What can be learned from the Mahone Bay Museum's decolonizing initiatives to develop Mi'kmaw Narratives?

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Thesis Proposal

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The research question that this PhD dissertation asks is what can be learned from the decolonizing initiatives that the Mahone Bay Museum is undertaking to privilege the Mi'kmaw voice concerning the museum's current museological practice? This study will document the decolonizing process being undertaken by the Mahone Bay Museum, identify lessons learned and develop tools that can be useful for other museums also interested in the decolonization and indigenization.

My main role as a researcher will be to document the decolonizing process of the local settler's museum in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada. From this work an intention of this study will be to provide an example of how museums, even small and local, can take an active role in truth and reconciliation through mobilizing Indigenous knowledge about colonial history through the practice of Indigenous allyship and relationship building.

For this project, I will document the activities and outcomes of the museum as the process unfolds. Recently, the museum has established a volunteer committee to work on this project. My dissertation hopefully will be useful to other museums if they choose to take on similar decolonial work. I hope to be able to identify and describe in detail the processes taken by the museum on its decolonization journey and to document those things that worked well, tensions and problems encountered and solutions that are worked out. The outcomes of the committee's work of establishing a Mi'kmaw narrative will also be recorded and analysed for positive impact on the community.

Currently, the Mahone Bay Museum's displays are focused on colonial history of Mahone Bay after settlement by the English in the mid 1700's. The Mahone Bay Museum has a desire to add a component to its work that privileges the voice of the Mi'kmaw and how they want history represented in the museum. One of my roles will be to participate in this effort along with others, who are part of a committee, established by the museum for this purpose.

Another aspect of this study is that I will be a participating on the committee while I am documenting what happens. Therefore, this study undertakes a participatory approach that emphasises partnership and building strong relationships with local Mi'kmaw Elders and their communities as a way to privilege the Mi'kmaw worldview. When Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous researchers (like myself) have a shared interest in working together an important component of this study will be to practice Indigenous allyship and use Indigenous holistic research approaches. This novel research direction serves to decolonize the way history is represented in the Mahone Bay Museum, located in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada. Since this dissertational project is about Indigenous allyship it also speaks to the importance of using Indigenous knowledge and methods in the university context alongside traditional western methodologies as part of the decolonizing process.

This project is an ideal example of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) as it is focused on the collaborative commitments between the Mi'kmaw community, Mahone Bay Museum and me as the researcher, through my role on the committee, as an active participant in the decolonizing project. Accordingly, this PhD dissertation will be guided by the overall principles of CBPR.

This work is directly related to the mandate stipulated in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada: Calls to Action* (Government of Canada, 2018). Calls to Action 67 through 70 set out in that document ask Canadian Museums and Archives "to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal Peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations (Government of Canada, 2018)."

As part of the mandate, the TRC Calls to Action 67 through 70 (Government of Canada, 2018) asks Canadian museums and archives "to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal Peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations" (Government of Canada, 2018). Accordingly, it is the intention motivating this study to meet the recommendations set out by the TRC as well as the UNDRIP.

In 2006, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly as an international human rights instrument for addressing Indigenous human rights issues worldwide (UN General Assembly, 2006). UNDRIP is a significant Indigenous rights milestone that effectively defines the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples. The declaration (UN General Assembly, 2006) states that proper measures must be put in place to ensure that Indigenous history and culture are free of discrimination and that accurate representation of Indigenous Peoples occurs throughout educational, media, and other public venues.

This research honours the TRC Calls to Action by supporting the process of decolonization and indigenization as fundamental to the well-being of Canada and its citizens. Through this doctoral work I am attempting to honour the TRC Calls to Action that have been mandated for all levels of Canadian government, as well as educational, public, and private institutions and individual citizens in order to advance the process of reconciliation. By documenting the decolonial actions taken by the Mahone Bay Museum, the intention underlying the work presented in this proposal is to meet the recommendations set out by the TRC by creating a decolonizing tool for other museums.

History of the Mahone Bay Museum

Mahone Bay is a classic example of a Canadian European colonial settlement that has evolved over the centuries and, like many places, has become a destination spot for travellers. Vacationers world-wide are instantly captivated by Mahone Bay's sea-faring legacy, scenic harbour, well-maintained century-old Victorian homes, heritage gardens and the iconic three churches. Overall, the town has a sense of pride that is steeped in preserving the original European colonial settlers' lives, values, and legacy.

The Mahone Bay Museum (known as the Mahone Bay Settlers Museum until 2015), began in 1979, when the Mahone Bay Founder's Society formed to organize the 225th anniversary celebration of the founding of the European settlement. From the beginning, the museum has reflected settler

ideology and is led by a Board of Directors, small paid staff, and dedicated local community. The museum provides visitors and the town population with an in-depth understanding of the community's colonial heritage.

When Lyne Allain began working at the museum in 2016 as manager and curator, she immediately noticed the lack of museum documentation on what life was like in the area prior to European colonization. Specifically, Curator Allain observed that there was virtually no representation of the history of the local Indigenous Peoples known as the Mi'kmaq. Mahone Bay is an integral part of Mi'kmaw territory, known as Mi'kma'ki, which includes present-day Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, parts of Maine, Newfoundland and the Gaspé in Quebec, which the Mi'kmaq, have inhabited for over 13,400 years.

As a result, Curator Allain began working on how to best represent the history in the area prior to European colonialization. She spoke with a couple of local Mi'kmaw in an effort to include the Mi'kmaw community and determine how to proceed forward with a Mi'kmaw museum exhibit.

It became quickly apparent that the representation of the Mi'kmaq in the Mahone Bay Museum would be more complex and involved than Curator Allain originally imagined. The idea of forming a volunteer committee was decided. This included local Mi'kmaw working with non-Indigenous peoples who were knowledgeable and passionate about the Mi'kmaw history and are tasked with beginning the process of developing a Mi'kmaw Exhibit. I was most fortunate to be asked to be part of this committee. To date the committee members are Elder Ellen Hunt, Elder Joe Michael, local Mi'kmaw, settlers who are interested in learning about Mi'kmaw history, Curator Allain and me.

Since my current PhD research interests are invested in practising Indigenous allyship through building relationships with the local Mi'kmaw community and unsettling historical settler ideology in Lunenburg County, I was very interested in how I could contribute to the Mahone Bay Museum's vison of inspiring interest in local Mi'kmaw history and preservation. Therefore, weaving my PhD dissertation work into the Mahone Bay Museum's decolonizing endeavours, by documenting how current museology is practised, seemed like a natural fit for a research topic idea.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review represents a starting point for beginning the initial research. The broad research question guiding this project is "What can be learned from the Mahone Bay Museum's decolonizing initiatives to develop Mi'kmaw Narratives?"

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (2000, p. 24) states that "the educator has the duty of not being neutral." Based on Freire's (2000) insight, this study is founded on a similar position, which is that all educators should consider social action as an important component of pedagogy. Like Indigenous scholar Marie Battiste (2013) in *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit*, as a researcher I refuse to accept situations that place humans in positions of marginalization, violence, and powerlessness. This literature review explores this theme in ways that support my interest in practising Indigenous allyship and building relationships with Indigenous Elders and their communities so that socially just historical narratives that privilege the Mi'kmaw voice can emerge.

This literature review also demonstrates the importance of building relationships grounded in allyship and kinship between Indigenous Peoples and settlers so that genuine steps toward reconciliation can truly occur. The review was conducted from the perspective of linking theory and practice to explore the pedagogical potential of decolonizing museums as sites for restorying colonial history from an Indigenous lens, strengthening the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians to support truth and reconciliation as outlined by the TRC.

Relationship and Research in Partnership with Indigenous Elders

In her work, *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Metis & Inuit Issues in Canada*, Chelsea Vowel (2016) uses her first-hand knowledge and life experiences to demonstrate the intersections between decolonization, reconciliation, myths and stereotypes that support colonial ideology and how settlers' must grapple with the tensions that exist when colonization privileges an Indigenous narrative. Similar to *Living Treaties: Narrating Mi'kmaw Treaty Relations* by Marie Battiste (2016a), this dissertation focuses on the purposeful intention of unsettling a mainstream colonial upbringing, which has shaped both the Indigenous Peoples and the settlers living in what is now known as the nation state of Canada.

Paulette Regan (2010), suggests in *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*, that for successful reconciliation to occur in Canada, settlers must consciously wrestle with their Eurocentric colonial history from an Indigenous perspective. When settlers become informed about and attentive to Canadian history from an Indigenous point of view, she says that they recognize how endemic colonialization is and how colonial-dominant discourse has been used to perpetuate an ideology that continues into the present. Subsequently centering Indigenous worldviews serves to disrupt the mainstream colonial narrative so that as settlers begin to fathom how colonization significantly influences the many unearned privileges that settlers invisibly receive from Canadian societal structures.

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault (1995) argues that dominant discourse contains a particular set of ideological beliefs, which are employed to set up privileges for specific individuals and to control, silence, marginalize, ignore, and erase the power and points of view of others. The Foucauldian (1995) theoretical framework clearly brings to light the complex relationship between Canadian institutions (e.g., residential schools, public schools, post-secondary institutions, museums, government), on the one hand, and Eurocentric/colonial discourse, knowledge, and power on the other, and how this relationship has been employed for the assimilation, control, and even extermination of the ways of life and being of Indigenous Peoples such as the Mi'kmaq.

Vital to a settler's ability to grasp the conceptualization of decolonization perceived from an Indigenous point of view is the development of lifelong friendships with Indigenous people, especially Indigenous Elders. Both Regan (2010) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), in her work *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, remind us that Elders are important members of Indigenous communities and have earned a high degree of respect based on their acquired wisdom and knowledge pertaining to Indigenous ceremony, healing practices, traditional teachings, and history. The point Vowel (2016) and Smith (2012) both emphasize is the vital role that Elders play in decolonization because of their position as highly valued community members who have acquired years of wisdom and experience, feel a deep reverence for Indigenous ways of knowing,

and have shouldered a responsibility to support what is best not only for their own local community but also for the greater good.

Fundamental to the success of this dissertation as a decolonizing approach is recognizing and respecting the important contributions of Indigenous Elders as knowledge keepers and privileged participants when conducting research about Indigenous views on colonial narratives.

Building genuine relationships with Mi'kmaw Elders who are willing to be teachers of non-Indigenous researchers, like myself, is accomplished by becoming involved with the local Mi'kmaw community, practising Indigenous allyship and collaboratively restorying local colonial history to reflect a Mi'kmaw worldview. Similar to Shawn Wilson's (2008) work, *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research* Methods, Regan (2010) and Tuhiwai Smith (2012) also suggest, the importance of building relationships with Indigenous Elders and learn about their role. As a non-Indigenous researcher working with the local Mi'kmaq, both understanding the importance of Elders and building these relationships is ethically important to the overall research process.

Therefore, as a non-Indigenous researcher, it is important to build genuine relationships, that are based on trust, transparency and investment, with Mi'kmaw Elders and other Indigenous Elders and work in partnership throughout the whole research process. Although this takes time it is fundamental to practising Indigenous allyship.

I have already begun this process in spending time with Mi'kmaw Elders and as a result, we have developed real friendships with each other. Through the practice of Indigenous allyship, our relationships are built on mutual respect for each other as well as believing in the strength of our abilities together to practise research in a holistic way and effect knowledge production and social change.

Over the past four years, these Elders have become important to me and my life, both professionally and personally. They have taught me invaluable knowledge and skills from Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems such as; Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing), Msit no kmaq (All of My Relations), Thinking Seven Generations Ahead and other Mi'kmaw ways of knowing. Mi'kmaw Elders Ellen Hunt and Joe Michael, for example, have been adept at conveying the holistic teachings on which these Mi'kmaw worldviews are based and how they are employed for interacting with and interpreting the world we share with all life.

As a result, of our time spent together, genuine friendships have grown and extend to working on a variety of projects such as our decolonizing work with the Mahone Bay Museum. It is our hope that our work with the museum will be manifested through the practice of Indigenous allyship. This type of research in partnership honours the relational intersections among these Elders, their community and me, as a non-Indigenous researcher, who share similar objectives of decolonizing and indigenizing the way history is represented in the Mahone Bay Museum.

Becoming an Indigenous Ally: Decolonization and Indigenization

The relationships I have started to build are very important for informing how to become a respectful Indigenous ally as well as what constitutes purposeful decolonial practice. In the *Handbook of Indigenous Education* (2019) edited by Elizabeth Ann McKinley and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, the chapter entitled "Indigenous Family Engagement: Strong Families, Strong Nations," by Megan

Bang, C. Montaño Nolan, and N. McDaid-Morgan (2019), makes a strong case for reimagining relationships between Indigenous Peoples, non-Indigenous educators and educational systems. Bang et al. (2019, p. 804) declare that "respectful and reciprocal relationships" between Indigenous Peoples and settlers are "foundational for cultivating the types of long-term collaboration necessary for resurgence." They further emphasize that these mutual relationships between Indigenous Peoples and settlers must include recognition and honouring of the global history of colonialism from an Indigenous stance.

One way to build amical relationships between Indigenous Peoples and settlers is through the practice of Indigenous allyship. In *Becoming an Ally: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression*, Anne Bishop (2006) defines what an ally means. She states that part of being an ally is recognizing the inherent, effortlessly received societal privileges that are tied to patterns of injustice toward others. She suggests that upon recognizing these unequal relationships, allies then take active responsibility for changing these hegemonic structures. Referencing Bishop's (2006) work in an Indigenous context would suggest that an Indigenous ally is an individual who begins a personal decolonizing process by acknowledging his or her own settler privilege. Indigenous allies stand with those who are affected by the harms caused by colonialism and realize that to effect any social change, the real work must begin within themselves.

As I embark upon this decolonizing and indigenizing journey, the work that I do will incorporate Bishop's (2006) ideas about allyship. Part of the process of allyship is to understand one's inherent privilege and its relationship to unsettling one's colonial history that resulted in the dispossession and oppression of Indigenous Peoples. As this dissertation leads me to delve into the intersections of socially just truths, colonial narrative, and Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems and worldviews, there will certainly be discomfort. This uneasiness stems from the original conflict between the Mi'kmaq and settlers that resulted from early British colonization in Lunenburg County and that carries forward into the present day. As with the research interests expressed in *Museums, Heritage and Indigenous Voice: Decolonizing Engagement*, Bryony Onciul (2015) stresses this very fact. As well, Bishop's (2006) notion of allyship also includes the development of genuine relationships and friendships with Indigenous Peoples.

The Mahone Bay Museum and I have already begun this important step by reaching out to the local Mi'kmaw and their Elders in an effort to understand how the museum can respectfully include the Mi'kmaq in their museological practices. Instrumental to our decolonizing and indigenizing efforts will be a continuation and building upon of these important bonds and relationships that privilege the Mi'kmaw voice.

The Term "Settler" and Its Implications

In his scholarly work, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America,* Richard Slotkin (1992, p. 2) suggests that "[t]he term settler has most often been used to describe a pioneering individual who leaves their homeland with the intention of starting a new life living in a new place; they were immigrants who have moved to the frontier, a geographical space which was considered wilderness and vacant of other people."

Mi'kmaw Elder Daniel Paul (2008) further brings to light in *First Nations History: We Were Not the Savages*, how the term settler was used to manipulate colonial discourse to support the perspective of

European colonizers at the expense of the original inhabitants' history, culture and occupation of Turtle Island (name for North America by Mi'kmaq and other groups) for over 13, 400 years. Paul (2008) confirms that traditionally the word settler has been attached to a nostalgic connotation of new inhabitants who were responsible for the "founding and building" of Canada and United States which was inaccurately characterized as terra nullius, vacant and free for the taking.

This understanding of the term settler is in keeping with the work by Emma B. Lowman and Adam J. Barker: *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (2015). Lowman and Barker (2015) state that both the past and present use of the term settler is strongly tied to the notion of land. Like Paul (2008), they remind us that Europeans considered Turtle Island to be free for the taking, and they believed it could be claimed for ownership either by the state or by individuals. Paul (2008) asserts that in contrast, from an Indigenous perspective, settlers are foreigners who stole Indigenous land, broke treaty obligations, and implemented other measures of so-called law in order to maintain control of Mi'kmaw territory and their resources. Paul (2008) argues that, as a result, these actions on the part of settlers severely impacted Indigenous Peoples, such as the Mi'kmaq, and had devastating effects that are still experienced today.

Paul (2008) states that when taking a long, difficult look at the term settler through an Indigenous lens, those who would describe themselves as descendants of settlers can begin to see both their ancestors and their present-day selves in a different light. Marie Battiste (2013, p. 97) further emphasizes, "Through an Indigenous perspective, settlers can come to understand how contemporary colonization is linked to relationships, structures and processes in Canada that are complicit in systems of violence and dispossession towards Indigenous Peoples."

Battiste (2013) highlights examples of the on-going impacts of colonization such as inherent stereotypes, pervasive racism, marginalization of Indigenous Peoples which has resulted in loss of connection and reverence to land, culture, and way of life. For instance, Battiste (2016a) reminds today's settlers of the ongoing Canadian government policy of ignoring Mi'kmaw treaty rights and of the constant land disputes that occur between the Mi'kmaq and the government or between the Mi'kmaq and resource-extraction businesses.

The dispute between the Mi'kmaq and Alton Gas, regarding the storage of natural gas on the banks of the Shubenacadie River is an example of a contemporary land conflict that from the Mi'kmaw point of view is a violation of the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Campbell (2019), a reporter for the Chronicle Herald, recently reported on the overall concerns expressed by the Mi'kmaq.

Campbell (2019) noted that from the Mi'kmaw perspective; Alton Gas is using false land claims and is trespassing on unceded Mi'kmaw territory without permission. Campbell (2019) also reported that the Mi'kmaw communities and their allies are deeply concerned about the serious environmental impacts of this project and that they have not been inadequately addressed. Mi'kmaw water protectors and their allies therefore are emphasizing Mi'kmaw treaty rights through a platform called *Stop Alton Gas*. They oppose Alton Gas and their plans and are requesting further research be conducted regarding the environmental impacts on the various ecosystems of the river.

Regan (2010) offers another cutting-edge approach to understanding the term "settlers" as it relates to colonization and power. Regan (2010) has vast experience documenting the culturally genocidal impacts of the Canadian Indian Residential School system, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation process in Canada. As Director of the *Research for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*,

Regan (2010) has been able to offer insight into challenges related to resolving contemporary conflicts between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians as a result of the colonization of Canada.

A critical and unique aspect of Regan's (2010) work is that she considers herself a settler and places her own privileges at the heart of her research. Regan (2010) states that tackling decolonization requires settlers to acknowledge the hard truth that the identity of a settler is not one of benevolent peacekeeper, as they have surmised. Instead, the Canadian identity is linked to the erasure from public view of the perpetration of the many forms of violence against Indigenous Peoples. By following Regan's (2010) lead, other "settlers" can also begin to make this new ethical shift with respect to the term and its meaning.

Based on the use of critical theory, comparative analysis, and ethics, Regan's (2010, p. 17) research methodology is focussed on "the synergy of truth telling, as a pedagogical tool, by the settler to create counter-narratives which will dismantle the historical colonial legacy." Her perspective requires "authenticity and reciprocity from settlers as they begin to witness firsthand the present-day struggles of Indigenous Peoples, such as those of the Mi'kmaq, that are tied to colonialism." Today's settlers must genuinely listen to the different Mi'kmaw narratives that are associated with colonization and its detrimental impact.

Regan's (2010) novel and divergent narrative thus challenges the story of the benevolent peace-loving settlers that was written from a Eurocentric standpoint in order to obliterate that of the Mi'kmaq. Regan's (2010) position is that when today's settlers earnestly become true allies with Indigenous Peoples, the potential for transformation is possible for everyone. Lilla Watson, an Indigenous Australian, visual activist, and academic, defined this ideology when she said, "If you are coming to help me you are wasting your time. But if your liberation is bound up with mine then let us work together" (Ablett et al., 2014, p. 7). Many social activist groups have since used this phrase to emphasize the point that the liberation of oppression should not be viewed as a charitable act but rather as an emancipatory process for all. Watson prefers to credit the collective process of the Aboriginal Activist Group of Queensland in 1970 with the origin of this quote (Ablett et al., 2014).

Regan (2010) states that today's settlers must begin to understand the inherent interrelatedness of the benefits they and their ancestors have reaped from colonization and its relationship with the continued oppression of Indigenous Peoples. The linkages between murdered and missing Canadian Indigenous females and resource extraction is a contemporary example of the correlation between settler benefits, the negative impact on Indigenous Peoples, and their intersections with colonialization. In 2016, the Government of Canada established the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This platform gave a voice to many Indigenous families and individuals so that they could share their stories about what had happened to their beloved family members. Until the conclusion of this national mandate was made public in June 2019 and thus brought into the limelight, sadly, many settlers had been unaware of this Canadian genocidal atrocity. Regan (2010, p. 20) reminds today's settlers that when they "begin to understand themselves as the problem, there is potential for social, political, and cultural change."

Regan (2010) believes that transformational learning will occur when settlers speak difficult truths, (such as links to resource extraction and violence against Indigenous woman and girls), remain mindful, and challenge the false innocence they understand as their history and challenges this mythical and sentimental perspective of the term and its meaning. Instead, Regan (2010) suggests

using the word settler to include current-day descendants and other non-Indigenous Canadians. She argues that, in this way, the term will constitute a pedagogical tool for instilling a better understanding of the colonial ontology of the relationships of power, the beneficiaries of colonization, and the systems of oppression inherent in colonial hegemonic frameworks. Her use of the word settler is intended to help people such as myself broaden our understanding of who we really are – rather than who we claim to be. Her choice of meaning for the term is intended to facilitate a way of more fully comprehending the 21st century Canadian perception of colonization.

Vowel (2016, p. 18) supports the use of the word settler as a contemporary term for non-Indigenous Canadians and contends that "just like we need terms to define Indigenous Peoples we need terms to define non-Indigenous Peoples." However, Vowel (2016) also states that there is no perfect, generalized label that describes the historical, contemporary, and future relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. She believes this lack exists because "the majority tends to have the power to sanction and widely accept terms and does not have much cause to refer to itself" (Vowel, 2016, p. 14). The point that she makes is the profound importance of choosing a modern-day term for people who are not indigenous to Canada in order to understand the relationship between Canada's colonial legacy and the way it informs present day relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.

During our conversations on almost every topic, Mi'kmaw Elder Joe often says to me, "It's complicated." Vowel (2016, p. 18) reminds us that, like Elder Joe's characterization, relationships among Indigenous Peoples, the Canadian government, and settler Canadians are complex and based on a colonial ideology, which supported an imbalance of power that negatively impacted Indigenous Peoples. Her choice to use the word settler is suitable because this term helps people recognize how past and present events impact the current relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. Employing the term settler places an emphasis on the intersections of the many types of relationships (historical, modern-day, and future) that exist and that Vowel (2016) argues are directly related to the occupation of land and the extraction of resources at the expense of today's Indigenous Peoples.

Museums as Sites for Social Justice

This portion of the literature review is directed at exploring how the pedagogical space of a museum has been used as a Eurocentric mechanism in order to establish cultural historical norms by emphasizing the colonial/imperial system of knowledge. A key effect of this mainstream method of presenting knowledge has been to erase the historical narrative of Indigenous Peoples, such as the Mi'kmaw Peoples in Mi'kma'ki. From a perspective of decolonization and indigenization, the literature review includes an examination of this type of biased educational institution, which is burdened with western ideology, as a site that can be transformative in nature and provide an opportunity for expressing resistance to a dominant negative discourse.

Onciul's (2015) study spells out how building better relations between Indigenous communities and museums is fundamental to the decolonization and indigenization of general museological practice. She has demonstrated that despite the good intentions of museums in Alberta, Canada, with respect to including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, the museum infrastructure falls short (Onciul, 2015, p. 240). She says this deficiency is the result of museums being "enshrined in dominant western professional and social conduct approaches," which greatly limit the ability of Indigenous Peoples to fully participate in how they want their stories represented in a museum.

Using her construct of engagement zones, Onciul (2015, p. 243) successfully points out and elaborates on the many limitations on Indigenous engagement that occur as a result of museums' deep-seated western museological theory, standards, and history. A few examples of these restraints include prioritizing Eurocentric modes for the collection and exhibition of heritage and artefacts, power relations within the museum that place non-Indigenous staff at the top of a hierarchal administration, western heritage management conventions that are still preferred over Indigenous customs, and unknowing negative consequences for Indigenous staff working in a very western ideological space, to name a few.

Despite the countless complexities and problems associated with the decolonization and indigenization of well-established Eurocentric museological infrastructure, Onciul (2015, p. 237) remains optimistic about museums as potential sites for "creative, inspiring, life-changing and empowering" transformation. She argues that, if museums are truly invested in envisioning decolonization and indigenization as emancipatory ways to move forward, it is necessary to expose and critically examine how Indigenous engagement is limited by the inherent barriers of museum infrastructure. Her work is important to our research because of her critical examination of the inherent tensions that exist within the current relationships between Indigenous Peoples and a museum's purpose and operations.

First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries, by Terri Janke and Company (2018), is a significant study that was developed for the Australian museum and gallery sector. The purpose of Janke and Company's (2018) work is to outline a ten-year plan that is "committed to improving Indigenous engagement and employment" across all levels of museums and galleries.

Janke and Company's (2018) roadmap highlights the importance for museums and galleries to build stronger, improved relationships with Indigenous Australians that support the decolonization and indigenization of their Eurocentric foundations. Some of their suggested ideas include reimagining representation, embedding Indigenous values into museums and gallery businesses, increasing Indigenous opportunities, two-way caretaking of cultural material, and connecting with Indigenous communities.

The vision statement included in Janke and Company's (2018, p. 3) roadmap "is about changing interactions, communications, understanding and ultimately, the Australian view of First Peoples." An integral component of this ambition is the creation of a "future where Indigenous communities have control over their cultural material." Janke and Company's (2018) objective is to connect Indigenous community self-determination to museums and galleries by placing Indigenous Peoples in control of how their history, culture, and heritage are both managed and represented.

Janke and Company's (2018) roadmap can be applied to other colonial nation states, such as Canada, where Eurocentric museums and galleries serve to support the colonial narrative and the erasure of the original people of a region. Their outline has the potential to shift any nation, whose identity is based on colonization, away from mainstream colonial rhetoric and move towards supporting and building non-oppressive democratic relationships with Indigenous Peoples. The key point is that Janke and Company (2018) have already set out a high-level strategy for improving overall Indigenous engagement in this type of cultural institution. In short, Janke and Company's (2018) roadmap aligns with this research proposal and provides a template for a strategy for achieving

research goals that are directed at the implementation of significant changes in the colonial institution of the museum.

The Predatory Museum by Lynn Maranda and Bruno Brulon Soares (2017) underscores the hidden purposes of museums and their relationships with European colonization throughout the 17th century to the 19th century. Maranda and Brulon Soares (2017) argue that the complex process of a museum has always been based on interest in field expeditions and is still very much associated with the assemblage of Indigenous collections by this means. Maranda and Brulon Soares (2017) argue that this western notion of physically going out to collect information and artefacts is inherently connected to the hegemonic structures of colonization. More to the point, they insist that the collection, categorization, and exhibition of items through field expedition was usually carried out by western researchers, scientists, and scholars from colonizing countries, such as the British, who did not understand the sacred cultural value of these objects from the perspective of their first caretakers in the context of their original location.

For example, Maranda and Brulon Soares (2017) emphasize the fact that, during the 19th century, ethnographic museums formed their collections by taking sacred cultural objects from Indigenous Peoples and then decontextualizing and re-contextualizing these items based on European measurements and values. They contend that, as a result, when artifacts exemplifying Indigenous Peoples and their culture were placed in a museum, they became imagined, represented, disseminated, and ultimately understood from a European perspective.

An anthropologist whose thinking aligns with that of Maranda and Brulon Soares (2017) is Nicholas Thomas. In his work *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, Thomas (1991) critically examines the complex cultural/political dynamics and intersections among colonialism; Oceanic societies such as Fiji; and the European acquisition and appropriation of cultural objects from these geographical areas. Thomas (1991) challenges anthropological theory and the way relationship is traditionally understood between Oceanic Indigenous Peoples and colonizers. He states that "throughout the colonial period, Indigenous cultural material was constantly removed from situations of utility or ritual to become museum objects, thus gaining a new type of value even if not necessarily losing its meaning in the previous circumstance from which it was removed" (Thomas, 1991, p. 7).

Thomas (1991) stresses that the museum, as an organization, traditionally had its own set of values which, in turn, eradicated all previous standards attributed to the collected Indigenous objects. The museum thus reimagined a different state for these objects, with some of the original meaning and significance of these objects being changed and/or erased.

Although Thomas's (1991) study deals mostly with Oceanic contexts, his work provides excellent insight for application to other locales and people who have been colonized and then become the subject of the western scrutiny associated with museum collections and exhibits. Richard Parmentier's (1993) literature review provides validation for the broad implications of the global creditability of Thomas's (1991) work. Parmentier (1993) says that when one considers the broader issues of colonialism and the historicity of Indigenous material objects and their effects around the world, Thomas's work can apply wherever colonization and appropriation of Indigenous material and culture have occurred. Together these authors inform this project regarding how museums can be used as a form of social justice.

The Role of Museums vis-à-vis Reconciliation

For a better understanding of the way museums have been used as methods of legitimizing the normalization of European colonialism, these public pedagogical spaces must be analyzed within the broader context of the purpose of education in settler states such as Canada. Battiste (2013) states that an integral factor in this scrutinization is the explicit portrayal of the Eurocentric colonial historical narrative as normative across all types of education, such as public educational spaces, which erases the historical significance and importance of Indigenous Peoples.

In *Resurgence and Reconciliation: Indigenous-Settler Relations and Earth Teachings*, authors Michael Asch, John Borrows, and James Tully (2018) weave together the work of a variety of scholars who have examine the hegemonic discourse that has substantial political, social, and economic control over the settler project. The multidisciplinary efforts of Asch et al. (2018) challenge the purpose behind countless Canadian reconciliatory practices that have been implemented since the arrival of settlers to Turtle Island and reveal it as nothing more than a colonial ruse. They expose the hidden agenda of colonial instruments that include treaties, law and government (the Indian Act, for example), education, and public pedagogical spaces and how they have been used for manipulating a mainstream narrative that supports colonial priorities, a practice that continues today.

Based on the notion of the Other as presented by Edward Said (1978) in *Orientalism*, Brian Noble (2015) defines coloniality in contemporary terms in "Tripped Up by Coloniality: Anthropologists as Instruments or Agents in Indigenous-Settler Political Relations?" Noble (2015, p.429-430) states that coloniality presumes a modern oppositional relationship between the self (settlers) and the other, which in Canada's case, are the original inhabitants. He surmises that when coloniality is understood in this way it can be thought of as "the tendency of a self/settler as an encounter to impose boundary coordinates such as territory, knowledges, categories, normative practices, on the domains of land, knowledge, ways of life, etc." (Noble, 2015, pp. 429-430). These intentional colonial actions are directed at the other/Indigenous Peoples who had/have both prior and current connections with these realms, which exclude the highly valued relationships Indigenous Peoples have with the land, self, community, and way of life.

Based on an understanding of Noble's (2015) work on "coloniality as an apparatus" with countless forms of colonialization, one objective of this research is to demonstrate how museums have been used as educational mechanisms that privilege colonial authorship of the European settler over the original inhabitants' point of view. As the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (1996, vol. 3, p. 433) concluded, "Education is the transmission of cultural DNA from one generation to the next. It shapes the language and pathways of thinking as well as the contours of character and values, the social skills and creative potential of the individual." The words from The United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples at the UNESCO Conference on Education in July 1999 were as follows: "Displacing systemic discrimination against Indigenous Peoples created and legitimized by the cognitive frameworks of imperialism and colonialism remains the single most crucial cultural challenge facing humanity."

When pointing out the museum as a colonizing structure, Elizabeth Edwards (2016) confirms UNESCO's findings in her work *Photography, Anthropology and History: Expanding the Frame.* Edwards (2016) critically examines the hegemonic connections between colonization and museums and how these physical spaces were used to support colonial narrative, assumptions and practices such as

legitimising hierarchies of race and culture. She states that at its core these archival institutions are directly tied to the emergence of the Age of European Enlightenment and its associated values on education and progress that influence how museums function as a colonial instrument still today.

In "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) concur that museums have traditionally been used for legitimizing one specific version of knowledge over other kinds such as that of Indigenous Peoples. In "Contemporary Museums as Pedagogic Contact Zones: Potentials of Critical Cultural Adult Education," Darlene Clover and Kathy Sanford (2016) challenge the normative views portrayed in museums. They argue that museums are far from passive and neutral as educational sites and do not simply house and display art and artefacts. Rather, they see museums as informal places where adult learning occurs and is heavily influenced by wider societal values and beliefs through the stories that are transmitted by the museum's collection of cultural objects.

In their book *Learning with Adults: A Critical Pedagogical Introduction*, Leona English and Peter Mayo (2012) devote a chapter to "Museums, Cultural Politics, and Adult Learning," which highlights the Eurocentric and class bias in museums that influences how knowledge is produced and what is permitted to be counted as knowledge. They contend that museums should thus be considered sites of cultural politics and public pedagogy that play an important role in the politics of how knowledge is both produced and represented. They also maintain that "the critical adult educator can utilize museums as an important space for critical pedagogy and non-formal education by scrutinizing the social, political and cultural intersections of the overall purpose of the museum" (English and Mayo, 2012, p. 101).

Mayo and English (2012) assert that both museums and the curriculum are storehouses for what can be included or excluded as official knowledge. We are reminded by Foucault, (1995, p. 27) that "Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of the truth but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least becomes true."

In her article "Exhibiting Decolonising Discourse: Critical Settler Education and the City before the City," Kay Johnson (2016) clearly demonstrates how the complex intersections of public education, museums, imperialism, colonialism, and colonial discourse are strongly tied to an imperial hegemonic infrastructure that controls what and how knowledge is translated. In short, she uses these discursive themes to expose how colonial powers have controlled the way settler knowledge is produced for purposes of land occupation, dispossession, and erasure of the original inhabitants of Turtle Island.

Despite the inherent relationships among public pedagogy, hegemonic knowledge, and pedagogical practice that serve the status quo, Regan (2010), Battiste (2013), Clover and Sanford (2016), Tuck and Yang (2012), English and Mayo (2012), Johnson (2016), and Asch et al. (2018) see these same public institutions as places where pedagogical struggles for social change and innovation are possible. For example, Johnson (2016) agrees with the TRC (2018) that museums play a key role in reconciliation as a public space for re-imaging education. She says, "This is not surprising, given the political, ethical, spiritual, ceremonial, and embodied dimensions of historical remembering in public history institutions" (Johnson, 2016, p. 178).

I argue that the scope of reconciliation can be expanded through museums and this research and that it can be an example of ways of practising Regan's (2010) and Bishop's (2006) notions of Indigenous allyship. As Paulette Regan (2018) suggests in her chapter, "Reconciliation and Resurgence: Reflections on the TRC Final Report," included in the book edited by Asch et al. (2018, pp. 209-227), reconciliation must go "beyond residential schools to encompass the whole settler project."

This research is based on an understanding that public pedagogical spaces such as the Mahone Bay Museum have the potential to become significant sites where active co-learning can occur. By creating a set of decolonization tools, similar to Regan's (2018) ideas, this research project envisions opportunities that "encompass the whole settler colonial project" by developing museological frameworks that tackle our "troubled history" and facilitate "ways of working together that shift power and perspective."

The viewpoints explored in the literature review support participatory-style approaches to collaborative research to be conducted with the Mi'kmaq, a local museum, and settlers, using Indigenous knowledge structures that will challenge the epistemic framework of mainstream museums to enable teaching, learning, and healing to occur. It is through unlearning, relearning, and embracing Indigenous ways of knowing that museums can practise Indigenous allyship and begin to understand the inherent racism embedded in the adopted colonial system of culture and commerce they portray in their institutions. Once this colonial fabrication has been disrupted, a more balanced and ethical understanding can emerge. Through Indigenous epistemology, truth and reconciliation can become transformational approaches for liberation, emancipatory growth, and insight.

Research Challenges

A research challenge to consider is that decolonization is complex and unsettling and requires a significant overhaul of Canadian societal values and norms, thus presumably making it an extremely daunting task for many settlers even to comprehend. Vowel (2018) surmises that decolonization might also be met with mainstream opposition due to hegemonic rhetoric, biased views, and resistance to change, all of which are heavily influenced by the colonial discourse and infrastructure that shape virtually every area of Canadian society.

Michael F. Brown's (2008) book review of Christina Kreps (2013) work *Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation and Heritage Preservation* reminds us that decolonization and indigenization cannot be seen as a panacea for democratizing the Indigenous storyline. For example, Kreps (2013) states that decolonizing and indigenizing curatorial practices is complex, multilayered, and embedded in the dismantling and transforming of the Eurocentric hegemonic infrastructure which has been complicit in suppressing what Brown (2008) maintains as "inconvenient truths" for its own benefit. Tuck and Yang (2012) agree with this perspective and claim that decolonization cannot be perceived as a metaphor for improving society and education. As a result, Tuck and Yang (2012) caution researchers and educators about adopting quick and seamless socially just initiatives and critical methodologies.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon (2004) argues that decolonization disrupts how the world operates. This viewpoint speaks volumes to the fact that decolonization ultimately changes how all levels of Canadian society will function. Tuck and Yang (2012) assert that tied to this realization,

about decoloniality, is the inability of settlers to recognize and accept how their own complicities, relationships, and benefits are connected to the many hard truths of colonization.

Tuck and Yang (2012) further argue that settler colonization requires the severe disruption of the cultural relationship of Indigenous Peoples to land, water, and all that it encompasses. They identify the hard truth that, to occupy Indigenous Peoples' land, settler colonization must be built on the use of a variety of brutal methods to completely erase and/or assimilate Indigenous Peoples. Examples of colonial mechanisms that have been put in place to enable colonists to do whatever was necessary in order to accomplish these violent goals include Gorham's Rangers, Residential schools, the Pass system, and the Indian Act, to name just a few.

Vowel (2018) asserts that present-day Canadian political infrastructures, governmental and educational institutions, law enforcement, national languages, economies, and trade are heavily tied to the roots of European colonization, which dates back to the 15th century. She therefore maintains that decolonization and indigenization, by their very nature, must work against the challenges of continued Canadian colonial cultural and political hegemony that are still firmly in place.

This includes the contemporary colonial illusion that Canadian colonization happened a long time ago, that it is part of the past, and that things are different now. Every Canadian province and territory have historical monuments, copious written documentation, annual celebrations (Canada Day, for example), and nostalgic museum displays that help inaccurately mark the static quality of Canadian settler history. It will be difficult to change the mindset to one that recognizes that Canadian history is instead a fluid entity, directly related to the types of relationships non-Indigenous Canadians have with Indigenous Peoples today.

A willingness to make connections with the intersections of Canadian colonization, the negative impact on the original inhabitants, the benefits for others, and the ways these relationships continue into the present is a harsh Canadian truth that many do not want to swallow. In his work, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," Patrick Wolfe (2006) along with authors previously noted, contend that settler colonialism should be understood as a hegemonic structure and not some historical event in the past. To highlight how colonization is still very much alive today, Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 5) emphasize that colonial "violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation."

Regan (2010) states that all over the world, scholars have discussed the problems of structural change associated with the symbolic patterns of violence that are embedded in the history of Indigenous-settler relations. In *Five Qualities of Practice in Support of Reconciliation Processes*, John Lederach (2001) expresses concerns that breaking free from these cycles of inherent violence will be a challenge of authenticity and ethical cognition for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with respect to determining how to transcend from the past, through the present, and into the future.

Battiste (2013) asserts that the decolonization of Mi'kma'ki history is an excellent starting point for critical analysis that will challenge the personal privileges, belief systems, assumptions, and biases that are deeply embedded in the current culture and view of history. Lederach states (2001) that in order for the settler's conscience to welcome this new perspective, they must embrace the possibility of change, and not be fearful of what might transpire as a result. For most people, this shift is more easily said than done. For example, it is one thing for a 21st century settler to acknowledge that

Nova Scotia is considered unceded Mi'kmaw territory, according to the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1752, but what are the contemporary ramifications of genuinely living up to this statement and the treaty agreements?

In their study *Decolonizing our Schools: Aboriginal Education in the Toronto District School Board*, Susan Dion, Krista Johnston, and Carla Rice (2010) suggest that, in theory, the concept of decolonization is a wonderful term for the achievement of Indigenous resurgence and self-determination. However, the authors then state that, upon deeper reflection, it becomes obvious that this change will be an uphill battle until non-Indigenous Canadians become actively and genuinely involved in true social action. In agreement with Regan (2010) and Battiste (2013), I am of the opinion that challenging one's own belief system is a trying and distressing process because of the difficulty of acknowledging that our origins are tied to the alienation and degradation of Aboriginal Canadians, African Canadians, immigrants, and others.

Historically, research connected with Indigenous Peoples has been conducted using mainstream qualitative and quantitative approaches that support a colonizer ideology and continue to devalue Indigenous ways of transmitting knowledge. As noted by Smith (2012, p. 1) "the term research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonization." In addition, she asserts, "When mentioned in many Indigenous contexts, the word research stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful."

From a different perspective, the inherent colonial bias that exists within museum infrastructure and Canadian society may impact a person's ability to understand what we are doing and even the importance of the work. Realistically speaking, when settler try to dismantle and even wrap their colonial heads around the decolonization of Canadian history and its present-day relationship with contemporary colonization, as Vowel (2016) argues, they find it a very uncomfortable and daunting task. For this reason, some individuals might not be willing or even able at this juncture to consider their role in practising Indigenous allyship and decolonization.

Another concern about this project is the time it takes to build trust and genuine relationships with the Mi'kmaw community. This challenge is related to enlisting Mi'kmaw Elders and community members who are willing to work on the committee and to identifying other individuals who may have a wealth of knowledge to share from a Mi'kmaw point of view.

Depending on the disruption of the Mi'kmaw ability to pass knowledge from generation to generation, due to the devastating impact of residential schools, the Indian Act, and other Canadian government laws and policy, we cannot determine at this point which oral history about the area has been successfully passed down or has been erased from Mi'kmaw memory. Although a concern, this limitation can also be seen as a key objective of this research. Generating written documentation of the oral history of Lunenburg County in a way that honours how the Mi'kmaw would like it to be represented will be an important outcome of this work.

A final key challenge connected to this research project is the necessary grappling with the intersections of Tuck and Yang's (2012, p. 1) constructs "settler moves to innocence" and "an ethic of incommensurability" with settler involvement in decolonization. Tuck and Yang (2012) claim that despite the good intentions of settlers, this step in itself is fraught with the reconciling of colonial culpability. They argue that, when non-Indigenous individuals take on decolonial desires, settler efforts can "actually further settler colonization." Although these decolonial measures can decentre

settler perspectives, Tuck and Yang (2012) spell out how decolonial actions on the part of settlers have objectives that are incommensurable with decolonization.

Tuck and Yang (2012) highlight the fact that settlers continually find ways to resolve their colonial legacy and its impact on the original peoples. The authors contend that when decolonization is employed metaphorically it "makes possible a set of evasions" that they call "settler moves to innocence." For example, when settlers choose to use decolonial discourse as a research method, Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 1) claim that decolonization becomes a metaphor that settlers use to help "problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity." Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 3) firmly assert that "decolonization is much more than a metaphor" and expose the many tropes that settlers use to make the path to reconciliation easier for them so that they become less guilty about their complicity. Examples of some of these moves to innocence include settler nativism, fantasizing adoption, colonial equivocation, conscientization and re-occupation and urban homesteading of Indigenous Peoples.

Tuck and Yang (2012) further challenge and unsettle these notions of "settler moves towards innocence" by demonstrating their relationship with their other construct of "an ethic of incommensurability." The writers recognize that since "decolonization is not equivocal to other anti-colonial struggles," it is therefore incommensurable. One of the key purposes of Tuck and Yang's (2012, p. 1) work is to make it known that "what is distinct and sovereign for project(s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based on social just projects" has no common measure, which means that it therefore cannot be compared and, as a result, is incommensurable.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

Framework to Bring Methodologies Together

The aim of the research proposed for my doctoral dissertation is to document the decolonization initiatives of the Mahone Bay Museum. Since I am also an active participant in this process, the methodology described below will be used by me in the documentation process and as a participant in the work of the committee.

There are two fundamental aspects of methodology that I will use for this PhD dissertation. As the entire subject matter of the project undertaken by the Mahone Bay Museum is to privilege the Mi'kmaw voice, I believe it is essential and appropriate that I adopt Indigenous research methodologies as part of my work on my dissertation. The second key aspect is that this project is about community as the Mahone Bay Museum is a community-based organization. In addition to documenting the work of the museum I am also a member of the committee that has been charged with the work of including Mi'kmaw history in its work. Therefore, this dissertation is ideally suited to Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) principles. CBPR will be a key methodology used in this study.

Whether it is me documenting the museum's decolonizing journey, or the work of the collective, it is important that both Indigenous and western methodologies are incorporated across all aspects of this research. The methodology described below will be used by me in the documentation process,

as well as an active participant of what I will be documenting, and the decolonizing actions of the museum.

Since I am on the museum's decolonizing committee and I am also documenting the decolonizing process it is important that both the committee and I follow Wilson's (2008, p. 40) notion of "relational accountability." It states that "Key to the Indigenous research paradigm is that the researcher is subjective, builds [a] relationship with the research, and views research as [a] ceremony of maintaining accountability to these relationships." As Wilson (2008) suggests this Indigenous way to do research holds both me and the committee accountable to all the relationships that are connected to authentically documenting the research process that honours how the Mi'kmaq would like us to represent what happens.

This means that in order for this type of methodology to work, fundamentally both the committee and I must honour Mi'kmaw worldviews. This process is consistent with reconciliation as defined by the TRC (Government of Canada, 2018). This constraint means that research methodological obligations must follow Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing, which emphasize Mi'kmaw knowledge-based systems as the underlying principles and protocol for all areas of the research. Therefore, this research methodology will combine both Indigenous and non-Indigenous methods when documenting the strategies that the Mahone Bay Museum uses in its decolonizing initiatives, of its current museological practices.

In order to successfully support the ability to move between Indigenous and non-Indigenous research paradigms, the overall methodology must emphasize practising Indigenous allyship through relationship building from an Indigenous knowledge standpoint. This type of socially just, structured research in partnership privileges the Mi'kmaw worldview and is based on Mi'kmaw Elders and their community interests to build genuine friendships with the researcher.

Relationship as Methodology

What has the process of trust building and the establishment of relationships been like so that Mi'kmaw Elders and others in their community are willing to truly work in research in partnership to develop new historical narratives about Lunenburg County that privilege the Mi'kmaw worldview? In order to better understand the context of relationship as methodology and Wilson's notion of relational accountability let me use the lived experience of my recent master's degree to better explain and how this is directly related to my doctoral work.

The first thing to mention about building trust is that is takes time. It is not something that happens overnight, and it must be authentic. The process of trust with local Indigenous Peoples, began in the fall of 2016, when Dr. Sharpe suggested for the Graduate Studies in Lifelong Learning program practicum requirement that I become involved with the local women's drumming group known as All Nations Drum. These wonderful, strong women welcomed me into their close-knit group and introduced me to the healing powers of Indigenous drumming, Indigenous ways to view the world as well as other members in the local Mi'kmaw community.

Dr. Sharpe also suggested Catherine Martin, who is a Mi'kmaw Elder and was MSVU Nancy's Chair at the time, as my practicum supervisor. This current research idea would not be possible without the genuine relationships that have developed from wisdom and guidance of Catherine, All Nations Drum and the many Mi'kmaw Elders I have met through them that began with my master's work.

The trust that that has been built between me, the previously mentioned individuals and various members of the local Mi'kmaw community is based on the many lived experiences that we have shared together. This trust grew as a result of me being extremely respectful and humble which helped to demonstrate that I was authentically interested in learning about Mi'kmaw knowledge and cultural practices. This trust also included practising Indigenous allyship by becoming involved in socially just initiatives that aligned with their interests such as Stop Alton Gas, Walking with our Sisters, Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Woman vigils, other public events and peaceful protests.

Essential to the overall learning process of the practicum was that I practised Indigenous allyship, built genuine relationships and followed Wilson's (2008) notion of relational accountability. Central to Wilson's (2008, p. 110) thinking, and my own, is an understanding of the continued evolution and improvement of a relationship with a research idea and its intersection with the term "relationship" from an Indigenous perspective.

When looking back at the original master's degree from which this doctoral project stems, this concept is analogous to Wilson's (2010) construct known as "relational accountability." This Indigenous research way of knowing represents the synergetic, interdependent, interrelated responsibility between the two different projects and how the doctoral work is predicated on a commitment to begin where the master's work left off. Many of the relationships that I developed, through our lived experiences together, from the practicum experience have carried over into my master's thesis and are now fundamental to the success my doctoral work. It is a main reason for why I ended up working with the Mahone Bay Museum and their intention to decolonize how they represent local history and then decided to document this decolonizing process as my PhD dissertation.

Relationship is foundational to every aspect of this dissertation and is tied to every methodology described below. Wilson's (2008) work is exemplary with respect to expounding on what relationship means from an Indigenous research perspective. He draws on the interrelatedness of Indigenous epistemology, ontology, axiology, and methodology and the associated commitment to and application of Indigenous research methodologies and Indigenous philosophy. His work will thus be crucial to my understanding of what is meant by Indigenous research. Because I will employ a relationship-style methodology, similar to the one Wilson (2008) describes, this project will make connections that will support a more ethical approach to learning, through the mobilization of holistic Mi'kmaw epistemologies as deep platforms for viewing public pedagogy such as museums as sites for social action. This way to do research also applies to how the committee will conduct their decolonizing actions.

As Wilson (2008) suggests, the implementation of Indigenous methodological practices must encompass an understanding of, and respect for, Indigenous research as ceremony that is built on the deep holistic levels of Indigenous relationship. By following Wilson's (2008) lead, I will consider conducting an investigation in a manner that recognizes the ceremony of maintaining accountability to all of these relationships and to others that develop along the way. As a result, this doctoral research experience will incorporate spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional components of Indigenous methods of conducting research. This technique differs significantly from that employed in mainstream academia, which places greater importance on qualifying and quantifying data according to a specific scientific approach. The collaborative commitment of the committee to this

holistic aspect of Indigenous methodology will also be key when sifting through what needs to transpire in our decolonial work together.

Setting the Context

Currently the Mahone Bay Museum presents the history of Mahone Bay from a very colonial perspective. Most of the displays begin in 1754 and tell the story of colonization and settlement in the area that highlight the European narrative. Recently, the museum has expressed a desire to include the Mi'kmaw narrative with respect to the history of the area before the British settlement of Mahone Bay was established.

The museum has formed a volunteer committee to carry out the project. Documenting the work of this committee will be the central component of my PhD dissertation. The committee includes Mi'kmaw representation as well as settler representation. As the museum's Board of Directors is responsible for managing the museum, the committee's work and outcomes will need the Board approval to be put into effect. The project has already received support and approval from both the Board and staff of the museum.

Potential Research Idea & How Methodologies Will Be Used by Me or Committee

One of the interesting archeological features in Lunenburg County is the existence of Mi'kmaw shell middens and Acadian lime kilns, in close proximity to each other, that predate the arrival of the English. These provide a good example of the type of history that can be told in the museum and provide a vehicle to demonstrate the specific methodologies to be used in the research for this PhD dissertation. I will use this example of local history that has been brought to my attention to demonstrate how the methodology will be incorporated for this project.

There are very well-preserved remnants of two Acadian lime kilns on the shores of Mahone Bay Harbour. There is also evidence of Mi'kmaw middens very close to the lime kilns as well as the remnants of a large pier that could date back to Acadian times. There is written documentation about a study done in 1995 on the Acadian kilns and Mi'kmaw middens stored at the Nova Scotia Archives.

Archeological evidence that was found in Debert, Nova Scotia has proven that the Mi'kmaw have been living in Mi'kma'ki for over 13,400 years. The Mi'kmaw oral historical records suggest that they have been here since time immemorial. As shellfish was a plentiful source of food, over the centuries, large piles of shells accumulated. These middens would suggest the location was a Mi'kmaw settlement for a long time. When the Acadians arrived, they had a need for lime for construction and built the kilns near an obvious lime source. The shells were crushed and burned in the lime kilns to produce lime. The lime was then transported from the pier and used on construction projects.

This theory would support the existence of a long and consistent settlement by the Mi'kmaq in that area. It would also provide some insight into the interaction and relationship between the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians prior to settlement by the English. This relationship could also have an impact on the way the English and the Mi'kmaq interacted during the early years of colonization.

Research Methods

The following section of the proposal outlines both Indigenous and qualitative methods that will be integrated as a comprehensive methodological approach for this project. When applicable, the Mi'kmaw middens and Acadian kilns example will be used to help demonstrate how the methods will work together.

Indigenous Research Methods

Indigenous Storywork Principles

Another important Indigenous research paradigm that will inform the research methodology is represented by the principles set out in *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* by Jo-ann Archibald (Q'um Q'um Xiiem) (2008). As explained by Archibald (2008), Indigenous storywork is an Indigenous pedagogical tool, which uses the power of oral narratives as a method of achieving deep learning. Her seven Indigenous storywork principles of "respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness and synergy" (Archibald. 2008, p. 129) should be used as a basis for recognizing the importance of accountability when documenting the decolonizing efforts of the Mahone Bay Museum.

As I am documenting the decolonial process of the museum, the research approach that I must take must be done in a way that is respectful, shows responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness and synergy. This accountability will guide many aspects of how I document by being accountable to Mi'kmaw Elders and Mi'kmaw scholars, and my relationship with the decolonizing research topics that the committee decides to bring to fruition.

The above-mentioned Indigenous storywork principles can be employed to facilitate a culturally responsible approach to the decolonization of the settler view of how one might document the decolonizing narrative of the museum. Using these principles demonstrates a commitment by me to honour Mi'kmaw ways to do research.

Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing)

A very important Mi'kmaw pedagogical framework that will be used as part of the methodology for this study is Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing). Created by Murdina Marshall, Albert Marshall, and Cheryl Bartlett (2012) and described in "Two-Eyed Seeing and Other Lessons Learned Within a Co-Learning Journey of Bringing Together Indigenous and Mainstream Knowledges and Ways of Knowing," Etuaptmumk are guiding principles for integrating Indigenous and mainstream research frameworks.

Incorporating Etuaptmumk as part of the methodology will be important because it is a type of Mi'kmaw epistemology that celebrates an integrative co-learning journey between the Mi'kmaw and non-Indigenous people. I see the work by Marshall et al. (2012) as necessary to balance between an Indigenous and non-Indigenous methodology because Etuaptmumk illuminates the depth of involvement of the research through both an Indigenous and a mainstream lens.

According to Marshall et al. (2012), Etuaptmumk is a gift of multiple perspectives treasured by many Indigenous Peoples, which is a requisite for genuine transcultural, transdisciplinary, and collaborative work to occur between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In "Two-Eyed Seeing in Medicine," Marshall, Marshall, and Bartlett (2015, pp. 17-18) distinguish this way of knowing as "learning to see from one eye with the strength of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strength of mainstream knowledge and ways of knowing for the benefit of all."

By applying Etuaptmumk to the documentation of the decolonizing process of the museum, I will be better able to integrate Mi'kmaw and mainstream ways to understand stories from a variety of perspectives. For example, by following Etuaptmumk I can employ a combination of Indigenous oral history and western written document analysis about a narrative that the committee decides to explore like the Mi'kmaw middens and Acadian kilns. Etuaptmumk allows a validation of multiple stories to occur which supports the creation of a deeper, richer historical account of this narrative to emerge. From my point of view, Etuaptmumk allows me and the committee the ability to conduct research using both Indigenous and western frameworks and is instrumental to our efforts to decolonize and indigenize the museum.

An important consideration to point out is that the process of decolonization and reconciliation can bring about situations that can be very uncomfortable for settlers. The work of developing an Indigenous narrative for the Mahone Bay Museum could produce results that are very uncomfortable for the settler population of Mahone Bay. The principles of Etuaptmumk can be utilized as part of the research process to facilitate results of the research that enhance the greater good of the entire community.

Msit No'kmaq

Msit No'kmaq is an important Mi'kmaw teaching that will guide the research methodology for this dissertation. Msit No'kmaq is a Mi'kmaw knowledge construct that acknowledges deep connections with the living spirit within all things, including animals, plants, rocks, water, fire and air, Mother earth and the universe. Translated into English, Msit No'kmaq means roughly "all my relations."

As with the Indigenous approaches to research described by Wilson (2008, p. 70), Msit No'kmaq encompasses an understanding that interprets the whole research paradigm as being "greater than the sum of its parts" and includes the inherent holistic relationships that exist within the research idea. Both Elder Joe and Elder Ellen suggest that this Mi'kmaw way of understanding our relationship with the past, present, and future generations of everything is about recognizing that everything has a spirit and that all of these energies are interconnected in a holistic way. Elder Ellen says that Msit' No'kmaq can also apply to the many living relationships that can be found in a story as well.

Msit No'kmaq asks that we recognize our place in the world and honour and respect the relationships we have with everything in it. As humans, it is important that we recognize both individually and collectively the epistemological, ideological, and axiological relationships that touch us and the ways in which our actions are connected to those relationships. Msit No'kmaq will help to remind both me and the committee that Mi'kmaw knowledge systems are replete with profound teachings that help humans understand their inherent relationship with and responsibility to all life

and beings that inhabit Turtle Island. This profound concept can also be found in other Indigenous knowledge-based systems, and it connects directly to respect for and acknowledgement of the complex relationships that humans have with all living things and ultimately everything (Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre, 2015).

In the case of documenting the research process of the museum, Msit No'kmaq helps me to acknowledge the multi-faceted relationships that co-exist between the different narratives about history, such as the Mi'kmaw midden and Acadian lime kilns, and their deep connections to land and place. Msit No'kmaq keeps me on track with Etuaptmumk by acknowledging that research about stories and history is very much alive, fluid and connected to place, many types of relationships and must balance within the Mi'kmaw and western views to successfully understand the world. Msit No' kmaq will inform this project because it provides an opportunity for me to think differently about research in a rich and holistic way.

Thinking Seven Generations Ahead

The Seventh Generation Principle, also known as Thinking Seven Generations Ahead, is another Mi'kmaw discernment technique that will be instrumental in informing the research process for this study. In her work, *Thinking Seven Generations Ahead: Mi'kmaq Language Resurgence in the Face of Settler Colonialism*, Ashely Julian (2014) examines the Mi'kmaw Seventh Generation Principle. She describes this construct as a community's responsibility to consider the impact their actions or decisions will have seven generations into the future. As with Msit No'kmaq, the Seventh Generation Principle encompasses more than just the human factor. Julian (2014) characterizes the Thinking Seven Generations Ahead philosophy as integral to the Mi'kmaw way of life and states that it is based on honouring values that connect past, present, and future generations.

Thinking Seven Generations Ahead is a Mi'kmaw ethical principle that maintains relational accountability with respect to decisions made by me when documenting the decolonizing process of the museum and how this intersects with being an active committee member of this decolonizing initiative. In order to help ensure the security of future generations, it can be applied to the ethical responsibility required of a researcher, like myself, when conducting Indigenous research. Furthermore, this principle can help guide the committee when deciding how to best represent decolonial narratives in the museum as it places emphasis how the historical representation is tied to the past, present and how this impacts the future.

Interestingly, this is exactly what the TRC is asking settlers to do as part of the reconciliation process. Since this research is committed to reconciliation, as a researcher interested decolonizing colonial history, a big piece of this project is both recognizing and understanding how the historical actions of the past influence the present and future generations. Re-creating historical narratives in the museum that privilege the Mi'kmaw voice that exposes how mainstream colonial discourse uses the past to influence the present and future is an important part of decolonization.

Hence, this Mi'kmaw construct is important to the methodology for this study because it helps both me and our committee grasp the multi-generational components of history. Thinking Seven Generations Ahead is the ability not just to look at how our actions impact the future but also to consider looking back in history to see how actions have impacted where we are today. Therefore, when we consider the Mi'kmaw middens and Acadia kiln story for example, in order to re-create a

decolonized version of this history, it is crucial to look at the multi-generational ways in which the place where these artefacts are found was used.

Talking Circle

When the research committee meets, we will use a Mi'kmaw Talking Circle combined with Archibald's storywork principles to help us shape the appropriate narrative that best reflects the Mi'kmaw interests. The purpose of the Mi'kmaw Talking Circle is to create a safe environment in which the committee members can safely share their point of view with each other. In a Talking Circle, everyone is considered as an equal, everyone belongs, and their views are respected. The intention is to build relationship, understand and connect with one another. These two methodological approaches allow for the collaborative work of the creation of new stories to emerge.

In addition to the committee there are a number of other resources with relevant knowledge who may be consulted if needed. I will be responsible for coordinating between the volunteer committee and any additional resources who might provide valuable input into the decolonial work of the museum.

Qualitative Methods

With the use of Etuaptmumk as the central framework to work in both Indigenous and western research the incorporation of specific western style qualitative research approaches can be easily applied to the overall research methodology. As outlined in *README FIRST for a User's Guide to Qualitative Methods* by Lyn Richards and Janice Morse (2013) the qualitative research approaches that will be considered for this study include community-based participatory research (CBPR), document analysis and personal interviews.

For clarification, I will call the Mahone Bay Museum decolonizing and indigenising initiatives the Mahone Bay Museum Decolonizing Project and use the acronym MBMDP. Please keep in mind that when we begin to do our research together the name of this project might change depending on the input by other committee members.

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

Since CBPR provides a partnership approach to research and I will be documenting the museum's decolonizing process that I am also a partner of, it makes sense that CBPR will be used as a methodology for this study. CBPR allows me as a researcher, as well as a participant of the project, to mutually engage with the Mi'kmaw community instead of western research approaches, which in the past, have conducted research on the Mi'kmaq. CBPR supports a fundamental goal of the committee which is to prioritize the Mi'kmaw worldviews as central to every facet of the MBMDP.

The MBMDP is ideally suited to the principles of CBPR as it, by necessity, involves a partnership among the museum, me as researcher and the local Mi'kmaw community. CBPR in essence means that I do not control or dictate the parameters of the research project. Rather, I work in partnership with the Mi'kmaw community to facilitate and participate in the research with relevant members of the affected Mi'kmaw community.

There is an excellent book by Barbara A. Israel, Eugenia Eng, Amy J. Shultz and Edith Parker (2012) as editors called *Methods in Community - Based Participatory Research for Health*. Chapter Two "Developing and Maintaining Partnerships with Communities" by Wallerstein, Duran, Minkler and Foley (2012) describes in some detail the principles and methods that can be employed in CBPR. Although the title of the book refers to health, the principles outlined expressly apply to a broader context including Indigenous research and can be applied to the MBMDP.

Some of the principles described by Israel et al. (2012, p. 35) are as follows and will be utilized when carrying out my PhD research:

1. Perhaps the most important principle is to establish a relationship of trust between the researcher (in this case me) and the community. Usually building real trust between Indigenous individuals, their communities and settlers evolves over a long period of time. Since embarking on my masters, I have engaged in many activities to establish both strong and genuine relationships within the Mi'kmaw community that will be essential to the success of my research and dissertation.
2. A second key principle is the need to bring together the traditional academic rigor and discipline of a western based university with the knowledge, wisdom and experience of the local Mi'kmaw community. As highlighted by Israel et al. (2012, p. 34), "By respecting the community's expert knowledge concerning its assets as well as its needs and concerns, researchers will be in a much better position to forge egalitarian CBPR partnerships."
3. A third principle is to maintain flexibility. The authors state (2012, p. 32), "Plan and then implement the plan is too simplistic. To succeed, CBPR processes must be open to permutations and reformulations." This principle will be followed in the research process by working with the members of the committee, particularly the Mi'kmaw members, as they define what narratives they wish to tell in the museum. The documentation of this process should be very valuable as hopefully the evolution of the MBMDP will provide "learnings" that can be used by other museums attempting to do the same kind of work.

The authors (2012, p. 35) set out four strategies, all of which will be followed, assessed and continually re-evaluated during my PhD research project:

1. Self-reflecting on our capacities, resources and potential liabilities as … academics interested in engaging with the community.
2. Identifying potential partners and partnerships through appropriate networks, associations and leaders.
3. Negotiating the issues for research; even if initiated through the university (in this case through me). These issues and research questions can be reframed through the partnership that has been built.
4. Creating and nurturing structures to sustain partnerships through constituency building and organizational development.

These strategies will guide my research, my participation in the decolonial project with the Mahone Bay Museum, and my work documenting the process. I have already made a start on some of these. A lot of my journey, since I started my masters and have continued with my PhD work to date, has been to look critically at my own personal history as a descendant of the first German settlers in Lunenburg County and to reflect on how that affects my perception of the local history I have been

taught since I was a child. In my journey, I have had to engage in deep questioning of how my privileges as a settler have been created at the expense of the local Mi'kmaw and how I need to deal with that.

I have already identified a number of potential partners and leaders who have agreed to work on the committee and who can guide my research as the project evolves. The overall framework of the research question of how to reflect local Mi'kmaw history in the Mahone Bay Museum has been established. However, as stated above, I recognize that the issues and research questions may be reframed as the work proceeds through partnership with the local community. The museum has created what in my view is a good structure to nurture the project by including Mi'kmaq and settlers on the committee charged with the task of providing a more balanced history that includes the Mi'kmaw perspective.

CBPR fits nicely with the Etuaptmumk framework and guidelines set out by Marshall et al. (2012), whereby Indigenous Peoples and settlers work together with less restrictive ranges and types of different research methods that can be used. As mentioned before, Marshall et al. (2012) frequently explain Etuaptmumk as a way "to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of western knowledges and ways of knowing and learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all."

Seeing that this Indigenous multiple methodological research framework is supported by CBPR it offers a variety of both Indigenous and western methods to be used in the process of building trust between the MBMDP committee members and the local Mi'kmaw community. This relationship of trust is directly related to the ability for the MBMDP to successfully restory colonial history and build counter narratives that honour the Mi'kmaw worldview. By following Marshall et al. (2013) Etuaptmumk understanding as an Indigenous methodological research tool, this kind of integrative transcultural approach to research asks both Mi'kmaq and non-Indigenous participants, on the museum's decolonial committee, to share their varied worldviews collaboratively from a cross-cultural perspective involving no hierarchy.

As stated by Gregory Younging (2018) in *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and About Indigenous Peoples*, culturally appropriate research requires placing Indigenous Peoples at the forefront of the work and should arise from the needs of the communities. As well, he also understands CBPR as an essential component that requires "engagement, and inclusion for [a] new conversation to occur between Indigenous Peoples and settler society" (Younging, 2018, p. 30). CBPR supports one of the main principles of the research which is that the voice of the Mi'kmaq must be privileged across all aspects of the research.

Like the Indigenous research methodologies described by Marshall et al. (2012) (Etuaptmumk), Wilson's (2008) Relational Accountability, Archibald's (2008) Storywork principles, Msit No'kmaq, and Thinking Seven Generations Ahead, CBPR is built on a relational philosophy that connects one's deliberations, actions, and decisions to something larger than oneself. Similar to an Indigenous research paradigm, CBPR is thus a natural choice for use in conjunction with this study. Like Indigenous methodological frameworks it helps to hold me, as well as the entire project, accountable to the study itself and to the Indigenous research methodologies that will be used.

CBPR is fundamentally rooted in participatory action processes, with a goal of transformative praxis, that supports my work as a documenter and the committee's work, to build socially just pedagogy

that supports social change. Since CBPR is based on collaborative engagement between the community and me, it supports true partnership to develop among the MBMDP members. Therefore, CBPR fully enables our committee to contribute our expertise and knowledge and share in the decision-making across every aspect of the research process.

Finally, since CBPR is considered a type of research that involves action and reflection it also supports my success as the documenter of this project. By being personally and actively involved in the MBMDP, CBPR supports the learning that comes from the practice of reflection as a fundamental component of recording the research process. The principles of CBPR allow me to engage in a deep thoughtful relationship with the lived experience of the MBMDP and its work and use my reflection of the MBMDP as a crucial cognitive practice of the whole research itself.

Document Analysis (Secondary Sources)

As mentioned earlier, because CBPR is context specific to the needs of a community, it will allow the MBMDP to incorporate broader and less restrictive choices when choosing research methods. In *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis*, Sharan Merriam and Robin Grenier (2019) define document analysis as a qualitative data-collection research method whereby the interpretation of relevant documents is applied in order to support the investigation of the research topic question. Another author, Glen A. Bowen (2009), in "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method," describes document analysis as a form of qualitative research involving interpretation of documents by the researcher to give voice and meaning to the topic to be assessed.

To investigate both the Mi'kmaw storyline and European colonial narratives and myths related to Lunenburg County, the MBMDP will use this social research method of document analysis for collecting data. Document analysis will enable the committee to uncover and expose underlying stories that may be hidden within largely colonial historical accounts of Mahone Bay and the surrounding area.

For example, the committee members will use document analysis from written sources, such as the Nova Scotia Archeological Society, Nova Scotia Archives and Acadian Archives Canada, to validate the physical evidence of the Mi'kmaw presence in the area. This data will be used to help decolonize the current colonial narrative about the history of the Mahone Bay area including, for example, the Mi'kmaw middens and Acadian kilns.

Exploratory Informal Interviews (Primary Sources)

The MBMDP will include interviews with individuals who have been working to contest the colonial European historical slant so that more accurate and socially just narratives emerge. The individuals who will be interviewed include Mi'kmaw Elders, Mi'kmaw scholars, and professional historians who have been working on co-creating and re-creating narratives that are different from those presented in the Mahone Bay Museum. An audio tape and or video recorder will be used to record the responses of the interviewees, and then for analysis purposes, the data can be transcribed into written form. Consistent with previous ethical considerations, the audiotapes will be erased after transcription. All participants will have the option of withdrawing at any time.

In the case of the Mi'kmaw middens and Acadian kilns, myself and a Mi'kmaw Elder will interview Mi'kmaq and other knowledge-holders who might have both oral and written information about the story that underpins Mi'kmaw representation.

It is quite possible that during the interviews I may be given guidance about a number of factors that influence this study. For example a Mi'kmaw Elder may offer their wisdom about the best way to document the decolonial process of the museum, suggest ideas about what the museum can do to enhance its decolonizing actions and give specific ways that local narratives should be considered to privilege the Mi'kmaw knowledge about the story.

Outline for this Research

Mahone Bay Museum Decolonial Project (MBMDP) Phase

For this study one of my roles will be to participate on the Mahone Bay Museum decolonial committee to help create opportunities and narratives that privilege the voice of the Mi'kmaw and how they want history represented in the Mahone Bay Museum. Therefore, for this phase of the study, I will be participating in this effort along with others who are part of a committee established by the museum for this purpose.

Part of this phase of the MBMDP includes:

- Mi'kmaw Elder Ellen Hunt and I will meet on a regular basis to discuss the MBMDP. Through our meetings we will collaborate and come up with suggestions for decolonizing and indigenizing projects that the MBMDP might undertake.
- When the MBMDP committee meets as a group, we will use a Talking Circle combined with Archibald's storywork principles as the methods to share our collective ideas and work through restorying of colonial narratives and projects that the museum will incorporate in ways to honour Mi'kmaw worldviews. We also discuss possible individuals to interview who are Mi'kmaw knowledge keepers and can share valuable information related to the ideas we are discussing.
- Based on how the committee decides to move forward and what decolonial and indigenising projects they want initiated, Elder Hunt and I, together, will interview Mi'kmaw knowledge keepers who may provide important information about the topic.
- As a team, Elder Ellen and I will use document analysis to collect data like going to the NS Archives together.
- I will do document analysis and bring to Elder Ellen and the committee for review.
- Since Elder Ellen has already done a substantial amount of research about the history of the Mi'kmaw in Lunenburg County I will do an oral interview with her as a method for collecting data. She may give me document analysis suggestions in which I will do on my own and bring the findings back to our team.
- Combining document analysis with the interviews, Elder Hunt and I will craft and restory a document of our findings as well as ideas about how to best disseminate the new narrative and bring to the museum committee for discussion and review. When we meet with the committee, we will use a Talking Circle combined with Archibald's storywork principles as the methodology to share our findings. We will use this Indigenous way to share, collaborate and finetune the restorying of colonial narratives that honours the Mi'kmaw point of view.

- When gathering data either as an interview or document analysis, I will be the one who records and transcribes the data documents into written form on my laptop which is password protected.
- It is possible that other Mi'kmaw members of the committee will want to be more actively involved than is described above. If that occurs, I would be pleased to work with them to assist in any initiatives they wish to pursue.
- When the MBMDP is near completion the committee will meet, and I will ask them a prescribed set of questions about the project. We will use the Talking Circle combined with Archibald's storywork principles as the methodology to discuss these questions.

Broad Themes That May Formulate Questions for the Interviews with Mi'kmaw Knowledge Holders

Below are some preliminary questions that represent themes that may be explored during the interviews. The questions will be further developed as the committee meets and decides which decolonial issues need to be addressed. Topics that may influence the direction of the questions include; artefact display and representation, re-creation of historical narratives that privileges the Mi'kmaq as right holders of knowledge, and formal recognition through signage - to name a few.

- What is the Mi'kmaw story about this place?
- Do you know anything about this story that is connected to the Mi'kmaq?
- Why do you think you know only the colonial version of the story?
- What does this story tell us about this time period in Lunenburg County?
- What does this story tell us about today?
- What purpose, if any, do you think the story serves?
- Do you have other stories that you would like to share?
- How can Mi'kmaw ways of knowing be used for communicating the Mi'kmaw understanding of the history of Mi'kma'ki/Atlantic Canada?
- How do you think the Mahone Bay Museum can do a better job of telling stories that privilege the Mi'kmaw point of view?

Possible Research Questions that Researcher may ask Committee

- Do you have any suggestions for how the Mahone Bay Museum can continue to build stronger relationships and networks with the local Mi'kmaw communities?
- Do you have further examples of ways to embed Mi'kmaw values into Mahone Bay Museum?
- Can you give examples of how the Mahone Bay Museum can continue to move forward and improve Mi'kmaw representation and engagement?
- Can you give your opinion about what processes worked well?
- Can you give your opinion about the tensions and problems that the committee encountered and how these solutions were worked out?
- Do you see the decolonial work by the Mahone Bay Museum as having a positive impact on the Mi'kmaw community? Please explain your answer
- Do you see the decolonial work by the Mahone Bay Museum as having a negative impact on the Mi'kmaw community? Please explain your answer.

What is my Contribution and Role as a Participant on the Committee of the MBMDP?

- I will bring my experience of developing strong relationships based on trust with Indigenous Elders and their communities.
- I will share how I built trust and relationship with the Mi'kmaq and how this experience can be used as a guide for other committee members.
- I will share my knowledge with the committee of my recent experience as a settler working to restory Lunenburg County history in a way that honours the Mi'kmaw point of view.
- As appropriate, I will introduce the works of historical scholars I personally know and have relationships with to the committee - for example: Martha Walls, Daniel Paul, and John Reid.
- I will use my knowledge, experience and relationships that I have developed with the Mi'kmaw community in ways that can support the MBMDP.
- I will help other settlers on the committee develop their own relationships of trust with the Mi'kmaw members of the committee.
- I will share my knowledge on how to successfully incorporate Indigenous research frameworks such as Etuaptmumk, Indigenous Storywork Principles, Thinking Seven Generations Ahead, Msit No'kmaq, Relationship, Relational Accountability and The Talking Circle when the Mi'kmaq and settlers co-create new stories together about Mi'kma'ki.
- I will conduct face to face interviews and collaborate with other committee members on analysis of data.
- I will collect written documents and collaborate with other committee members on analysis of data.
- I will suggest that the committee use a Talking Circle approach for general meetings and the decision-making process for the outcomes of the project.
- My role in supporting this internal process will be to co-facilitate the Talking Circle with an Elder. The Talking Circle will be the main activity that the committee will use as a method to share stories, information, knowledge and discuss any tensions across all aspects of the research.
- I will be actively involved in preparing any type of dissemination of our findings such as arts-based projects, public lectures, and representation of new stories in the museum.
- I am documenting this community-based activity and I am the main note taker and documenter of all meetings.

Documenting Phase

Another aspect of this study is that while I am participating on the committee, I will be documenting what happens. The final document will be my PhD dissertation.

What is my Role When Documenting the Research Process of the MBMDP?

- During the MBMDP, I will create a written document of the research process of the MBMDP.
- Included in this document will be an analysis of the research process taken by the committee. I will write about and identify the successes, the tensions, the obstacles encountered, what worked, what did not work, how were tensions solved, what strategies worked to help the committee succeed, outcomes and dissemination ideas, etc.

- As part of this document, I also will also reflect of my experience working on the MBMDP.

Audiences and Outcomes

What is interesting about this study is that there will be different audiences for different aspects of the research findings. For starters, the documentation of the decolonial process of the museum provides an example and possibly a template for other museums who are interested in decolonizing their museological infrastructure to use as a guide.

Secondly, from the MBMDP, there are many potential decolonial projects that will come to fruition that honour important ways to include the Mi'kmaq as inherent right holders of Mi'kmaw knowledge about local history and narrative. Some of these ideas include: a visual representation of a Mi'kmaw narrative at Mahone Bay Museum, a plaque near the Mi'kmaw middens and Acadian kiln site with brief description about the history, new town sign that reflects the Mi'kmaw presence prior to British colonization and co-sponsoring a public event with Mahone Islands Conservation Association (MICA) about our findings which prioritizes the Mi'kmaw knowledge about the area. Some potential audiences for these decolonial projects by the museum include but are not limited to local Mi'kmaw, local settlers, children, and tourists who visit the museum.

Committee Members

On Site Committee Members

Dr. Elder Joe Michael is a very well-respected Mi'kmaw Elder from Indian Brook, Nova Scotia who recently received an honorary doctorate from Acadia University. He is on the Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network, (NSITEN) Board of Directors. NSITEN is a volunteer based, not for profit cultural tourism organization that works towards supporting the growth of authentic and Mi'kmaw cultural, tourism businesses and community enterprises in Nova Scotia.

Elder Ellen Hunt is from Lunenburg and has conducted extensive research in Lunenburg County related to the history and origins of the Mi'kmaq.

Lyne Allain is the Mahone Bay Museum Manager and Curator. She was hired in Spring 2016 and has made decolonizing the current museological practices a priority.

Barry Stevens is a local Mi'kmaw businessperson in the area. He has a natural interest in representing local history and culture that privileges the Mi'kmaw knowledge about the area.

Margie Knickle is a PhD student at MSVU who is interested in learning about her colonial upbringing from a Mi'kmaw perspective. Her ancestors were some of the original European colonizers that helped to settler Lunenburg, Nova Scotia in 1753.

Michael Eisnor is an amateur historian whose family who has lived in the Mahone Bay area since early British colonization. He has done extensive research on the intriguing history, origins and background of history in the area that highlights the Mi'kmaw presence.

Potential Offsite Resources

The offsite resources include other Elders, interested Mi'kmaw and historians that will be important resources to help guide the work include:

Gerald Gloade is an artist, and Mi'kmaw storyteller who is currently the Program Development Officer for the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre.

Roger Lewis is a curator of Ethnology at the Nova Scotia Museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He specializes in Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw archeology, knowledge practices and historical narratives connected to the Mi'kmaq use of land and resources, and the holistic Mi'kmaw relationship to cultural objects (Nova Scotia Museum, 2016).

Elder Dr. Daniel Paul is an author, columnist, and human rights activist whose interests are exposing Atlantic colonial history from the Mi'kmaw perspective.

Melissa Sue Labrador is Mi'kmaw artist from the Wildcat Mi'kmaw community. Her whole life has been immersed in the Mi'kmaw culture, traditional values and ways. She draws on these lived experiences with her family for her creative inspiration.

Dr. John Reid is a history professor at St Mary's University whose academic focus is early "modern north-eastern North American history prioritizing imperial-Indigenous concerns in Acadia/Nova Scotia and Northern New England (St. Mary's University, 2016)."

David Corkum is a retired high school teacher and a local amateur historian who has conducted extensive research with respect to both the colonial history and the Mi'kmaq along the South Shore. Similar to Margie, his also family date back to some of the original settlers of Lunenburg.

Ethical Considerations

As a non-Indigenous researcher who is practising research in partnership with the Mi'kmaw Peoples, it is imperative that I understand the different ethical concerns that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous research. Since this study concerns the Mi'kmaw Peoples it must come under the scrutiny of Indigenous and mainstream research ethic reviews.

The first ethics review will be conducted by Cape Breton (Unama'ki) University and is called the "Mi'kmaw Research Policy and Protocols Conducting Research with and or Among Mi'kmaw Peoples." As well, the Mi'kmaw's inherent Indigenous right known as Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) will be incorporated as fundamental ethical values to abide by. Created by UNDRIP (UN General Assembly, 2006) FPIC is a prerequisite that ensures the full involvement of Indigenous Peoples across every aspect of an Indigenous research project from design to implementation, evaluation and dissemination. An important element of FPIC (UN General Assembly, 2006) is that it allows the Mi'kmaq, at any point during the research process, to give or withhold their consent to this project and how it may affect their unceded territory Mi'kma'ki. Lastly, this study must also come under the approval of Mount Saint Vincent Universities "Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans."

Chapter Four

CONCLUSION

Significance of Research

This PhD dissertation provides documentation of what can be learned from the decolonizing initiatives that the Mahone Bay Museum is undertaking to privilege the Mi'kmaw voice concerning how to decolonize local narratives. By documenting the decolonizing process being undertaken by the museum, this study will identify lessons learned, examine inherent tensions in decolonial work, illustrate successful decolonial projects by the museum and develop tools that can be useful for other museums also interested in decolonization and indigenization.

This thesis proposal demonstrates how Indigenous research principles can be used to support the recommendations made by TRC (Government of Canada, 2018) which calls upon Aboriginal Peoples, non-Indigenous peoples and museums to collaborate in the inauguration of museological practices that advance an understanding of reconciliation. Because this incorporates an Indigenous research paradigm, this doctoral research represents a response to the TRC (Government of Canada, 2018) requests to build Indigenous research capacity through the identification of methods of working in partnership that honour the research practices of local communities. These practices include Mi'kmaw ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies that are geared toward initiatives that mobilize Mi'kmaw knowledge. These strategies will contribute to the strengthening of the capacity of the local Mi'kmaw community to conduct research in partnership with the broader research community.

This study will also provide an example of how non-Indigenous researchers can engage respectfully when working with Indigenous communities. A final consideration is that the work proposed here will be conducted in response to the TRC Calls to Action (Government of Canada, 2018), a document that defines reconciliation as the ongoing process of establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Overall, this topic is significant because it demonstrates the value of Indigenous knowledge-based systems and Indigenous ways of practising research and how they can be incorporated into current post-secondary research models. This work will not be just an add-on to an existing body of knowledge but can fundamentally change how mainstream knowledge is understood and can affect how western research is usually conducted. Through the development of these more socially just museological methods the shared history of Mahone Bay and surrounding area can be re-storied in a way that privileges Mi'kmaw knowledge.

By recording examples of the museum's decolonial projects, a final aspect of this proposed PhD dissertation will be that it impacts how we understand colonial history from personal, local/community, regional, and national points of view. The documentation of the different decolonized narratives is important because it disrupts and challenges colonial discourse and sets in motion the possibility of a different and more socially just Canada. The work will facilitate strengthened peace and friendship relations between the Mi'kmaq and settlers, along with their shared responsibility to represent the history of Canada in a way that supports reconciliation. The hope is for transformative education that produces constructive social change and that can also be applied to other educational institutions, such as public schools and universities.

Possible Chapter Outline

Abstract

Introduction

Chapter – Literature Review

Chapter – Research Methodology

Chapter – Ethical Considerations

Chapter – Elder Responses from Personal Interviews

Chapter – Analysis of Written Documentation & Findings

Chapter – Description of Committee's Work

Chapter – Mahone Bay Museum Outcomes

Chapter – Analysis of the Committee Processes

Chapter – Tools for the Decolonization of Colonial Narratives: Mi'kmaw Perspectives

Chapter – Autoethnographic Reflection

Chapter – Conclusion

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