# University of Alberta

*Cipenuk* Red Hope:

Weaving Policy Toward Decolonization & Beyond

by

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**Abstract**

This research focuses on documenting the efforts of the Waponahki people to design and pass legislated policy that effectively addresses racism and the process of colonization in school curriculum. The Waponahki, Indigenous to Maine and the Maritime Provinces, set precedent in both Canada and the United States during the late 1990s for the development of progressive educational policy that was implemented as legislated policy; two public laws and one state rule. Research on these policies, including the processes of their development, is significant because it provides an educational and social justice policy-making model. This work also contributes to the emerging discourse on Indigenous Research Methodologies as critical to the transformation of policy development theory and practice amongst Indigenous peoples. In Alberta, Canada, the Aboriginal student population is the fastest growing of any other race/ethnicity in the province (Alberta Learning Commission, 2005). However, Aboriginal students have the highest drop-out rates, and are least likely of any group to complete university (Frideres, 2005 & Statistics Canada, 2001). Experiences of racism in schools continue and are cited as a leading reason for Aboriginal student attrition, and the implementation of policy and practice that values Aboriginal worldviews is key to Aboriginal student success in school systems (Hampton & St. Denis 2004, Wotherspoon & Schissel, 2003). This research documents and analyzes the development of such policy from the lens of an Indigenous Waponahki researcher. The project is also unique because it specifically articulates a Waponahki epistemology and

ontology as its foundational research methodology. Guided by the essence, practice, and principles of Waponahki basket weaving and creation story, the project examines two key pieces of legislation (public law) and one state rule that address racism and support language revitalization: in 2000, Maine Public Law Chapter 27, Title 1 MRSA §1102, more widely known as the *Squaw Law*; in 2001,Maine Public Law, Chapter 403, Title 20-A MRSA § 4706, known as the *Wabanaki Studies Law*; and in 2005, the *Native Language Endorsement Rule*, Maine Department of Education, 05 071 CMR 115 Part II section 1.17, a state rule authorized by the state legislature.

The study employs data collection methods that examine published documents, texts and individual interviews related to the three examples of legislated policy. Discussions address not only the challenges and opportunities of designing and implementation, but also speak to how these legislated policies function in practice as policies that work toward Waponahki survival and beyond. By discussing the development of these three specific examples as policies that evolved from the knowledge, traditions and colonial experiences of Waponahki people, this research describes and analyses how Waponahki ways of knowing (epistemology) and ways of being (ontology) inform policy-making processes in Maine.

**Acknowledgements**

The weaving of this work has been molded by countless people and experiences, I apologize to anyone I might inadvertently omit. First, I owe my deepest gratitude to the heart of this work, my Mumma, Elizabeth Sockbeson who raised the eight of us on her own with all she has. Her focus, tenacity, mobilization, perseverance and love has kept the blood pumping through this dissertation. I learned political resistance and the need to love who I am at a very early age, as she insisted on braiding my hair in two braids everyday to go to the off-reserve school; her message to me at seven (7) years old in response to the racism at school was to "always be proud to be Indian." This was the point at which this dissertation began. A loving thank you to Buppy Jack Loftus, for always being there for all of us. Many thanks to my dear and most beloved siblings, they continue to love me as the baby of the family and I treasure our time together; their qualities have shaped my heart and mind: Julia, her wit, incredible mind and commitment to raising me up; Albert, his immense leadership and compassion; Markie, his keen judgment and unprecedented good nature; Velena Pie, her deep sense of caring and dignified survival; Andy, luv luv for his great big heart and kindness; Late Rachel Bubacouches, for her unconditional love and generosity, teaching me very early to be brave and courageous, the first to rescue the skunk with the stuck jelly jar on its mouth; Tommy, his willingness to always help out and astounding ability to always make us smile. I thank Barry Dana for his role in helping to raise me, he taught me our connection to the river, ocean and land; he spent countless hours with me deeply

informing my love for our territory. I honour Albert “Ducky” Sockbeson, my Passamaquoddy birth father, his alcoholism was no measure of how deeply he loved us.

*Eesh-neesh,* thank you, my soul’s mate and my intellectual counterpart, Reggie Cardinal, the husband of my dreams who pulled all nighters with me, editing, formatting and listening intently to my thoughts and understandings about this work and tirelessly tending to my homesickness. My children always keep me feeling alive and appreciative of life; their intelligence fed this work, and helped keep it on the ground, often pulling me out of my head and into my heart: Julia-Msahtawe, the light and heart of my life; Iktome the love and spirit of my life; Cipenuk the joy and hope of my life. *Eesh-neesh* to Mnasin Phillip and Mitween Doris Cardinal as they kept my family glued together while I focused on the writing, their generosity is unmatched and I feel loved as one of their children.

The scholarly influences of this work are extensive and have inspired the writing in incredibly liberating ways. It is with intense gratitude I thank my esteemed Cree supervisor, Dr. Cora Weber-Pillwax, a true word warrior, who brought the moose meat, the nourishment this work necessitated and her sinew strength bound it together. The scholarly influence of Dr. Darren Ranco, a Penahwubskeag brother, who helped weave the positioning of this work into the academy; his intellectual support proved invaluable. I acknowledge Dr. Stan Wilson’s vision for making a reality the IPE (Indigenous Peoples

Education) program, an Indigenous intellectual space for many of us to study while presenting the whole of ourselves. I thank the remainder of the doctoral committee for their time and care over this process: Dr. Lynette Shultz, Dr. Jose da Costa, Dr. Dip Kapoor and Dr. David Smith. This work was honored to have Dr. Sandy Grande serve as the external examiner and her review of the work strengthened its completion. Late Penahwubskeag scholar Dr. Eunice Baumann-Nelson taught me when I was a little girl that who we are is in our blood, and no one can take that from us; may her spirit always be honoured.

This work was cared for and prayed on by numerous family and friends which carried it through its darkest and most intense hours. The rational and calm mentoring of my rock, Aunty Donna and Debbie, and their generosity of a laptop computer made the typing and data collection possible. The emotional intellectualizing and conviction that nourished the work is owed to my Passamaquoddy sister, Esther Attean.

Special thanks are owed to the next generation of my family within whom I believe our Indigenous knowledge lives; they embody the Red Hope. To my Penahwubskeag nieces and nephews, I acknowledge their place within Red Hope: Maulian, Ipimen, Laylu, Andrew G, Ebe, Ethan, Teppie, Ernesto, Elizabeth, Eesha, Ny Ny, Dougie, Jason, Jaeden, Jaxson, Jillian, Athena Jean, Jeremy, Andrew Jr., Chlo Chlo, Lucas James, Buddy, Honey, Ivan, Gregory and Jordan. Their mothers have nurtured them with all their love; Sylvia, Dorothy and Nicole, they are truly my sisters.

To my Stoney nieces, nephews and grandchildren, Colton, Ava, Jenna, Kylee, Weya, Josiah, Payton, Ellie, Eska and Lily, I acknowledge the gifts of their parents, Jennifer, Tina and Tim as my siblings who have nurtured this work here in Alberta.

I have felt carried by the love and support of my fellow Indigenous colleagues at the University of Alberta; my Albertan relatives who have participated in this ceremony and welcomed me into their territory to write this work includes Claudine Louis, Jeannette Sinclair, Lauralyn Houle, Dr. Phyllis Grace Steeves, Dr. Evelyn Steinhauer, Dr. Patsy Steinhauer, Lisa Bourque-Bearskin, Dr. Angeline Letendre, AnnaLeah King & Sarah Auger. The CURA (Community University Research Alliance) Aboriginal Healing through Language & Culture sponsored the intellectual space for this work.

The eloquent and inspiring words of Wayne Newell infused this work with Waponahki knowledge, and his constant and kind mentorship fueled my motivation to complete. The strong and gentle leadership of Donald Soctomah brought incredible insight to the study. I acknowledge and thank Mary Basset for teaching me that although we were not supposed to be here, we are still here and we deserve to be here. To my IRATE (Indigenous Resistance Against Tribal Extinction) friends and fellow activists, I offer my thanks for mobilizing my life in this direction; I will always think upon that time in our lives as one of deep transformation and exhilaration. I further acknowledge my colleagues from Harvard who encouraged me to continue working in

the academy, especially my dear friend, Dr. Alex Wilson, who reminded me of the purpose for this work when I felt like I was incapable of finishing.

This work, this PhD, is for all our peoples, it is not for personal gain. In closing, I acknowledge all of my people, our ancestors and those yet to come, all of the Waponahki Confederacy, the Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation, and all Indigenous peoples; this is our PhD, our dissertation, and it is for the people. *Woliwon,* Thank You.

**Illustrations and Images**

**Table of Contents**

## Introduction

### Welcome Song: Ahlee a huh, Ahlee aqunute

*Ahlee a huh, Ahlee aqunute, w*elcome to my dissertation, the ceremony to which I have committed my life for the past several years. I welcome you in the way our people have done for many generations with our welcome song, *Ahlee a huh, Ahlee aqunute,* the opening song to many of our gatherings and community celebrations called*, socials*. Today, the social is one of the longest running ceremonies in our Waponahki[1] communities. The people come together, sing and dance and eat together. Going to the "buildin" (community hall) for baked beans, hulled corn soup, "sumany" (raisin rice pudding), and oak hill bread with plenty of molasses – these are some of my happiest childhood memories from our reservation, Indian Island. These were and still are happy times in a world of so much change, pain and struggle for our people. Our welcome song is still used today to greet visitors, share stories, and start our socials. It sounds like this: *Ahlee a huh, Ahlee a aqunute.*

In 1999, I was driving home from work, listening to National Public Radio (NPR) on the Maine Public Broadcasting Network. As our welcome song started playing, my three-year-old daughter in her car seat recognized the song and sang along. The song was cut off and the announcer began to interview Wayne Newell, a participant and

[1] Waponahki (also written as Wabanaki) means "people of the dawn" and refers to the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq and Abenaki peoples who live in Maine and the Maritime Provinces of Canada and have formed a post-contact political alliance, the Wabanaki Confederacy.

Elder advisor in this study. The rendition of the song came from a Smithsonian Museum archival recorder, a large cylinder recording apparatus used in the early 1900s. In the interview, Wayne reminded listeners that the welcome song is ancient and was sung long before the one hundred year old recorder had been invented. Tears came from my eyes as I felt joy that my baby recognized this song and it made her happy. So with that, I welcome you to my study, a sharing of my soul.

Because this dissertation draws extensively on my experiences and positioning as a Waponahki scholar, mother, and community member, I will present the majority of the study using a first person narrative voice. Identity terms referring to Indigenous peoples will be used interchangeably throughout the study, however, the term *Aboriginal* will be used most often to identify Canadian Indigenous peoples, and the words *Indian* or *Native/American* will refer to those Indigenous to the United States. *Native* has been used to refer to persons of both countries.

The following doctoral study examines and documents efforts made by the Waponahki people to enact legislated policy against racism and colonization so that we may rebuild and strengthen the livelihood of our future generations. The Waponahki people and the state of Maine set precedents in both Canada and the United States for the development of policy as public law and regulation, warranting a deep examination of their efforts in this process. By discussing the development of three specific examples of legislated policy (two public laws and one state rule) that evolved from the knowledge, traditions and colonial experiences of Waponahki people, this research

seeks to answer the question: How can/does Waponahki ways of knowing (epistemology) and ways of being (ontology) inform policy in Maine?

Indigenous methodology, embedded within the ancient but unstated theoretical foundations of Waponahki basket making, will provide the frame for investigating and discussing the policy development processes followed by the Waponahki people through time. The descriptions offered through this study relate to policy development processes for three specific national policies connected directly with Waponahki peoples. The study of the legislation and state rule (legislated policies) significantly broadens the field of educational policy studies, and simultaneously contributes to the growing discourse on Indigenous research methodologies as foundational to education research and practice in relation to indigenous peoples.

The first legislated policy highlighted in this study is Maine Public Law 2001, Chapter 27, Title 1 MRSA §1102, where offensive names such as *squaw*, are prohibited as states place names. This law is more widely known and will be referred to in this study as the *Squaw Law.* The second is, Maine Public Law 2001, Chapter 403, Title 20-A MRSA § 4706 is the state mandate directing schools to teach Waponahki Culture and History, including topics related to the oppression, racism and genocide directed against the Waponahki people. This curriculum law is more widely known as *LD 291 or the Wabanaki Studies Law*. It will be referred to in this study as the Wabanaki Studies Law. The final legislated policy to be considered is a state rule adopted by the Maine Department of Education, State Board of Education, and authorized by the Maine

Legislature upon the recommendation of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs in 2005. A *rule* in Maine is the same as a *regulation* at the federal level, and rules have the same effect of law. The state rule will be referred to in this research as the *Native Language Endorsement Rule*, Maine Department of Education, 05 071 CMR 115 Part II section 1.17. The Native Language Endorsement Rule refers to language revitalization and recognizes tribal authority to certify Waponahki language teachers and to employ them on equal footing with other grade school teachers. The study outlines the challenges and opportunities inherent in implementing the three legislated policies, and describes their functions as educational policies aimed at anti-racism and the decolonization of the Waponahki people of Maine. Waponahki perspectives and Waponahki basketry will be discussed as expressions of Waponahki epistemology and ontology, and Wabanaki policy development processes will be documented through these discussions. As an ancient tradition of the people, basketry or basket-making contains philosophical context, and is an articulation of Waponahki ways of knowing and being. It holds the ultimate expression of Waponahki life, including meaning and purpose.

I treasure the time my daughter made her first basket, guided by one of our Elders and her older cousin. My heart felt deep joy at her concentration and engagement with the ash. She gave me the basket as a present and as I held it in my hand, my heart was touched by the love of my ancestors and my eyes filled with tears. That moment of hope, pride and love is indescribable. I have since talked with peers

from my community who described experiencing the same warmth when their children or grandchildren handed them their first ash basket. We agree that this event has incredible meaning. Our baskets represent survival and sophistication of Waponahki mind that, in spite of others' attempts to colonize and weaken it, has continued to thrive.

Waponahki people see their own creation as beings in the process and activity of basket-making. In Waponahki contemporary reality, we can observe that basket making continues to grow and transform, just as the people themselves grow and transform. This study examines how three policy development processes carried out by the Waponahki people continue to return us to our own epistemology and ontology as ways to deal with problems that are rooted in the historical practices of colonization. The moulds required to shape the baskets are passed down through the generations, and the ancient laws can be seen embedded in the contemporary policies that have derived from the particularly Waponahki approaches to policy development. The ability of Waponahki people to articulate their collective knowledge about the colonization enterprise has served as a resource or context for these particular policy development processes, and Waponahki capacity to engage in a foreign policy development process and transform that process into one that is rooted in Waponahki epistemology and ontology.

**Purpose of the study and researcher position: Where I Stand on Indian Island**

I have chosen to address the purpose of the study and my position within the study in the same section of the dissertation as they are integrally connected with each other and thus inherently reinforce the research methodology. In essential ways, the study will contribute to the growing discourse of Indigenous scholarship and research methodology that is ancient to our peoples but relatively new in the academy. The study has multiple purposes, each of which carries within it some implication of my position in the work. These purposes include: to unearth knowledge about one ancient Indigenous system and process of policy making, to contribute significantly to existing knowledge about the incorporation of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies into educational policy-making in general, and to contribute to the awakening of Waponahki knowledge into contemporary actualization and embodiment. In fulfilling these purposes in this work, policy and policy development are shown as outcomes of Waponahki knowledge mobilization.

As a Penahwubskeag[2] woman, I am one of only very few in the Waponahki confederacy to have the privilege of engaging directly in university doctoral research and to study the policy work of my own people. Furthermore, it has been a rare and distinct opportunity for me as a Waponahki woman to engage as a stakeholder in the development of state legislated policy. At the beginning of my doctoral program in

[2] Penahwubskeag (more widely known by the Anglo term "Penobscot,") is one of the four tribes of the Waponahki Confederacy of Maine and the Maritimes. The confederacy crosses the United States and Canadian borders, and includes the Abenaki, Maliseet, Mikmaq, Penahwubskeag & Passamaquoddy tribes.

2005, I was on sabbatical from an administrative position at the University of Southern Maine. One of my primary responsibilities was to serve as liaison between the Waponahki tribes and the university system with the goal of maintaining positive tribal-university relations where I participated in policy-making as an active member of state and tribal committees. Through lobbying, organizing or testifying, I gained a first-hand intimate knowledge of two pieces of legislation addressed in this study. The Waponahki Studies Commission was an appointed commission struck to ensure the fulfillment of the legislation. I was appointed as one of the of eight Waponahki tribal members, two selected by each of the four tribal chiefs/governors for appointment, and the remaining members selected by the Commissioner of Education from the State of Maine. In that role, I organized, and continue to be involved with summer institutes where I lecture and engage with pre-service and certified teachers about how to comply with the Wabanaki Studies Law in their teaching. Because I have had a very active role in the practice and implementation of policy, I see this study as an opportunity for us as Waponahki people to consider the direction of our own contemporary educational policy making, and to note the significance of these processes in the contemporary expression of our own epistemologies and ontologies.

As Waponahki people, we have typically been the subject of research carried out from a non-Native outsider perspective and from within the intellectual boundaries maintained by the various academic disciplines or areas of study including history, anthropology, education, health sciences, social sciences. In this work, the narratives of

the intentions, thoughts and experiences of Waponahki policy makers speak to the concept of research from a space within (Ranco, 2006), in keeping with the previously stated purposes of this work, the narratives document policy making processes from Waponahki perspectives and describe Waponahki intentions and implications in relation to the three selected Waponahki educational policies in Maine.

## Waponahki Historical Context

The following section is a brief history of the Waponahki people and discusses historical information salient to the study. The Waponahki people before European invasion numbered over twenty tribes throughout Maine and the Maritimes. Today, there are five remaining tribes, the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Abenaki. Entire tribes were wiped out via genocidal bounties and germ warfare, where the people survived 97% population depletion (Paul, 2000; Thornton, 1987). As peoples of oral tradition, the ways of knowing and being have been passed down from generation to generation of people. Much of the documented history has been taken up by non-Waponahki, predominantly white anthropologists and historians, and is considered by many Waponahki to be inaccurate and biased (Penobscot Nation Oral History Project, 1993; Paul, 2000). The history of the people began far before European invasion, and the Waponahki are Indigenous to the land and have lived on the territory of Maine in the United States and Eastern-most Canada in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia since time immemorial. The following dates and accounts are

significant as they are markers that set context for the policy development that will be discussed in this study.

The Waponahki taught the Europeans how to survive and thrive on the land. The Waponahki values of generosity and hospitality were quickly taken and used to their advantage by the Europeans, who began their abusive treatment of the Waponahki as early as the mid 1500's (Prins, 1995). The Waponahki initially served as guides and hosts of the Europeans. However, as the Europeans began taking over their lands, kidnapping the people and murdering them, the Waponahki began to defend and fight back. The Waponahki had engaged in trade with the Europeans and had become highly skilled at using the European guns. In 1632, English authorities prohibited the selling of guns to the Waponahki (Prins, 1995). This act was yet another way of taking power away from the Waponahki and further worked toward the intended decimation of the people. In the next one-hundred years, several wars were fought between the Waponahki and the Europeans. The history of the people between the1600's through to the early 1700's included massive massacres and wars (Prins, 1995). During this time, the Waponahki Confederacy was developed as a political alliance to challenge European warfare and this confederacy lasted into the 1860's (Francis, Leavitt & Apt, 2008). Bounties for the scalps of Waponahki began to be paid in the early 1700's when Queen Anne of England compensated her people for the scalps of Native Americans. The specific bounty for Penobscot scalps was issued in1755, about 100 years after Waponahki were prohibited from the use of guns, putting them at a gross disadvantage

in defending themselves. Issuing such bounties after the gun prohibition to Native people made it easier to kill off the Waponahki (Paul, 2000).

In an attempt to halt the decimation of Penobscot from the scalping bounties, in 1775, Penobscot Chief Joseph Orono accompanied by a delegation of Penobscots, pledged an alliance with the English in Watertown, Massachusetts (American Friends Service Committee, 1989). In 1818, a treaty was signed by the Waponahki and Massachusetts, establishing and allocating reservation lands (AFSC, 1989). In 1820, Maine became a state, no longer a part of Massachusetts and the tribes negotiated for a representative to engage politically with the State of Maine. At that time, the Waponahki of Maine were considered wards of the state (Loring, 2008). In 1842, the tribal representative positions in the Maine House of Representatives went into effect and these positions have continued through to today. Representatives are determined through tribal elections, and Maine is the only state in the U.S. with tribal representatives (Loring, 2008). The Penobscot and the Passamaquoddy each have a representative in the House of Representatives, and each person with that position has the authority to speak and to sponsor legislation. They are, however, excluded from voting. They are the only two seats in the House of Representatives that are prohibited from voting (Loring, 2008).

During the early 1880's until the early 1900's, Waponahki children were sent to federally-operated residential schools, primarily the Carlisle Indian Industrial School.

There, the students were not permitted to speak any Native language (Francis, Leavitt & Apt, 2008). During this time, the Waponahki way of life and the traditional economic system was disrupted with the imposition of reservation life, and the people were no longer able to move throughout the region and live off the land. A dramatic shift in work and economic subsistence occurred as the people moved from traditional hunting and fishing to a heavier reliance on making and selling baskets, construction work, and guiding and logging (AFSC, 1989).

In 1924, Native Americans moved into the status of citizens of the United States but were not given the right to vote in Federal elections until 1954. The 1950's marked much transition for the Waponahki. The first bridge was built from Indian Island (Penobscots), to the main land, Old Town in 1952 (Ranco, 2000). This time period marked severe poverty and unemployment for the Waponahki. World War II took numerous men away to fight in the United States army, and many Waponahki were forced to leave their reservation communities to find work in larger cities, often in the secondary work sector located in the Boston, Bridgeport, Hartford areas. These migrations off-reservation imposed significant language shift to English as on-reservation schools enforced English-language speaking only policies, and teachers went outside of the classroom to encourage parents to speak only English with their children (Francis, Leavitt & Apt, 2008). The right to vote in state and local elections was granted to the Waponahki in 1967, twelve years after the right to vote in national

elections. Maine marks the last state in the United States to grant Waponahki the right to vote (AFSC, 1989).

In 1972, the Passamaquoddy tribe and Penobscot Nation filed a lawsuit claiming two-thirds of the State of Maine (AFSC, 1989). The claim included 12.5 million acres of land granted in treaties that had not been ratified by Congress, making them illegitimate treaties. The lands in question thereby would fall under the continued ownership of the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot. The Indian Nonintercourse Act of 1790 dictates that Indian lands can only be acquired with the approval of the United States Congress (Francis, Leavitt & Apt, 2008) and this law was being called into effect by the Penobscot and the Passamaquoddy. In 1975, the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy were granted federal recognition, which gave access to much-needed federal funding for housing, education and infrastructure for the reservation communities. In 1980, the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act was signed and made into law, recognizing the illegitimate treaties not ratified by Congress. The law did not award the tribes ownership of their previous landholdings, but monetary compensation was granted so they could buy back certain lands within their traditional territories (Ranco, 2000).

It is within the context of this history that the Waponahki people began to return to their own ways of thinking and to dismantle the frame of colonization that held them tightly within institutions and systems that were crushing and overpowering them as

Waponahki people. My own story as a Waponahki woman and researcher is only one of many as we move along that path towards our own renewal.

**Waponahki Motherhood & Research**

The intellectual gaze outward from deep within my experiences and soul has driven this research. As a Waponahki mother of three, my children's experiences and insights have been central in both conceptualizing this work and sustaining mobility around it. I share this section of personal information because I believe that more understanding about young children's experiences in school may encourage teacher education leaders and planners to incorporate anti-racism and decolonization into their programs and curricula. In 2005, my daughter, a kindergarten student, reported that children were playing "kill the Indians" at recess at her school in Maine, and that she had chosen not to participate. In the game, the preschool children were Indians and the children in kindergarten and Grade 1 were pirates who chased and killed the Indians. As a kindergartener, my daughter could have been a pirate. However, she refused because, as she explained, she was a "for real" Indian, and that game was "not okay because it liked to kill Indians". Note that the younger children – those with the smallest bodies and the least power - played the Indians. Around the same time, my daughter received a card from her fourth grade reading buddy (see Figures 1 & 2). On the front of the card was an intricately drawn picture of a ship from which light-peach colored figures with yellow hair shot at a group of brown, black haired figures on the shore. Immediately in front of the brown skin people was a large bomb-like fire.

**Figure 1. Front view of card given by Grade 4 child to my kindergarten-age daughter.**

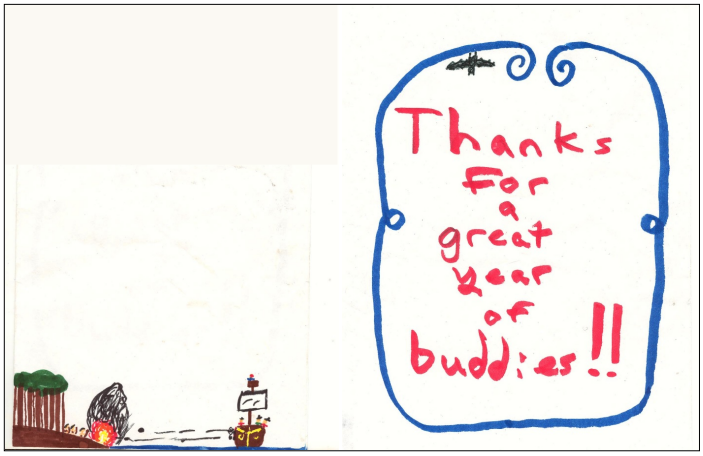
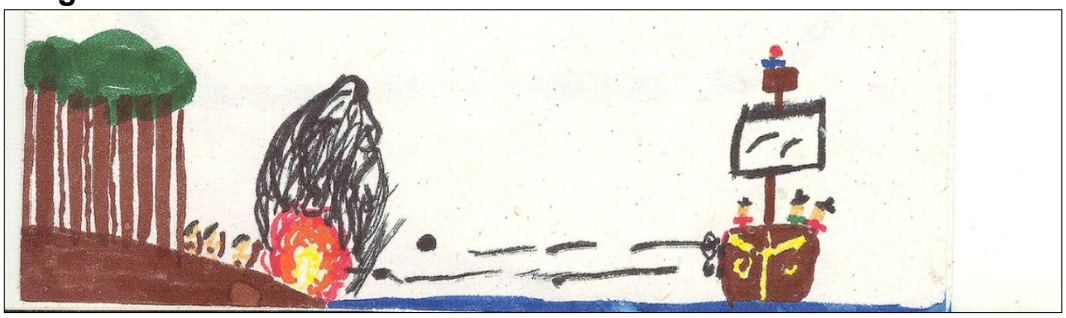



**Figure 2. Closer view of card given by Grade 4 child to my kindergarten-age daughter.**



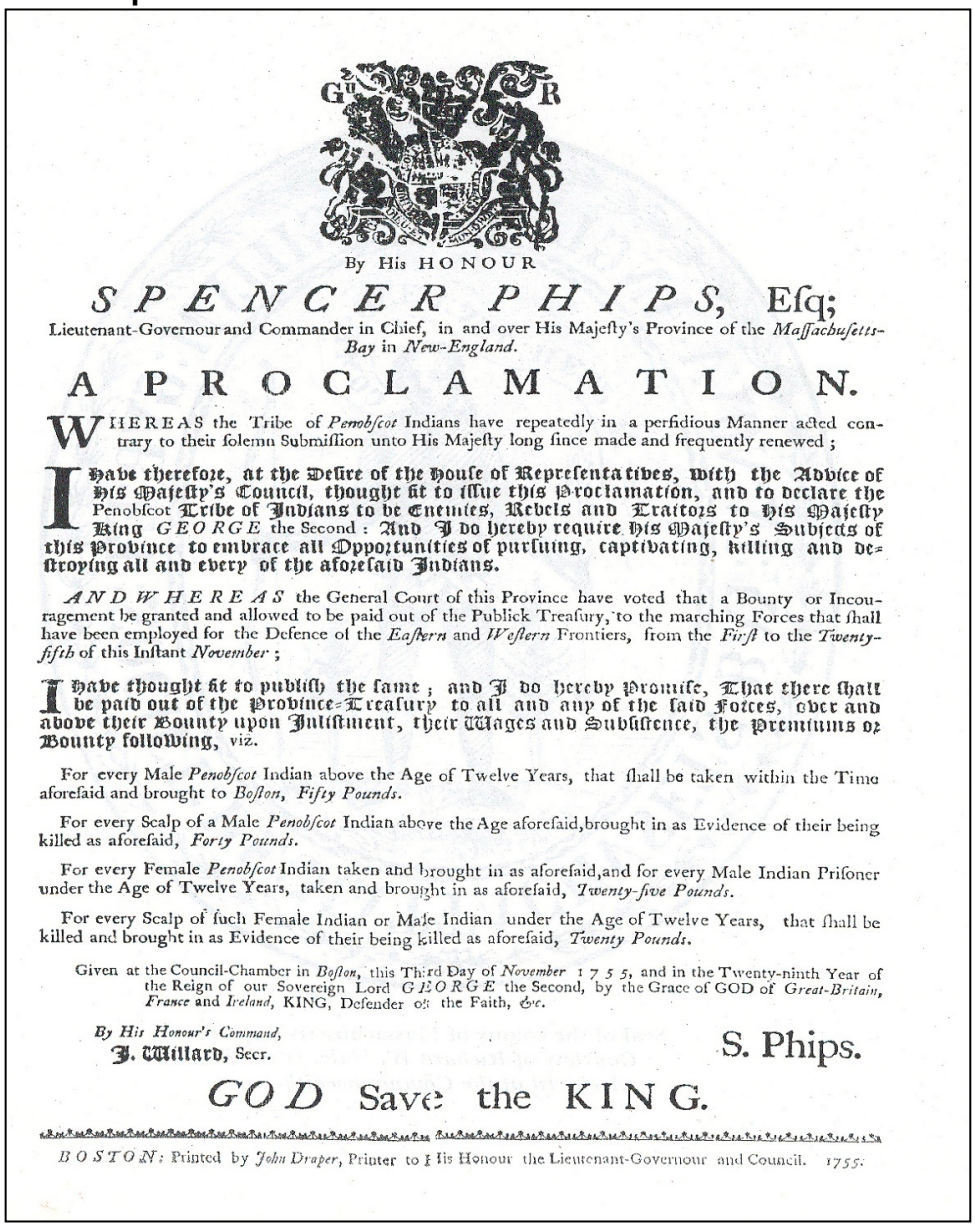
The peach colored figures were clearly winning this violent battle. On the inside of the card was a thank you note from this white fourth grade student expressing gratitude for a great year as reading buddies. I asked my girl what the picture meant to her. She said it was a picture of bad pirates killing the Indians, and that not all pirates were bad. I asked her why they were killing the Indians, and she responded by saying, "Mumma, I don't know why they want to kill **us**…I think it is because they do not know enough about **us.**"

The next day, I presented the card, along with a complaint about the recess game, to the headmaster of the school. He replied by explaining that the boy was a very kind child and his family was, too. I explained in turn that I was not concerned about nor did I question the kindness of the boy and his family. I demanded that the school administrator look closely at the picture. The imagery on the card had much in common with pictures of Nazi figures putting Jews in incinerators, or men in white robes and hoods hanging black people by the necks on trees and placing them on fire.

The innocently crafted card reminded me of the painful history of genocide that my people have survived. A notice of the 1755 British bounty proclamation (Figure 3) is posted on the wall of our tribal government office, declaring a genocidal bounty on Penobscot scalps and live prisoners, and serving as a reminder that, despite the fact that historical genocide has nearly depleted Waponahki population by 97%, we are survivors. The photograph (Figure 4) of my daughter's great-great-grandmother, Elizabeth Andrews, humanizes the bounty document. Our grandmother survived as one of the first generations of descendants against whom the genocidal bounty was enacted and over 250 years since that first genocidal bounty was announced, my daughter positions herself as an Indian being targeted in the recess game, "kill the Indian." I spoke with the children in her Kindergarten and first grade classes to explain that at one time this recess game was a for real game and it is hurtful to play in this way. The teacher had expressed concern that the children needed to be protected from hearing such historical facts because they might feel guilty. It seemed fairly easy for the adult

educators to want to ‘deny’ some facts of history in order to protect some students, but seemed not to have given equivalent thought about the feelings and experiences of my “Indian” or Penobscot daughter.

**Figure 3. British 1755 proclamation; a genocidal bounty on Penobscot scalps and live prisoners**



By His HONOUR

*SPENCER PHIPS*, Esq;

Lieutenant-Governour and Commander in Chief, in and over His Majesty's Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in *New-England*.

A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS the Tribe of *Penobscot* Indians have repeatedly in a perfidious Manner acted contrary to their solemn Submission unto His Majesty long since made and frequently renewed;

I have therefore, at the Desire of the House of Representatives, with the Advice of his Majesty's Council, thought fit to issue this Proclamation, and to declare the Penobscot Tribe of Indians to be Enemies, Rebels and Traitors to his Majesty King *GEORGE* the Second: And I do hereby require his Majesty's Subjects of this Province to embrace all Opportunities of pursuing, captivating, killing and destroying all and every of the aforesaid Indians.

*AND WHEREAS* the General Court of this Province have voted that a Bounty or Incouragement be granted and allowed to be paid out of the Publick Treasury, to the marching Forces that shall have been employed for the Defence of the *Eastern* and *Western* Frontiers, from the *First* to the *Twenty-fifth* of this Instant *November*;

I have thought fit to publish the same; and I do hereby Promise, That there shall be paid out of the Province-Treasury to all and any of the said Forces, over and above their Bounty upon Inlistment, their Wages and Subsistence, the Premiums or Bounty following, viz.

For every Male *Penobscot* Indian above the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be taken within the Time aforesaid and brought to *Boston*, *Fifty Pounds*.

For every Scalp of a Male *Penobscot* Indian above the Age aforesaid, brought in as Evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, *Forty Pounds*.

For every Female *Penobscot* Indian taken and brought in as aforesaid, and for every Male Indian Prisoner under the Age of Twelve Years, taken and brought in as aforesaid, *Twenty-five Pounds*.

For every Scalp of such Female Indian or Male Indian under the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be killed and brought in as Evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, *Twenty Pounds*.

Given at the Council-Chamber in *Boston*, this Third Day of *November* 1755, and in the Twenty-ninth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord *GEORGE* the Second, by the Grace of GOD of *Great-Britain*, *France* and *Ireland*, KING, Defender of the Faith, &c.

*By His Honour's Command*,
J. Willard, Secr.

S. Phips.

*GOD* Save the KING.

*BOSTON*: Printed by *John Draper*, Printer to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governour and Council. 1755.

**Figure 4. My great grandmother, Elizabeth Andrews, a descendant of some of the first generations to survive the bounty for the scalps or live capture of Waponahki people (previous figure).**


Racism is similar to the proverbial road paved to hell with good intentions. Although the white child who had sent that card to my daughter had not intended to threaten or cause pain to myself or to my family, pain and threat were certainly impacts. Until this moment, I had not experienced this indescribable feeling: I was sensing fear in my 6 year-old daughter who had been threatened with personal violence because of her very treasured identity. My daughter is infinitely proud to be a Native person. Imagine

for one moment a recess playground where children play “Kill the girls!”, “Kill the Jews!”, “Kill the black people!” What are the long and short-term impacts on a six-year-old girl? I wanted to ensure that this would not happen again, and that the school would immediately implement a policy to prevent another similar incident. However, for the children who are playing ‘kill the Indians’ at recess time, how do we teach in anti-racist ways? How do we teach about racism and anti-racism, or address the violent and disturbing nature of racism for those who are the victims of such behaviour? I looked more closely at what the school was teaching about my people and found that the existing curriculum was limited to Waponahki traditional foods, singing/listening to Waponahki songs, dancing/watching Waponahki dances and building wigwam replicas. Does this curriculum on the Waponahki people contradict the students’ recess games or the character drawings? I will delve deeper into an educational analysis of this experience in a later section of this work. For now, as a part of my own positioning as the researcher in this study, I will comment only that this situation demonstrated clearly the need for a school policy that would address anti-racism, and go beyond the usual anti-harassment policy.

The timing of this experience contributed to my thinking on the Wabanaki Studies Commission where Waponahki members were mandated to create educational resources to comply with the recently passed Wabanaki Studies Law. At around the same time as the incident with my daughter was taking place, I, as a member of the Commission, was determining the essential understandings that might be expected of a

student who had engaged with Wabanaki Studies as per the law. The personal anguish of the experience with my daughter was intensified by the external government demand to be coldly analytical and intellectually distant in the Commissioned tasks.

The intersections of these personal experiences as policy maker, mother and researcher have come together to motivate me and inspire me to develop the following study. I grew up being told by older family members that there was no such thing as coincidence and during my doctoral studies this understanding has been qualified as knowledge by Indigenous Scholars such as Gregory Cajete (1994) who shares explicitly that for many Indigenous peoples, there is no such thing as a coincidence. Many of us believe that experiences are linked meaningfully and must be interpreted and acted upon according to such principles; the experience my daughter had at school are linked meaningfully with mine as policy maker. Making sense of these meaningful coincidences was a part of subsequent policy development and of this research. For instance, if I had been a parent who had no access to engagement within this level and type of policy development, an event such as my daughter experienced would have gone unaddressed or, like so many others of this nature, remained invisible. From personal experience as an Indigenous woman and researcher, I am aware that numerous undocumented and unaddressed acts of racism are carried out in school environments. Many of us as Indigenous students experienced firsthand “kill the Indian” games, or “catch the Indian” on the recess playground and too few of us ever had the opportunity to address that in any sort of systemic way, even as adults. At the time,

however, that my daughter was dealing with her case, I was the informed parent, and I was a policy-maker addressing exactly that area of concern that was being raised by the incident itself. When I shared the story about the racist card and the recess game with my colleagues on the Wabanaki Studies Commission, I believe it was pivotal in setting direction for a major part of implementation of the Wabanaki Studies Law.

## Chapter 1: Indigenous Research Methodology (IRM)
## Waponahki Onto/epistemological Research Weavings

> We are intimidated so much into becoming their scholars rather than just using the richness of who we are; and we have something very important to say and we need to say it in the context of the way we were brought up and culturally influenced. If we stray from that, we get caught in a trap…we need to be careful and always be ourselves…institutions and systems of higher education are not set up for us…sometimes they are too arrogant to listen to us in a welcoming way, so we really do need to have an academic revolution.
>
> - Wayne Newell, personal communication, January 2010

This chapter presents my understanding of how the Waponahki intellectual tradition of weaving baskets embodies a theoretical framework and foundation for understanding Waponahki policy making and research. Through my multiple lenses as a Waponahki person, a woman, a mother, and a scholar, I give voice to a Waponahki intellectual tradition and help to position Indigenous Knowledge Systems within the Eurowestern academy. Beyond personal and educational experience, I have also been privileged through my work at the University of Alberta's Community University Research Alliance (CURA) project, *Aboriginal Healing through Language and Culture* with time to construct this particular chapter. The CURA project is dedicated to

mobilizing Indigenous knowledge and honoring the vitality of Indigenous knowledge systems.

An Indigenous research methodology that is based upon Waponahki epistemology and ontology is used in the study. Their interconnectedness and interrelatedness offers an onto-epistemic focus where ways of being and knowing are inseparable, and understood to be fundamental to one another. Waponahki research methodology provides a framework through which I am able to study and make sense of the Waponahki policy-making process and to articulate those understandings as an act of remembering and mobilizing Waponahki knowledge. *Knowledge mobilization* came into my vocabulary as a useful term when I first heard it in a SSHRC-CURA research team meeting.[3] The significance of the term struck me in the way it so intimately reflects the Indigenous research principle that knowledge is to be sought primarily as a means of benefit to the people or to the collective whole from which such knowledge draws its source. That the term has been adopted by the Western research agencies as a replacement for the term "knowledge dissemination" is indicative that Western research criteria itself may be adjusting its standards towards more sophisticated and ancient ways of defining and talking about knowledge and its applications in ordinary lives. This has always been the understanding of knowledge and its uses within the ways of the Waponahki peoples and also, it appears, within the ways of other Indigenous peoples

[3] CURA *Healing through Culture and Language: Research with Aboriginal peoples in Northwestern Canada,* December 13, 2006.

(Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Brown & Strega, 2005). In light of the vast amounts of Indigenous knowledge that have been subjugated, the concept of Indigenous knowledge mobilization is particularly empowering. It speaks to the sense of immobility and paralysis that pervades Indigenous communities, and offers hope of movement, as in mobilization, from within ancient systems of knowledge. Instilling this hope through such mobilization within peoples who have lived generations of oppression and attempts to eradicate their Indigenous ways of knowing is especially meaningful. The ongoing significance of Indigenous stories to Indigenous peoples is an example of the ancient practice of knowledge mobilization where new forms of knowledge are disengaged from ancient knowledge and applied in new forms and contexts. The new knowledge is not separate from the process of mobilization of that ancient knowledge.

Hence, it was no surprise to me that the concept of 'knowledge mobilization' was also manifested in this study of policy development processes within the Waponahki community. It became clear to me through the narratives of the policy makers that Waponahki knowledge has continued to flow from a living knowledge system exactly because the people of that system had never rejected or ignored the respectful process of validating and honouring knowledge through its 'mobilization' in the life of the community. Waponahki knowledge and its mobilization has sustained our people and continued to develop as our people lived through generations of oppression, and this knowledge has had huge impact on our lives, including contemporary policy making processes. Our experiential knowledge of the colonial oppression has informed, and

continues to inform the ways in which we draw upon our Waponahki knowledge system to formulate our policies.

The discourse and data analyses undertaken in this study are based on my own hermeneutical processes of interpretation of specific laws and policies, and is reflective of the ways in which the ancient practice of knowledge mobilization has come down to me from my own ancestral and contemporary Waponahki teachers. I also engage with what I have come to identify in my work as *Waponahki Policy Stories;* these stories were told to me by the Waponahki leaders who sponsored the two pieces of legislation and state rule. The stories were a part of my early education, but in this work, I purposefully asked those leaders to tell me the stories again so as to be able to hear the stories from my present position of researcher and Waponahki scholar.

As a Waponahki researcher, Indigenous research methodology moved me toward the remembering and articulation of a Waponahki knowledge system and the research process continues to lead me deeper into this space/place of my own knowing and being. Waponahki research methodology serves as the larger frame for this study, and is deeply informed by four primary sources: the creation story of the Waponahki, the subsequent development of Waponahki basketry, my experiences as a Waponahki woman, and the scholarly contributions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars regarding research methodologies.

The Waponahki creation story as a primary source has led me back to myself, because the creation story is the source of every Waponahki. It therefore becomes

logical that I identify myself as data for this work. In other words, engaging with IRM led me to understand that my people have a distinct way of knowing and being, one from which I cannot separate myself. My experiences and autobiographical sharing become a primary source of data collection as well as a primary source of analysis. In other words, during my research I have had to collect the whole of myself, not just part of myself. Unlike any other form of research, IRM affords us as Indigenous Scholars to serve as the data while intellectually gazing inward and outward to articulate in the English language our ways of knowing and being, in the context of our contemporary realities. This process includes a deep examination of the epistemology and ontology of my people. When I began my doctoral studies, I did not believe my people had an epistemology or an ontology. IRM probed me intellectually to engage with the reality of our knowledge system and how it came to be.

In our system of knowledge, dreams are reliable sources and guides for new knowledge and dreams held a powerful force on my work and research process during and before the time that I began writing this dissertation. Many of these dreams were indicators that qualified my continued purpose and directions during particular times of this study. Dreams were a significant method but the content will not be discussed in detail, except to explain that they are a way that my people understand and utilize or call upon to transfer knowledge or receive knowledge from different spaces of existence and reality. The spirit world is a reasonable part of how we make sense of the world around us, which I also understand to be theory.

Ceremony is another method or strategy that heavily supported this research project. In the same way that I welcomed you to this dissertation, I engaged continuously in ceremony throughout this work and will so for the rest of my life here. I understand this dissertation as a prayer and a hope for the future, one that mobilized the personal perseverance to continue and eventually complete the work. Each time I sit down to write, prayers are offered and I sense my ancestors' presence guiding this work. The work necessitated ceremony and without this continuous and constant presence within ceremony, I would not have been able to complete the work. The process of the CURA (Community University Research Alliance) and engagements with ceremony in a research context created the intellectual space that I needed as an Indigenous researcher. Numerous talking circle ceremonies and Elder support were made possible through the CURA and such ceremonial engagements fueled this dissertation to its completion. My relatives here in Alberta and back in Maine prayed, not only for the completion of the work but for the effectiveness to benefit our communities; for this, I am infinitely grateful and recognize these prayers as a large part of the ceremony that brought the research to this point.

**Unpacking Ash Baskets: Understanding Waponahki Ontology and Epistemology**

Basket making is central to the analysis of policy development processes amongst Waponahki. This is because basket making is an ancient tradition that is, simultaneously, the foundation and the profound articulation of Waponahki people's ontology and epistemology. Within basket making is the Waponahki intellectual tradition, a part of Waponahki ways of knowing and being. To talk of basket making provides the opportunity to speak most credibly, in Waponahki terms, about how the three policies under study are being woven and framed for usefulness in contemporary Waponahki life. I have therefore chosen to take basket making, the manifestation of Waponahki knowing and being, as the most logical means of understanding and articulating the processes of Waponahki policy development.

The ash moulds used in basket making are typically older than the basket maker; some have been passed on from generation to generation, coveted and treasured by families. Many of our Waponahki moulds also sit in museums that are owned by institutions. The ash mould shapes the type of basket that might be woven, similar to the ways that Waponahki ontology and epistemology shape policy development. Our ways of being in the world and our understanding of those ways (our ontology) are heavily interconnected with our ways of knowing (our epistemology). They guide us to our truths and determine our experiences and survival. An ancient history of engaging with basket making created the frame for the Waponahki intellectual tradition and as such provides/is the basic structure for research as a means of acquiring or

remembering Waponahki knowledge. Our research therefore is structured to significantly remind us of who we are. It returns us to our selves. I approached this doctoral work knowing that I would engage with the three policies in some way. Upon learning about IRM, I came to understand that I did not have to abandon a Waponahki way of knowing and being in order to research the policies. I was able to return to myself 3,500 miles away from my community, and understand and feel again the mind of a basket-maker in my own being.

Waponahki ontology frames our approach to problem solving as we focus on our examination of the policies. What we have learned through our experiences of colonization heavily impacts our way of being in the world, in the state of Maine and in the state legislature. It is the mould that mobilized the development of the policies. The ways in which we come to know these truths are Waponahki epistemology, rooted in both individual and collective experiential knowledge. We use our ways of being and knowing to develop and write policy that moves us through and beyond decolonization.

Although ontology and epistemology are central to understanding an Indigenous knowledge system, and these are in fact ancient concepts, they are also English words used in the English dominated context of Western academia. While the terms ontology and epistemology have been central to the production and perpetuation of Euro-western philosophical and intellectual traditions, they have not been conceptualized solely by Euro-western tradition. Indigenous scholar Dwayne Donald explains the necessary separation of epistemology from ontology and its role in the colonial project (Donald,

2009). The discipline of epistemology, in its inception during the Enlightenment, was motivated to define a truth for all through empirical or analytical methods. “Objectivity is viewed as a necessary mindset for success in this endeavor…this epistemological turn discounts the spiritual and metaphysical realms as too subjective and irrational to garner serious scholarly consideration (Donald p. 402-403).” Ontology and epistemology are ancient concepts within Indigenous knowledge systems that center on interconnectedness. The ash mould defines the shape of the basket, as the interconnectedness of Waponahki epistemology and ontology define the policy outcomes. Donald believes that ontology and epistemology were disconnected in the Eurowestern tradition to privilege Eurowestern ways of knowing:

> The relationships between knowing and being were confused-the distinctions became less clear-as ways of being were increasingly defined based on Eurowestern ways of knowing. This was translated into a declaration that Eurowestern ways of knowing were the only way to be. This declaration was a major principle guiding Eurowestern impetuses during the colonial era that maintained its influential power in the world to the present. (Donald, 2009, p. 403)

Indigenous ways of knowing and being are deeply interrelated, and such is the deep enjoinment of Waponahki epistemology and ontology. In our Waponahki languages (as in many other Indigenous languages), ontology and epistemology are terms represented by words that are action oriented. In other words, epistemology and ontology are not deemed to be inactive, they imply a dynamic force of action,

movement, energy, transformation and change. At the same time, if this capacity for holding and carrying energy is to be sustained, neither epistemology nor ontology can be separated one from the other. This state of enjoinment is central to the weaving of Waponahki policy making, and in the same way, Waponahki people do not conceive of themselves as separate from the land. The life of the land and all its elements are central to Waponahki epistemology and ontology; it is the basis of the relationship of inseparability between humans and the land.

Our policy-making processes are impacted also by the knowledge of our peoples' oppression and this deeply informs our ways of being in the engagement of Waponahki policy development.

My approach in carrying out this study has been informed by the work of Cree/Metis scholar Cora Weber-Pillwax, who speaks about understandings and intention with respect to the construction of an Indigenous research methodology. Rather than a narrow definition, she offers the following principles to consider when developing such a methodology (Weber-Pillwax, 1999).

(a) the interconnectedness of all living things,

(b) the impact of motives and intentions on person and community,

(c) the foundation of research as lived indigenous experience,

(d) the groundedness of theories in indigenous epistemology,

(e) the transformative nature of research,

(f) the sacredness and responsibility of maintaining person and community integrity, and

(g) the recognition of languages and cultures as living processes (p.31, 1999)

I agree with Weber-Pillwax's principles summary and I use the principles as a significant element in the Indigenous research methodology that frames my work. Throughout this chapter, I have discussed this Indigenous Waponahki methodology as the intellectual frame for analysis of selected Waponahki policies. I have applied Waponahki epistemology in this analysis, and have noted that the principles identified by Weber-Pillwax are embedded in the discussions conducted within this methodological approach. In the words of Brown and Strega (2005), Weber-Pillwax's exemplary work transcends the "positivism of western science" and the principles she offers are "transformative to build a more just society". These authors recognize Indigenous research methodologies as a "call for critical inquirers to practice in their empirical endeavors what they preach in their theoretical formulations" (p. 282). The weaving framework I offer does not represent the views or define the research methodology for all research carried out by Waponahki people or scholars. My intention is to explain the research methodology that I used in this work as one that honors the ancestors and the people, and thereby is a direct remembering of who we are. Most importantly, this methodology sustains my ability to conduct the study from my heart and simultaneously supports my identity as a Waponahki woman – my heart and identity being so

interconnected, I experience them as one and the same. My research begins at this reference point but does not necessarily end there (Brody, 1981; Weber-Pillwax, 1999). A researcher's consciousness and consideration of such a reference point are fundamental to Indigenous research methodology. Unlike any other methodology, IRM honors and recognizes Indigenous knowledge as more than that associated with the limited meanings of the Western academic term, "data". For example, in my last interview with Wayne Newell, I thanked him for sharing his wisdom and knowledge in this doctoral study. He responded as follows: "I like to think of it more like this: it is not my knowledge or wisdom, rather the knowledge and wisdom is generated by our conversations, the relationship that we have and our time spent talking through these issues and what is generated from them, that energy is the knowledge and wisdom" (interview February 2010).

**Glooskap Challenges Epistemocide**

As a framework, Indigenous research methodology reconnects me with my ancestors, who are present in my research. Our epistemology is dynamic and full of vitality. In this work, I do not see myself as the creator of knowledge. I recognize, however, that I can help remember and mobilize Waponahki knowledge. Like many other Indigenous people, I understand that knowledge evolves, is transformed and evidenced through peoples' experience. Our Elders, through their extensive experiences, hold much of our knowledge, but even they often recognize explicitly that they are still learning (Ermine, 1995; Cardinal, 1977; Penobscot Nation Oral History Project, 1993). As Wayne Newell commented, he did not see his contributions to this work as wisdom, but as energy generated during our time together. This is the source and sustaining characteristic of Waponahki knowledge.

Ermine (1995), a Cree scholar, connects Aboriginal epistemology deeply to the self, believing that, as Aboriginal people, we do not need to look beyond ourselves to find our ways of knowing or epistemology. As researchers, we need to understand deeply our own relationship to our study and our own location within our research (Weber-Pillwax, 1999) – that is, we must ask and answer the question, "Where is the 'I' in my research?" This question was put to a group of doctoral students at a research gathering in the IPE (Indigenous Peoples Education) specialization, University of Alberta, 2007. This question led me to look more deeply at and to re-interpret the

Waponahki policy development process, using a process that Meyer (2003) and Ranco (2006) have referred to as a form of hermeneutical analysis.

This work, including data and document analysis, with its unfolding and re-interpreting cycles, begins with our creation story as the source of our beings and the energy that sustains our knowledge. The story of Glooskap, as written below, is taught in reservation schools to our young people:

**Waponahki Creation Story**

*Glooskap came first of all into this country….*

*Into the land of the Waponahki, next to sunrise.*

*There were no Indians here then…*

*And in this way, he made man and woman:*

*He took his bow and arrows and shot at trees,*

*The basket-trees, the Ash.*

*Then Indians came out of the bark*

*Of the Ash-trees. (*American Friends Service Committee, 1989*)*

The creation story tells us that Glooskap is a spirit being responsible for our creation and saving the people; there are numerous Glooskap teachings or stories. This story points to how we came to be in this world. I first heard this at our home as an eight year old girl. I was attending a Catholic school off the reservation. As one of only nine Native children in the school, I was exposed to the Catholic worldview for at least two

hours each school day. I was taught both the biblical story of Adam and Eve, as well as Darwin‘s theory of evolution, offered as a secondary way to understand human creation.

At school, I also learned that “Indians” had legends and myths (both of which I was led to understand were fictional) about creation. When the Waponahki creation story was presented to me, I enjoyed it, but my Catholic indoctrination made it impossible for me to believe it as truth. I did not think much about it again until my university years, when I heard other Native people’s creation stories. I sensed their deep belief in their origins. During this time, I was also introduced to critical theory in a feminist context and, for the first time, exposed to Native scholarship in an educational context. I learned about the colonial oppression my people had survived and continue to experience. I remember not understanding the sources of our socioeconomic stresses, reductively attributing our troubles to lack of motivation and perhaps even alcoholism. Slowly, though, I learned about our history and the legacies of colonization, genocide and racism. I became aware that not everything I read in the bible was true and that Waponahki ways of knowing and identifying had been disrupted through colonization. Research reported in contemporary literature consistently identifies the detrimental effects of colonization and its use of education policy to suppress our knowledge systems. These effects include high levels of socioeconomic distress (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003; Moore, 2003; Deloria, 1985 & 1999; Grande 2004).

Almost ten years after beginning university studies, I had the opportunity to work with other Waponahki people to define what the state would be mandated through law

to learn about our people. My own knowledge mobilization began with my development of curricular resources related to the Waponahki History and Culture Law. We decided that our creation story would be shared to help others understand what is embodied in our worldview. At the same time, knowledge mobilization was manifesting itself within my own family. I had explained to my daughter the previous year the story of our creation and she had accepted it without question, responding with total engagement and belief. A year passed and she reported to me that her peers in her kindergarten (off-reservation in a predominantly white school) did not believe that we could come from the ash tree. She questioned whether or not this was really true. I let her know it was the truth, and many people have different beliefs about their origins. I share this story as an example of how our people are surviving the epistemocide. Clearly, the intended eradication of our ways of knowing and being is not complete (de Sousa Santos, 2007).

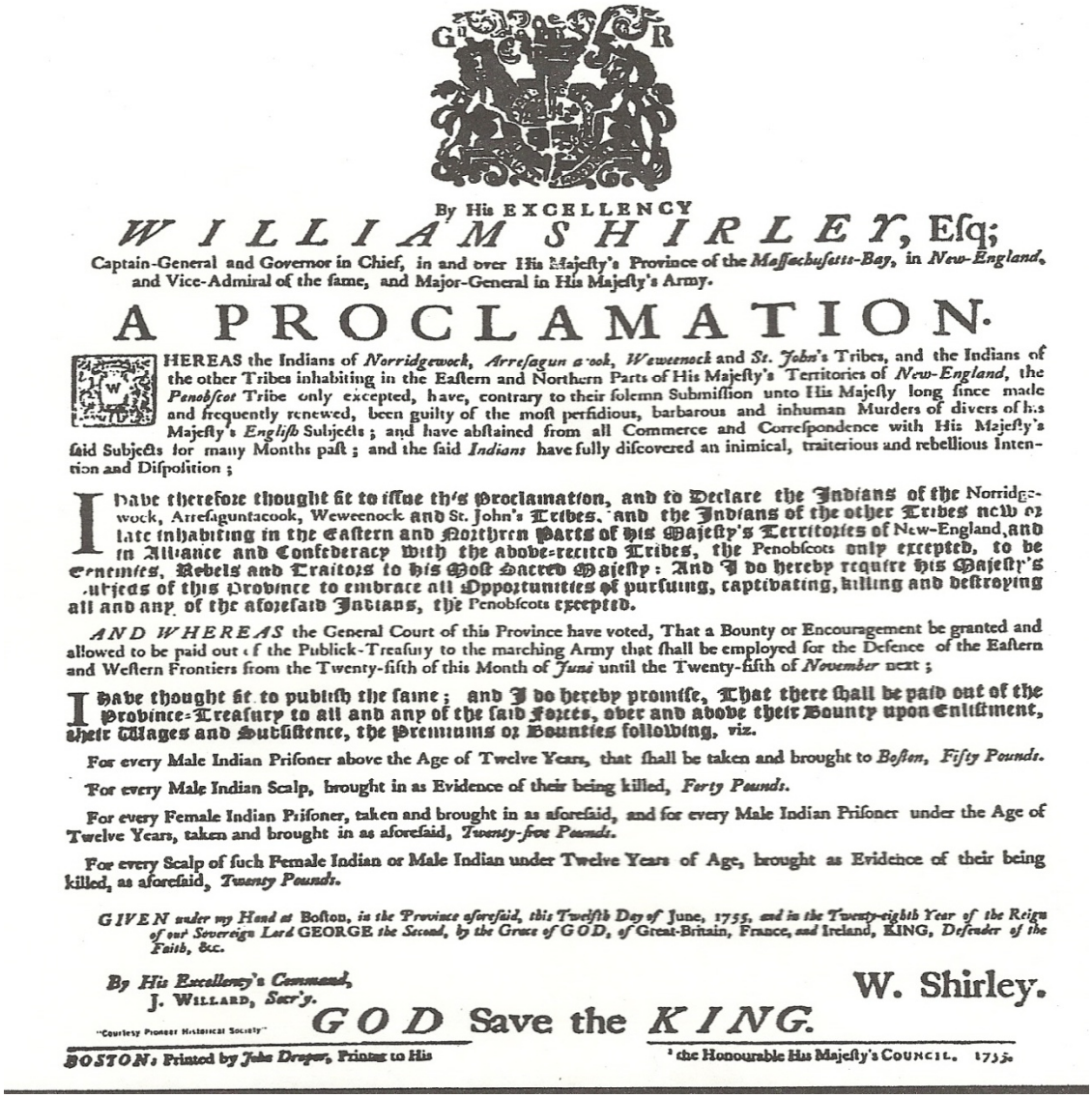
While the necessity for Waponahki worldview to be included in the state-mandated teaching of Waponahki history and culture is clear to me, our children need to learn something even more profound before they are able to grasp the notion that people can come from a tree. We need to understand the power and dominance of Euro-western knowledge systems in existing curriculum. Children have the critical thinking capabilities to understand that there are multiple creation stories, all valuable and legitimate. Our own Waponahki children should understand our creation story not as a myth or legend but as an explanation of our origins. Recalling my process of

learning (and coming to understand the truth of) the Waponahki creation story has improved my own understanding of why we need to remember this knowledge.

One night after a class on Indigenous research methodology, my husband, a Stoney Sioux man Indigenous to Alberta asked me what Glooskap has to do with studying policy and racism or oppression. The Stoney people are of the Nakota Sioux dialect, made up of several different tribes in Mid-Western United States and several First Nations in Western Canada. His question presented a critical moment in my research, one that made me reflect on how our knowledge about oppression drives our revitalization projects. I reminded him of our daughter's doubts about the Waponahki creation story and pointed out that the systemic racism that prohibits the transfer of our knowledge is the same systemic racism that perpetuates the transfer of Western knowledge by placing it in a superior position to Indigenous knowledge or failing to even recognize it as knowledge. De Sousa Santos calls for the academy to value local knowledges and traditional western knowledge equally. A "monoculture of scientific knowledge" is responsible for the epistemocidal experiences of Indigenous populations (de Sousa Santos, 2007). Grande (2000) problematizes western theory's dominance as a "choke-hold" on Indigenous scholars, calling instead for a *Red Pedagogy* creating intellectual space that both benefits our communities while meeting the pressures of universities. I recognize the engagement of IRM to move closer toward her articulation of a *Red Pedagogy* where the scholarly mind of the Indigenous scholars can intellectually breath within our own ways of knowing and being.

Although the intended result of colonialism was to wipe out the Waponahki, we are still here. The genocidal bounty on Penobscot people and scalps is only one of numerous bounties placed on American Indian peoples (Martin, 1998). The bounties spurred the eradication of numerous tribes, the following bounty was place on most New England tribes (Figure 5. British 1755 proclamation offering 40 pounds for an adult Indian male, 20 pounds for the scalp of an Indian woman or child.) Before colonial invasion, there were over twenty Waponahki tribes. Today there are only five.

**Figure 5. British 1755 proclamation offering 40 pounds for an adult Indian male, 20 pounds for the scalp of an Indian woman or child.**



By His EXCELLENCY

*WILLIAM SHIRLEY*, Esq;

Captain-General and Governor in Chief, in and over His Majesty's Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, in *New-England*, and Vice-Admiral of the same, and Major-General in His Majesty's Army.

# A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS the Indians of *Norridgewock*, *Arresaguntacook*, *Weweenock* and *St. John's* Tribes, and the Indians of the other Tribes inhabiting in the Eastern and Northern Parts of His Majesty's Territories of *New-England*, the *Penobscot* Tribe only excepted, have, contrary to their solemn Submission unto His Majesty long since made and frequently renewed, been guilty of the most perfidious, barbarous and inhuman Murders of divers of his Majesty's *English* Subjects; and have abstained from all Commerce and Correspondence with His Majesty's said Subjects for many Months past; and the said *Indians* have fully discovered an inimical, traiterious and rebellious Intention and Disposition;

I have therefore thought fit to issue this Proclamation, and to Declare the Indians of the Norridgewock, Arresaguntacook, Weweenock and St. John's Tribes, and the Indians of the other Tribes now or late inhabiting in the Eastern and Northern Parts of his Majesty's Territories of New-England, and in Alliance and Confederacy with the above-recited Tribes, the Penobscots only excepted, to be Enemies, Rebels and Traitors to his Most Sacred Majesty: And I do hereby require his Majesty's Subjects of this Province to embrace all Opportunities of pursuing, captivating, killing and destroying all and any of the aforesaid Indians, the Penobscots excepted.

*AND WHEREAS* the General Court of this Province have voted, That a Bounty or Encouragement be granted and allowed to be paid out of the Publick-Treasury to the marching Army that shall be employed for the Defence of the Eastern and Western Frontiers from the Twenty-fifth of this Month of *June* until the Twenty-fifth of *November* next;

I have thought fit to publish the same; and I do hereby promise, That there shall be paid out of the Province-Treasury to all and any of the said Forces, over and above their Bounty upon Enlistment, their Wages and Subsistence, the Premiums or Bounties following, viz.

For every Male Indian Prisoner above the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be taken and brought to *Boston*, *Fifty Pounds*.

For every Male Indian Scalp, brought in as Evidence of their being killed, *Forty Pounds*.

For every Female Indian Prisoner, taken and brought in as aforesaid, and for every Male Indian Prisoner under the Age of Twelve Years, taken and brought in as aforesaid, *Twenty-five Pounds*.

For every Scalp of such Female Indian or Male Indian under Twelve Years of Age, brought as Evidence of their being killed, as aforesaid, *Twenty Pounds*.

*GIVEN under my Hand at* Boston, *in the Province aforesaid, this Twelfth Day of* June, *1755, and in the Twenty-eighth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord* GEORGE *the Second, by the Grace of GOD, of* Great-Britain, France, *and* Ireland, KING, *Defender of the Faith, &c.*

*By His Excellency's Command,*
J. WILLARD, *Sec'y.*

W. Shirley.

GOD Save the KING.

"Courtesy Pioneer Historical Society"

BOSTON: Printed by *John Draper*, Printer to His [illegible] the Honourable His Majesty's COUNCIL. 1755.

The epistemocide connection with the bounties is obvious in that as people of several generations are legally murdered according to a national edict, the possibilities

of that epistemology surviving are severely lessened or non-existent. The physical destruction of a people is the ultimate and deliberate severing of the vital link between an epistemology and an ontology. Without that link, epistemology is empty words, and ontology is swallowed up in chaos and/or dis-order. However, just as the original bounty on the heads of Waponahki men, women and children did not destroy us (Figure 3, p. 17), the knowledge suppression or epistemocidal practices that we continue to live through as Waponahki people will not destroy us either. Our survival as a people and my writing on Waponahki intellectual tradition in the context of remembering Waponahki epistemology, as well as my ability to make sense of or theorize about Waponahki policy development by engaging with the Waponahki intellectual tradition expressed in basket weaving prove this. An example of the strength of that vital energy that lies at the intersect of ontology and epistemology was presented to me recently. As a research assistant, I was working with two Elders, one of whom had grown up immersed in the knowledge system of his people. At a gathering, the first Elder shared a teaching about the creation of humans. The second Elder, who had been denied this Indigenous knowledge, listened. After the teaching, he expressed his relief that humans had not evolved from monkeys, a belief that he had heard about but had never accepted.

In addition to the significance that Glooskap holds in our creation stories, there are other stories of how Glooskap helps the people, saving them from hunger, drought and severe weather. I believe that Glooskap is challenging epistemocide, and that the

preservation of these stories as teachings and our truths help the people to maintain our ways of knowing and being in this world. This doctoral study and my engagement with Waponahki ways of knowing and being would be incomplete without a formal engagement with the teachings about Glooskap, and particularly about how this spiritual being has challenged epistemocide. In response to my husband's question of what Glooskap has to do with oppression, genocide and racism, I would say that Glooskap is a central figure in any research related to the ways our people come to know and be, and that our engagement with Glooskap- associated traditional knowledge is the centrality from which all other knowledge spirals outward to help us understand our people's survival.

The creation story is important to the survival of our people because it is reflective of both Waponahki epistemology and ontolology simultaneously, like the woven threads in a traditional basket. A viewer will see each one separately according to the choice of focus, and will only see the whole with an understanding that these are vitally linked at the creation of the life that carries both.

There are several stories of how Glooskap helps the people, saving them from hunger, drought and severe weather. I believe Glooskap is challenging and the preservation of these stories as teachings and our truths help the people maintain our ways of knowing and being in this world. This doctoral study and my engagement with Waponahki ways of knowing and being would be amiss without the engagement of Glooskap and particularly how this spiritual being has challenged in this study. In

response to my husband's question of what Glooskap has to do with oppression, genocide and racism: Glooskap is central in researching the ways our people come to know and be, our engagement with this traditional knowledge is the centrality from which knowledge spirals outward in understanding our survival through colonial oppression.

**Hermeneutics from Within and Indigenous Research Methodology**

The analytic method used in this study draws on a hermeneutical approach. Hermeneutics, as Meyer identifies it is, "the art and science of interpretation" (Meyer, 2003). Although Hermeneutics fits within the framework of Indigenous research methodology it does not necessarily define it. One angle of understanding is how Meyer reframes hermeneutics as Hawaiian, and defines an articulation of "Hawaiian Hermeneutics." She encourages Indigenous scholars to re-interpret the ongoing "gloomy" data that describes our socio-economic distress and instead draw out the strength and resistance they may represent. For example, she suggests, low retention rates at school are to some extent a measure of our youth's resistance to Eurowestern schooling systems and their connection to Indigenous systems of learning. Eber Hampton first introduced in the literature the need to re-think low retention rates, which helps us to re-examine the education standards and outcomes of Eurowestern education as a system created to maintain Eurowestern privilege and power (Hampton, 1995).

As Ranco (2006) asserts both historically and in predominant ongoing use of hermeneutics in research of Native people has typically studied Indigenous people as the "other". He calls for a power shift in research of Native people to power within:

> The belief that understanding comes from a change of self by overcoming subjective difference has also been a key tenet in recent hermeneutic philosophy…A better ethics, however would be involved in shifting the privilege away from the outsiders and their knowledge, to the insiders and their knowledge. (p. 64)

Consistent with Ranco's "better ethics," I analyze the development of the policies from my insider position and knowledge as a Waponahki researcher. Ranco (2006) identifies how such a power shift may occur, citing Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) description of culturally specific ways to approach research. In *Decolonizing Methodologies,* Smith (1999) describes her work with the Maori of New Zealand. Their methodology was guided by Maori values and research ethics, drawn from Maori epistemology and ontology, the Kaupapa Maori practices:

1. Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people). .
2. Kanohi kitea (the seen face, that is present yourself to people face to face).
3. Titiro, whakarongo… korero (look, listen… speak).
4. Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous).
5. Kia tupato (be cautious).

6. Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people).

7. Kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge). (p. 120)

Many researchers, including myself and Ranco (2006) cite this list as an exemplary way to "reformulate the power relations between those who study and those who are studied." (p. 74) Many of our Indigenous communities already have their own (formal and informal) ethical codes and protocols to use in reference to or with outside researchers. Culturally specific lists like Smith's and the principles of Indigenous research methodologies offered by Weber-Pillwax (1999) root us as researchers in our own Indigenous epistemologies, a vital and authentic source for our research activities and one that reformulates power relations in ways that meet our own standards of ethical conduct. This is the place where we, as Indigenous people, are living the research.

Both Smith's list and Weber-Pillwax's principles are consistent with the epistemologies of each scholar's respective Indigenous people. One principle offered by Weber-Pillwax in considering IRM is particularly relevant here: "the groundedness of theories in indigenous epistemology". When I read Smith's (1999) list and subsequent text directly, I see how she outlines that the values come from Maori epistemology and ontology, respectively ways of knowing and being. This place of deep rootedness in Indigenous epistemology is how I place Glooskap and basketry in my study. They bring to my work the spirit of those ancestors who came before me and who suffered deeply

so that I could be here now. It is a place where the spirits of my ancestors are present in my study; to not involve these aspects of my Waponahki epistemology would undermine the depth and potential of my scholarship to contribute to the intellectual advancement of Waponahki knowledge. It would create a situation where, through my work, I could be acting out and promoting the same pattern of western knowledge dominance and oppression that I am trying to dismantle, undo or avoid. Mobilizing Waponahki epistemology speaks to a space of hope that is layered within our language revitalization processes. As Wayne Newell, a Passamaquoddy tribal leader once shared with me, “Passamaquoddy language is the road map to who we are, our soul.” Waponahki epistemology has not been eradicated. I was not supposed to be here right now even writing this text. Eradication policies against my people tried to annihilate us, but we are still here. We are still weaving our baskets and developing policies that bring our people together for the good of the community. We are still here sharing our intellectual traditions and mobilizing knowledge that our ancestors suffered to maintain and pass on. The weaving of the ash has deeper meaning than the mechanics of situating strips of ash, as the development of policy is far more than the technicalities of placing text together to make policy. The weaving of the ash reminds us of who we are and where we come from, just as the development of the policies requires groundedness in our identity and history all working toward our survival as Waponahki people.

As I continue to learn more about Indigenous research methodology's relevance to the way I think, I am inspired by the methodology's role in my doctoral study. During a doctoral course, *Frameworks for Research in Educational Policy Studies*, I learned that there was a widely used "bible of qualitative research" called *The Handbook of Qualitative Research* written by two heavily cited qualitative researchers, Denzin and Lincoln (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Now in its third edition, the handbook drives research in many universities. While I had initially suspected that the text would be too generic to be helpful to my project, I was reassured when, on its first page, I found a discussion of the importance of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's work where she explains that "research" is often a dirty word in many Indigenous communities (2005). The introductory chapter focuses on the decolonization project which makes space for the latter part of Smith's text, where she engages with Indigenous methodologies. This is where the seminal work of Weber-Pillwax's (1999) principles of Indigenous research methodology has distinct location, where we can look forward to a time when research is not a "dirty" word in our communities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Smith approaches Indigenous research methodology with the challenging question, "What happens to research when the researched become the researchers?" (Smith, 1999) I offer a further consideration of the outcome when the researched not only become the researchers, but engage in research through Indigenous research methodology. The framework that I have offered is one that I have lived, experienced, theorized and felt in my soul. Indigenous research methodology has brought me to my ancestors, to our creation, and toward living the

research. Smith's famous text on the decolonizing project ends with a reflection on Indigenous Methodologies and Kaupapa Maori Research. Smith describes Irwin's work in Kaupapa Maori Research as grounded in "a paradigm that stems from a Maori worldview" (Irwin cited in Smith, 1999). Furthermore, in Dr. Angeline Letendre's candidacy defense, she defines her use of Indigenous research methodology as a "meta-paradigm." As "Meta" is the prefix that transcends, and paradigm is how reality is organized and understood by society (Outhwaite, 2006), this is the epistemological core of Indigenous research methodology.

The decolonization project and Indigenous research methodology are interconnected. They rely on one another to create that space in the academy that Weber-Pillwax envisions for Indigenous research methodology (Weber-Pillwax). Decolonization must begin with the self. How should we evaluate and realize the value of our epistemologies if we are not looking within?

The identification of the knowledge that informed policy making in Maine is central to maintaining the intent and promulgation of the policies. Consequently, the study of the policies necessitates a methodology rooted in Waponahki epistemology and knowledge. Otherwise, as the baskets might become reduced to the technicality of weaving wood, and Glooskap to a legend, the policies would in similar fashion be diminished. The intellectual rigor and sophistication of the mind that weaves such policy would be lost. Again this development is the mobilization of knowledge. Paulo Freire identifies this as praxis, actions that are informed so that sociopolitical transformation

will occur (Freire, 1992). Praxis requires action, not just theory (p. 75). Praxis aligns concretely with the outlined principles of Indigenous research methodology offered by Weber-Pillwax, especially the fundamental importance of "lived indigenous experience" (Weber-Pillwax, 1999). This Indigenous experience elevates knowledge; it is also the measure and evidence of knowledge. Such Waponahki policy making is knowledge mobilization as transformation that undoes the effects of the colonial invasion. Dr. Tuhiwai-Smith shared during a public lecture at the University of Alberta, May 2006 that "we must not only theorize the experience, but we need to *experience* the theory." Similarly, as Dr. Weber-Pillwax shared during a course lecture, October 5, 2006, when engaging with Indigenous research methodology, a person *lives* the research; we do not just *do* the research. In this context, I have been involved directly in the policy-making, I have lived in the conditions that pre-empted them and I now experience their implications.

**Discussion of Interviews & Waponahki Policy Makers**

I begin the process of analysis with interviews of the tribal leaders involved. Their stories about the policy development help us to understand how policies are woven. Their stories are based on formal interviews as well as informal conversations. All are one to two generations older than me. I have known them most of my life. I selected them because of their integrity in important political work and because of their leadership roles in translating the hopes of our people into formal legislated policy. Rather than being organized into any specific chapter, their policy stories are woven throughout the text of the dissertation and inform the entirety of the study.

These policy stories are grounded in the relational accountability principle and reciprocity principle of Indigenous research methodology (Weber-Pillwax, 1999; Wilson, 2009). In effect, this research looks at policies that support Waponahki communities. Relational accountability does not concern only interpersonal relationships but also epistemological connections with concepts such as the policy making. Relationality's scope of documents, history and people expands curriculum, providing a strong basis for using an Indigenous research methodology. The analysis of these policy stories discusses the primary focus of the study which is to consider how Waponahki ways of knowing and ways of being inform policy development in Maine. By discussing the development of three specific examples of legislated policy that evolved from the knowledge, traditions and colonial experiences of Waponahki people, this research seeks to answer the question: How can/does Waponahki ways of knowing

(epistemology) and ways of being (ontology) inform policy in Maine? The following are brief introductions to the tribal leaders, offered as a way to better understand the policy development process.

**Passamaquoddy Tribal Representative Donald Soctomah**

Donald Soctomah is of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, a fluent speaker of the Passamaquoddy language, Donald has dedicated his life to political issues for Waponahki people. He has been re-elected numerous times by his people as Tribal Representative to the House of Representatives. He is a Waponahki historian, authoring several volumes of history of the Passamaquoddy, holding the seat of Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. He holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Maine at Machias and has consulted on numerous documentaries regarding the Waponahki.

**Penobscot Tribal Representative Donna Loring**

Donna is a tribal member of the Penobscot Indian Nation and held the position of the Nation's Representative to the Maine State Legislature through the last half of the 118th, (which began in January 1998.) She served full terms in119th, 120th, 121st, she stepped down to run for State Senate in 2003. She served the first three months of the 122nd, and was re-elected to represent the Penobscot Nation in the 123rd 2007 and 2008. She served on the Legislatures' Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. Her legislative service ended on October 1st, 2008. She has published, *In the Shadow of an Eagle,* which chronicles her time while in the legislature.

**Passamaquoddy Tribal Councilor and Director of Indian Township School Language Program, Wayne Newell**

Wayne was born at Sipayik (Pleasant Point), Maine and is a member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe. He speaks the Passamaquoddy language fluently and utilizes English as his second language. Educated at the local schools, Wayne eventually went on to earn a Master's degree in the field of Education from Harvard University. Wayne's first love is the preservation of the Passamaquoddy language. In 1971, he directed the first bilingual/bicultural education program for the Passamaquoddy tribe. This program included the introduction of a writing system for the Passamaquoddy language which continues to be spoken and written by tribal members today. He authored and co-authored over forty reading books written in the Passamaquoddy/Maliseet language. Wayne has also been active in his Tribe's continuing struggles for justice for Native people. He has served on many of the Tribe's leadership positions. Currently he serves on the Passamaquoddy Tribal Council, former Representative of the Maine State Legislature, the Maine Human Rights Commission, and the Maine Indian Tribal State Commission. Wayne was also appointed by former President Jimmy Carter to serve on the National Indian Education Advisory Committee.

**Concluding Thoughts on IRM & Weaving Policy**

The literature continues to emphasize the need for Indigenous scholars to respond to research needs in their communities (Deloria, 2004; Kuokkanen, 2007; Smith, 1999; Steinhauer, 2008; Wilson, 2008). There is a great potential for social and

political change for our people when we engage in research consistent with our Indigenous epistemologies. Such research methodology brings us to our ancestors and to a space of transformation. As late Dr. Harold Cardinal concludes in his seminal text, *The Rebirth of Canada's Indians (1977):*

> The most important of rights of all our rights, without which there can be no rebirth, is the right of our elders to define their centuries old perception of our Creator, and to perform the centuries old religious rituals from which all the true values of our Indian society stem. Only then is our right to follow the path shown to us by our Creator sacrosanct. Then and only then, will our re-birth be complete. (p. 222)

Indigenous research methodology is wholly consistent with the re-birth that Dr. Cardinal called for in 1977. It is this same rebirth that I believe Smith (1999) attempts to arrive at in her work. Dr. Cardinal speaks to the important right to engage with our Indigenous knowledge systems. If we do not do this, rebirth will not occur. The concept of rebirth as presented by Cardinal is tied firmly with decolonization, and in my own work, I have experienced and worked within an Indigenous Waponahki Research Methodology that encompasses decolonizing methodologies and more effectively moves me as researcher to transcend the forces of our peoples' colonization.

As a people, Waponahki have the same creation source as our basketry - the ash tree. The ash tree, a solid hardwood, is the tree that our ancestors tell us we come from, and baskets link us to our creation story and weaving is fundamental to our ways

of being and knowing, basic to our survival. We are the ash that comes from the tree, interconnected with the earth, living and dynamic. With development, harvesting, paper mills and the effects of the emerald ash borer, the brown ash tree is being depleted at an unprecedented rate and is now struggling to survive. The decimation of our sacred ash tree reminds us of the genocide which resulted in the decimation of 97% of our original population (Thornton, 1987).

We hold the ash tree with gratitude, as something sacred and essential to both our creation and our future. We have always been connected to and crafted baskets from this tree and are recognized nationally by other tribes for our sophisticated basketry that ranges from berry or corn replicas to heavy-duty pack baskets. We selectively and carefully harvest wood from the ash tree to ensure its future growth. The tree is cut down, the branches are removed, and the log pounded with a hammer-like tool to loosen the wood, enabling us to peel apart the strips we use to make baskets. Basket makers are able to make ash strips as thin as thread or as wide as two inches for utility baskets.

The blue prints for the design of highly intricate woven baskets rest in the minds of my people, some designs revealed in dreams. Similarly, the vision and designs that guide our policy directions reside in the minds of the policy makers and in the communities within which they work. Basketry and policy making work toward our continued cultural survival and existence. Like our baskets, our lives come from the ash tree. As Waponahki people, we design and craft policy making and basket making as

more than just the practice of writing text or weaving wood. People who work with both weaves rely heavily on experience, rootedness in the community, and knowledge of who they are. Like our ash baskets, which begin with an ash star as the foundation, the policy making begins with foundational weaves that must hold together. These foundational weaves are reflections of (a) our Tribal Representative's ability to sponsor legislation in the State of Maine House of Representatives, (b) our ability, as Waponahki people, to write legislation, (c) our people's knowledge of their historical relationships with the state of Maine and federal government, (d) our knowledge of our legal rights and the current and future needs of the Waponahki, (e) and our ability to organize our own people to lobby for legislation and testify in support of bills. From these and other foundational weaves, our policies evolve and take shape.

As a Waponahki person, when I hold a fancy basket I can feel the sophistication of the mind involved in its creation. Fancy baskets are intricately woven baskets, typically using very small strips of ash; sometimes the basket is as small as a berry. When we engage in policy making, we hope that the care and the intricacy of our thinking will make a difference to our people for generations yet to come – that is, that it will ensure that our collective mind will continue to thrive. This stands in stark contrast to policy making that benefits only individuals or certain segments of a society, and often is only built upon the financial or economic considerations of the state. When the policy we have designed as Waponahki people is passed by the state, it helps us to mobilize our peoples' knowledge and moves us as a people toward, and eventually beyond, a space

of decolonization. The weaves of ourselves would then have taken us out of the social context created by colonization, and created instead a world of Waponahki ways.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The literature review provides a theoretical foundation that supports the purpose of this work: to reveal the vitality of Waponahki knowledge through an analysis of policy-making processes and content in direct relation to the three pieces of legislated policy arising from within the nations of Waponahki peoples in Maine. The first section of the literature review addresses racism towards Indigenous peoples in the context of education. The second section discusses how racism is part of the colonial apparatus and how anti-racism as a strategy has evolved from an Indigenous historical resistance to the colonization processes. Both racism and anti-racism are terms used in the analysis of the first two pieces of legislation, the Squaw law and the Waponahki Studies Law. The third section reviews the literature on knowledge subjugation, including subjugation of Indigenous knowledge systems, knowledge of oppression and linguistic genocide, and informs the analysis of the third legislated policy, the Native Language Endorsement Rule.

### Racism and Indigenous Peoples in Education

There has been significant relevant scholarship about the impacts of racism on the education of Indigenous peoples. The list of authors included in a comprehensive literature review commissioned by the Canadian Government via INAC (Indian Northern Affairs Canada) on racism and Aboriginal peoples in education, co-authored by Dr. Eber Hampton and Dr. Verna St. Denis (Hampton & St. Denis, 2002) demonstrates that clearly. In my work, I often referred to that review as an academic and Indigenous

source of interpretation and scholarly analysis of existing literature on the topic of racism and Indigenous education. Additionally, and In keeping with the academic rigor expected of doctoral studies, I have ensured that my own literature review on this topic includes updated, more recent, perspectives and publications. Interestingly, taking a comparative view between those works referenced in Hampton and St. Denis and those I reviewed most recently, there has been very little development in new knowledge, public understanding or educational applications in relation to racism and Aboriginal education. Perhaps the most significant note to be made is that the use of the word *racism* in circles of educational publics no longer carries the same sense of social abhorrence and impropriety that it did in 2002. This is likely an outcome of ongoing resistance by the many victims of racism to the historical and public denial/shrouding of destructive and racially-motivated actions within the confines of educational institutions and policy-making processes.

Because the issues raised and addressed in recent literature on racism and Aboriginal education remains very much within the topics and approaches represented by the sixty pieces of scholarly literature and research studies in the INAC review, my work relies on that specific compilation by respected and well-known Indigenous scholars as a most appropriate and reliable reference. The document covers scholarship on racism and Aboriginal peoples of Canada, American Indians of the U.S. as well as some Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

St. Denis and Hampton (2002) conclude in their review that racism is a significant problem plaguing Aboriginal experiences in the educational system, and that it is much to blame for the lack of academic success rates of Indigenous students. The authors emphasize that the amount of scholarly research about how to teach culturally diverse classrooms of students far outweighs that of teaching for anti-racism in the area of Aboriginal Education. They further identified that although the literature places emphasis on racism as a barrier of educational attainment, there is relatively minimal scholarly attention to the issue. This scholarly gap is attributed by the authors to the deeper but related problem of denial that racism exists. They call for a better understanding around the discourse of denial of racism, pointing out that such denial is exercised by both individuals in institutions as well as within the institutions themselves. Although the research data cited by Hampton and St. Denis reveals that Indigenous students and teachers identify racism as a consistent problem, educators and administrators working within school systems simultaneously deny that racism exists in their schools (2002).

St. Denis & Hampton refer to the discourse of denial as a national tradition where Canadian and American societies claim a raceless ideology (2002). This ideology of racelessness is explained in a study conducted by Christine Sleeter (2003). Sleeter's work described how educators, when asked what they see when they look at a minority student, claim that they do not see the student's race; they see only a human being or

child. Sleeter describes this “color blindness” as a large part of the problem of racism as it supports the discourse of denial (Sleeter, 2003).

St. Denis & Hampton (2002), in their review, along with Schissel & Wotherspoon (2003) and St. Denis (2007), conclude that the effects of this discourse of denial are manifested in blaming the victims of racism, which is racist in itself. The cultural deficit theory, for example, explains Aboriginal student failure in achievement as a lack of culturally relevant curriculum and the students’ inability to assimilate fully into the intellectual and social milieu of the school. This theory places the blame on the Aboriginal students and their cultural identity for being deficient in their ability to adapt to school achievement and other expectations. The effect of this institutional denial of racism and victim blaming is to remove accountability for the problem away from the individual(s) projecting the racist acts, the institution and the system. Low-self esteem is often cited as the source of problems that Aboriginal students face at school, but the actual root of the problem is more often racism. Blaming the problem of Aboriginal students’ low levels of academic achievement on programmable factors, such as those identified in cultural deficit and low-self esteem theories, perpetuates the pervasive discourse of denial.

Dehyle’s work (as cited in St. Denis & Hampton, 2002) elaborates on how acknowledgement of racism implies accountability on the parts of the schools and school officials, while a denial of the problem of racism absolves the administrators and educators of the responsibility to strategically and systematically intervene. The review

attributed some of the propensity of institutions to participate in the denial of racism to varying interpretations and definitions of racism, and further defined racism attached to institutions and systems as racial prejudice plus power. Green (2006) supports this line of inquiry and points out that while everyday acts of racism like name-calling are unacceptable in society, systemic racism is denied, and therefore perpetuated.

Canadian Métis scholars, Chartrand and Larocque, as well as Olsson (as cited separately in St. Denis & Hampton, 2002) all speak to the dynamics of unequal power relations in racism. Chartrand defines racism as a word used by many people with differing ideas related to its meaning. His definition recognizes differing power relations, where an imbalance of power allows racist behavior to create impact. A Cree child in a schoolyard in Winnipeg is taunted with racist slurs by a white child. The power dynamics in this exchange are imbalanced, because the Cree child has relatively little socio-economic "clout" and is vulnerable to such behavior. Unlike the Cree child who directs racialized taunts to a white child of a Winnipeg suburb, the white child does not suffer the same levels of social, political, and economic disempowerment. Larocque suggests that:

> Racism is political, it facilitates and justifies socioeconomic mobility for one group at the expense of another…while there may be mutual dislike, there is no such thing as a mutual discrimination in an unequal relationship.

Olsson differentiates between the tendency to insult and the power to oppress another group. For instance, Aboriginals may express racial prejudice against white people;

however they do not have the power to be racist, which is the power to oppress another group of people. This concept was supported in and Afro-American context earlier by Pinderhughs (1989) and Chisom and Washington (1997).

Understanding the power imbalance is a significant point made throughout St. Denis and Hampton's review of the literature. "It is the imbalance of power between Indigenous peoples and Canadian society that gives racial prejudice its teeth" (2002).

In concluding this section on racism and Aboriginal education, I refer to literature that defines race as a social construct with very specific purposes and functions. Castagna and Dei (2000) dispute race as having scientific validity, viewing race instead as a socially constructed category that is used to gain "social currency" and support the unequal distribution of power and privilege. Ng (cited in St. Denis and Hampton, 2002) calls for the recognition of Aboriginal people's subordination as a result of White European supremacy girded by an economic and material impetus. St. Denis and Hampton further highlight the importance of understanding whiteness in a scholarly context. They cite Bhabha "By denying that race matters, whiteness, as the dominant racial identification, can be considered the invisible norm against which 'others' are judged as 'not white/not quite' (St. Denis & Hampton, 2002). Delgado and Stefanic (2001), speaking from the context of critical race theory, state that racism places both white elites and working class people at an advantage in material and psychological ways, pointing out that in societies where they form the majority, white people have little

incentive to eradicate the racism that advances them. This tendency would continue to empower the discourse of denial.

Peggy McIntosh's work identifies white privilege as critical to maintaining a racist system (McIntosh, 1998). McIntosh (1998) argues that whites carry around an invisible knapsack of those unearned privileges, embodied in their whiteness, which they cash in daily without ever having to be racially aware. SixKiller Clarke (as cited in St. Denis & Hampton, 2002) similarly argues that white skin privilege applies to lighter skinned Aboriginals who have been shown to have higher academic success rates and employment opportunities.

St. Denis and Hampton (2002) conclude that racism is an ongoing problem for both Aboriginal students and teachers, presenting itself in various forms and preventing or seriously impeding academic success. Their comprehensive and scholarly review of the literature on racism and its impact on Aboriginal people and their education introduces the effects of racism on Aboriginal students in an educational context, and serves as an excellent background for the next two sections that address racism as an element of the Indigenous policy-making.

**Racism as Colonial Apparatus and Anti-racism as Resistance**

Long before Pope Paul III declared us as human beings in 1537,

we had already acknowledged that fact.

- Dr. Peter Christmas, Mikmaq (*Invisible*; documentary, 2002)

As an Indigenous educator and scholar myself, it has been my observation and learning from my own Indigenous teachers, community, peers, and colleagues that racism continues to be an ongoing problem at the root of many of the issues facing Aboriginal or Indigenous students, including those issues embedded in policy, administrative structures, programs, curricula and pedagogies. The extent of damage to Indigenous knowledge systems in Canada and the U.S. by a variety of forms of racism (i.e. individual, institutional, systemic, covert, overt, intentional, unintentional, internalized, externalized) has been investigated by respected scholars (Green, 2006; Lawrence & Dua, 2005), it has not been measured according to Western forms of statistical research, and likely will never be. However, to deny that such destructive processes did take place and are continuing in Indigenous communities globally is simply to ignore the voices and experiences (the epitome of empirical evidence) of those peoples who are the victims of this destruction of ancient knowledge.

This part of the chapter will reference literature that speaks to the place of racism or race theory in the colonial apparatus employed by Europeans and European nations in the colonization of the North American continent. It will address how racism and race theory supports colonization and will call for a strengthening of the decolonizing effect of

anti-racism. Thus, this section will articulate the meanings and origins of racism as well as speak to how anti-racist work can support decolonization. This discussion will engage with racism as an instrument of colonization, and the implications of race and power across Indigenous and non-Indigenous policy contexts.

Race, unlike ethnicity, is a political and social construct created in order to divide people (Chisom & Washington, 1997; Gould, 1981). Ethnicity is associated with the territorial and cultural origins of a person, and all people have an ethnicity, although not all people are aware of that (Pinderhughs, 1989). Ethnicity of Indigenous peoples is associated with over five hundred existing tribal affiliations in Canada and the United States. The social constructions of race for Indigenous populations would identify us as *Indians* or *Mongoloids*, whereas our ethnicity would root us in our tribal/band affiliations, connected to our various Indigenous territories.

In defining race, unlike ethnicity, Chisom and Washington write:

> Race is a specious classification of human beings created by Europeans which assigns human worth and social status using 'white' as the model of humanity and the height of human achievement for the purpose of establishing and maintaining privilege and power. (Chisom & Washington, 1997)

According to these definitions, a person who self-identifies as *white* by race, could potentially identify personal ethnicity as Irish or English.

Eighteenth century European founders and scholars of anthropology, George Louis Leclerc Buffon and Johann Freidrich Blumenbach created a racial hierarchy, strategically assigning *white* Europeans the "Caucasoid" category as the norm, and assigning all other peoples other categories of racial variations of white people (Gould, 1981). Caucasoid, Mongoloid and Negroid represent the pseudo-scientific racial classifications which emerged from skull size 'studies' by the two European scientists. They measured the skull size of one skull from the Caucasoid Mountains in Russia and several from the Mongolian region of Asia. Both of these geographic areas are connected to specific peoples from those regions. There is no geographic region on the planet earth called "Negroid" or "Negro." The scientists studied skulls from Africa and constructed the term "Negroid" referring to the skulls of Africans in an effort to further legitimize the dehumanization of Africans as slaves. The skull study found that the one "Caucasoid" skull was larger, housing more brains and this led to the claims of superiority of people of Caucasoid category over that of the smaller skulls and brains of the Negroid and Mongoloid categories (1997). The continued use of the term "Caucasian" demonstrates the power of the beliefs around these original claims of "white" superiority (1997). Although race as biological fact has been repeatedly disproven (Gould, 1981), United States government policy documents continue to use "Caucasian" as identification of persons and people, as "white" in reference to people is deemed to be either offensive or politically incorrect. The serious implication of this practice is that the original fallacious claim of superiority of "white" people continues to

be upheld in legal social practices. For example, police and medical files will still identify persons as “Caucasian”, acting as if this is an accurate and scientific basis of identification. The impact of this practice is far-reaching and negative for any other peoples who do not fit under that pseudo-scientific classification of persons and peoples, since it places all others into categories of racial classification that are inferior to “Caucasoid”. Furthermore, the term is rooted in western science that placed the Caucasoid skull larger and superior to all other peoples (1981).

According to Delgado and Stefanic (2001), two of the creators of critical race theory, race has no biological or genetic roots. The study uses critical race theory to show how racism supports colonialism. Race since the 1700s has been a historical way to think about and categorize human beings, and it has defined the parameters and patterns of human interaction between and towards individuals and peoples according to the original pseudo-scientific racial categories and the ensuing social hierarchies that evolved in European and Western nations. The biological basis of race theory is no longer acceptable in the world of scholarship, while the social construction of race is very real (Brayboy, Castagno & Maughan, 2007). The biological research in fact placed Caucasoid, represented by ‘white’ people, above all races, but in response to this, and over time all races, except white, have moved toward ethnicity identification in order to move beyond the reaches and confinement inherent to such a claim (Pinderhughs 1989, Gould 1981).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) *rejects* three premises of racial ideology: (a) there were not distinct, archaic human subspecies; (b) contemporary humans are not divisible into biological races; and (c) race as biology has no scientific value (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001).

It is noteworthy that CRT derived from the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. It was developed in a legal context to disentangle the racism embedded in our laws and legal system (2001). CRT is particularly significant in an educational policy context as policy is the partner to law, either preceding legislation or invoking it. Policy here is defined as anything the government decides to do or not to do (Abele, Dittburner & Graham, 2000). Hence, policy and law are relatives that need to be reunited in understanding how racism is perpetuated. Furthermore, for the colonization of Indigenous peoples, the colonial enterprise has necessitated racism. American Indian scholar, Brian Brayboy makes relevant critical race theory to Indigenous people. His seminal work in developing Tribal Critical Race Theory locates racism as colonial apparatus and identifies colonization as endemic to society (Brayboy, 2006). Brayboy points out that CRT, developed by black civil rights lawyers, addresses the racism experienced by African Americans, whereas TCRT engages with both the racialization of American Indians and the impacts of colonization (2006).

The racially motivated sexual violence against Indigenous women is cited in the literature as central to colonization (Smith, 2007; Morten-Robinson, 2000; Churchill, 2004; LaDuke in Smith, 2007) This study places distinct focus on the Maine legislation

related to the eradication of state place names containing the word *squaw,* or any using a derivation of the term. Monmonier identifies *squaw* to be an offensive reference, meaning "whore" in various Indigenous languages. Although he remarks that for most mainstream white Americans the term is not understood to be offensive, he asserts that *squaw* is a neutral term for Indian women (Monmonier, 2006). Monmonier's analysis sorely lacks any evidence of his assertion of mainstream views, which contradict the other literatures and research that state that the term *squaw* is indeed offensive, intentionally so, and has violent impacts. For instance, other scholars identify the term to mean "prostitute" or female genitalia, angry Indian woman, or Indian princess (Merskin, 2008; Parezo & Jones, 2009). The Native American Rights Fund, identified the term as analogous to the word *cunt,* used as an incitement by European invaders who would grab their crotches and anglicize the word *sqwe* meaning woman in Algonquian languages, and then proceed to rape and pillage the Native women (personal communication, 2000). Parezo & Jones confirm this, asserting that a contemporary analogy of *squaw* is as offensive as the word *cunt* (2009). They refer to the sexual violence associated with the term in the context of the 1850's California Gold Rush where Native women were kidnapped, raped and killed, and referred to as *squaws* (2009). The literature points to varying meanings of the word, but the consensus is that it is a negative term to use in reference to a Native woman. In her book, *Conquest; Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide,* American Indian scholar, Andrea Smith documents extensively how sexual violence against Native

women has built the nations of Canada and United States, and how the nation-building enterprise has necessitated the violent oppression of Indigenous women. Smith documents in her text the horror that the word squaw has heaped upon Native women:

> When I served as a nonviolent witness for the Chippewa spearfishers who were being harassed by white racist mobs in the 1980's, one white harasser carried a sign that read, "Save a fish; spear a pregnant squaw." During the 1990 Mohawk crisis in Quebec, Canada, a white mob surrounded an ambulance carrying a Native woman who was attempting to leave the Mohawk reservation because she was hemorrhaging after giving birth. She was forced to spread her legs to prove she had delivered a baby. The police at the scene refused to intervene (Smith, p. 28).

Well beyond the literature, and I would contend, most importantly, along with every Native woman in my circle of relatives, acquaintances and colleagues, I, understand and experience the word to be the most denigrating way to refer to me, a Native woman. The etymology of the term *squaw* is extensive and warrants a thorough study on its own, but those sources and that type of research is not within the scope of this work, nor would it necessarily contribute to the arguments that I have put forward in support of the work carried out by the Waponahki people in pushing forward the legislation to remove the word from mainstream usage. This is not to say that the primal good that is inherent in the term within its own Algonquian context ought to be forgotten or set aside; it is to state only that our language will not be permitted any longer to be

used by those who have violated us as Native women. The reminder of that historical moment when our grandmothers were only the receptacle for the conqueror's sperm dies with that legislation. We did not give up our own word to name ourselves as Algonquian women, but we silenced the voice of the violator. That seems to me to be the significance of the legislation.

The assimilationist policy and genocidal intention of the residential school system was based on the supremacy of whiteness (Wotherspoon & Schissel, 2003). Through law, racism has been and continues to be institutionalized and made systemic. Policies set the normative behavior for institutions and governments. When racism is ignored in policy considerations and institutional practice, it is in effect, tolerated and perpetuated (Green, 2006).

'Indigenous' is not a racial indicator; it is more often a political identification locating a people to an ancestral and signifying a shared history of relationships and impacts associated with colonization (Smith 1999). Indigenous connections of people to territory and land is an integral one upon which we as Indigenous peoples base our identities and the principles and patterns of our relationships and interactions. According to the Elders, the land is in the hearts and minds of the people (Venne, 2004). In the context of oppression, being Indigenous can be racially constructed because being Native or Aboriginal is racialized by society, individuals and institutions. Indigenous, Aboriginal or Native is typically perceived by the dominant society as brown skin, dark hair and dark eyes. Superficial features and society's reactions to these

physical features racialize Indigenous identity. Racial profiling of Indigenous peoples involves the attribution of stereotypical characteristics based on stereotypical physical identifiers, and is commonly played out in public spaces where there is a power differential in the relationship, i.e. teacher – student, nurse – patient, police – citizen, cashier – customer. Racial profiling is one obvious result of the racialization of Indigenous peoples in Canada and the United States.

Indigenous peoples of Canada and the United States are legislated against more than any other group (Deloria, 1985), and more laws in the United States have been enacted to respond to Native people as a "problem" than any other group (Churchill 2004; Grande 2004; Deloria1999). Given that race is not a biological reality, its legacy serves only to legitimate lingering colonial power. Legislation against Indigenous peoples has dispossessed them of land, ways of knowing and ways of being. The basis of that dispossession is rooted in white supremacy, given that the power to dispossess another group is vested in white people and white power. If racism is the power to oppress another group, then legislation against Indigenous peoples is simply another tool of racism wielded by the colonial apparatus.

Addressing racism and the interlocking systems of social oppression through "an educational and political action-oriented strategy for institutional and systemic change" has been discussed as anti-racism by Calliste & Dei (2000). According to Tuhiwai-Smith, decolonization engages the social oppression created by imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels (1999). Decolonization, as a word of empowerment,

undoes colonization, reclaims human rights, and revitalizes Indigenous languages, cultures and humanity. Decolonization offers the hope that racism will be contradicted by anti-racist strategies.

**Indigenous Knowledge Subjugation, Oppression and Genocide**

Academic theories of knowledge and power as they intersect with realities of racism are crucial to my study. Michael Foucault's analysis of power and construction of knowledge is particularly apt for application to the reclaiming of policy development processes by Indigenous people. Stoler (1995) refers to Foucault's work where in 1976, he had outlined the apparatus of "state racism" as being biopowered. Barry Smart (1985), a decade later, interpreted biopower to be a literal power over bodies, (including minds and the knowledge they harbor), harnessed towards the creation of nation states. This "technology of power" (as a political technology) Smart describes as affording control over entire populations. According to Stoler, even the discourse about race has been co-opted in the service of building a nation state (Stoler, 1995). I believe that Biopower continues to have significant role in the continued colonization of Waponahki people.

Foucault's *Two Lectures (*1977*)*, state the need to mobilize local knowledge, which has historically been buried or disqualified by the state. Criticism is impossible without the re-appearance of these subjugated knowledges, which have been positioned at the lowest in the hierarchy of science and knowledge or outrightly buried. To Foucault, such knowledges are based upon the "historical knowledge of struggle"

(Foucault as cited in Gordon, 1977). If the function of knowledge subjugation, in relation to Indigenous knowledge systems, is essential to the creation of the nation state, the function of racism and the necessity for wide public support of the denial of racism becomes significant.

Stoler (1995) interprets Foucault's lectures as an imperative to create a genealogy of racism. In the way that Stoler discusses this concept of genealogy of race, we can understand this to mean documenting or otherwise remembering the genealogy of a people's struggles, including those relating to knowledge subjugation and particularly where the struggles are rooted in racial oppression. She describes how Foucault (in *Two Lectures* 1976), identifies genealogy as an investigation into those areas that are without history, where histories have been subjugated. The pervasive problem of denial of racism fits here: as the realities of racism are denied and hidden, they become an instrument ultimately for colonial power. Indigenous knowledge of oppression supports the creation of a genealogy of race, and an exposure of racist denial will support uplifting 'local knowledge' and the creation of such a genealogy.

Stoler's critical examination of the challenges in applying Foucault's historical theories to better understand racism today results in a scholarly intersection of racism, power and knowledge. Foucault's attempts to locate racial discourse within a deeper genealogy paid particular attention to the conversation's changing form.

Stoler suggested that:

> What is significant for us, and what ties the lectures (on race) closely to the *History of Sexuality*, is Foucault's concluding argument that the emergence of biopower inscribed modern racism in the mechanisms of the normalizing state. (p. 84)

Relative to this study, Foucault's assertion of racism as a result of the "class body" enhances our understanding of practice of racism which we see articulated by St. Denis and Hampton (2002). Foucault places the blame for "the birth of state racism" within historical discourse, rather than in the daily exercise of racist acts. According to Stoler, he did not necessarily discount the daily acts of racism, instead focused on the power of racial discourse embedded in the state. For Foucault, historical racial discourse is the "weapon of Power" (Stoler, 1995)

Indigenous peoples' understanding of the power of their own subjugated knowledges has a strong relationship to how they understand racism's impact on their lives. The concept of insurrecting such subjugated knowledge connects a people (in this case, Indigenous people) to that which continues to be denied or hidden. The epidemic denial of racism that St. Denis and Hampton identify is heavily intersected with the knowledge subjugation.

As Indigenous peoples, our understanding of racism is a process of unfolding that which has been subjugated, of surfacing 'local' knowledges. Articulating Indigenous knowledge of racism may be part of the investigation required to create a

genealogy of race (racially-motivated struggles). Foucault describes insurrecting knowledge and genealogy, or knowing the 'historical knowledge of struggle' as necessary for a 'return of knowledge.' Genealogies are considered by Foucault to be anti-sciences, an important highlight given that race theory began in the sciences and was treated as scientific fact that the Caucasoid race be superior to that of the Mongoloid or Negroid race (Delgado, 2001). As research activity, genealogy does not rely on a body of theory, or necessitate a centralized theoretical base in order to qualify it, as its "validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought." (Foucault as cited in Gordon, 1977). This could help the development of a frame for Indigenous knowledges about racism.

Albert Memmi (1965) offers his knowledge of colonization and asserts the documenting of the portraits of the colonized and the colonizer as his truth and an important process because it "cuts through illusion." He articulates the illusion to be that colonization is a benefit to all involved. There is a link to cutting through illusion about colonization and conceptualizing Indigenous knowledge of colonization. Memmi, in his portrait of the colonized and the colonizer has put to text a "counter-history", a process similar to Foucault's notion of genealogies, and one that could resurrect subjugated knowledges. Cutting through the illusion that colonization benefits all may also surface the denial of discourse that St. Denis and Hampton (2002) describe. Memmi identifies racism as, "the highest expression of the colonial system" and theorizes from the position of the oppressed in ways that are familiar to me as an Indigenous woman.

A final significant commentary in this literature review addresses Indigenous knowledge oppression and linguistic genocide as important and determining factors in the survival of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. In the situation of the Waponahki peoples, the physical genocide and linguistic genocide targeting them both aided and abetted each other. As Scutnabb-Kangas (2000) noted, when languages are eradicated, the likelihood of self-determination is minimized, and potential nations are denied their ability to govern themselves. She identifies three ways to reduce the number of languages: (a) physical genocide; (b) linguistic genocide and; (c) making languages invisible (2000). She identifies physical genocide as the most potent way to eradicate a language. Although Waponahki people know firsthand about physical genocide processes and state policies, in fact, their languages have survived despite the devastating decimation of their peoples.

Among the Penahwubskeag (Penobscot Nation, of the Waponahki Confederacy) today, only a handful of people understand the language, and even fewer speak it fluently. It is recognized not only by Scutnabb-Kangas that Indigenous languages have been withheld from mainstream society and that linguistic genocide has been invisibilized deliberately to take social and political power from those Indigenous groups (2000). We know that the memory of our past and all that connects us to our ancestors is embedded in our language. “Ruling memory” removes memory from a people, affording the colonizer the power to re-create the reality of those colonized and determine what normative is (Norton, 1993). A gross communication gap has “ruled”

the memory of many Indigenous people, leading us to believe that we are abandoning our mother tongue. According to Norton (1993), colonization affects the connection to ancestry:

> The colonized found themselves exiled from the history and memories that once bound them with their ancestors and an imagined posterity. In exile from their past they also found themselves in exile from their future…Colonial rule acted on tradition in diverse ways, but in every case it severed the ties that bound the present and the future to the past. (p. 457)

Colonization continues to be couched in soft words like “settlement,” and “founded.” This terminology affects the memory of the past. A territory and a people “discovered, settled or found” are not the same territory and people “invaded, stolen or murdered.” The epistemology of an indigenous people, carried in the language of that people can be, and often is, caught in the description and terminology that constructs the past. In the way that languages are threatened, so are epistemologies invaded, oppressed, stolen, threatened, and perhaps destroyed.

Revitalization, no matter in what form it is undertaken, reclaims appropriate terminology, making those languages alive again (Greymorning, 2004). Rightfully so, the emphasis of revitalization lies in bringing language back. Generations of Waponahki have been unable to communicate with one another. Our peoples, heavily reliant on oral tradition, are in situations where one generation is often not able to

communicate with the next. As Waponahki peoples, we had experienced and observed that the epistemologies of our various peoples, represented by vast amounts of knowledge and teachings, were being buried and transformed under the oppression and impact of racism and linguistic genocidal policies. Research, such as that of Teresa McCarty (2003), in support of language revitalization and against linguistic genocide, simultaneously supports the vitality of Indigenous epistemologies and the survival of Indigenous ontologies. Without some sense of individual understanding of epistemology and ontology if the people with whom that individual is connected, there is not discourse from within that epistemology and no sense of self within the ontology into which that individual has been gifted.

This literature review has not addressed specifically areas of study directed at Indigenous involvement in policy-development, nor has it spoken to policy development or its processes in Canadian or other societies in general. My decision not to include the literature of policy-development is based on the fact that the processes involved in policy development in democratic countries are a standard part of public school programming, and every person in these countries is expected to know and understand and participate in policy development activities as critical elements of their citizenship or membership in these countries. The literature of critique of this claim made consistently by democracies might be relevant to my work, but even that field of study would require an extensive amount of time and concentration in order to do justice to the field. A review of that literature would not necessarily have contributed directly to my work, and

would, I believe, have set a direction towards policy making as the central topic of the work. As I hope is clear by now, my purpose in carrying out this work has been, and continues to be, to show how the ancient epistemology and ontology of my people, the Waponahki, continues to be lived out in our people, and I do this by discussing the development of three specific examples of legislation that evolved from the knowledge and tradition as well as colonial experiences of our people, and how that development has affected and will continue to affect the survival of our ways. Other pertinent literature references will be included and woven through the discussion in the subsequent chapters that discuss the policies in this study. I sensed that this was a more appropriate way to contextualize the literature within the discussion of Waponahki experiences, polite and more in line with Indigenous intellectual traditions of discourse engagement, observation and analysis.

## Chapter 3: Waponahki Knowledge of Oppression

The history of colonial oppression of the Waponahki people is extensive. In order to localize the knowledge about this oppression, the following section will draw on a draft document that I have had the privilege and pain to be a very peripheral participant in reviewing. The working group on Maine Indian Child Welfare organized a coalition comprising several tribal leaders/organizers and has been working to draft a declaration that documents this harsh history. It is no coincidence that the same core group of Waponahki women who have been drafting and initiating this document were central in organizing testimonies for the Squaw Law, particularly two Passamaquoddy women, Esther Attean and Denise Altvater. The draft of this declaration or mandate, Declaration of Intent to Create a Maine/Wabanaki Truth & Reconciliation Process, is a prime example of Waponahki knowledge of oppression (Figure 6). This important and forward-looking document is included here as an example of the on-going vitality of Waponahki epistemology and ontology. Engaging briefly with this document as an introduction to the subsequent chapters of this study foregrounds my intention to mobilize such local knowledge of oppression.

**Figure 6. *Draft:* Declaration of Intent to Create a Maine/Wabanaki Truth & Reconciliation Process**

*This document is a statement that gives context to the Truth and Reconciliation Process between the State of Maine child welfare agency and the Wabanaki tribes. This process will illustrate what has happened, what is happening and what needs to happen. We commit to uncover the truth and acknowledge it, creating opportunities to heal and learn from the truth. We commit to working together, collaboratively focusing our efforts on activities that will move us forward as equal partners invested in promoting best child welfare practice for Wabanaki people of Maine.*

**"We are not supposed to be here"**

*~Contemporary Wabanaki people*

The Wabanaki people are indigenous to the land now known as the State of Maine. In the 15th century there were over 20 tribes and over 32,000 members of the Wabanaki Confederacy. Today, there are four Wabanaki tribes still in existence; over 16 other tribes were completely destroyed. Within the remaining four tribes, there are nearly 8,000 tribal members alive today.

Governmental policies to devastate Indian people were perpetuated through the development and intervention of boarding schools, removal policies, and actions of state child welfare systems; all based on the racist belief that you must kill the Indian in a native child to save the person they would become.

Beginning in the late 1800's, the United States government established boarding schools intended to solve the "*Indian problem*" through assimilation. In the 1950's and 1960's the Indian Adoption Project removed hundreds of native children from their families and tribes to be adopted by non-native families. In 1978, the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which codified higher standards of protection for the rights of native children, their families and their tribal communities. Congress stated that, "No resource is more vital to the continued existence and integrity of Indian tribes than their children" and that "Child welfare agencies had failed to recognize the essential tribal relations of Indian people and the culture and social standards prevailing in Indian communities and families" (25 U.S.C.& 1901).

**"We can work together to make sure that everyone simply follows laws and policies, or we can go deeper and figure out how to make changes because it is the right thing to do."**

*~Denise Altvater, Passamaquoddy*

Important progress has been made with the passage of the ICWA and the work of the Maine ICWA Workgroup, but Maine's child welfare history continues to impact Wabanaki children and families today.

Wabanaki tribes have partnered with the Maine child welfare system to bring about lasting positive change. Since 1999, this effort has resulted in ICWA trainings for state workers, an Indian Child Welfare policy and a better working relationship.

In spite of this progress, we have come to realize that we must unearth the story of Wabanaki people's experiences in order to fully uphold the spirit, letter and intent of the ICWA in a way that is consistent and sustainable.

**We, the undersigned, commit ourselves to work diligently and honestly to carry out this process with integrity; promoting truth, understanding and genuine reconciliation.**

The group who drafted this working document to be finalized by the end of October 2010 originated as the Maine Indian Child Welfare Coalition, and is aimed at working with the state of Maine toward its compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act. As part of their research into their work, the group is currently investigating the process of truth and reconciliation that Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples in Canada and South Africa have been engaged in. Their long-term goal is to highlight this declaration in the creation of social and political change for Waponahki people, and is a visible outcome of the Waponahki genealogy of struggle against oppression and racism.

The policy making processes in my tribal confederacy are reflected in the weaving of legislated policy referred to earlier as the *Squaw Law*, the *Wabanaki Studies Law* and the *Native Language Endorsement Rule.* To briefly reiterate: the Squaw Law addressed the use of the word "squa" or any derivation of "squaw" in state place names; the Wabanaki Studies Law mandated the teaching of Waponahki culture and history; and the Native Language Endorsement Rule authorized the Waponahki tribes to certify

their own language teachers. The three subsequent chapters engage with the pieces of legislated policy (respectively) through discussion about weaving policy in a Waponahki context.

**Educational Policy Background of the Waponahki**

The sophistication of the Waponahki mind in basketry and policy making was neither acknowledged nor supported by the first wave of educational policy affecting Waponahki people. The second major era of Indian policy that has had lasting and vast impacts across the United States and Canada began with the creation of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. In 1865, almost 100 years after the genocidal bounties on Penahwubskeag scalps and live persons was instituted, the boarding school warfare against the Waponahki began. Established in Pennsylvania in 1875 by Captain Richard Henry Pratt, a United States military officer, the school's mission was to "kill the Indian and save the man" (Grande, 2004). As founder and headmaster of the school, Pratt's philosophy was based on his previous experience as warden of a military prison at Fort Marion, Florida (Churchill in Greymorning, 2004). Pratt summarized the school's methods:

> In Indian civilization, I am a Baptist because I believe in immersing the Indians in our civilization and when we get them under, holding them there until they are thoroughly soaked. (Richard Henry Pratt)

Initially, Pratt recruited students by promising tribal leaders that their treaties would be upheld if their children were sent to Carlisle. Eventually when these promises

were no longer believed, the children as young as six years old were kidnapped from their homes on reservations and forced to attend. Upon entering, their hair was cut and their Indigenous clothing taken from them. They were prohibited from visiting and/or communicating with their families, often for the entire time that they were at the school (in some cases, as long as 12 years). Many of the children at the school were sexually and physically abused and their Indigenous languages were literally beaten out of them if they were caught speaking their mother tongues.

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School started out with 78 students and quickly reached capacity, with over 10,700 Native students from 145 different tribes having attended the school before it closed in 1918. The school became the template for an entire system of residential school warfare in both the United States and Canada. An average of one of every ten children who entered the doors of the school died there. While roughly 1,000 deaths were documented at the school, only 186 children were buried in its graveyard. The original cemetery was desecrated by the recent construction of the Jim Thorpe gymnasium, a visible statement of an institutional preference for burying the truth about its genocidal history. In 2003, a nation-wide effort initiated by a Penahwubskeag woman, Betsy Tannian, working in collaboration with the families of deceased students and other former students, led to a plaque being erected at the cemetery. Data on the Carlisle Indian Industrial School and the Waponahki was compiled and used with permission by two Waponahki women, Betsy Tannian, LSW and Esther Attean, LMSW of the Maine Waponahki Indian Child Welfare Coalition, for

the purposes of training social workers in the state to comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978.

The school's overt and strategic attempt to eradicate our identity through the indoctrination of white values continues to have severely negative effects on Waponahki people and communities. This includes low levels of language fluency, a particularly devastating impact because our worldview and epistemology are embedded in our language (Ermine, 1999). The initial era of educational policy against the Waponahki people devalued our own knowledge systems and privileged and elevated western knowledge systems. The repression of our knowledge is deeply felt at times such as when my daughter and I myself experienced doubted the truth of our creation story. As the late Stephen Biko, an Indigenous South African and anti-apartheid activist, reminds us in his text, *I Write What I Like,* "The greatest weapon in the face of the oppressor, is the mind of the oppressed." Our minds are critical for cultural survival and existence. Similarly, the researcher Walter Lightning reflects on Cree Elder and traditional knowledge holder, the late Louis Sunchild, whose teachings included cautions to protect our minds from cold and addictions. Lightning learned from Sunchild that:

> Our minds were created for the exercise and manifestation of compassion in our behaviors, attitudes, dynamics interactions with others and with respect to our own and others' bodies. (Lightning, p. 215)

Elder Sunchild understands the heart and mind as one entity (Lightning). His teachings inspire us with questions that we can only answer and respond to within the ways that

we express our individual lives.  We are lead to ask: What would happen to our research if we thought with our hearts, if we embraced our hearts as deeply connected to our minds?  What if we recognized openly in our lives that our Indigenous minds are sophisticated and that our epistemologies reflect and contain that mind and sophistication?

## Chapter 4: The Squaw Law, Eradication of Offensive State Place Names

*All women are strong in many ways, and I'm not just talking about Native women. Women of all races. Native women were very strong to point out how hurtful the use of squaw is, and to work to eliminate the word from everyday use.*

*(*Danielle Altvater, Passamaquoddy, age 10, Indian Island School Speech Contest 2005)

The following chapter outlines the policy development of LD 2416, an act to eradicate offensive state place names with the word, "squaw." Background information on the law and its development, an examination of the process which brought the law into vision, and current socioeconomic statistics affecting Indigenous women that help to frame the urgency of the legislation are included. A speech in support of the legislation is analyzed for the purposes of examining the policy development and its decolonizing impacts.

The etymology of the word "squaw" or how the word has come to be is fairly contested in the literature, however it is commonly understood in the literature to have negative impact. There is no more offensive term that refers to Native woman than the word, "squaw."

### Squaw Law Background

In the spring of 2000, the State of Maine passed LD 2418, commonly referred to as the *Squaw Law*. Sponsored by Passamaquoddy Tribal Representative Donald Soctomah, this legislation amended previous legislation eradicating state place names

with the term “nigger” to include removing those with the term “squaw.” The law was further amended in June 2009 to include state place names with any derivation of the word “squaw,” such as “squa.” One of the initial challenges in the course of the policy development was to convince the state legislature that the word squaw was an offensive word.

> Passamaquoddy and Penobscot members of MITSC initially confirmed that this term is highly offensive to many tribal members. Some debate followed about the extent to which “squaw” is offensive. Some contended that the term just means an Indian woman. Many others insisted that the term is highly insulting and derogatory, meaning whore or a woman’s private parts. MITSC heard several tribal members state that “squaw” is hurtful and hateful to them, just as the term “nigger” is hurtful and hateful to Black people. (MITSC Proposal to Sponsor LD 747)

In lobbying the legislature to better understand the impact of the word, Penobscot Tribal Representative Donna Loring invited those who misunderstood the word to mean *Indian female*, “to go to Indian Island, call a woman ‘squaw,’ and see what type of response you get. You can’t legislate how people use words, but you can legislate state names. The word has basically been anglicized and used in a hateful manner.” (Loring Interview, Jan.16th, 2010)

MITSC voted unanimously to draft legislation to eliminate *squaw* from place names and attempted to have this introduced to the Second Regular Session of the

119th Maine Legislature. The Legislative Council initially failed by one vote to accept Representative Soctomah's bill (then LR 3466) into the Second Regular Session of the 119th Legislature. On appeal, however, the Council voted 9-0 to allow the bill into the session.

**Eradicating Squaw: Mobilizing Truths of Indigenous Women and Girls**

It would be impossible for me to write about the Squaw law without invoking a deep connection to my identity. As my mind and heart are the same, I approach the text knowing that many of the hearts of Native women are heavy. This truth is represented by the highest rates of socioeconomic distress of any racial or ethnic group in Canada or the United States (United States Census Data, 2000). The statistics reveal the realities of what Indigenous women in Maine, the U.S. and Canada face in the legislative development of the Squaw Bill. I hope to humanize the following statistics. Rather than being mere numbers, they show the reality we as Native women are faced with. We are more impoverished than any other group. For instance, in the state of Maine we are four times more likely to be poor than white women (United States Census Data, 2000). In Canada almost half, 47% of Aboriginal women are living in poverty (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, 2009). We are the least likely to be home owners in our own homelands (United States Census Data, 2000). We have the highest suicide rates of any population group in the country and are 2-7 times more likely to commit suicide than white people (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention). The Canadian Task Force on Preventative Health Care reports that Native women are

more likely to attempt suicide than Native men, but our men are four times more likely to 'succeed' in their suicide attempts (2000). As the majority of suicides are committed by young people, there are the secondary victims of mothers, grieving their children's untimely deaths. In April of 1997, I organized a gathering of over fifty Waponahki youth to attend a conference. At this gathering Mary Basset from Sipyak, Passamaquoddy reservation in Pleasant Point, Maine, facilitated a Re-evaluation Counseling workshop. She had us all sit in a circle. She asked us to stand if someone or any of their friends or family had ever tried to or committed suicide. Everyone stood up. I wept, overwhelmed seeing these familiar statistics come alive in the pain reflected on the faces of the Native youth in our circle. Suicide statistics come screaming alive at funerals of young suicide victims. My personal experience of attending such ceremonies is one of the most painful in my life.

Poverty statistics show that there are hungry Native children right now, with mothers unable to feed them. As I write about the Squaw Law I am reminded that the hearts and minds of our women must be honored, and those realities shared in every context. They are realities that are invisible in mainstream society, however painfully embedded in our daily, hourly lives. A Penobscot Elder, writer and activist, Sipsiss once told a group of my Waponahki female peers that, "as Native people we have to think about white people every day and white people don't ever have to think about us." It is these truths that drove Waponahki women to organize, testify and celebrate the passing of the Squaw Bill. Firsthand knowledge of oppression informed policy development.

Waponahki women organizing for this law were mobilized by their own direct knowledge of our harsh realities and the need to create change. Re-claiming our identities meant dismantling the racialized epithet celebrated in place names throughout our state.

**Squaw Stories and Decolonization**

In accordance with Indigenous research methodology, an investigation of the legislative development must be contextualized by reflection of my own experiences with the word squaw. I served a very active role organizing for this bill and had more responsibility for lobbying than I did with either of the other two pieces of legislation. The tribes had just been denied the ability to have our own casino through a state referendum. The political climate at the time was particularly intense, and many Maine Indian issues were on the table. In my conversations with Representative Soctomah, he explained that the political timing was appropriate to introduce the Squaw law given our presence in the recent media over the casino referendum. Due to the political loss of gaining a casino, he and others felt that legislators would be politically supportive of an alternative bill that did not take up state dollars, like a casino might. At a meeting in Augusta at the beginning of the process of weaving this policy, I was joined by numerous Waponahki women. We shared our stories about the pain associated with this word. I was not aware at the time, but we were organizing in the context of our Waponahki intellectual tradition. As story sharing mobilizes change, we were weaving the base of our policy. My mother, a Penobscot Tribal Councilor, was in attendance and served an integral role in initiating the political energy of the group. A few people

were hesitant to move forward in the process, either fearful of the harsh and racist response from whites or reluctant to believe we could make change. My mother motivated them. She spoke strongly about the need to make this legislation happen: if we didn't do it, then no one would. She reminded us that "only Indians are going to really care about and make change for other Indians." This was particularly appropriate in this context.

Many stories wove this law into being: stories of sexual harassment, abuse, badgering, and violence. Over fifty Waponahki women travelled to the legislature the day that the hearings took place. My strand is only one of many weaving the policy. In my testimony to the legislature, I referred to my research, which had revealed a poignant history of the origins of the word "squaw". The NARF (Native American Rights Fund) equates squaw to the word "cunt," as used by white colonizers upon invading tribal villages, grabbing their crotches and calling "squaw," as they proceeded to rape and pillage the women. The membership of NARF is primarily Native American attorneys, and this fact gives this definition of "squaw" a heightened integrity. Although this definition was offered during the process of legislation discussion, it was not used by the media as the word "cunt" is considered by many mainstream Americans to be deeply offensive – to whom is not clear. Instead, the media used Webster's dictionary definition of "squaw", an offensive word for American Indian people generally, and American Indian women, particularly.

In my testimony I also shared my first experiences with the word “squaw”. As a little girl, I had never heard it. But then I began going to an off-reserve catholic school where I was the only Native child. While there were a handful of other children of color, the school was predominantly white. In fourth grade, I was part of the subsidized hot lunch program. Often the owning-class children brought their own lunch and were seated and finished more quickly than the children getting hot lunch. I had just received mine and was walking with my tray to find a place to sit. I always remember this being an anxiety-filled daily occurrence. I often felt worried after receiving my lunch about where I would sit, whom I would sit with, and where I would be welcomed. I wore two long braids and glasses. My eyesight was always terrible, and I could not see well without my glasses. One day, I walked toward the tables with my tray full, past an older boy, the son of a well-known doctor in the community. This boy, who had tremendous social capital and the unearned privilege of being a white male in a predominantly white context, said my name in a very friendly way, I remember in that moment, feeling good that he, in particular, had sought my attention. I looked up as he tripped me, my lunch flying from my hands, my glasses popping off my face as I fell to the ground on my knees. Then I heard him call me “Dirty squaw!” and the children at his lunch table laughed. I was humiliated. I felt confused since I had never heard that word before, but I sensed that it had something to do with me as a Native person, given the boys were slapping their mouths with their hands. A male teacher, who had witnessed it all, picked up my glasses, grabbed the boy by the arm and scolded him. Later the boy was forced

to apologize. I was alone in the coat room when he approached me with the same friendliness I had hoped for before, only this time he apologized. He said that he didn't mean anything by it, because he thought that squaw was a word for an Indian girl. I don't remember what else he said, but I distinctly remember feeling embarrassed. I didn't want to re-visit it; I wanted it to go away. I readily accepted his apology; I didn't want any conflict and I didn't want to be singled out. In fact, I even relayed to him that it was not a problem. I also remember keeping the story to myself, not telling my family. There were other times I was called squaw as a child, but this is the most lasting in my memory. I shared this story in both the initial meeting with the other women and in my testimony to the legislature to help them understand the importance of eradicating the word from state place names.

Today, as I analyze the law, I am hopeful that this legislation will forward social change and decolonization. The quote at the beginning of this chapter is from a Passamaquoddy girl's speech about the importance of the law. She was the same age as I was when I became aware of the word. Her awareness represents implications of this legislation toward effective decolonization. As an adult reading her words against the background of being racially harassed as a child, I feel mobilized. This is not to infer that girls are not being called squaw anymore. In fact they are. The difference is that today there is the curricular space to engage with the truth of this word. There has been progress countering its a-historical definition as 'merely' a word for native woman (Churchill, 2004; Mann, 2000). As a ten-year old child, I chose not to report this incident

to my family because I didn't want attention paid to my difference, or any further conflict. My experience exists in stark contrast to children's reactions to racial harassment today. In 2005, a Passamaquoddy ten-year old girl initiated her own research, wrote and delivered a speech to her elementary school about how offensive this word is and the importance of the law. This speaks to the progress made by decolonizing laws. My story took place in 1982, shortly after the passing of the original offensive place names bill which eradicated the word *nigger*. At the time, tribal leaders had attempted to include the word "squaw," but it was rejected by the legislature, and subsequently passed to eradicate only state place names with the word *nigger*. Soctomah explained that there was a fear by tribal leaders at the time that trying to push for *squaw* to be included on the offensive names bill of 1978 might have compromised the land claims case (Soctomah interview). Soctomah also shared his role as a Native man in the process of the legislative development. He was questioned by legislators as to why he as a man was sponsoring the legislation.

> In a tribal group, you can't direct something at one person without affecting everyone, I heard this word a lot growing up and knew first-hand the damage done by it…I was raised by women and that motivated me. (Soctomah interview, Jan. 20, 2010)

Native men are also affected by the treatment of Native women. Over half of Native men in the U.S. and Canada have been raised by single mothers. Moreton-Robinson explains that the sexual exploitation of Native women plays a significant role

in damaging Indigenous peoples as a whole and is a significant reason for high rates of socio-economic distress (Moreton-Robinson, 2000). She further attributes this to miscegenation, a process through which "Indigenous men's dignity and identity have suffered because of the sexual exploitation of Indigenous women" (p.166). Violent miscegenation was first directed at Indigenous women with the use of the word "squaw," used as an incitement for white men to rape Indigenous women (Merskin, 2008, Churchill, 2004). Upon first review, I misunderstood the term "miscegenation" to be a synonym for "mysogynation," a feminist term with its meaning rooted in the hate of women. bell hooks uses the term mysogynation to explain the violence perpetuated by black men against black women. Although Native women also suffer from same-race violence, my concerns are the possibilities for a word like "squaw" to be used as a potent tool of colonialism to justify rape, and how those possibilities inform present-day conditions of Indigenous society. To O'Shane (1976), the impact of violent miscegenation is the imposed mixing of blood and races/ethnicities of peoples. Native men suffer a legacy of brokenness from the sexual oppression of Native women. Racially-motivated rape "takes the dignity and power away from the Indigenous men" (O'Shane as cited in Morten-Robinson, 2000, p. 166) and imparts a devastating impact carried in the blood memory of our Indigenous brothers, fathers, grandfathers, uncles, sons and nephews. Andrea Smith (2005) acknowledges how such sexual violence is rooted in colonial oppression:

> The history of sexual violence and genocide among Native women illustrates how gender violence functions as a tool for racism and colonialism among women of color in general (p. 15).

**Discourse of Dehumanization and Squaw**

After the testimony by Waponahki women, the Squaw Law received national media attention. This was likely a result of the efforts of Passamaquoddy Tribal Representative Soctomah and Penobscot Tribal Representative Donna Loring to publicize the bill. The primetime news magazine, "20/20" contacted Soctomah for his story about the Squaw Bill. Many tribal members (myself included) were excited about the opportunity to get national coverage for issues that were usually invisible. Soctomah and Loring flew to New York City for interviews, where they too shared their excitement and enthusiasm. Many people from our communities prepared to watch the episode, anticipating a positive impact on the upcoming vote in the legislature scheduled for March 15th. On the evening of March 10th, only five days before this bill was to go for vote, the piece aired. It was a fitting climax of the racism that we had endured throughout the entire legislative process. The piece mocked the issue and characterized it as futile, unnecessary and a waste of taxpayers' dollars. John Stossel had run the story as part of the "Gimme a Break!" feature that week. Barbara Walters and Stossel asserted that the name change was totally unnecessary. Walters erroneously suggested that we don't know what we want to be called, Indians or Native Americans. She was tired of all the political correctness. Stossel responded by repeating, "Gimme

a break." Walters asked, "What do they want next, their land back?" The piece concluded with Stossel's repetition of "Gimme a Break!" and Walter's comments that "They don't even celebrate Columbus Day!" (Loring, 2008, p. 45) I watched in shock and disbelief. They had transformed our moment of celebration, happiness and recognition into one of pain and helpless anger. Their denial of racism was a painful reminder of the power of discourse to dehumanize. bell hooks puts these kinds of mass media events into a larger societal context:

> Looking at the impact of mass media on the self-esteem of black children/children of color is important because they encounter a pedagogy of race and racism long before they enter any classroom settings…in a classroom where children are taught that Columbus discovered America, as though the continent was previously uninhabited, children are being covertly taught that Native American people and their culture was not worthy or valued. (Hooks, 2005, p. 95)

According to Walters, native people should celebrate Columbus Day – a holiday which, as Hooks, and numerous other Indigenous people have made clear, devalues and disregards Native Americans.

In her policy story, Loring speaks about the importance of dehumanizing the Waponahki in order to keep us colonized (Loring Interview, January 23, 2010). She compares the tactic to one she learned from her military experience in Vietnam. Army training taught U.S. soldiers not to see the Vietnamese as human. Our people have

also been dehumanized. The way in which Barbara Walters questions Maine Indian people wanting their land back, too, dehumanizes a people in order to justify the occupation and takeover of their territory. Her comments support Loring's thinking that the dehumanization of Waponahki people facilitates their continued colonization. (Loring Interview, Jan. 15, 2010). Walters' and Stossel's attitudes protect national identity in service of controlling land. If people are sub-human or uncivilized or reduced to "squaws," they can be subjugated, or lose their rights to possessions of any sort. Loring comments on this event in her recently published book, *In the Shadow of the Eagle,* which chronicles her time as a tribal representative in the Maine House of Representatives:

> I expected something like this, but not such negativity from Barbara Walters. I must say I was really disappointed and surprised at her ignorance and total disrespect for Indian issues…I am certain that had this been an African-American organization or group targeted by those insensitive comments, they both would be apologizing profusely and maybe even looking for another job! How could they get away with such disrespect toward Native people on national television?
>
> (Loring, 2008, p. 45)

Loring (2008) references the heaviness felt by Native people as an outcome of the discourse of denial of racism. The 20/20 incident with Barbara Walters illustrates

how the colonization and control of our lands has required the continued and public dehumanization of us as a people.

## Chapter 5: Wabanaki Studies Law

### Background

> White people tend to think we are like a convenience store, they like to come in and buy the candy, the M&M's of our culture and spirituality and leave behind all the cleaning products, like the oppression, colonialism and racism.
>
> (Rene Attean, Penobscot Scholar & Basket maker, panel presentation, University of Maine, Native Awareness Month, April 1992)

The educational policy examined in this chapter outlines the challenges and opportunities in creating the Wabanaki Studies Law as well as discusses the document's function as an educational policy working toward anti-racism education and the decolonization of the Waponahki people.

In 2001, the state of Maine passed LD 291 (Maine Public Law 2001, Chapter 403, Title 20-A MRSA § 4706), requiring Maine schools to teach Maine Native American history and culture and to educate Maine's school children about (and thus increase the public's understanding of) the Waponahki people. This law, one of the first of its kind in the history of the United States, finally went into effect in the fall of 2004. The formal organization, building of curricula, and implementation of the law resided primarily with Indigenous people from Maine, creating an unusual opportunity for Indigenous people to

control the form and content of information that was to be communicated about our culture.

**Wabanaki Studies Law and Mandating Anti-Racist Policy for Teachers**

As Waponahki people, we hoped that the Wabanaki Studies Law would begin to critically address the racist experiences of our people. We must critically engage anti-racism when expanding knowledge systems in teacher education programs. As one of the several Waponahki people promoting this law, we developed the legislation with the stated intention to provide "greater understanding, respect, and appreciation for the Waponahki" (Wabanaki Studies Commission, 2003, p. 1) Many of us hoped that the law would address behaviors such as racist games and messages from reading buddies in the case described in the introduction chapter to this study. Tribal Representative Loring begins her book with her vision for this law:

> Let understanding and communication through education be the building blocks of a new tribal-state relationship, one that recognizes and honors the struggles and contributions of Native people. (Loring, 2008, p.V)

The report that came out of the Wabanaki Studies Commission listed fifteen "Essential Understandings" that teachers are expected to integrate into their own professional knowledge and practice, including curriculum and pedagogy. One of these understandings is knowledge about oppression, genocide and racism against Waponahki peoples, and an understanding about Waponahki worldviews. As a member of the Wabanaki Studies Commission, I organized a think tank of Waponahki

and white educators, administrators and scholars to create guidelines to help effect the understandings. The group readily agreed on the teaching of Waponahki worldview, including culture and history; however, intense debate arose around the teaching of oppression, genocide and racism. The traditional Waponahki knowledge holders were the strongest advocates of teaching about our oppressive colonial experience, and in the end, the decision at this think tank to move ahead on all the teachings passed by a slim margin.

As Sherene Razack writes, this focus on cultural difference "too often descends, in a multicultural spiral, to a superficial reading of differences that makes power relations invisible and keeps dominant cultural norms in place" (Razack, 1998, p. 9, also cited in Kuokkanen 2003, p. 278). Sami scholar Rauna Kuokkanen calls for indigenous educators to "assist others to pay more attention and become more familiar with ideas, premises, and concepts characterizing indigenous thought" (Kuokkanen 2003, p. 282). Consistent with Palmer (1998), she argues that the hospitality of the teacher toward the student "results in a world more hospitable to the teacher" (Palmer, p. 50). When we as Indigenous people are recognized as holding expertise about our cultures and experiences, we become the hosts and they become the guests. Then, our gift can work to instill a sense of responsibility in our guests, which in turn creates a more just world for us. This moment of hospitality can only occur if the gift of our cultures "is about increasing knowledge and understanding or changing attitudes, [and] is also equally [focused on] addressing systemic power inequalities and hegemony" (Kuokkanen, p.

285). Those in the group designing the teaching expectations who had the most cultural knowledge (i.e., the culture and language revitalizers or traditional knowledge holders) knew this to be true. While they advocated for culture to be taught, they also spoke out for significant amounts of anti-racism, anti-genocide and anti-colonization to be incorporated into the curriculum[4].

One of the elders present at the think who strongly supported the teaching of genocide, racism and oppression was Wayne Newell. At the first Waponahki Studies Institute in the summer of 2004, Wayne was asked to do an introductory talk to the teachers for the Institute. He began his talk, as he does often, with a story: Similar to what many other Waponahkis thought, I thought the word "wenooch" referred to or meant "white people." He informed us on that occasion, those unfamiliar with the language and those like myself who had used this word to refer to white people all of our lives, that the word "wenooch" doesn't mean "white people" at all. "Wenooch" actually asks a question: "Who are they"? He then went on to explain that when Europeans first arrived on our lands, our people were unaware of who they were, and consequently referred to them with a logical question about their identity. This further confirms that the Waponahki did not reduce the Europeans to the color of their skin, nor did they attempt in any way to racialize them. Today, with the degree of linguistic genocide that our people have experienced, the common understanding of this word

[4] This section of the chapter was presented at the WIPCE (World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education) New Zealand, 2005 co-presented with Penobscot scholar, Dr. Darren Ranco.

amongst Waponahki does reduce “white people” to the color of their skin; many of our community members translate the term “wenooch” as “white people.” From the presentation by Wayne Newell, I gleaned not only that our peoples have lacked the power to be racist, but also that our own description of who has oppressed us has never been as dichotomized by us as I had once believed and understood. Wayne’s explanation showed that our people did not reduce the strangers to the color of their skin; they posed a significant and logical question of identity that arose from the inexplicable presence of strangers in their midst, a question directly related to pertinent information, and one that was not indicative of any intent of marginalization, discrimination or alienation. Further, that original question represented the lack of a dominance-based worldview, or a conqueror’s mentality; instead, it spoke clearly to the reality of an egalitarian understanding of human identity, an awareness and a willingness to be the host of newly-arriving guests. Generations later, after the guests have repeatedly brutalized the families of the hosts, the children of the hosting people remember only the original question, and assign it as the identifier for the children of the guests: a deeper logic at work today in asking, “Wenooch”?

**Epistemocide and Wabanaki Studies Law**

My children are a meaningful expression of ontology, a part of my own being, an understanding and a deep consciousness of my own experiences as part of who I am. But ontology was a word that I had never heard until starting my higher education. One

night before leaving my family on a research trip,[5] I snuggled with my children. They asked me to tell them the story of how my husband and I met. Usually requests for stories are a bed-time delay tactic, but this moment differed as I would be gone for a week. It is a special story that they request on birthdays or a holidays, so I acquiesced. We giggled with joy and the story made our snuggling last a little longer than usual. Early the next morning, my husband asked me how I would begin the talk I was scheduled to present. I told him how our children had convinced me to tell them again how we had met. As we talked, it occurred to me that in asking for this story again, they were asking how they came to be in this world. As a parent, and once a child myself, I understand that many children are deeply interested in knowing how their parents met. Like many other children in the world, my children wanted to know their own personal creation story. Children's interest in how they came to be is evidence that epistemology and ontology are crucial elements to everyday life and meaning, deeply connected and intrinsic to identity. Similarly, for an Indigenous collective, belief in our creation story is embedded in our language and intrinsic to our survival.

Tribal Representative Loring's policy story confirmed this. Wabanaki Studies Law is necessary for our people to know who we are and where we came from. Loring wants her descendents to know about this legislation:

[5] In October 2009, I was asked by the University of New England to deliver the first annual Donna M. Loring Inaugural Lecture. It was sponsored by the Maine Women's Archives. where Donna Loring donated her archives of her diary while serving in the House of Representatives. In effect, UNE had committed an annual lecture in her honor. She since published a text of her diaries, *In the Shadow of the Eagle*, documenting her time in the legislature.

> LD 291(Wabanaki Studies Law) was really the Maine Indian History Act, a bill that I wrote, I sponsored, and … that I shepherded through the legislature. The bill was created because it was time for the majority culture to learn about Native people and time for Native people to learn about their own culture. They need this to have self-worth, self respect and in order to have that, they need to know who they are and where they come from. All of that was denied us; we had to learn about this ourselves…[Native peoples'] history was purposely kept from them. It was my goal to make us visible, where we are invisible. It is very difficult to get rid of you if they have to recognize [you] as human beings…LD 291 was the instrument that would make Maine Indian people visible and that is going to preserve and protect us. (Loring interview January 17, 2010)

Loring described how this knowledge of who we are and where we came from was denied to us in the attempts to eradicate our ways of knowing and being in the world (de Sousa Santos 2007). She explained her own hopes for Wabanaki Studies Law to arrive at that knowledge and emphasized the importance of addressing the epistemocide. Loring also hoped that LD291 would "humanize" us as native people.

Loring spoke about her hopes for this law's ability to decolonize when asked if she received any opposition to the bill,

> Not really at all, we got a group of middle school children to testify in favor of it in fact. LD 291 came after the offensive names bill, and I knew that when I was

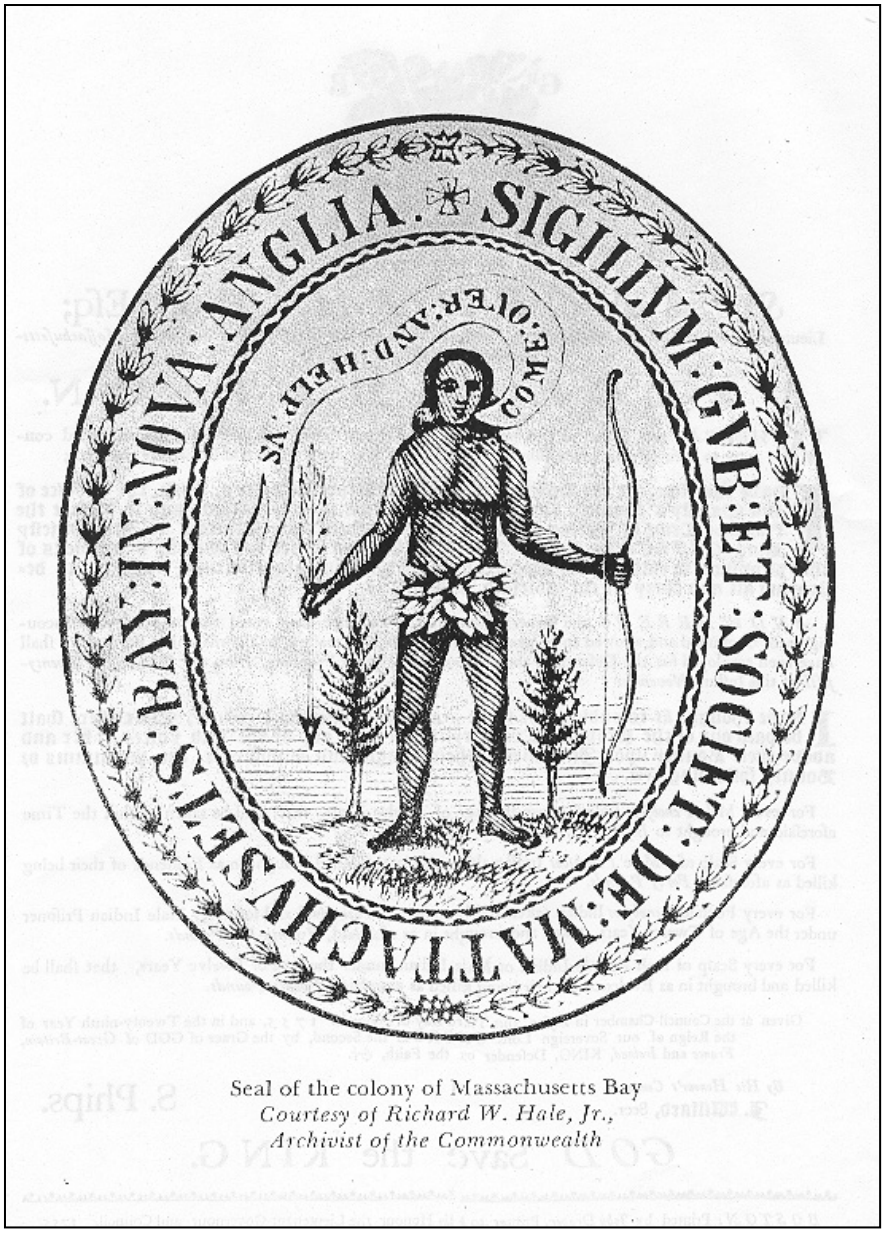
> pushing it through, I knew that bill would be more important than the land claims settlement act. I knew that when I watched the governor sign it into law… that it would be more important than the land claims settlement act[6]. I knew that Indian and non-Indian kids would grow up knowing that we were not invisible, respect who we are, know our history and recognize us as human beings and value us as people. Hopefully, the result will be equal partnership. The paternalistic way will end. (Though) it is a goal that will not be achieved in my lifetime (Loring Interview, January 17, 2010).

The dehumanization we have survived and continue to experience is represented in the original seal of Massachusetts where the figure of the Indian has a scroll coming out of his mouth asking for Europeans to "come over and help us" (Figure 7). The colonial rhetoric has not changed in over 500 years, and it has not been directly only at the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. There is a process of dehumanization and inferiority engaged within the process of colonization that is testament to what Loring speaks of and to the necessity to tell the truth. This colonial document is significant in understanding the discourse of dehumanization of the Waponahki and the initial imagery that implored the European colonizers to help the Indians. The 1629 seal existed during the time that Maine was still a part of Massachusetts so the image represents the colonizers' view of a Waponahki, or another tribal person just south of

[6] The Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act of 1980 was the largest land claim in U.S. history, where over 2/3 of the state was proven to be illegally taken from Maine Indian people.

the Waponahki. The colonial rhetoric of “helping” reinforces an European attitude of superiority over Indigenous peoples. The colonial rhetoric of dehumanization of Waponahki, coupled with the rhetoric of European superiority, justified the genocidal warfare against the tribes. At the time it was commonplace for the Europeans to refer to Indigenous peoples as *savages* and considered them less than human (Prins, 1995). The constant and historical image of the “helpless Indian” as show in this original seal of Massachusetts supports the colonial enterprise of claiming superiority through the guise of helping.

**Figure 7: Original Seal of Massachusetts 1629**




Seal of the colony of Massachusetts Bay
*Courtesy of Richard W. Hale, Jr.,*
*Archivist of the Commonwealth*

**Concluding Thoughts on Wabanaki Studies Law**

The law has received strong criticism because it most immediately reaches non-Waponahki students even though it was drafted for the Waponahki people. The analysis continues to ask, how does this legislation directly benefit Waponahki? This policy is distinct from the other two in its development. As Loring states, it was written entirely by herself, and she had to submit it under the Social Studies Bill on the same day that she first considered it. It would not have been passed on its own because it would have put financial responsibility on the state of Maine for its implementation. Because of that, she was compelled to put it under the Social Studies legislation in order for it to pass the legislature. This policy was molded by Loring's hopes and vision for the future based on her life experiences. Its weave continues as Waponahki educators and community members work diligently on an unfunded project to continue developing curricular resources which best support compliance with the law for all teachers, statewide.

## Chapter 6: Native Language Endorsement Rule

### Background

I challenge the pervading opinion that Waponahki languages are lost and the people have abandoned their mother tongue. In the literature of linguistic genocide, Skutnabb-Kangas being a primary source, this opinion is also challenged. As a Waponahki educator and scholar, I understand clearly the significance of the linguistic genocide position and such analysis of our language situation has been hidden from our knowledge base. The facts guide an examination of the third educational policy (referred to in this study as the Native Language Endorsement Rule) and its intention to work toward language revitalization in the state of Maine.

The Waponahki did not cause the language crisis in our communities today. "It is not our fault"[7] that many of us are not able to speak our language. Colonialism has taken our language from us. Now is the time to revitalize our language. The truth about our history and our continued oppression has been withheld from our people and made invisible within the larger mainstream educational system. This chapter identifies accurate accounts that have been kept from us. An initial discussion regarding accountability and blame for the language crisis follows.

A significant new policy action toward language revitalization in the state of Maine uses Waponahki approaches to policy making. I weave narrative and analysis to

[7] Mary Basset, recognized Elder of the Passamaquoddy tribe explained to a group at a Waponahki Language Gathering that not being able to speak our language is not our fault, July of 2006.

present language revitalization as a decolonizing methodology. The weaving and the process of language revitalization are considered acts of decolonization.

Published work by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars sheds light on the policy response to the linguistic genocide experienced by the Waponahki people. I have attempted to document the factors contributing to our minimal fluency, and our motivations as a Waponahki Confederacy to address these factors through language revitalization policy by collaborating carefully and consistently with those persons who were directly involved in the development of that state rule, and who are our language experts and advisors. I have focused this discussion on the Waponahki language crisis, referring to the concept of linguistic genocide, and describing how these processes have led to the suppression of Waponahki memory. In the process of working through this section of my study, I became more directly aware of how much knowledge Waponahki people carry about "linguistic murder" and how educational policy can support the revitalization of our languages.

**The Waponahki Language Crisis: Surviving Linguistic Genocide**

The Penahwubskeag (Penobscot) total population is just over two thousand people. Just over five-hundred people live on a six mile wide reservation located on an island in the Penobscot River, called *Indian Island*. We have only one fluent speaker of our language in our community, Carol Dana, 58 years old. Three younger people, one is Carol Dana's daughter, Wenona Lolar 38 years old, the other two are both 24 years old, Maulian Dana and Gabe Paul, speak and understand at diminished fluency. It is

noteworthy to identify these speakers in the context of the linguistic genocide we have survived. These four individuals have some of the strongest fluency in the community however the language is not their primary language, and numerous specific words and concepts are unknown (Greymorning, 2004). The effort of language revitalization on their part is heroic and I have immense respect for their dedication.

The history of our language is located in our knowledge about strategic governmental policies put in place to dislocate our cultures and strip us of our languages. The first genocidal policy was documented in 1755, when a bounty was placed on Penobscot scalps and live persons; children and women worth the least amount of compensation. (See Figure 3) This practice of physical genocide supports the linguistic genocide of Waponahki languages.

Scutnabb-Kangas explains that when languages are eradicated, the likelihood of self-determination is minimized, and potential nations are denied their ability to govern themselves (Scutnabb-Kangas, 2000). High Aboriginal students' drop-out rates point towards ongoing issues with the fulfillment of Indigenous self-determination and self-governance objectives, and the connections of this failure with the historical language eradication is obvious. Eber Hampton (1995) pointed out that in many ways, the messages from our youth who are leaving the schools is that they will not be assimilated out of their own identities as Indigenous people. A similar and more recent message from Manu Meyer encourages us to re-think our drop-out rates as more of a representation that our youth are trying to hold onto our old ways and that the

educational systems is failing our children (Meyer, 2003). Both our school systems and our tribal governments are operating as colonial systems, hierarchically based on Western versions of pedagogy and governance. The problem with these systems is that people speak only English, the new language that has been forced upon us and comes with its own way of seeing and responding to the world. In our case, it is a way that is very different from our Waponahki way of seeing and being in the world.

Three ways of reducing the numbers of people speaking and knowing Indigenous languages are: 1. physical genocide; 2. linguistic genocide and; 3. making languages invisible (2003). Physical genocide is the most potent way to eradicate a language. Based on Scutnabb-Kangas' analysis and assertion, I understand that Waponahki languages have survived despite dramatic oppression and devastating decimation of the peoples. Before European colonization, there were over twenty Waponahki tribes within our confederacy. Due to bounties similar to the one shown in figure 3 (British 1755 proclamation: a genocidal bounty on Penobscot scalps and live prisoners), there exist only four tribes (American Friends Service Committee, 1989).

Today, within the Penahwubskeag, there are only a handful of people who can understand the language and even less who can speak it fluently. The link between physical genocide and linguistic genocide is an important one that needs to be uncovered, as it speaks to the deliberate and strategic attempts to deny human rights. This further helps us to make sense of the here and now in order to work toward the future.

Scutnabb-Kangas (2003) asserts that Indigenous languages have been covered up and withheld from mainstream society. She immediately adds linguistic genocide to this list of subjugation, and contends that linguistic genocide has been invisibilized deliberately to take social and political power from those Indigenous groups (2003). This reality plays out in Waponahki communities and can be observed through colonial documents of genocide and is evident in the general lack of awareness about such documents. The physical genocide that pre-empted the linguistic genocide is a part of history about which there is minimal awareness in New England (the region of northeastern United States). Such history desperately needs to be disclosed. In the spring of 2005, I presented a lecture to over 100 social studies teachers in Maine, and asked how many were aware of the genocidal document (Figure 3, p 17). Only two people raised their hands (Maine Social Studies Conference, May 2004). I continued to ask how many had heard of the Nazi holocaust, and nearly all hands were raised. An integral part of their North American history and experience had been withheld from them, yet they are educators of thousands.

It is noteworthy to understand that this colonial document of such genocidal practice has never been eradicated or denounced (or apologized for) by either the U.S or British colonial government, unlike the Canadian situation where the government apologized for the residential school oppression of the First Nations people of Canada. Scutnabb-Kangas claims that such apologies heighten the awareness of the biological racism which is inherent in the forced assimilation that pervaded the boarding school

era. Residential schools served as the primary launching ground of the attempted murder of Indigenous languages in Canada (Scutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

The next major era of Indian policy that has had lasting and vast impact on Waponahki language survival across the United States and Canada began with the establishment of Indian industrial and residential schools in the 1800s, and referred to earlier as the beginning of boarding school warfare against the Waponahki and other Indigenous North American peoples. The survivors of the Carlisle school returned home internalizing the mission of the school, deeply wounded, and with no connections or knowledge of their own languages. It is here that the transfer to the next generations of our Waponahki values and knowledge of unity, love, family and connection to the earth was broken. Children came home and could no longer communicate with and understand their parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles. They acted out what they learned, as do all children. They were socialized and trained to reinforce the abusive lessons learned at the school. Wounded souls without a voice plagued our Waponahki communities. They were taught it was not good to be Waponahki (Smith, 2005; Churchill, 2004; Knockwood, 1992).

We endure the painful legacy of this trauma today. According to Penobscot Tribal Nation census data, the blood quantum statistics reveal that over 70% of our members are only 25% Penobscot. Anyone with less than 25% Native blood is allowed to be counted as Penobscot (Penobscot Census Book, 2004). Of the four tribes in our Confederacy, we have the lowest quantum of Indian blood and lowest Waponahki

language fluency. We also experienced the highest rate of documented numbers of children taken to the Carlisle school (see Appendix A) than any other tribe in the state, from four to five more times the amount of documented Passamaquoddy. Given this relationship between rates of boarding school attendance, low language fluency and low blood quantum, coupled with the brutalization that has been directed at our people on the basis of the Waponahki identity, it is not surprising that many of our people are ashamed of their Native identity. Forced assimilationist policy, increased intermarriage with white people and the Carlisle pedagogy of "killing the Indian" have been the tools of our identity oppression.

Scutnabb-Kangas (2000) cites efforts have been made by the United Nations to recognize linguistic genocide as a criminal act against human rights. The1979 International Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide act condemns:

> Any deliberate act committed with intent to destroy the language, religion or culture of a national, racial or religious group on grounds of National or racial origin or religious belief, such as:
> (1) Prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publication in the language of the group.
> (2) Destroying or preventing the use of libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, places of worship, or other cultural institutions and objects of the group (p.317).

The Carlisle Industrial School was not the only educational institution that prohibited the speaking of Waponahki languages. On each of the reservation schools governed and run collaboratively by the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) and the Catholic Church, speaking Waponahki was prohibited through physical punishment until the mid 1900s (Churchill 2004; Penobscot Nation Oral History Project,1993).

In effect, these practices take not only our voice, but the voices of those before us and those not yet created. Destroying the language dismantles an entire people's way of knowing and understanding the world, right down to the very act of disenabling a mother's inherent human right, to express her love to her child. It also denies her the ability to understand herself, to make sense of the devastation that is happening both to her and to all that surrounds her. The devastation is the trauma caused by colonization. Our ancestors were raped: this type of psychological warfare is not indigenous to our people. Concurrently, our ancestors were denied the right to communicate. Humanity dies in a person's soul when she is not only raped but is also not permitted to understand what is happening, and therefore unable to communicate what has happened with another person. This creates even deeper wounds.

The language crisis in the Penahwubskeag community is actually that my community typically does not see it as a crisis. However, it is also not our fault that we do not see it as a crisis. The gross lack of awareness behind our response to the crisis reflects the depth of the linguistic genocide. Its painful legacy has numerous implications: the inability to recognize dramatically low fluency as a problem or a crisis is

just one. We have been programmed to recognize the limited fluency as a loss of language usage and an acceptable way of life for our people. How would things change if we saw linguistic genocide as an instrument of colonial power? Would we as Indigenous peoples in the educational system be more inclined to protect Indigenous languages from continued attempts to murder our language?

Our connection to our ancestors is deeply embedded in our language. At a curricular think tank that designs resources for the Wabanaki Studies Law, one of the traditional knowledge holders, Bernard Jerome explained the Mi'kmaq term for shadow, *N-jijagamij*. The Mi'kmaq term means the ones who come before us, our ancestors, as Bernard explained, it is the visible reminder that we are never alone and that our ancestors are always taking care of us. This meaning speaks distinctly to our worldview and cannot be replaced with the simple English noun, shadow, which diminishes ways of being in our Indigenous world to a dark spot on the ground. Knowing that our ancestors are always with us, and seeing their reflection in our shadows is significant to me. As a child, I was told to not step on my shadow by my elders, but it was not explained to me. Perhaps such an explanation was impossible for her to articulate in the English language. This shadow story exemplifies the linguistic genocide and its connection to the epistemocide we have survived.

**I Lost My Keys, Not My Language**

It is a misperception that our peoples *lost* our languages, or our cultures. As a working mother, I lose my keys often. I immediately exclaim, “I lost my keys!” and then panic and frantically search to find them. Once the keys are found, I am on my way, late as ever.

In the course of my studies at Harvard University, I attended a lecture of an anthropology post-doctoral fellow. The presentation was about language loss and I hoped for insight into the Waponahki experience. However, the word *loss* kept poking me in the eye, straight through to my nerves. I finally raised my hand and explained that our languages had not necessarily been *lost* and that perhaps *taken* was a more suitable term. I had reached clarity on the issue of our people not speaking their own language. If it were as simple as a loss, we could take full blame; we could gather search parties to find it, and once it was retrieved, we could identify a process so as to not be so forgetful next time, something as simple as purchasing a key hanger to place by my door so I won’t lose my keys. However, language loss is not that simple.

Revitalization of language works against undercurrents of oppression that need to be addressed by both our Waponahki communities and mainstream society. If I view something as taken from me, there is an implication that it is still there, that it can be retrieved. However, if I lost it, I am to blame for its disappearance. As Native people, blame can be so paralyzing that we become immobilized. That is yet another easy justification to remain speaking the English language. Loss is not a strong enough word

to describe the history of Indigenous languages, and it does not accurately represent what happened. *Language loss* supports the mentality of disempowerment and immobility on the parts of Indigenous peoples themselves.

**Weaving Authority to Teach Waponahki Languages**

In May, 2005, the Native Language Endorsement Rule was passed by the Judiciary Committee of the Maine state legislature. As policy-making processes have been for many other colonized Indigenous peoples, these processes continue to be a way for our people to survive. Policy-making, organizing, negotiation, diplomacy and governance have always been integral practices of my people and our communities. We are deeply aware from our own history that to stop such engagement is to endanger our own survival as a people.

In the process of lobbying for the language policy, the Waponahki testifiers connected and were visited by our ancestors. Wayne Newell told us that during the testimony for the state rule, all of the people spoke in Passamaquoddy with a translator for the legislators (Newell, 2010). Wayne did not realize how powerful this would be. One of the most senior senators, "a woman (Senator Libby Mitchell) with more political power in the legislature than all of our over 5,000 Indians in the state combined told the group that it was the most moving testimony she had ever heard, and she did not even understand the language" (Wayne Newell, Interview, January 20, 2010). The testimony was, in essence, a sacred act. When we speak our language, we breathe out the voices of those who came before us, who suffered for us to be here. To carry on and

communicate that suffering and sacrifice are the most sacred acts we bear as the present generations. On that occasion, the sacred nature of that action and that ancestral connection with our presence of being was felt by everyone in the room, even those who did not understand what was being said. The ancestors were there. As Wayne told me this story over the phone, I closed my eyes and could see and hear my people in that legislative chamber, and I was moved to tears knowing that I was a part of that connection. Roger Paul, a language teacher testifying in favor of the state rule explained to a group at an annual language immersion gathering in which I participated:

> Whenever we speak the language the ancestors taught us, it pleases them, and they come and listen in and guide us. **(**Roger Paul, personal communication, August 2007)

The indigeneity of our approach asserts our inherent rights through language immersion. My people intricately wove our own policy, this time through the language. This policy was made by our own process, on our terms, in the words of our ancestors, of the blood that runs through our veins.

After nearly two years of negotiations with the State, a critical paragraph of text was added. The text reads:

> **Native Language Endorsement Rule**
>
> A. Function: This endorsement on a teacher certification allows the holder to teach students kindergarten through grade 12 in Waponahki languages.

B. Eligibility:

1. Endorsement Eligibility Pathway 1

(a) Graduated from a Maine program approved for the education of Waponahki language teachers, together with a formal recommendation from the preparing institution;

2. Endorsement Eligibility Pathway 2

(a) Receipt by the Department of documentation that the applicant meets tribal proficiency standards to teach that tribe's native language, which documentation is signed by the officer designated for that purpose by the governing body of any federally recognized Indian tribe in Maine, or by the Chair of the body so designated, and whose signature in either case is attested by the Tribal clerk; and

(b) Completed an approved course for "Teaching Exceptional Students in the Regular Classroom"

Each tribe of the Waponahki Confederacy will have the jurisdiction to determine their own processes of certification. This is all very historical and cause for celebration. Our own people are finally legally recognized as certified teachers of our language. A basic human right has been acknowledged by our government. The process of determination for the Passamaquoddy includes elders and tribal leaders where they use a consensus process of selection. The course for "Teaching Exceptional Students in the Regular Classroom" is an ambiguous portion of the policy; tribal leaders therefore

seek to design their own approved course. This aspect of the certification process is being clarified now.

The ash bark is woven in the way my people negotiated the legislated policy. These policy weaves have significant meaning for the future. In making sense of the linguistic genocide that we survived, our basket making creates a rigorous meaning beyond that which is embedded in the actual practices of weaving or writing. Basket making, like policy-making, is a sophisticated approach toward achieving a hopeful future in the face of continued oppression.

The state rule works to bring us closer to a place where we may realize immersion. Wayne Newell believes that requiring fluent tribal members who want to teach in reservation schools to get their Bachelors in Education in English speaking universities, "has the effect of decreasing their fluency… (W)e cannot afford that." (Wayne Newell Interview 2010).

Efforts to revitalize the Waponahki Language deserve the undivided attention of the educational policy field and other institutional policy making entities. The state of our Indigenous languages is presented in a local newspaper as "extinct" and our peoples as having "abandoned" our language (BDN, 2005). This perception is common internally to our community if people think about language at all. It is pervasive amongst those external to the reservation communities in Maine. Recent state legislated policy, the state rule has set precedent in the nation. The Waponahki Confederacy exercised its sovereign power, through its own policy development,

determining teacher certification of language competency. This assertion has since been endorsed by the state legislative system. Embedded within this state rule is the clear recognition of the Waponahki family of languages: Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet and Mi'kmaq are official second languages, similar to official European second languages such as French, Spanish and those of other recent immigrations.

Our people of the Waponahki confederacy in Maine, now have (for the first time since colonial invasion and the take-over of our educational system over 500 years ago) the authority within the state governmental structure and the recognized legal right to determine who is a competent teacher of our language. We anticipate that this legislated policy will have profound implications on the language revitalization processes that support the Waponahki languages, including local policies and practices, The policy-making processes that resulted in the Native Language Endorsement Rule were motivated by epistemological and ontological energies that resisted extermination, much like those that would be activated by any other people struggling against the forces of destruction. The difference in this case lies in the fact that the epistemology and the ontology of this particular people were not grounded in instinctual movement, but in ancient knowledge that carries within itself a knowing that is not separated from being. In effect, ensuring that as long as there is Waponahki life, there is capacity for re-birth and regeneration according to that Waponahki knowledge and Waponahki being. In the presence of our peoples today lays the evidence of our resistance to the

linguistic genocide faced by our mother tongue, the language of the people of the dawn. (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000)

Nearly 300 years after the legally mandated state bounty on Waponahki peoples, our state legislated policy works toward language revitalization. When confederacy elders say that we were not intended by the colonizers to survive, I am again inspired by the power inherent to the process of weaving this policy, a power that relied on our people speaking our ancient language. We all knew that every piece of that whole experience worked together towards the revitalizing of our language amongst our people of today.

**Revitalization of Voice and Language**

Revitalization does not concern itself with whether languages were lost or taken. The emphasis lies in bringing language back, making alive again our mother tongue. Generations of Waponahki have been unable to communicate with one another. What happens to a people, heavily reliant on oral tradition, when one generation is not able to communicate with the next generation? Vast amounts of knowledge, love, and life skills are stripped away. In this void, however, we can still find the space to exert our voice. In that space is who we are as a people, how we understand ourselves, how we came to be, how we understand the world around us, and how we live out our relationships with others. There is a significant knowledge gap that needs to be connected and I believe revitalizing our language will help us to articulate how we recognize and know that space, even without the words. To make conscious what has been embedded

within us and crying for release (the Stuck-in-the-throat syndrome) is the attainment of the language revitalization process.

My great grandmothers once came to visit me when I was applying to graduate school for my master's degree. In this dream, I walked upon a circle of elderly women weeping and speaking in our mother tongue. I couldn't understand what was being said, but I wept with them; I could feel their sadness. I had a tea bag in my pocket and offered it to one of the women whose eyes met mine. I asked her in English what was being said. She explained to me that Native people are not just quiet, stoic people; our silent tendency represents how we have been denied our voice, our inability to communicate with the next generation. I understood that the next generation isn't intrinsically shy or quiet; they have simply not been afforded the human right to communicate with their parents and grandparents in a language that is mutually comprehensible and meaningful so as to support understanding one another. We have been denied the opportunity to fully understand our knowledge systems, our ceremonies, our love and our ways of life. I have kept that visit in my mind for several years. There is no book that outlines more clearly or explains in a better way than Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) the linguistic genocide that I had envisioned in that gifted dream.

I have seen theories of revitalization most fully actualized during language immersion sessions. Indigenous language revitalization experts, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Stephen Greymorning, Lionel Kinuna, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, and Teresa

McCarty all conclude that immersing ourselves in the language is the most effective, long-term way to restore our languages.

Teresa McCarty explains the long term effectiveness of immersion and the inadvertent ways that it increased academic success in the students of the schools she studied (McCarty, 2003). McCarty looked at three different Indigenous communities, that of the Hawaiian Aha Punana Leo, the Navajo's of Fort Defiance, and Keres of the Pueblos. McCarty found that although it was not the primary intention to increase academic success in the schools, language immersion had the effect of increased academic performance. On the part of the communities she worked with, their intention for the study was to revitalize their languages. Her article, *Revitalizing Language in Homogenizing Times,* presents the data on relatively new schools and their impacts on bringing to surface the contradiction to linguistic genocide, that of, linguistic human rights (2003).

**Contextualizing Decolonization with Personal Story**

The communication of personal narratives in the academic world can be a particularly effective way to demonstrate meaning. As a child my grandmother, Lena Sockbeson, spoke our language. At the end of her life, she was diagnosed with dementia. As she came closer to her passing, she stopped speaking English: doctors and nurses reported her to be speaking in tongues. My aunt and uncle recognized that she was speaking Maliseet. She was only able to communicate in this long forgotten language; perhaps it was her choice. Speaking our language comforted her as she was

passing **"**When we are alone, language provides the comfort the same as what a baby looks for" (Lionel Kinuna[8]). My grandmother speaking Maliseet compelled our family to stop and listen to what she was saying and how she was saying it. Her state of mind was far, far from dementia. It couldn't have been closer to the most intelligent rational space in our souls, our most sacred Waponahki voice. Wayne Newell calls "our language …the road map to our souls." Her language was always there, somewhere in her mind. It is one of our beliefs that we are received by our ancestors in our language. I know that this was happening to my grandmother. After 500 years of genocide, rape, pillage, destruction, oppression upon oppression, surviving the intent of our extinction, it is amazing that those who came before us still receive us in our mother tongue (Wayne Newell, interview, January 17, 2010).

My grandmother was decolonizing all her life, just by being who she was. She survived oppression of being a Maliseet woman prohibited as a young girl to speak the tongue of her blood, her mother. Even as she passed into the next world, she resisted. Her survival and perseverance are contradictions to the colonial intentions to eradicate her. She raised nine Waponahki children with my Passamaquoddy grandfather. They were known by their peers as hard working people (Penobscot Nation Oral History Project, 1993). As she passed on, she revitalized her language, whether she intended

[8] Lionel Kinuna is a Sioux educator, this quote was taken from a reading in this course EDPS 601, Revitalizing Indigenous Languages that was not published.

to or not. Late Dr. Eunice Baumen Nelson once explained to me as a young girl that who we are is in our blood, even our language. No one can take that away from us.

These individual instances of decolonization are the epitome of revitalization, our return to our ancestors. Colonization intended that we forget our ancestors, that our memory as an entire people be destroyed.

Decolonization is manifested in our young people as well. In 2003, a young girl from my community died of a terminal disease called “no guts” syndrome. Only one in a million children in the world is diagnosed with “no guts”. I believe that her illness is related to environmental justice issues of pollution around the reserve. My reserve is located on an island in a river into which seven paper mills have been dumping a lethal cancer-causing carcinogen called dioxin. Our people have eaten the fish out of this river. Our cancer and terminal illness rates are significantly higher than that of the state average.

Stephanie Mitchell lived beyond her life expectancy: the doctors estimated that she would not live to see her teenage years. She reached eighteen. She loved to sing Waponahki songs, participating in a young girls drum group named, Sukulis (meaning “sweet” in our language). Her last months of life were spent in Pennsylvania, over a days drive from the reservation in Maine. In her last hours of life, her family requested that her Sukulis peers sing in the language to her. She was in a coma at that point. One of her dear friends, Esther Attean composed the lyrics of “To All My People,” Stephanie had known well this song and loved to sing it very much. Esther taught the

Sukulis how to sing this song and faxed the lyrics to the family at the hospital. Stephanie's aunties and Sukulis (via telephone) all sang this beautiful song to her in her last hours of life.

Lying in a coma, Stephanie smiled when she heard the song. Shortly thereafter, she passed on. Stephanie understood our history of genocide and was deeply proud of her identity as a Waponahki young woman. She openly expressed that she was a survivor. Indeed she was.

Stephanie, like my grandmother and all the Waponahki people who have passed, was received by our ancestors in the language. These processes of decolonization and embedded knowledge need to be more clearly understood.

The connection to our people that suffered immensely for us to be here is sacred. As Waponahki, we are the *people of the dawn*. Our name reminds us that there is a new day always approaching. Language revitalization is happening and we are using the skills and approaches Indigenous to us. This important recognition fuels hope, it is called *Cipenuk; the Red Hope.*

## Chapter 7: Red Hope & Implications for Indigenous Educational Policy

### Cipenuk's Birth (Recommendations & Conclusions)

My three children have names in our families' Indigenous languages. All have deep meanings for us, and the names suit my children. In Stoney language, Iktome means the "medicine boss". One of his grandfathers named him while I was pregnant. His great-grandmother says his name suits him. Even as a toddler she would say to him, "Iktome use your powers and tell us some stories!" He would always respond with a smile for her. When I was 7 to 8 months pregnant with my third baby, I did not know my due date because of complications. Iktome's older sister, Msahtawe, asked him when the baby was coming into this world. Iktome said August 8th. On the morning of August 8, 2007, I woke up with labour pains and delivered Peter Cipenuk Cardinal. In labor, I was lifted by the knowledge that Iktome had "used his powers." We gave Iktome three Stoney names and one Passamaquoddy name to choose from. Without hesitation, he named the baby, *Cipenuk*. At the time, I understood the name to mean east, or a wind from the east. He was born in Blue Hill, Maine in a hospital next to the Atlantic Ocean. Our belief in Iktome's ability to name his brother speaks to the habits associated with epistemology. We did not question him taking on this responsibility, which represents the significance of retained Indigenous epistemology and ontology.

A year later I asked Wayne Newell and Brenda Dana, the Passamaquoddy Language teacher at Indian Township School, how I might say "Red Hope," in our language. Wayne looked at Brenda and said "Cipenuk, isn't it, Brenda?" Brenda said,

"Yes, Cipenuk". He also told me the Red, which would refer to Native people, is embedded in the word Cipenuk. I exclaimed that was what we named our third child. He laughed and suggested that that must be the name of the dissertation.

I work with the word *Red* as a reference to Native people, because it is word of empowerment, because it means all of my people Indigenous to both the United States and Canada. As a younger native woman, the stories of the American Indian Movement and friends who were involved in Wounded Knee fueled me. I organized a grassroots organization, IRATE, Indigenous Resistance Against Tribal Extinction. It was a time in my life I felt very alive; I was living on a Red Road. I remember hearing that there was a Native way of life, and that such a journey was a Red Road, and I was included in that. What I know now is that since birth, I have been living on a Red Road, by the virtue of being an Indigenous person native to the territories I was created on. I have found in doing this research coupled with my life experience what *immobilizes* us as Native people. The writing of this dissertation reminded me of the necessity to research what *mobilizes* us as Native people. It is inclusion in something greater than us: hope. bell hooks quotes Paulo Freire at the beginner of her text, *Teaching Community; A Pedagogy of Hope*: "It is imperative that we maintain hope even when the harshness of reality may suggest the opposite". (Freire, in hooks, p. 1)

Given the depths of oppression we have experienced with the racism and genocide, life can easily get hopeless. During the course of this study I attended a university program where we watched an intensely sad documentary on the genocidal

practices of Aboriginals in residential school. Numerous people in the audience were sobbing, and the closing statements by Dr. Cora Weber-Pillwax felt transformative to me in that space of heavy heartedness: “although we need to know about all of the oppression and genocide, we can’t allow this to define who we are…” While engaging with a knowledge of oppression, it is my hope that we as Waponahki people engage with our own intellectual traditions within the epistemologies and ontologies that are ancient to us, otherwise the possibility of allowing the oppression to define who we are increases significantly. To infer that “we can’t allow” gives us the power to prohibit this from defining us, how critically important to survival and thriving as native peoples. It is this space of transformation that requires hope.

I first heard the word “decolonization,” when I hosted bell hooks on the University of Southern Maine campus. She explained to me how exhausted she felt when she did not share her opinions; she said she often had not expressed her voice and felt silenced. She explained that she also often felt tired and sleepy. When she began speaking up, and taking that risk, she was more energetic and less tired. This was when she began her own processes and actions of decolonizing, and her words resonated deeply with me. It gave me hope that there was way out of all the harshness. I decided early on to name this work, *Red Hope*. When I presented the idea to my nieces and nephews, their reactions included widened eyes and smiles, and “wow, that sounds so cool, Auntie!” Craig Womack (1999) writes:

> The process of decolonizing the mind is a first step before one can achieve a political consciousness and engage oneself in activism, this has to begin with the imagining of some alternative (p. 230).

The necessity to "imagine some alternative" led me to Indigenous Waponahki research methodology to engage with data and my life in a way that I would not have been able to otherwise. The research process gave, and continues to give, me a sense of hope which is central to our continued survival as Indigenous peoples. Without hope, we give up. In concluding this study, I feel as though I have only just begun.

Through my lens as a Waponahki woman, Red Hope has everything to do with Indigenous Policy-making. The policies with which I have spent time in this work speak to decolonization processes. At the same time, the policy-making process I have described speaks to Waponahki epistemology and ontology. Meaningful engagement in life within our various Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies begins with the distinct and ancient mold of the ash basket, and lies at the heart of social and political change for our people. This ash mold is where we begin and not necessarily end; it continues to be passed on from generation to generation. "Let us put our hearts and minds together and see what life we will make for our children" (attributed to Sitting Bull). My Stoney Sioux relatives explain that in Stoney Sioux, this saying has a profound meaning where heart and mind are the same.

Wayne Newell shared a story of his hopes for our youth:

> It is important that we see the value in one's own endeavors, we really need to go to: who am I, what do I come from, what do I need to say, who is my audience? Right now in my life, for me, my audience is the youth that aren't even born yet, I have been talking to those yet born, (just talking into my computer) recording my stories, I have been spending a lot of time talking to those folks, and spending a lot of energy on that, talking about our worldview and transmitting that knowledge in that recording format. These institutions of higher education are not set up to hear it as knowledge though. (Newell Interview, January 21, 2010)

**An Honor Song, Red Sky**

In a talk I gave for Women's History Month at a university in March of 2008, I shared several images that unite our history to our future. I would like to close my dissertation with two images that convey hope. The first is a document of a graphic that my nephew, Lucas James Sockbeson created for a community event t-shirt (Figure 8). I was proud of him when I heard of him winning the art contest, but when I actually got to see the artwork and he explained to me over the phone what the graphic meant to him, I felt deeply moved and I now understand this to be rooted in my awareness that the intended epistemocide of Waponahki knowledge is not complete. The young boy explained his graphic as a picture of a circle of elders surrounding a baby who represents the future

generations, and an eagle flying overhead is our ancestors watching over our people.  When I was Lucas's age, I knew I was Indian, and I was privileged to have a sense of my identity, but I had not the extent of this articulation of knowledge of my situation or the situation of our people. It is hopeful to realize and acknowledge that the ways of knowing and being that are indigenous to Waponahki are reaching our children and they are able to share their understanding with us.

**Figure 8. Young Penobscot Artist, Lucas James Sockbeson drawing Connecting Past to Future.**


The second image is of my mother in a ceremony that involved the healing of a wounded eagle and its release. The eagle had been found as baby hopping on one leg. At the time, my mother was on tribal council and the eldest tribal leader, so she was asked to hold the eagle and thrust it into the air for its first flight. At the same time in Canada, I was writing my literature review and feeling the deep weight of the research task ahead of me and the pain associated with

reading over and over again the racist experiences of Indigenous peoples, including my own. I was also in a constant yearning for my home and my people, 3,500 miles away. I had spoken to my mother on the phone earlier that day and she had explained to me that she was nervous that the eagle might just drop to the ground. However, she was going to pray that it didn't and we had a good laugh. I prayed from here in Alberta and what she was about to do was on my mind throughout the rest of that day. I spoke with her that evening and I could feel her excitement and happiness on the phone; the eagle had taken its first flight.

It was this experience that compelled me to locate hope within my work and to continually practice the internalization of the hope. As I looked at the pictures of that event and spoke with my mother on the phone, I wept under the infusion of power that came with the remembering of the whole of who we truly are, the Waponahki, the people of the dawn; a new day is certainly coming and therein reside the Red skies that tell us this.

**Figure 9a, 9b & 9c. Wounded Eagle Release Ceremony**

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## Appendix A - Maine Indians at Carlisle

### *Penobscot (Penahwubskeag )*

George Francis
Grace Francis
Harold Francis
Joe Francis
Peter F. Francis
Paul Jones
John Lewey
David Lewis
Marie Gertude Lewis
Philip J. Lola
Annie Lord
Helen Lord
Teresa C. Lyon
Napoleon Madison
Dora Masta
Laura Masta
Christine Mitchell
Dana Mitchell
Emily Mitchell
Frank Mitchell
Henry Mitchell
James Mitchell
Lawrence Mitchell
Vernie Mitchell
Clara Neptune
Chief Nichola
Irene Nicholas
Frederick Nicolas
Clara Frances Paul
Edith Ranco
Eugene Ranco
Everett Ranco
John Pannuck Ranco
Joseph Ranco
Michael Ranco
Charles Ryan
Blanche Shay
Ada Sockbeson
John Susep
Winfield Swasson
Newell Toma
Noel Tomer

**Appendix A (continued)***

***Abenaki***
Flora Sadie Masta
Walter E. Paul
Myrtle Polnap
Estelle Falling Star Tahamont
Robert J. Tahamont (Little Owl)

***Maliseet***
Noel Toman
Noel Tomer

***Passamaquoddy***
Samuel Dana
John Francis
Bennett Francis
John Leevey
Joseph N. Loring
Joe Nicholas
Joseph Socobie
Simon Socktunah

**As a matter of public record, these names represent only Waponahki students who were documented by the school, 1,500 students have unknown tribal affiliation.*