political interactions between the Acadians and the Mi’kmaq in his work to argue that “individualism, the spirit of independence and insubordination were the dominant characteristics of the Acadian mentality at the time,” despite the image of the Acadian docile and submissive peasant that dominates public history (1982, p. 29-30). This position was likely influenced by the earlier work of Michel Roy (1978), who is described by Massicotte as “seeing in the readings of the Acadian past an identity importance of such weight that they affect the present” (Massicotte, 2005, p.151). The longstanding influence of Acadian mentality and self-perception in



historiography is an overarching theme across these critiques. A move away from histories that affirm the popular conception of collective memory of the Acadian past is the primary goal of these new historians (Massicotte, 2005).

Pierre Trépanier (1979) supported a different aspect of Thériault's position, arguing that the monolithic approach historians have taken to Acadian religious history has indeed caused many to neglect studying the important socioeconomics of Acadie. These calls for a greater focus on diversity and socioeconomics were united by Acadian historians of the 1980s who framed many of their analyses of commercial Acadian histories as related to certain marginalized groups within the larger nation, including women, Indigenous peoples, and the impoverished (Couturier, 1987; Landry & Lang, 2001). Nicolas Landry and Nicole Lang took a particularly unique approach in their book *L'Histoire de L'Acadie* (2001). Their chronology follows notable political or cultural events from the seventeenth century settlement until 2000, with the work putting less of an emphasis on the 1755 deportation, yielding a more comprehensive and symmetrical historical narrative (Landry & Lang, 2001). The value of investigating socio-economic conditions has also been recognized by Sheila Andrews, who has contextualized nineteenth century Acadian nationalism by continually referring back to the rise of an Acadian elite (1996). Massicotte (2005) argues that these authors have been able to gradually counter the dominant narrative of a pastoral and conquered Acadie but shift the view of the nation towards its socio-economic reality, which has proven to be quite dynamic over time.

To summarize, scholars of the "New Acadian Historiography" have critiqued the work of neo-nationalist writers working before the 1970s, calling for a greater focus on the socio-economic realities for Acadian communities and the diversity of inter-group relations, as well as a critical consideration for the role identity politics, settler colonialism, and nationalism have

played in influencing common readings of Acadian history, mainly those that have been adopted by public history. Thus, there are considerable links to be made between developing patterns in Acadian history and the value of turning towards history, memory, and identity in historiographies. The need for a new Acadian history is best summarized by Massicotte's reading of Halbwach and Namer: "Memory is transmuted according to the questions and intentions addressed to it by the present" (2005, p. 169). In light of the continual Acadian plight as minorities navigating industrial systems during in the twenty-first century, this reminder of the role of memory as influencing actions is paramount for the new historians of Acadie.

### **2.3 Nationalism**

While nation, nationality, and nationalism are difficult terms for historians to define, most have recognized their ties to history and memory (Anderson, 2006). In the 2006 book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson asserts that nations are "imagined communities" and nationalism is a sort of "cultural artefact" whose meaning has changed overtime, creating a "profound emotional legitimacy" (2006, p. 4-6). Anderson explains that nations can be seen as "imagined communities" because they form a lasting and unifying "comradeship" that is continually sustained regardless of inequalities or exploitation within the nation (Anderson, 2006, p. 7). In other words, the status of a nation is not necessarily contingent on the power structures within it. Thus, the study of nationalism requires a substantial degree of focus on the cultural rather than institutional roots of the nation.

Interestingly, Anderson argues that racism functions independently from nationalism given that racism is not concerned with the nation-ness of an individual (2006). By the same

token, Anderson claims that colonial racism is most influenced by societal constructions of class, not nationality (2006). Anderson interprets racism as often ignoring or removing the “national and cultural differences between nations.” (Pryce, 2019). An illustrative example is the racism that white Americans exhibited towards Asian Americans during the Vietnam War, irrespective of nationality (Pryce, 2019). Nonetheless, some scholars argue that Anderson has overdrawn the distinction between nationalism and racism. These critics observe that racism has been used to exclude certain groups from certain definitions of nationality, which has in turn played a role in the formation of various nations (Pryce, 2019). In his critique, Gabriel Pryce looked at the case of Indigenous peoples in North America, pointing to intersections of class, racism, colonialism, and nationalism (2019). Pryce explains that while the reserve system inevitably perpetuated poverty and isolation for Indigenous communities, it was originally conceptualized by lawmakers as a way to solve the “Indian Problem”, “whereby Native Americans were seen as “savages”, isolated from settlers because they were not viewed as compatible with the “values, identity, or system of the white American nation state which settler colonialism has led to” (2019, para. 10). Thus, American national identity is what fueled racist policies targeting Indigenous people. Pryce argues that nationalism can and should be examined in relation to class and race, insisting that iterations of nationalism, especially in settler colonial societies, has been proven to “instigate racist beliefs, as well as racism stimulating prejudice conceptions and notions of nature” (2019, para. 10).

## **2.4 Settler Colonialism**

Indeed, in the context of history, memory, identity, and nationalism, it is essential to apply the lens of settler colonialism to this analysis given both the white European settler status

of the Acadians and the location of Nova Scotia's South Shore within Mi'kma'ki, the unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq. Settler colonialism has been defined as a continuous series of processes and structures that govern former (or current) colonial geographies, primarily involving "replacing" Indigenous populations with settler populations (Hunt & Leeuw, 2020). These processes operate by procuring land, resources, and wealth at the disadvantage of non-imperial subjects, most commonly reflected in the structural and continuous attempt to assimilate Indigenous populations located within the boundary of the new nation (Hunt & Leeuw, 2020). Scholars have recognized the importance of distinguishing between colonialism and settler colonialism (Hunt & Leeuw, 2020). Colonialism involves a similar process of economic accumulation but is notably followed by the departure of imperial colonists from the region (Hunt & Leeuw, 2020). The key difference with settler colonialism is that the colonists remain on the land they have reaped, turning it into a homeland in a way that "reconfigures Indigenous land" and denotes "Indigenous lands, bodies, worldviews and ways of being are actively and continuously under attack" (Hunt & Leeuw, 2020, pg.1).

The concept of settler colonialism has been applied when analyzing resource conflicts by scholars such as Korneski and Harper. Kurt Korneski (2018) has observed that in the case of interactions between settlers and Indigenous peoples working in extractive industries such as the fisheries, settler colonialism undoubtedly plays a decisive role in how the inter-group relationship is formed and maintained. In the historic case of Newfoundland and Labrador's development into a major settler fishing outpost, Korneski argues that occupying key access points to the marine resources (as managed by the Indigenous peoples since time immemorial) was essential to colonizing the island (2018). As a result, the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery is a direct byproduct of colonization, meaning that any interactions between settlers and

Indigenous peoples within the system is reproducing settler colonialism (Korneski, 2018). He goes on to say that settler colonialism, along with the “struggle and the inequities and oppression central to it” thus “becomes manifested in physical confrontations, national imaginings, and in symbolic representation” in the fishing communities of Newfoundland and Labrador (2018, pg. 149).

Equally, Amy Harper (2018) has applied settler colonialism to look at issues arising from the co-management of salmon populations on Canada’s Pacific Coast. Harper argues that the agency of individuals, often influenced by their whiteness, plays a crucial role in how fisheries disputes on the West Coast have unfolded: “one’s location within the larger social structure (e.g., gender, race, class), and is key to how people experience, articulate, and respond to environmental struggles” (2018, pg. 1). Harper emphasizes that a consideration for the geo-historical context of a region as well as settler colonialism are vital for researchers investigating the positionality of individuals involved in resource disputes (2018).

Importantly, others working in the field have shown how minority ethnic or cultural groups can complicate the application of settler colonialism as an interpretive framework. According to Amy Fung, scholars who focus on dominant social groups unwittingly separate marginalized minorities “from their role and complicity in benefiting from and upholding the status quo of white settler colonialism.” (2021, pg. 1). By ignoring ethnic and racial minorities within multicultural settler societies, Fung suggest that “settler colonial studies inhibit our critical understanding of the settler identity by naturalizing settler supremacy as whiteness.” (2021, pg. 1). Thus, it is essential to recognize that all settler minority groups in Canada are in fact involved in processes of settler colonialism by simply occupying the land.

## 2.5 The Role of History in Group-Based Resource Conflicts

A set of scholars has turned to the history, memory, and identity of groups or individuals to better understand the dynamics of resource disputes. Notably, researchers have recognized how a prior history of conflict and cooperation is an important factor in the intensity of inter-group resource disputes (Ansell & Gash, 2006). Prior encounters are particularly influential in the case of stakeholders that do not have organizational infrastructure (e.g., cultural groups, advocacy groups) (Ansell & Gash, 2006). These groups, that lack organizational structure (compared to that of a government agency, for example) are more likely to shape their positionality around their histories of conflict (Ansell & Gash, 2006). This can create major barriers to consensus building and conflict resolution. English summarizes the issue as “the more diffuse the effected stakeholders, the longer term the problem horizon, the more difficult it will be to represent stakeholders in collaborative processes” (2000, p.551, in Ansell & Gash, 2006). Thus, individual or group perception is likely to influence the actions of stakeholder groups lacking formal organization as well as make conflicts more difficult to resolve. As a result, perceived threats to the stability of a natural resource can often develop without much basis in conservation actualities, and more emphasis on the groups historic disputes or perceived injustices.

Additionally, power or resource imbalances, both current and historical, have been identified as playing a divisive role in the onset of resource disputes (Lubell, 2000). Chris Ansell (2006) argues that conflicts can take shape regardless of the environmental or economic stability of natural resource extraction, since conflicts are ultimately rooted in the perceptions of participants. Mark Lubell (2000) emphasises that those perceptions, and the resulting potential for conflict or collaboration, are contingent upon the contemporary and historical relationships of the stakeholders. These cognitive assumptions have been interpreted elsewhere in resource

dispute literature, often within the context of perceived threats and positionality analysis. Lastly, and importantly, Jeroen Warner (2006) expanded upon this by looking at how a group's ability to understand perspectives, interests, and actualities of complex situations can be hindered by the memory of historical power imbalances. Misunderstanding the conditions of a resource dispute combined with the inability to see the perspective of the other side has notably appeared in disputes relating to historically grounded assumptions (Warner, 2006). While participants and observers might misunderstand resources, conflicts, the media, and historical analysis this thesis will clarify what the issues around identity, memory, and history are in the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute that would otherwise be missed.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

### 3.1 Research Design

The major research objective of this thesis was to determine how Acadian history, memory, and identity, as related to the Maritime fisheries and the Mi'kmaq, played a role in the mobilization of nationalism among Acadian fishers during the 2020 conflict through a historically grounded analysis. A mixed methods approach was adopted to allow for suitable depth of scrutiny. The study had two primary components. The first was a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to determine how settler fishers were framed during the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute. The analysis evaluates the overall media treatment of fisher positionality as related to drivers of the conflict and looks at how the media picked up on Acadian nationalism as an important factor. The conclusions are then used to compare the emergent historical influences of Acadian positionality to other historical narratives presented by Acadian public history. The second phase of the study involved a chronological reconstruction of how Acadian nationalism and identity have been tied to the fisheries since 1605. This section broadly discusses how historical events, the memory of them, and the resulting manifestations of an Acadian cultural identity over time may have influenced the Acadian's actions as a settler minority group in the 2020 conflict.

### 3.2 Approach Rationale

The 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute had a massive stakeholder catalog, including government officials, administrative bodies, law enforcement, minority groups, Indigenous groups, settler groups, political groups, and activist groups. Accordingly, an approach that deconstructs just one of these complex variables is anticipated to yield valuable information to



aid in understanding the nuances of the situation. The Acadians and the Mi'kmaq are two minority populations who historically cooperated, including within the fisheries, yet have more recently had competing perspectives on the regulation of livelihood fisheries, first in 1999 and then in 2020. As a result, a historical analysis that focuses on the development of Acadian nationalism within the fisheries industry emerged as a suitable approach. Focusing on interactions of history, memory, and identity in this work aligns with trends in “New Acadian History” that aim to diversify the historiography. When paired with a media analysis, a historical approach can holistically respond to the guiding research questions and generate new knowledge on the topic. Given the recency of this conflict and its lack of coverage in academic literature, turning to media reports was the most suitable approach to integrate the event with a discussion surrounding public history. This study uses a broad and philosophical application of CDA by focusing on the relationship between the discourse and broader political contexts as opposed to focusing on the content at a micro-linguistic level. Using CDA on this macro scale can produce better reflection on the identity itself and any embedded cultural assumptions, according to the literature (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004). This kind of analysis best characterizes the goal of this research, justifying the broader application of CDA in this project.

### **3.3 Gathering Data and Creating a Theme Map**

For the CDA phase of the study, sixty media articles were selected from seventeen news outlets across Canada, forty-five in English and seventeen in French. The articles were assembled using the Factiva and Eureka Databases available through the Dalhousie University Library, in addition to a simple Google keyword search. Articles were selected based on their date of publication, length, and subject matter. Only materials published between 15 September

2020, and 25 November 2020 are included in this analysis. A variety of news outlets were consulted for this data collection, including a mix of mainstream national news, mainstream local news, alternative national news, and alternative local news. The study featured articles from *Acadie Nouvelle*, *CBC News*, *The Chronicle Herald*, *The Coast*, *The Conversation*, *CTV News*, *Global News*, *The Globe and Mail*, *La Presse*, *Le Devoir*, *Morning Star*, *The National Post*, *Radio Canada*, *Refinery 29*, *The Toronto Star*, *The Toronto Sun*, and *VOA News*.

The articles were closely read and manually coded using a table similar to that of Figure 1. Emergent themes regarding drivers of the conflict and the depiction of various stakeholders were tracked and represented on a theme map according to their categorization as a key message, problem, or solution. *Key messages* are the largest and most encompassing group within this thematical study and characterizes what the articles intended to primarily communicate by looking at what received the most amount of attention to in their summary. These sections are further broken down into *problems*, considered to be what the article outlined as drivers behind the conflict. The subthemes are categorized as *solutions* within this model, meaning they all serve to mediate the problems in some capacity, including stakeholder positionality. The manually coded data was input into Excel using a tabular form, correlating to both their date of publication and the news outlet to easily identify reoccurring themes. The final interpretation of the analysis is represented in a theme map (Figure 2).

### **Figure 1**

*Example of the Manual-Style Coding Framework Used.*

Article Title	Nova Scotia lobster dispute: Mi'kmaq fishery isn't a threat to conservation, say scientists
Source	<i>The Conversation</i>
Date Published	October 20, 2020
Author	Bailey, Megan
Headline Buzzwords	Lobster, dispute, Mi'kmaq, conservation
Primary Media Frame	<p>Inherent and Treaty Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishery is not illegal.</li> </ul> <p>Unfounded Conservation Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishery is not a conservation concern.</li> <li>• "Conservation is not at the heart of the ongoing dispute".</li> <li>• "Data for St. Mary's Bay and Lobster Fishing Area 34 show that commercial catches have declined in the past two years compared to the 2015-16 season. Commercial fishers have argued this is due to the summer "food, social and ceremonial" fishery that operates outside the commercial season. The recent protests have targeted the 'livelihood' fishery, but it seems that what the commercial sector is actually angry about is the food, social, and ceremonial fishery."</li> </ul> <p>Conclusion that the sector needs to address its racism, and ensure positions are grounded in evidence.</p>

### 3.4 Limitations

This study has a few recognized limitations. Critical discourse analysis is recognized as being an inherently limiting model. This is mainly due to the lack of consistent methodology for applying CDA, leaving the researcher to make subjective choices (Hansen, 2011). The limitations are further present in the theory's constructionist aspect, which implies that all truth claims are technically 'constructed' in discourse, making it difficult to determine a true social reality (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004). This narrow construction of reality is a large aspect of the criticism within the literature of the so called "Foucauldian approach" to discourse analysis, which can sometimes resemble CDA (Fairclough, 1992). Scholars have pointed out that this more traditional discourse analysis tends to assume that discourse is largely cohesive and applies this when analyzing social realities (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Fairclough, 1992). However, this leaves limited space for integrating factors into the analysis such as self-interested action or multiple discourses which may exist in opposition to each other (Ainsworth & Hardy 2004).

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter correlates the increased affluence of the Acadians in the Maritime fisheries to the formation of the collective Acadian identity and the political gains of Acadian nationalists and neo-nationalists. Each section looks at particular moments in time when Acadian history, memory, identity, the fisheries, and Acadian-Mi'kmaq relations overlapped, and then investigates the outcome, starting with media reports on the 2020 dispute, and then taking a chronological approach. The chapter connects historical shifts in the balance of power between fisheries rights of the Acadians and the Mi'kmaq to the mobilization of Acadian nationalism politics and the resulting perception of self. In doing so, this section serves to historically contextualize how and why the increased agency of Indigenous fishers triggered the mobilization of Acadian nationalism during the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute.

### **4.1 Media Analysis of Settler Fishers in the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute**

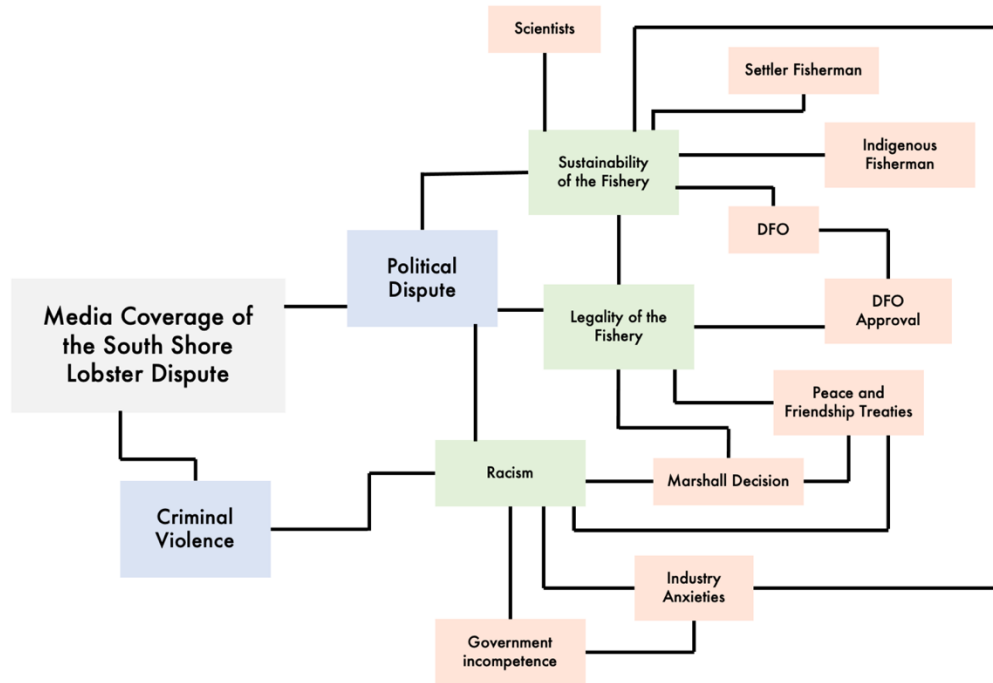
To start in 2020, the South Shore Lobster Dispute was a unique cause adopted by Acadian fishers, given they explicitly mobilized their conflict during the nationalism. Considering the lack of academic publications speaking to this issue given its recency, it is useful to turn towards the media to see how this uniquely Acadian positionality was interpreted during the conflict to aid in this interdisciplinary analysis of the dispute. The findings demonstrate that while the media was indeed cognizant of the role of history in this dispute, they were less keen to identify Acadian nationalism and engage with similar violence of the 1999 Burnt Church Crisis, with some leaning on the misguided historical narratives that have long saturated Acadian history to avoid addressing these contentious issues. These findings affirm the need for a greater attention to settler colonialism and nationalism when studying Acadian history, particularly in

relation to socio-economic factors (in this case, the fisheries), as prescribed by the new Acadian historians and accomplished through this revisionist historiography.

To begin with the media's general depiction of settler fisher positionality in the dispute, the most common drivers of protest were described as the legality of the Sipekne'katik livelihood fishery (mentioned in 93% of articles), the conservation risks it posed (mentioned in 63% of articles), and settler racism (mentioned in 28% of articles). As these drivers of settler positionality and their influences were mentioned in articles, they were manually coded. This body of data was then communicated via a theme map (Figure 2), which lists the *problems* that the articles are addressing, the *key messages* that inform these problems, and the *solutions*, which serve to mediate the emergence of these problems in some capacity.

## **Figure 2**

*Theme map outlining the key messages, problems, and solutions reported in 60 news articles covering the 2020 Mi'kmaq Lobster Dispute. Key messages are represented in blue, problems in green, and solutions in pink.*



In articles that cited the legality of the fishery as one of the key concerns leading to the protest and eventual conflict, the Peace and Friendship Treaties, Marshall Decision, and DFO approval were commonly mentioned in accordance, showing that history was indeed on the mind of those documenting the dispute. Of the 60 articles, 27 (45%) mentioned the Peace and Friendship Treaties, the legal agreements which first guaranteed access of Indigenous peoples and their descendants to regional hunting, fishing, and land use as relevant to the conflict. However, compared to the 90% of articles that discussed the 1999 Marshall Decision, only 21% also mentioned the settler violence in Burnt Church that followed, despite the similarities of the conflict to that in 2020. Moreover, the 17 articles that did touch on racism all addressed the 1999 Marshall Decision, showing that racism was just as relevant to that conflict and discussion in 1999 as it is to the events of 2020, despite any overt connections being made between settler positionality in the two disputes.

Furthermore, the interest-piquing flag waving of the Acadians received negligible attention in the media, being mentioned in only two of the articles (0.03%). To this end, it is curious why reporters did not take time to discuss the Acadians as stakeholders when it was clearly important to them that they distinguished themselves. Symbols of their nationalism were decidedly important to Acadians in the conflict. In these few articles that did touch on the Acadians, their analysis was misguided, all taking a “remember when you guys used to be friends’ approach” to the Acadian-Mi’kmaq narrative in this dispute, which, based on the literature of the New Acadian Historians, does not properly account for how the two groups relationship has changed over time, or the role of settler colonialism as influential to the Acadian experience as white settler minorities.

To overcome the limited historical narrative evident in media reports, and to further explore the complexities of the dispute, the below historical narrative demonstrates the persistent connection between Acadian nationalism and Acadian fisheries. Fisheries were enmeshed with the redefinition of the group self-perception and informed the Acadian nationalist struggle against assimilation within an anglophone-dominated settler colonialism. The increased agency of Indigenous fishers was therefore perceived as a challenge to Acadian cultural and political interests, as well as material ones. The 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute is better understood by acknowledging that the perceptions of Acadian fisher stakeholders were more influential in shaping the conflict than strict legal precedent or scientific fact. Furthermore, given the ongoing salience of Acadian nationalism, identity, and memory with regards to resource issues and more, broader discussions about the decolonization of Acadian public history remain complex.

#### **4.2 A People Called Acadian: Ethnogenesis of a Culture and Mi'kmaq Friendship**

An Acadian identity first emerged as an unintentional consequence of French colonial settlement on the Bay of Fundy (Brasseaux, 2005; Griffiths, 2005; Rees, 2008). The colonization of the eastern coast of North America by the French was a long and difficult process which began as early as 1534, with the creation of Acadie being one of the earliest colonial projects of the French crown (Davis, 2000). Apart from aspirations of expanding trade networks and disseminating Catholicism in the New World, it is important to note that French settlement policy in Acadie was also influenced by the desire to establish a new homeland (Griffiths, 1973). As a result, even the earliest Acadian communities are considered to be cultural landscapes, a place for Acadians to “share their common heritage, reaffirm their identity, and continue to build their sense of community in a spirit of peaceful reconciliation with history” (UNESCO, 2011, pp.x). The life of the Acadians prior to their deportation in 1755 is one part of the group’s long connection to Nova Scotia that has saturated public history on the Acadians (Wysote & Morton, 2019). Various exchanges between the settlers and the Mi'kmaq during these early years have almost uniquely been relied on to shape the historic narrative of an Acadian-Mi'kmaq friendship, although, through a post-colonial lens this narrative emerges as problematic. Above all, in this section it is crucial to understand that the Acadians were colonizers, as is reflected in their history, policies, and later identities.

This first Acadian settlement was established in 1605 along the north shore of the Rivière Dauphin (now known as the Annapolis River) and was to be known as Port Royal, occupied by a group of eighty odd colonists who spent their first few formative years developing an understanding of the area’s climate, flora and fauna, as well as forming relationships with the local Indigenous peoples, the Mi'kmaq (Ross & Deveau, 1995). Mi'kmaq are an Indigenous



people of Northeast Turtle Island (North America), including Canada's Atlantic Provinces, areas of Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula, and portions of the state of Maine, a geographical area known as Mi'kma'ki (Davis, 2000). The Mi'kmaq have stewarded the land of Mi'kma'ki for time immemorial, enjoying a productive and reciprocal relationship with the environment (Lewis, 2006). Mi'kmaq hunting and fishing was a skilled and measured endeavour, evolving with the seasonal changes and facilitated by the use of technologies such as the brush weir (Johnson, 1996). The immediate relationship between French colonists and the Mi'kmaq was largely influenced by Port Royal's location within a stone's throw from *Nme'juaqnek*, an area known to the Mi'kmaq as "the place of bountiful fish" (Fowler, 2020). *Nme'juaqnek* was the site of a major Mi'kmaq fishery where fishers employed brush weir technology to capture fish on the ebb located between the river's mouth and the sea (Fowler, 2020). The early settlers of Port Royal adopted the technologies of the Mi'kmaq fishery, with the communities described as "deriving a great aid to existence" from the brush weir fisheries by the year 1699 (Fowler, 2020). Logically, along with conveying the knowledge of brush weir fisheries, the Mi'kmaq also shared the harvest of *Nme'juaqnek* with Acadian colonists.

Given the Acadians were a predominantly Catholic group, the installation of a reliable fishery within their settlement had great religious and cultural importance. As the Catholic church began to place heightened importance on fast and Saint's days in the Christian calendar, the population became increasingly reliant on fish in the absence of other meat (Fagan, 2006). As well as strengthening local Catholic devotion (and thus the identity of the population), commercial fishing met the demand for fish back in France. While the transatlantic cod fishery has been ongoing since the fifteenth century, Acadian fishing interests were formalized through the establishment of the *Compagnie de la Pêche Sedentaire* in 1682 (Guitard, 1978). The fishery

stretched from Chedabouctou (known today as Guysborough) to encompass most of the territory between Cape Canso and the Bay of Fundy, extending as far as the Iles de la Madeleine by 1685 (Guitard, 1978).

The household economies of Acadian colonists also depended on agriculture. Here again, Acadians drew on the knowledge of Mi'kmaw farmers who grew squashes, pumpkins, beans and tobacco within their riverbank gardens (Ross & Deveau, 1995). The relationship between the Mi'kmaq, the Acadians, and their shared natural resources were extremely influential in the likelihood that the colony of Acadie would remain viable. This was further perpetuated by the geographical isolation of Acadie from other French colonies (Dunn, 2000).

Another notable aspect of inter-group cultural exchange in this period was the spread of Catholicism among Mi'kmaq as a result of Acadian missionary activity. In the face of the unique coexistence and even perceived friendship of the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians in the seventeenth century, it is important to remember these interactions were usually steeped in (or even under the guise of) colonialism and assimilation (Patterson, 1993). Famous religious figure of early Acadie Father Pierre Maillard, developed quite an exceptional relationship with the Mi'kmaq, culminating in the group's adoption of a yearly pilgrimage to Maillard's Holy Family Mission on Chapel Island (Patterson, 1993). Even this incredibly close friend of the Mi'kmaq still expressed a hesitancy to teach the Mi'kmaq French, claiming "they would abuse [the language] by learning what was evil rather than what was good" (Patterson, 1993, pg. 30). Thus, although the Acadians and the Mi'kmaq did enjoy productive cultural interactions, the nature of them was not always of mutual beneficence or respect.

It was also at during the seventeenth century that a new sociocultural phenomenon was unfolding – mixed marriages between the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians (Landry & Lang, 2001).

Historians and genealogists have long pointed to this exchange as further proof of the two group's friendship and collaboration in the seventeenth century (Dunn, 2000; Ross & Deveau, 1995). Nevertheless, other post-colonial scholars have criticized North American historians' reliance on marriage records as indicators of alliance or amicability between Indigenous and settler groups, calling into question the value of these sources (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Furthermore, there is no significant historical evidence that cross-cultural marriages and family formation were widespread. When documented marriages did occur, they were predominantly between Mi'kmaw women and European men (Deslandres, 2012; Leroux, 2019). Only about 120 Mi'kmaq-Acadian marriages were celebrated across all of Nova Scotia during the first one hundred years of the settlement, despite the combined population of the two groups estimated to be more than 103,000 (Landry & Lang, 2001).

French colonial officials viewed these marriages in colonial terms, expecting the unions to conform to French understandings and conventions of marriage, patriarchy, and religion (Deslandres, 2012). The French policy towards Indigenous peoples of the New World was consistently assimilative: their goal was to treat Indigenous allies kindly to avoid violence and transform them into respectable French Catholic citizens (Landry & Lang, 2001). This policy is reflected in the fact that France did not recognize the sovereignty of the Mi'kmaq nation during their years of alliance (Landry & Lang, 2001). At the time of these Mi'kmaq-Acadian unions, marriage between Catholics and Pagans (that is to say, those without religion) was strictly forbidden within the French Catholic church (Landry & Lang, 2001). Officials and missionaries applied this thinking to Indigenous peoples they considered to be "uncivilized savages" (Landry & Lang, 2001, p.52). Plus, the prospect of miscegenation troubled French missionaries in Acadie who viewed the marriages as necessities rather than desirable (Landry & Lang, 2001). Yet so

long as Mi'kmaw women and the marriages adhered to Catholicism, missionaries saw mixed marriage as slightly less offensive than live-in partnerships without a formal wedding. As a result, cross-cultural marriages are reflected in Church records (Landry & Lang, 2001). But the influence of French policy and social structure on these early interactions between the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians affirms the idea that the Acadians were colonizers first, and friends or allies second.

When looking at this history in light of future changes to the political agency of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia, it is important to recognize that many texts documenting this early Acadian-Mi'kmaq relationship have been criticized for unwittingly uphold the misconception that Indigenous peoples were “victims of history” (Patterson, 1993, pg. 23). The Mi'kmaq were not a passive and guileless people and were undeniably autonomous in this period, “exercising choices which represented their best efforts to accommodate the European intruders and adjust to the challenges and opportunities they posed” (Patterson, 1993, pg. 23). There are many examples of this historical agency, reflected in events such as the 1710 denial the Mi'kmaq exercised when asked to move to Cape Breton with the Acadians, given it would conflict with their traditional patterns of subsistence hunting and fishing (Patterson, 1993). Mi'kmaq did in fact act in self-interest during this period and made decisions strategically, an important point that is lost when they are portrayed as a completely passive people (Patterson, 1993).

The Acadian settlement at Port Royal would be constantly menaced by geopolitical competition between France and England over the course of the seventeenth century (Ross & Deveau, 1995). As fires and raids destroyed structures at Port Royal, Acadian settlers were known to winter with the nearby Mi'kmaq until they were retrieved the following year (Dunn, 2000). The territory of Acadie would change hands between the English and the French

numerous times between 1605 and 1713, sometimes by way of violent and destructive raids, with the English ultimately sustaining political influence thereafter (Dunn, 2000). Incessant geopolitical conflict played a central role in the evolution of Acadian identity and self-perception. Acadians faced unwelcome interventions of the French and English governments who made legislative decision for the area without any knowledge of its peoples or characteristics, including within the cod fisheries that eventually collapsed in 1702 (Griffiths, 1973). As Acadians developed their economic base and maintained cultural uniformity, the viability of the colony was simultaneously threatened by superior external military powers. Paradoxically, it was amidst geopolitical uncertainty that identifiably Acadian culture and customs began to conspicuously inform Acadian settler self-perception. The massively important *saulniers*, agricultural workers on the salt marshes, began to establish a series of dykes and salt pans during this period, fueling the success of sustaining both localized agronomy and fisheries (Dunn, 2000). By the time Acadie had decisively been transferred to the British through the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 (and thus became Nova Scotia), the colony had a well-developed consensus on shared morals, beliefs, traditions and goals for the settlement's expansion (Griffiths, 1973). They had become "a people called Acadian" and this process happened in the backdrop of repeated conquering (Griffiths, 1973, pg.18). In turn, the Acadians relied heavily on self-sufficiency and collaboration (with each other and the Mi'kmaq), two emblematic themes of Acadian identity in this period (Griffiths, 1973).

### **The Acadian Deportation**

In 1730, after living under British rule for a number of years, the Acadians were asked to swear an oath of unconditional loyalty to the British crown, as was required of all conquered

subjects (Ross & Deveau, 1995). The Acadians famously responded by expressing their neutrality towards the British, French, and the Mi'kmaq, a position that gave Acadian identity added political salience (Ross & Deveau, 1995). British authorities came to view Acadian neutrality as intolerable. When Acadian delegates again refused to swear their allegiance to the British crown in 1755, an act the British would use to justify deporting the population (Griffiths, 1973). The removal of the Acadians proceeded over approximately nine long years, with historians estimating that approximately 8,000 colonists were deported to English settlements on North America's eastern seaboard (Griffiths, 1973).

Historians have long studied the deportation of the Acadians (also known as *Le Grand Dérangement*) as a critical event in the group's history, permanently shaping their identity and memory as a people. As an Acadian delegation pleaded their case of neutrality to the British on the eve of their deportation, they were keen to assert their distinct identity and nationality (Griffiths, 1973). The Acadian delegation distinguished their group from "natural subjects of King George" by highlighting the "historical conception of their position within Nova Scotia, one determined by past negotiations and precedents" (Griffiths, 1973, p. 55). In other words, the Acadians appealed to their precedent behaviour of peace and neutrality, which meant their resulting deportation was perceived as greatly unjust (Griffiths, 1973). This idea of the Acadians as victims of a great injustice would become a touchstone of Acadian identity, which is important to remember given they first identified themselves as a unique nation on the eve of their exile. The deportation was foundational to the rise of nationalism that came with the population's resettlement in the late eighteenth century as well as the mobilization of neo-nationalism seen in the mid twentieth century. The collective memory of the deportation has informed Acadian identity and history.

Historians have argued that the characterization of Acadians as innocent victimized settlers that developed during the deportation has been overdetermined and overemphasized (Faragher, 2006; Wysote & Morton, 2011). Yet the construction of a “victim story” of Acadian identity, more fully articulated by Acadian nationalists at the end of the nineteenth century, had origins in the experiences of deported people trying to make sense of their difficult past (Faragher, 2006). Acadian identity subsequently developed under the hegemonic narrative of the “gentle settler” who has crafted the cultural landscape of Acadie, fueling their entitlement to the lands (which were indeed acquired through a colonial process) (Wysote & Morton, 2011). In addition to their role as colonizers, it is easy to find contradictions of this interpretation that the Acadians were gentle and passive victims. Namely, there is evidence of Acadian families using domestic slave labour of African Americans and Canadians, contradicting their aversion to repression and submission of the minority (Baker, 1983, cited in Rees, 2008). Moreover, during the violent resistance of the deportation, some Acadians engaged in massacring women and children in an act of revenge, contradicting their gentle passivity (Faragher, 2006; Griffith, 2005). The status of the Acadians as primarily colonizers of North America is important to maintain, despite their depictions in public history. This misguided adoption of complete Acadian victimization and passivity as a construction of identity would be mobilized by Acadian nationalists as the population began to once again settled the lands of Acadie.

#### **4.3 Eighteenth Century Acadian Resettlement and Early Nineteenth Century Cultural Renaissance**

Changing policies from 1764, the British administration began to develop a proposal which would allow Acadians to resettle in the Maritimes (Dunn, 2000). The slow and laborious

return of the Acadians led to new communities where social and economic conditions were transformed, yet where Acadians maintained their desire for cultural cohesion and increased their aversion to integration with other colonists over the course of the next 100 years. Acadian identity continued to develop during this century, influenced by their politics of isolationism and the birth of more diverse Maritime fisheries.

To avoid any possibility of Acadian resurgence or conflict (as well as the simple fact that Acadians lands had been occupied by anglophone settlers), British colonial authorities did not give Acadians the opportunity to resettle their old lands (Griffiths, 1973). The returning exiles were instead permitted land as far away from the French owned St. Pierre and Miquelon, with many settling in Clare County on the Bay of Fundy (Griffiths, 1973). Along rocky Maritime shores, many of these new Acadian coastal communities would come to be market dependent fishing outposts (Dunn, 2000). As a result of their new geographical situation, the Acadians were no longer able to rely on salt marsh agriculture, quashing their attempts “to recreate the self-contained and independent life they had had before 1755” (Griffiths, 1973, pg. 75).

The prohibition on resettling their agricultural lands created a stubborn Acadian population who refused to accept certain plots of land or integrate with other communities (Griffiths, 1973). A recorded account of the Acadians from 1791 describes the population as “still steadfast in their religious Tenets, maintaining almost an inviolate Separation from all other classes of People and in every respect answering (very nearly) the same character as the first” (Griffiths, 1973, pg.74). Their affinity for self-sufficiency and isolation was even noted by other minority groups in the region. In 1795, a group of Scottish immigrants residing in Prince Edward Island wrote to the nearby Acadian community stating that they were enthusiastic to provide the “destitute” community with a clergy but were unable to as “you kept all along as before in a



dispersed state mostly in the remote parts of the island” (Griffiths, 1973, pg. 74). Thus, the Acadian societal characteristic of self-sufficiency, now strengthened by the deportation, created estrangement from other minority groups who were also grappling with maintaining cultural integrity under British hegemony.

Importantly, the Acadians continued this isolationism by making little effort to re-establish their relationship with the Mi’kmaq. When the New England Planters resettled Acadian agricultural lands from 1755, many Mi’kmaq moved their settlements elsewhere to avoid interactions with anglophone colonists (Ross & Deveau, 1995). When the Acadians returned in the 1760s, many of their new communities further displaced the Mi’kmaq population, who was now running out of territory to live in comfortably (Landry & Lang, 2001). Some Mi’kmaq lived on reserve style communities over the course of the next 30 years, with their contact with Acadians being only through missionaries (Landry & Lang, 2001). Thus, meaningful interactions between the Acadians and the Mi’kmaq had ceased upon the colonists return. The absence of a sustained closeness between the two groups is further supported by the British military’s policy by 1780, which does not reflect a perception of the Mi’kmaq a military threat on their own or, more importantly, as Acadian allies (Landry & Lang, 2001).

Relative isolation also led Acadians to value their own group unity. In the nineteenth century, Acadian social life featured evening gatherings of families and neighbours. One aspect of the resulting socialization and cultural production involved sharing and comparing memories of the deportation and diaspora, leading to a new collective conceptualization of the traumatic events of 1755 (Griffiths, 1973). Word-of-mouth story telling guided the collective memory of the deportation, an event which remained untouched by popular literature until the publication of Henry Longfellow’s poem *Evangeline* in 1847 (Griffiths, 1973). These community-rooted

discussions of the deportation kept Acadian history within their memory, allowing them to have ownership over their truth. In turn, the Acadians continued to develop the important “vision of themselves through the concept of their history” (Griffiths, 1973, p.70). This process is interesting to mention, as it indicates an early reinterpretation of Acadian history which would soon be used to reidentify the population (Spigelman, M.S., 1975).

Towards the mid-nineteenth century, the fisheries of the Northeast seaboard began to diversify and expand (Landry & Lang, 2001). In 1850, there were only five documented fisheries operations in the Maritime provinces, but by 1861, there were eighty-nine (Landry & Lang, 2001). Moving away from the cod fisheries, Acadians in the Maritimes began to get involved in the mackerel, herring, and lobster industries (Landry & Lang, 2001). Importantly, leading fishing ports were located within Acadian communities during the 1850s, and although operated by foreign companies, nearly all the foremen and workers were Acadian (Landry & Lang, 2001). Thus, the large-scale development of the fisheries industry within Acadian communities occurred at a moment in history when the population was known for their hesitancy to collaborate with others, an important correlation when looking forward.

#### **4.4 Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early to Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Acadian and Mi'kmaq Fisheries: Nationalism and Political Mobilization**

The 1880s were a period of particular importance for the success of the Acadian fisheries, a development that occurred in tandem with the rise of identity politics and nationalism. Crucially, it was around this time that Acadians began to view the lack of unity among individual Acadian communities as a weakness, especially within the disproportionately Anglo-Protestant social context in the post-Confederation Maritimes (Spigelman, M.S., 1975). There was a lack of a

precise political definition for being “Acadian,” in relation to both ethnicity and nation, making the true community in the Maritimes difficult to quantify. By appealing to an emotive belief in the self rather than any strict criteria, the Acadian elite began creating and maintaining their own reality surrounding group identification in the hopes of fostering a national consciousness (Spigelman, M.S., 1975).

This mobilization was evident in the series of Acadian national conventions that occurred across the Maritime provinces between 1881 and 1890 (Spigelman, M.S., 1975). The conventions generated significant nationalism within the population through the adoption of visible manifestations of Acadian identity such as a national anthem, patron saint, national holiday, and national flag (Rees, 2008). More importantly however, the Acadians discovered they could mobilize their nationalism to defend their political interests against any “attacks on their autonomy” (Spigelman, M.S., 1975, p. 280). Embodying this sentiment, Acadian leaders that attended these conferences went on to play a key role in the emergence of additional Acadian settlements throughout the late nineteenth century (Spigelman, M.S., 1975). Many Acadian elites hoped to build an Acadian economic base through agricultural improvement rather than resource extraction. New agricultural settlement unfortunately fizzled out after the economic disaster resulting from a near total crop failure (Spigelman, M.S., 1975).

Yet concurrently, the lobster fishery was developing into the most prosperous and important Atlantic fishery, which caught the attention of Acadian nationalists (Brun, 1982). During the 1870s and 1880s, lobster fishing became the dominant fishery in coastal communities of Southwest New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, two areas that were largely unpopulated by English companies (Brun, 1982; Landry & Lang, 2001). Acadian entrepreneurs began to open small scale lobster pounds as the lucrative industry developed (Brun, 1982). More importantly

however, the majority of the larger foreign owned lobster pounds such as Portland Packing, O'Leary, Noble, and Kimball that began to obtain a commercial monopoly were run by Acadian foremen (Brun, 1982). On the southwest coast of Nova Scotia, Acadian fishers were recorded as making up 34% of the fisheries workforce and owning 34.7% of the coast's fleet in the 1880s (Landry & Lang, 2001). In communities such as Pubnico, as few as three Acadian families owned 37.4% of the area's registered schooners, showing their affluence (Landry & Lang, 2001). Elsewhere, by 1891 in the community of Westmorland, New Brunswick, the Acadians owned or rented around half of all the area's lobster pounds (Landry & Lang, 2001). Evidently, the Acadians were major stakeholders in Nova Scotia's commercial lobster fishery from its onset.

The transition of the predominant Acadian economy from agriculture to fisheries was not simply a shift from working the land to working the sea. Given the strong connections of the population to the land and their history, the development is more properly characterized as a profound transition in the relationship between the Acadian community and the product of their work (Couturier J.P & LeBlanc, P.E., 1996). The rise of Acadian nationalism, the resulting failed re-colonization policies, and the success of the Acadian fisheries were all unfolding as the Acadians developed a successful culture unity and identity moving into the twentieth century.

#### **4.5 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Acadian Relationships: The Mi'kmaq, Fisheries, Identity**

From the late 1880s to the 1950s, developments of Acadian identity, nationalism, and fisheries often overlapped with the increased political and economic agency of the Acadians. As the twentieth century brought industrialization and urbanization to the Maritime provinces, many Acadian communities found themselves on the outside, living in remote, illiterate communities that were still profoundly attached to the church (Daigle, 1978). Emigration was one response to

these rural conditions. Popular Acadian nationalism was also stuck in this socio-economic reality. As more Acadians began to enter urban life and adopt the English language after the Second World War, the societal unity enjoyed by the Acadians through isolation from the Anglo-Saxon world became threatened. Nationalists needed to adapt their appeals (Daigle, 1978). The dominating components of Acadian identity established during the 1880s national conventions such as a common faith, language, and past were no longer sufficient to unify the large and spread-out population against cultural assimilation (Daigle, 1978).

In reaction, Acadian publications such as the weekly newspaper *L'EVANGELINE* turned towards perpetuating historical myths to keep their nationalism alive, appealing to the “culte de l’histoire” that marked Acadian identity (Daigle, 1978). For a population that had lost any guarantee of social, cultural, or geographic cohesion, idealizing and retelling historical events was one way that nationalists could unite the Acadians (Daigle, 1978). By mobilizing a collective remembrance of a memorable historical epic, in this case the deportation, the nineteenth century Acadian nationalists were able to present their group as one of moral superiority, distinguishing themselves from others through the miracle of cultural survival (Daigle, 1978). *L'EVANGELINE* doubled down on this position by denouncing those who questioned the authenticity of Acadian history as it was known, saying these harmful ideas came from those seeking to turn history into a “cold science” (Daigle, 1978). This strategy of nationalism furthered Acadian isolationism through individualism, as the newspaper *L'EVANGELINE* encouraged a division between French and English communities throughout the 1950s (Daigle, 1978). The publication also repeatedly insisted on the differences between the Quebecois and Acadian populations, as well as attacking any injustices towards the Acadians that were thought to be perpetuated by the Canadian political system (Daigle, 1978). In

simultaneously distinguishing the Acadian population from other communities and fostering an idea of moral superiority, L'EVANGELINE leaned on nationalism to mitigate the migration of the Acadian population towards urban centres (Daigle, 1978).

Many of these thriving rural Acadian communities that nationalists were trying to protect had long been operating as fishing outposts. And it was in relation to the fishing industry that another type of social unity emerged. Acadians formed fisheries associations, cooperatives, and unions across the Maritime provinces in the early to mid-twentieth century (Jagot, 1985). This development is important to mention, as one of the principal characteristics of the Maritime provinces was heterogeneity (Jagot, 1985). Given the diversity of both culture and language in many fishing communities of the Maritimes, group isolation was common (Jagot, 1985). In southwest Nova Scotia for example, fishing communities had one of three distinctive origins: French settlers from the seventeenth century, New England fishers and Loyalist settlers in the eighteenth century, and German settlers to Lunenburg from 1751 (Apostle, R., Kasdan, L, & Hanson, A., 1985). The communities were further divided depending on the type of fishery they engaged with, be it inshore or offshore (Apostle, R., Kasdan, L, & Hanson, A., 1985). For communities inhabited by both English and Acadian fishers, memories of the deportation remained relevant when forming these associations, and these communities are documented as more or less keeping to themselves (Jagot, 1985). As the cooperative movement developed across the regional fishery, Acadian associations developed somewhat independently. Uniquely Acadian cooperatives were formed across several communities of the Maritime provinces including Caraquet (1915), Mont-Carmel (1931), Rustico-Nord (1936) and Baie-Egmont (1938) (Landry & Lang, 2001). Acadian fishers were dependent on each other by nature given their shared history of being driven from a community and then barely tolerated upon their return

(Jagot, 1985). This allowed the Acadian fishers to develop genuine and tightly knit cooperatives which were arguably more durable than others across the province who only mobilized to oppose localized administrative decisions (Jagot, 1985). These cooperatives were also large and powerful, with the Gloucester association of Acadian fishers in New Brunswick having 665 members at one point in time (Landry & Lang, 2001). These Acadian cooperatives have since been praised as a “leading example of co-management” and “promoting an orderly and well managed fishery” (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2004, pg.16).

Furthermore, the connections of Acadian identities and the fisheries were perpetuated by the growing sensitivity towards marginalized social groups that marked the 1950s and 1960s, generating a new public desire to protect them from further harm (Vasquez-Parra, 2012). The foreign owned fisheries that many Acadians had been working for began to dissolve towards the end of the 1960s, and Acadian entrepreneurs once again swooped in to take over the industry, growing their agency as a minority which was welcome by many (Saint-Cyr, 1985). The area of Clare, Nova Scotia became particularly dominated by the fisheries industry in the 1950s, with Acadian entrepreneurs opening over a dozen new factories in only a decade (Landry & Lang, 2001). Though class differences between operators and workers were clear, Acadians were central to the Maritimes fishing sector from the mid-twentieth century.

The 1970s saw further mingling of Acadian nationalism, fisheries, and the relationship with the Mi'kmaq, with these complexities arising partly due to the initiative of rural Acadians in New Brunswick. While expanding the network of national parks on Canada's east coast, Parks Canada came under fire in 1969 for dispossessing nearly 1,200 rural New Brunswick people of their homes and land to make way for what would become Kouchibougauc National Park (Landry & Lang, 2001). The communities located within the boundary of the planned park were

impoverished, leading the government to justify their relocation as “rehabilitating” the population, changing them into more “productive citizens” (Rudin, 2016, p. 41). Unsatisfied with the compensation for their loss of land, the mostly Acadian residents protested the forced removal during the 1970s, even after Kouchibougauc was opened to the public as a national park (Rudin, 2016).

While the dispossession of land that occurred in the communities of Kouchibougauc did not start as a uniquely Acadian cause, it soon became one through a few key influences. Under the federal parks policy, commercial fishing was not permitted within the boundaries of national parks (Rudin, 2016). Residents were largely unaware of this caveat at the time they moved outside of the boundary and accepted compensation packages from the federal government (Rudin, 2006). The loss of fishing rights, rather than the loss of land, “provided the spark that ignited resistance at Kouchibougauc” (Rudin, 2016). Non-resident Acadian fishers soon joined the cause in solidarity upon hearing of this development (Rudin, 2016). Thus, the reason for Acadians coming together at Kouchibougauc was not to defend the dispossession of their land, but the loss of their fishing rights. The federal government was reluctant to give the Acadians unique access to the fisheries of Kouchibougauc National Park out of fear that the Mi’kmaq would ask for the same privilege, with one federal official claiming “The Indians may be irritated that individuals who were compensated are being allowed to continue their fishing. The Indians did not receive any compensation for what they perceive to be their traditional rights and they may now demand such compensation” (Rudin, 2016, pg. 170). Thus, a barrier to the Acadians receiving exclusive fishing rights was the Mi’kmaq.

Furthermore, the naming of the proposed national park caused quite a bit of controversy for the Acadians. Canadian Prime Minister at the time, Jean Chrétien is quoted as saying that the



name was intended to reflect “as faithfully as possible, the historical and geographical features of the region” (Rudin, 2016, pg.82). The coastal areas of Kouchibougauc were historically used by the Mi’kmaq for fishing, with the name itself meaning “river of long tides” (Rudin, 2016, pg.82). Dispossessed Acadians found Chrétien’s perspective distasteful, believing their nation to have critical historical ties to that land (Rudin, 2016). Some even wrote to politicians and L’EVANGELINE requesting that the park have a “historic French Acadian name,” with proposals such as “Parc national des Acadiens” or “Parc national Claire-Fontaine” designed to assure that “our own ethnic group does not receive another kick in the teeth in its own territory” (Rudin, 2016, p.84-85). Despite these efforts by Acadian nationalists, Kouchibougauc stuck as the most suitable name.

Historian Ronald Rudin has correlated discussions surrounding the naming of Kouchibougauc National Park to the rising student protest movement occurring at nearby Université de Moncton, where young Acadians were fighting for greater representation and bilingualism (2016). Interestingly, the same day that the government passed legislation to proceed with the creation of Kouchibougauc National Park, they also passed a motion to introduce further bilingualism into New Brunswick’s community-controlled institutions (Rudin, 2016). This correlation is compelling, given the government made a move to appease Acadian nationalists while approving Kouchibougauc National Park on the side. As such, this is yet another example of the relationship between Acadian nationalism and Acadian fishing rights, including the use of nationalism as a reaction to any threat towards their agency as minorities that may be compromised by increased attention to Mi’kmaq history and influence.

The Acadians also leaned on their longstanding “culte de histoire” to mobilize resistance against the park’s creation, comparing it to a “second *dérangement acadien*” “continuing the

long tradition of the Acadian people as a submissive people” (Rudin, 2016, pg.118, 188). This was the crucial rhetorical device that definitively led this problem to be viewed as an Acadian one, not just the story of poor communities living within the park’s boundaries. When Ottawa had to deal with the protests of Acadian fishers within the park, they sent in historian of Acadian nationalism Antoine Richard to negotiate, recognizing the degree of influence history and identity had over the Acadian’s connection to the fisheries (Rudin, 2016). Acadian self-perception in relation to history, as illustrated by this example, continued to influence their politics. In 1979, the president of the *Société Acadien de Nouveau-Brunswick* even took it as far to overlook the history of the Mi’kmaq, claiming: “We were here first; we have lived with respect, and the time has come for us to claim the rights we deserve and to proclaim with pride and confidence that we are Acadian” (Rudin, 2016, pg. 195). Once again, Acadian self-perception guided their political action when it came to the Maritime fisheries, resulting in this emergence of neo-nationalism.

Acadian hegemony over the Maritime fishery became evident by the 1980s and 1990s. In Clare, by 1980 more than 50% of the community’s work was tied to the fisheries sector (Landry & Lang, 2001). In New Brunswick, Acadian fisheries reportedly generated 134 million of the 288 million dollars of revenue produced annually by the province’s fishery in 1982 (Saint-Cyr, 1985). Moreover, the Acadians were responsible for 100% of revenue coming from the provinces crab, shrimp, and perch fisheries in the same year, showing the groups contemporary prominence (Saint-Cyr, 1985). By 1996, a remarkable 95% of global crab captures were from only a few communities on the Acadian peninsula of New Brunswick including Caraquet, Lamèque-Miscou, and Shippagan (Landry & Lang, 2001). Furthermore, the Acadians particularly thrived in the 20-million-dollar lobster fishery of the 1980s, with the group described

as having “carved out a place for itself commensurate with a history characterized by determination, perseverance, hard work, and continuity” in the fisheries (Godin, 2002, pg. 12).

The sense of Acadian emancipation and increased agency, as relative to their history and identity, was thus furthered by their success in the fisheries. In 1983 when the federal government began to consider restructuring the Atlantic fisheries, and Acadian delegation travelled to Ottawa as a key stakeholder group, presenting their fishery as more profitable and viable than others in the Atlantic (Saint-Cyr, 1985). Thus, the fisheries were a major influence over Acadian self-perception in the late twentieth century. A 1982 survey of work satisfaction and community attachments of fishers in southwest Nova Scotia confirmed the influence of Acadian identity in industrial decision making. The study found a high degree of social and cultural homogeneity in fishing communities, with the most overwhelming example being the sharp geographical boundaries between French-speaking and English-speaking communities (Apostle, R., Kasdan, L., & Hanson, A., 1985). Communities like Barrington in Shelburne County and Argyle in Yarmouth County were located adjacent to each other, and both had a fishery dominated economies, yet the former had an almost uniquely English-speaking Protestant population and the latter was comprehensively French speaking and Catholic (Apostle, R., Kasdan, L., & Hanson, A., 1985). It is also worth mentioning that 56% of fishers in the communities of southwest Nova Scotia had lived there since birth, and 69% indicated in the survey that they felt they “really belonged” in their community (Apostle, R., Kasdan, L., & Hanson, A., 1985, p. 265). The study concluded that in contrast to nearby fisheries in Maine and Massachusetts, job satisfaction alone was not what kept Nova Scotians in the fisheries (Apostle, R., Kasdan, L., & Hanson, A., 1985). Respondents demonstrated an extreme reluctance to relocate to other fisheries communities should they be offered better jobs, demonstrating how the

dense network of kinship in southwestern Nova Scotian communities fueled the pervasive commitment of fishers to their trades (Apostle, R., Kasdan, L, & Hanson, A., 1985).

The powerful connections between Acadian identity, nationalism, and the fishery are compelling in light of the twenty-first century fisheries conflicts. The development of large-scale Acadian fisheries after the deportation has been directly correlated to Acadian resistance against cultural assimilation and homogeneity, showing how the fishery “contributed to the safeguarding the popular culture and the Acadian memory” (1998, pg. 76). Acadian culture was “modeled in the work” (Clarke, 1998, pg. 76) of the fisheries, demonstrated by the valuation of community attachments and the unique formation of Acadian cooperatives.

In 2004, Fisheries and Oceans Canada released an illustrated book titled *The Acadian Fishery in Nova Scotia: 400 Years Proud*. The book follows the Acadian fishery from 1605 until the twenty-first century as an homage to the Acadians “who from the early days of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, turned to the abundance of the sea for their survival and who have continued to be a major influence in the Nova Scotia fishery – the biggest and most valuable fishery in Canada” (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2004, pg. 3). Rife with praise for the Acadians and their long-time commitment to the maintaining the fishery, the book is a chief example of how interconnected Acadian history, nationalism, identity and the fisheries truly are. Interestingly, in its pre-deportation section, the 2004 book makes no mention of the brush weirs being Mi’kmaq technology but does name them as one of the “ingenious” devices employed by early Acadians (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, pg.7).

## Mi'kmaq Fisheries in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

As the Acadian fisheries received praise, enjoyed relative wealth, and succeed in perpetuating nationalist group belonging throughout the twentieth century, the reality of their Mi'kmaq neighbours involved in the fisheries was quite different. In response to twentieth-century settler colonial policies, Indigenous groups across Canada began to redefine themselves through political organization, including the Mi'kmaq (King, 2011). While older policies such as the 1876 Indian Act continued to limit Mi'kmaq political leadership, the 1940s Department of Indian Affairs centralization policy caused even further damage (Coffin, 2003). The Act displaced Mi'kmaq families from their traditional hunting and fishing grounds, breaking community ties that were further fractured by the introduction of the band system of governance in 1958 (Coffin, 2003). Furthermore, the longstanding Canadian residential school system also impacted the Mi'kmaq, with many children being stolen from their families and brought to the Shubenacadie Residential School in the 1930s (Coffin, 2003). These policies and their impact on the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia lit the fire for political organization in the province, with the majority of action occurring between 1969 and 1988, beginning with the formation of the Union of Nova Scotia Indians (Coffin, 2003). One notable way that the Mi'kmaq pursued greater political recognition was by challenging their exclusion from participating in the commercial fishery. The dual rise of Mi'kmaq and Acadian nationalism would set the stage for a long series of fisheries conflicts starting in the late 1990s and stretching into the 2020s.

The 1990s saw continual litigation against the extension of Indigenous fishing rights to include commercial fisheries (King, 2011). The 1996 ruling in *R. v. Van der Peet* created particularly difficult barriers, mainly due to the court's creation of a test that could be used to determine if an Indigenous commercial fishery qualified under aboriginal fishing rights (King,

2011). The court decided that Indigenous commercial fisheries must have “an element of a practice, custom, or tradition integral to distinctive culture of the aboriginal group claiming the right,” a statement which was disputed by scholars and other lawmakers (King, 2011). Critics pointed out how the ruling had “the effect of freezing aboriginal rights at a particular moment in time,” upholding mythological stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as noble conservationists or “imaginary pre-contact Indians” (King, 2011). The contemporary legal context established through these rulings would prove crucial for public perception of the famous 1999 Marshall Decision in Nova Scotia.

Upon being arrested and convicted for fishing and selling eels without a formally issued licence, Mi’kmaq fisher Donald Marshall Jr. appealed his conviction for violating fishing regulations all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada (King, 2011). Marshall argued that the conviction violated his treaty rights to catch and sell fish, as outlined in the Peace and Friendship Treaties of 1760 and 1761 (King, 2011). His acquittal in 1999 would prove to be of national importance, as the court ruled the Mi’kmaq do in fact have the right to earn a “moderate livelihood” through fishing under their treaty rights (King, 2011). Furthermore, the decision stated that any attempt by the DFO to regulate Mi’kmaq fishing seasons and licences was “an unreasonable interference on their rights” (King, 2011). While Mi’kmaq fishers rejoiced in the outcome of the Marshall Decision, settler commercial fishers reacted with anger (King, 2011). Settler fishers expressed frustration with the court’s ruling, claiming that Mi’kmaq livelihood fisheries would devastate the health of the commercial lobster stocks and that federal regulations should apply to all commercial fishers (King, 2011). After a month or so of voicing this discontent, settler fishers would then react with violence.

Known as the Burnt Church Crisis, settler fishers protested against the Marshall Decision on the wharfs of various fishing communities across New Brunswick in October of 1999 (King, 2011). Approximately 150 fishing boats occupied the Miramichi Bay, and some settler fishers initiated violent confrontations with Mi'kmaw fishers from *Esgenoôpetitj* that resulted in the destruction of hundreds of livelihood lobster traps (King, 2011). Markedly, many fishers that participated in the protest lived in some of the largest remaining communities resettled by Acadians in the late eighteenth century (Werner, 2001). Contemporary news articles documented that many of the fishers who participated in the violence at Burnt Church were indeed Acadian (Brake, 2018; Dugré and Hargrave, 1999; Fieguth, 2000). Gerald Basque, an Acadian Baptist pastor, spoke to media outlets during the confrontation, and attempted to remind Acadian fishers of their own history of oppression (Fieguth, 2000). Acadian fishers were themselves divided between those who believed the Mi'kmaq were indeed oppressed within the fisheries and those who believed they were just “pushing the boundaries of their rights” (Fieguth, 2000, para. 6).

These reactions spoke to the specificity of Acadian nationalism as a settler minority nationalism. All while asserting their own group identity, Acadian fishers fought against another minority group (indeed, another group that was oppressed by British and anglo-Canadian colonialism) attempting to asserts its right to harvest from fisheries and to overcome oppression and exclusion. The Acadian positionality at Burnt Church was centered around questioning whether Mi'kmaq fishers experienced oppression at all (Fieguth, 2000). Through this, the Acadians developed a perception of what the livelihood fisheries could look like in the future under their interpretation of the livelihood fishery being a free-for-all, potentially threatening the affluence of the Acadian's own fisheries in the region. The fisheries were historically the vehicle through which Acadians gained greater political and economic agency, meaning that any threat

to their industry monopoly could jeopardize the group's own ability to conquer oppression. This positionality at Burnt Church is undeniably steeped in the group's history. Partially in reaction to this violence, the Supreme Court released an amendment to the Marshall Decision in the same year, known as Marshall II, which specified that federal authorities would be permitted to regulate livelihood fisheries for conservation reasons, so long as Indigenous rights holders are meaningfully consulted (King, 2011). This is important to mention as the Marshall II amendment followed Acadian violence in 1999 and was then used to mobilize it in 2020.

Coincidentally, within a year of the Marshall Decision, Acadian politician and founder of the first World Acadian Congress, Andre Boudreau, began writing to Prime Minister Jean Chretien and the Queen's private secretary requesting that the Acadians be issued a formal apology for the hardships caused by the 1755 deportation, reintroducing the idea to the media that the population was an oppressed minority in the region with an unreconciled history (Thorne, 2000).

### **Conflicting Resource Rights Claims of the Twenty First Century and the Acadian-Métis**

Conservation remained a key point of contention with regards to fisheries, as the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute would show. Many observers continued to remember Acadian-Mi'kmaq relationships as amiable, despite the deep settler antipathies expressed at Burnt Church. Yet, in the developments that began in the 1970s, the mingling of Acadian nationalism, fisheries, and the relationship with the Mi'kmaq grew more complicated. To unpack this further, it is useful to first return to the conflict at Kouchibougauc National Park.

The dispossessed Acadian Vautour family became symbols of Acadian neo-nationalism and resistance when they began squatting on their former land in the 1970s (Rudin, 2016). Patriarch Jackie Vautour was embraced as a rebel figure by neo-nationalists, praised for his



ability to “embody Acadians determination to take control of their own affairs.” (Rudin, 2016, pg. 177). Although Vautour’s celebrity began to fade out of news publications by the 1980s, he once again became a figure of importance after being charged with illegally fishing in Kouchibougauc National Park in 1999 (Rudin, 2016). During his 2001 appeal trial, Vautour took a new angle in defending Acadian fisheries rights – he claimed to have “Acadian-Métis” Indigenous heritage and treaty rights (Rudin, 2016). This political pivot by Vautour is compelling, given it allowed him to retain his Acadian nationalism yet layer in a claim to Indigenous rights. Furthermore, this defence was only used by Vautour after the 1999 Marshall ruling, providing insight into the depth of connection resource rights (particularly in relation to the fisheries) have to Acadian nationalism and identity.

Since the early 2000’s census records of French-Canadian communities have seen an exponential increase in the number of residents like Jackie Vautour self-identifying as Métis, an Indigenous identity that has been mischaracterized as simply meaning a mix of Aboriginal and French ancestry (Leroux, 2019). The most salient aspect of these emergent identities is their reliance on self-identification, sometimes weakly supported by distant genealogical links to Indigenous ancestors (Leroux, 2019). There are currently several factions of Acadian-Métis groups across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, with well-known examples being the Bras d’Or Lake Métis Nation (BDLM) and the Association of Acadian-Métis Souriquois (AAMS). These groups (the BDLM in particular) have caused quite a bit of controversy within the Acadian and Mi’kmaq community.

The BDLM asserts that their nation evolved from the seventeenth century mixing of Indigenous Mi’kmaq people and Acadian settlers, claiming this exchange to constitute “the foundation of Acadian history” (2014a). There is a conflict here between these claims and the

documented history of Acadian-Mi'kmaq relations. Firstly, as mentioned, there is a significant lack of historical evidence supporting widespread marriage and miscegenation between the French and the Mi'kmaq (Leroux, 2019). Furthermore, it has been found that many online genealogy forms that the Acadian-Métis rely on in documenting their lineage have falsely listed French women as Indigenous (Leroux, 2019b). Above all, historical scholarship shows that the governance structure of early Acadie was informed by a desire to assimilate the Indigenous people by francizing them (Leroux, 2019a). Thus, these marriages cannot confidently be declared as an act of collaborative nation building that resulted in the emergence of a distinct Acadian-Métis population. Essentially, the claims of both an ethnogenesis and cultural continuity since the seventeenth century of an Acadian-Métis population (that is neither Acadian nor Mi'kmaq) have not been sustained.

The Acadians have self-identified as Métis only since fishing and hunting rights became especially contentious after the Marshall Decision. Mi'kmaw lawyer Jarvis Googoo has described that these identities “started to pop up out of the blue in the early 2000’s, after Marshall” (Brake, 2018). This suspicion has been corroborated by census records which show that while only 860 individuals identified as Métis in 1996, over 23,000 did by 2016 (Brakes, 2018). Sipekne'katik First Nations Councillor Alex Macdonald, a long-time fisher on the Saint Mary's Bay has also noticed an uptick in Acadian-Métis fishers since the Marshall Decision: “...the crazy thing is, the ones that are claiming Métis are the ones that are giving us a hard time” (Brake, 2018). The phenomenon has also caught the attention of Pam Palmater, a Mi'kmaw lawyer and Indigenous governance scholar, critiquing the Acadian-Métis for perpetuating “a new wave of colonization, where the colonizers, who have already taken just about everything from us, have seen that we've received wins in courts over the last few decades....so now they're

circling back and the only way to defeat our wins, our claims to our lands and resources, is to now claim Indigenous identity themselves and take it that way” (Brake, 2018).

Mi’kmaq have publicly dismissed the existence of an Acadian-Métis, mainly due to the compartment of group. According to Mi’kmaw lawyer Cheryl Maloney, there is a big difference between wanting to explore the Mi’kmaq culture due to potential Indigenous ancestry and attempting to access the rights and benefits of Indigenous peoples that are outlined in Canada’s Constitution (Bundale, 2018). The latter process has been the main political focus of the Acadian-Métis over the last twenty years (Leroux, 2019). By carrying identity cards that bear resemblance to government issued Indian status cards and attempting to fight for treaty rights in court, it is hard for many in the Mi’kmaq community to see the Acadian-Métis as a genuine ethnic minority and not simply self-interested “rights-grabbers” (Bundale, 2018).

Appreciably, there a connection to be made between the mobilization of Acadian-Métis identities and access to natural resources, including the fisheries. Alison Bernard, fisheries coordinator of the Mi’kmaq Rights Initiative has described the increase in non-Indigenous hunters he believes to be affiliated with the Acadian-Métis on Eskasoni First Nation lands in Cape Breton, both inside and outside the federally regulated season (Brake, 2018). In December 2015, non-Indigenous hunters confronted Mi’kmaq working with Parks Canada to control the moose population in Cape Breton Highlands National Park, claiming the group should not have “special privilege” (Brake, 2018). One of the settler leaders of the confrontation, Arnold Dithurbide, went on to be a founding member and the second chief of the Highlands Métis Association (Brake, 2018). There is an undeniable continuity between the proliferation of Acadian-Métis identities and court decisions that affirmed Indigenous treaty rights, calling into

question how this iteration of “Acadianism” may be informed by settler colonialism and minority nationalism.

Yet Acadian nationalism and the Acadian-Mi’kmaq relationship are contested public history terrain. For example, a 2018 article by Acadian historian Janet Hudgins chronicled seventeenth- and eighteenth-century genocides executed by the British, arguing that scholars (as well as the Canadian government) have largely ignored the “outright unthinkable terroristic strategies to invade, occupy and raid Acadian and Mi’kmaq homeland in Nova Scotia.” (Hudgins, 2018). Hudgins criticizes the 2003 “Day of Commemoration for the Great Upheaval” Proclamation issued by the Canadian government for not mentioning the genocide against the Mi’kmaq (2018). This is also reflected in the Delattre article covering the 2019 World Acadian congress which contained a quote from an organizer who encouraged Acadians to “reach out to their historical allies and foster mutual understanding...if we want to overcome the trauma of colonization” (para. 5). The equation of Mi’kmaq and Acadian suffering at the hands of the British is not entirely appropriate. As mentioned, the deportation of the Acadians was influenced by their relationship with the Mi’kmaq, but not due to the population’s indigeneity (Leroux, 2019). Articles such as Hudgin’s present a historically inaccurate claim that simultaneously mischaracterizes the Acadian-Mi’kmaq historical relationship and the relevancy of this relationship to both groups in the twenty-first century.

Lastly, and arguably most important to mention in this context, twenty-first century Acadians want to be remembered for their historic friendship with the Mi’kmaq, influencing their self-perception as a cultural group. Following the 2017 airing of CBC’s *Canada: A Story of Us* pilot episode, many Acadians expressed frustration in the programs failure to acknowledge the friendship between the Acadians and the Mi’kmaq, accusing the program of “literally

twisting history” (Lachance, 2017). Furthermore, during the 2019 World Acadian Congress historians Ronnie Leblanc and Maurice Basque both gave keynote speeches on historic Acadian-Mi’kmaq relations. Leblanc emphasized the volume of “mix raced” Acadians he believes to have identified in his research while Basque acknowledged how the nineteenth century emergence of an Acadian elite class distanced the group from their Mi’kmaq allies (Delattre, 2019). Donna Augustin of the Elsoptog First Nation was present at the event, stating “Our ancestors interacted and shared so many things... We created these bonds of friendship. To see these two flags next to each other today makes sense.” (Delattre, 2019).

However, many leaders in Mi’kmaq communities do not share this sentiment. At another Acadian gathering in 2019, Bernard Richard, a Mi’kmaq man currently working as advisor the agency Mi’kmaq Child and Family Services in New Brunswick took a different stance. According to Bernard, the historical relationship of the Acadians and the Mi’kmaq has become too grounded in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, failing to account for “a distance that has been established over time” (Mercure, 2019). Richard went on to urge that Acadians “undertake gestures of reconciliation” towards the Mi’kmaq and sympathize with their mutual yet different cultural struggle under British domination (Mercure, 2019). “Since we don’t know each other, we create images of each other. There is racism that has taken hold. Its undeniable. This trend needs to be reversed”, concluded Richard (Mercure, 2019). These critiques, in addition to the dismissal of the Acadian-Métis exercising “treaty rights,” paint a picture of twenty-first century Acadian-Mi’kmaq relations as fractured to say the least. This complicated relationship, which continues to be misrepresented in Acadian public history, was the contemporary backdrop for the escalation of Acadian vs. Mi’kmaq violence in the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute. Acadian-Métis self-indigenization and Acadian fishers’ mobilization of

nationalism in 2020 express a shared settler colonial logic. In both situations, the Acadians claimed that their status as a culturally distinct and historically displaced minority group meant they deserved recognition and privileged access to the resources of the region as their right. However, this Acadian group claim is exclusionary of Mi'kmaq treaty rights and ignores the political and economic benefits the Acadians have enjoyed from the commercial fisheries regulated by the settler colonial state. Ultimately, it was these assumptions that underpinned the threat perception and nationalist, colonial anger that was expressed by Acadians during the 2020 dispute.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis was to argue that Acadian nationalism was mobilized during the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute in response to the perceived threat against Acadian livelihood posed by the increased agency of Indigenous fishers. To sustain this argument, a pattern of Acadian nationalism as a tool to fight back against threats to their livelihood, in its various iterations, has been identified, as well as a discussion on how Acadian public history continues to inform the media's depiction of the group and their characteristics, further showing the value of critically examining Acadian history as colonial history.

Essentially, this research shows the Acadian process of reimagining history has impacted their perception of the positive Acadian-Mi'kmaq relationship as enduring, neglecting the historical shifts in the relationship as correlated to changes in the power imbalances of the two groups, occurring under the backdrop of settler colonialism. This process, occurring in tandem with the rise of Acadian "we were here first, don't forget about us" neo-nationalism has undoubtedly informed the seemingly contradictory display of Acadian nationalism to fight against the Mi'kmaq in 2020. This is further supported by the intense connections that Acadians have to the fisheries, an industry that served as to supply the group with greater political and economic agency as they fought back against complete assimilation following the deportation.

The settler colonialism employed by the new Acadian-Métis claiming treaty rights further supports this claim. The Acadian-Métis protesting the Indigenous moose hunt in Cape Breton Highlands National Park were not defending their livelihood or agency – no Acadians were getting rich or powerful through hunt. This shows that while nationalism has been primarily used to defend Acadian agency, it has also been used to reduce that of the Mi'kmaq.

This study is thus an important tool for historians to look back on the historic interactions of the Acadians and the Mi'kmaq in the fisheries, allowing for a recontextualization of the historic Acadian-Mi'kmaq relationship pre-deportation, the 1999 Marshall Decision and Brunt Church Crisis, the saga at Kouchibouguac National Park, and the emergent Acadian-Métis identity of fishers and nationalists. Looking forward, considering the assertion by numerous scholars that resources disputes are ultimately informed by stakeholder perception, it is evident that a new Acadian historiography that correlates fisheries and nationalism is a rewarding avenue to better understand drivers of both the 2020 South Shore Lobster Dispute and future conflicts that may continue along this long developing, contentious, and nuanced story arc.



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