Wenona Victor, “Indigenous Justice: Clearing Space for Indigenous Epistemologies,” Research Paper for the National Centre for First Nations Governance, December 2007.

**Thesis/Purpose:** The purpose of the paper was for Victor to share what she has learned in her exploration and application of Indigenous epistemologies with respect to the concept of justice.

**Summary:**

* Victor’s paper examines Aboriginal issues of self-determinism, colonization, ethnocentrism, violence against Aboriginal women, internal colonial challenges and Indigenous justice.
* Central to Victor’s argument was the concept of Eurocentric bias in western research or non-western cultures whereby values and norms of the European culture are used to evaluate and assess another culture. Example “Indians have no laws” – just because you can’t see it doesn’t mean it’s not there (9).
* Colonial violence – removal of children from reserves, overrepresentation of Aboriginals in prisons, lack of attention to Aboriginal culture and values.
* Self-Determinism vs. Colonialism:
* Self-determination nurtures human dignity, human responsibility, self and collective actualization and continuity, a colonial regime thrives on its ability to oppress to maintain hierarchical orderings for power and importance, authority, ignorance and a concept of time that is both linear and extremely short.
* Victor highlights the internal struggle of the Aboriginal community of “collective amnesia” where either culture has been forgotten (possibly forcibly so) or leaders have sold out to colonizing culture.
* Presents the solution of internal sovereignty – by taking control of personal lives, families, clans and communities. Aboriginals must return to traditional knowledge because it speaks to positive relationships, respect, solidarity and survival.

**Context:**

* Research methods and epistemologies applied to Aboriginal information.
* Colonization and Eurocentric approaches to Aboriginal political science.
* Aboriginal concepts of justice and sovereignty.