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Education for Reconcili*action*

A study of the draft curriculum for mainstream social studies in Alberta, Canada

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Elizabeth Solverson

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Abstract

In 2016, the Government of Alberta (Canada) commenced a curriculum development project with an explicit aim of facilitating reconciliation. The premise of this thesis is that reconciliation is the responsibility of *all* Canadians, and that this reconciliation needs to be *action* oriented. Through the method of content analysis, this study considers the proposed draft curriculum for mainstream kindergarten to grade 12 social studies in Alberta in terms of its capacity to stimulate commitment to reconcili*action* among settler Canadians. Social studies curricula of the past have damaged the relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples in Canada by perpetuating dominant narratives that exclude, Other, and marginalize Indigenous peoples' perspectives and experiences. As such, this study considers the ways the draft curriculum challenges dominant narrative versions of history through the inclusion of alternative narratives from Indigenous perspectives. The study considers reflective discomfort as a key process for settler engagement in reconcili*action,* and therefore considers the extent to which the draft curriculum provides space for discomfort.

The findings of this study reveal that through the widespread inclusion of content relating to Indigenous peoples, the proposed curriculum stands to facilitate reconcili*action* in many ways. The study considers the promotion of an understanding of reconciliation as establishing and maintaining relationships based on the Treaty Handshake vision as a major strength of the curriculum. However, though articulated in the content, this reimagined relationship is not fully embodied within the structure of the curriculum.

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1 Introduction

In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) held its closing event in Ottawa. At this event, the commission presented 94 calls to action aimed at facilitating reconciliation between settler Canadians and Indigenous peoples. Call to Action 62.i. states:

> 62. *We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:*
>
> *i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.* (TRC, 2015b, pp. 238, 331)[1]

One year after this call to action was released, in June 2016, the provincial Government of Alberta commenced an overhaul of mainstream curriculum for all core subjects[2] from kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12)[3]. Alberta Education[4] has repeatedly pledged that the forthcoming curriculum will address the TRC calls to action, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in order to 'advance reconciliation for all Albertans' (2016b, p. 10).

Immediately after its release, the proposed curriculum for social studies became the centre of heated political debate. Jason Kenny (2017), leader of the Conservative official opposition party[5] in Alberta, has described the proposed social studies curriculum as 'deeply troubling'

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[1] "Survivors" refers to individuals who attended a residential school under the Indian Residential School policy in Canada.

[2] These include: Arts, Language Arts (English, Français), Mathematics, Social Studies, Sciences, and Wellness

[3] The Alberta Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) school system includes programs for students ranging from pre-school age to senior high school age. Students typically enter kindergarten aged 5 or 6 and complete grade 12 aged 17 or 18.

[4] Alberta Education is the official name of the provincial Ministry of Education.

[5] The United Conservative Party of Alberta

and vowed, if elected, to 'cancel, revoke, and reverse changes'. Others have echoed Kenny's sentiments, accusing the New Democratic Party (NDP) Government of "politicizing" education with an overly "ideological" approach to social studies which ignores so-called "normative" Canadian history (Jean, 2017; Staples, 2017; Kenny, 2017).

A significant factor contributing to this political uproar is the focus on education for reconciliation within the social studies drafts. Education for reconciliation involves learning uncomfortable truths about colonial violence within Canadian history and present day society. For settlers, like Jason Kenny and myself, encountering this information can be "deeply troubling," as it stands in stark contrast to popular characterizations of Canada as a utopia of peace, justice, and tolerance. Though troubling, learning these truths and grappling with the resultant discomfort are necessary steps toward settlers 'becoming *something other than colonial'* (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 111).

The current momentum surrounding reconciliation in Canada provides tangible opportunity for meaningful change toward decolonization. But caution is necessary. In a conversation with Cree scholar Dwayne Donald, he mentioned the phrase '*aokakiosiit'* from the Blackfoot language of the Kanai (Blood) nation. A*okakiosiit,* Donald explained, means 'be wisely aware…there's danger out there and if you are not paying attention you could walk right into it. Things could go sideways' (personal communication, July 5th, 2017). This sentiment has stuck with me as I have endeavoured to understand reconciliation discourses in Canada. The danger rests in cheap rhetoric of reconciliation overtaking the need for real, concerted reconcili*action.* Grand Chief Willie Littlechild[6] coined the term reconcili*action*[7] to differentiate between superficial "lip-service" reconciliation and meaningful action toward reconciliation. While cursory reconciliation rhetoric is easy and self-affirming, meaningful reconcili*action* is necessarily difficult and uncomfortable. This thesis considers the ways the proposed curriculum for social studies stands to *unsettle settlers* (Regan, 2006; 2010) and facilitate commitment to meaningful reconcili*action.*

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[6] Willie Littlechild is high chief of Treaty 6 Territory in Alberta and former Commissioner for the TRC.
[7] I first heard the term reconcili*action* used in July 2017, within several speeches at the opening ceremonies of the World Indigenous Nations Games in Mascwacis, Alberta.

1.1 Research Question and Scope

While the commitments laid out by Alberta Education apply to K-12 curricula for all main subjects, this study focuses exclusively on the proposed curricular drafts for social studies. The primary research question of this study is:

*In what ways could the 2017 curriculum drafts for mainstream kindergarten to grade 12 social studies facilitate reconcili*action *in Alberta?*

In order to answer this question, the analysis is organized around several tasks. First, it is necessary to describe the curriculum development project in detail, including a detailed description of the structure of the draft curriculum documents. Second, the magnitude and diversity of Indigenous content are considered – with comparisons drawn to former social studies curricula. Third, based on trends identified in relevant literature, the content is considered in terms of the ways it perpetuates and/or challenges dominant narratives of Canadian history and society. Fourth, the content is considered in terms of its ability to produce productive discomfort among settlers. Finally, based on the findings of these supporting tasks, the primary research question is addressed.

Significantly, the curriculum drafts that form my data have been written for mainstream, state-run schools. This means that this curriculum is intended for all of the many diverse cultural groups within Alberta. While facilitating reconciliation is a significant goal of the curriculum development project, it is certainly not the only or even the primary concern[8]. The choice to focus on mainstream curriculum, as opposed to curriculum written by Indigenous people for Indigenous education institutions, was deliberate. There are two reasons for this choice. Firstly, the majority of Indigenous students in Alberta attend mainstream schooling institutions (Alberta Education, 2005a). Secondly, and of central importance to this study, reconciliation is not an "Indigenous issue"; meaningful reconciliation is the responsibility of *all* Canadians.

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[8] Other reasons the government have provided for the curriculum redesign include: the desire for a common architecture across subjects, the need to update outdated content, and an aim of increasing the focus on literacy, numeracy, and competencies (French, 2018).

1.2 Key Terminology

While Alberta is home to many diverse peoples, of central concern to this thesis is the relationship between two groups: *Indigenous peoples* and *settlers*. Both of these terms are somewhat ambiguous. It is therefore necessary to unpack these terms, and explain the reasons behind choices to use these rather than other terms.

1.2.1 Indigenous Peoples

Globally, the category of Indigenous peoples encompasses approximately 370 million people, from around 5000 different groups, across 90 countries (Cultural Survival, 2017). Largely due to the immense diversity within this large, scattered global population, there is no universally agreed-upon definition of Indigenous (Minde, 2008; Dahl, 2009).

Defining or describing the category of Indigenous peoples in Canada is also complicated. Various acts of government and legal challenges over the last 150 years have attempted to define and redefine Indigenous identities and categorise Indigenous peoples. The result is a complex system that often divides communities and even families into different groups[9]. For the purposes of this study, the category of *Indigenous* encompasses all persons who self-identify as belonging to one (or more) of the three constitutionally recognized groups of Indigenous peoples in Canada: *First Nations, Métis*, and *Inuit.*

The terminology used to refer to Indigenous peoples and the differing groups within this broad category has also changed multiple times. Until recently, "Aboriginal peoples" was the predominant collective term used to refer to members from all three of these constitutionally recognized groups and it is the term most commonly found in federal and provincial legislation, scholarship, and curricula. However, within the last decade, there has been a decisive shift toward using the term "Indigenous peoples" within all of these domains[10]. *First*

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[9] In the *Indian Act 1876*, all the original inhabitants of North America are referred to as "Indians" (Leslie, 2002). The *Constitution Act 1982* divided Indigenous peoples into "Indians" (now known as First Nations), Métis and Inuit. Beyond this, First Nations were further divided into Status and Non-status Indians and Treaty or Non-Treaty "Indians" (Alberta Teachers Association, 2016a).

[10] The reasons behind this shift are primarily two-fold: firstly, "ab" is a latin prefix generally meaning "not" so in strictly linguistic terms "Aboriginal" can mean "not original" – undermining peoples' status as first peoples of the lands; secondly, "Indigenous" is the term of choice for the international Indigenous movement and the United Nations, which affords the term certain legitimacy (Marks, 2014).

Nations is a blanket term for people from over 600 distinct Indigenous groups across Canada. To this day, First Nations are collectively defined as "Indians" within Canadian legislation. However, because of its colonial roots, this term has come to be seen as a racial slur by many people in Canada and has been replaced by First Nations in public discourses. Still, many First Nations people prefer identity terms based on their specific communities. Often derogatively referred to as "half-breeds" in the past, *Métis* are descendants of early unions between First Nations people and European fur traders and settlers. Within generations of Europeans arriving, the Métis had developed a distinct language, culture, and sense of collective identity, which have continued to this day (National Métis Council, 2017). *Inuit* are the original people of arctic regions of Canada, Greenland and Alaska. In Canada, their traditional homeland includes the modern-day regions of Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Northern Quebec, and Northern Labrador. While the formerly dominant term "Eskimo" is still the commonly used and accepted term for Indigenous peoples in Alaska, many Inuit in Canada view it as derogatory and offensive[11].

Throughout this thesis, I use the collective terms Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. These choices are based on the general acceptance of these terms among Indigenous peoples in Canada and from their predominant use in the draft curricular documents which form my data. I use the terms "Aboriginal" or "Indian" only where context warrants it, in order to reflect the vernacular used in policy documents, publications, or literature. Occasionally, more specific, locally derived identity terms are used, though the virtual absence of these terms within the draft curricular documents has meant that they appear infrequently in this text.

1.2.2 Settlers

From the late 1800s to the 1930s, millions of people immigrated to western Canada, primarily from Europe and the United States. While a large proportion of these new settlers were of British origin, immigrants also came from a diverse range of European and other cultural backgrounds. For many Albertans, use of the term settler is limited to these *early* settlers, but

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[11] A reason for this is the term "Eskimo" is an etic term, derived from the Cree word "Askipowak" meaning raw meat eaters and was assigned to Inuit people from outsiders, whereas Inuit is an emic term meaning "the people" in the Inuit language Inuktitut (Alberta Teachers Association, 2016a).

following Paulette Regan (2006; 2010), Emma Battell Lowman & Adam Barker (2015) and Jennifer Tupper (2014), my use of the term settler is much broader.

In this thesis, the category of *settler* includes both the descendants of Euro-Canadians who arrived in Canada during the colonial period and diverse immigrants who have arrived more recently and constitute part of contemporary settler society today. Settlers are understood as a multi-ethnic people who differ in a variety of ways and have overlapping markers of identity, but who are united in their complicity in settler colonialism. Though the settler Canadian identity is strongly shaped by whiteness, settlers are racially, politically, and economically diverse.

Because of its historic connotations, the term settler challenges Canadians to think about their historic relationships with Indigenous peoples and the land. As such, 'this word turns us to uncomfortable realisations, and difficult subjects' of 'dispossession and violence' (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 2). I choose to use the term settler in this text precisely for its potential to produce feelings of discomfort and self-reflection among settler readers, with the hope that this reflective discomfort can contribute to transformative action toward reconciliation.

1.2.3 Indigenous and Settler Identities: A Relational Understanding

Both of these identities, Indigenous peoples and settlers, can be seen as constructed to encompass broad collectives of diverse individuals who share certain commonalities, but also differ in many ways. Neither of these groups are clear cut or discreet; a shared history of colonialism has produced a complex array of identities among people living in Canada, many of whom may claim both settler and Indigenous identity. Within both groups there is great diversity in terms of power, privilege, and experiences of marginalization. It is important to understand the diverse manifestations of identity as intersectional and complex (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015). These identities should be understood as existing in tension with one another and relating in complex, non-binary ways. While the 'cultural interface' (Nakata, 2006) is blurred and ambiguous, the key difference between these two groups stems from their relationship to the land. Fundamentally, settlers live on lands to which Indigenous peoples have a pre-existing and undisputable claim (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 15).

1.3 Background on Reconciliation

In most contexts, the term reconciliation can be defined as the restoration of peaceful, friendly relations. However, many Indigenous peoples assert that such a relationship has never existed between Indigenous peoples and settlers in Canada. According to the TRC, *reconciliation* in the Canadian setting is 'about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples' (TRC, 2015b, p. 6). The TRC and others have looked to treaties and agreements as key foundations for reimagined relationships (2015b, p. 190).

In his 2005 report, then Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues, Rodolfo Stavenhagen noted that Canada ranked eight on the UN Human Development Index, yet when the same criteria were applied to Indigenous peoples in Canada, the ranking slipped to 48. In his 2014 report, James Anaya, Stavenhagen's successor, stated that there had been no significant change in the well-being gap between Indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians. Of the bottom 100 communities in Canada on the Community Wellbeing Index [12], 96 are Indigenous communities. Anaya also reported significant gaps in health outcomes of Indigenous as compared to non-indigenous people in Canada, a major housing crisis in Indigenous communities, and disproportional numbers of Indigenous peoples in the justice system – both in terms of those serving prison sentences, and victims of violent crimes.

These harsh realities are the direct result of historic and ongoing colonial violence inflicted on Indigenous peoples. However, when social ailments affecting Indigenous peoples are reported within news media, they are typically presented without relevant historical context. The TRC asserts 'non-Aboriginal Canadians hear about the problems faced by Aboriginal communities, but they have almost no idea how those problems developed' (2015b, p. 235). A significant reason is that 'our education system, through omission or commission, has failed to teach this' (TRC, 2015b, p. 235). Widespread ignorance has led to pervasive racist, stereotyped

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[12] The Community Well-Being (CWB) index is a means of examining the well-being of individual Canadian communities. Various indicators of socio-economic well-being, including education, labour force activity, income and housing are combined to give each community a well-being "score".

understandings of Indigenous peoples among the majority settler population[13]. For instance, because of ignorance and misunderstanding about treaties and Indigenous rights, many settler Canadians view Indigenous peoples as receiving special privileges from the government, which other Canadians are not privy to (Kanu, 2011). The continued situation of intense inequality and discrimination has resulted in a relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers characterized by mutual distrust (Anaya, 2014; TRC, 2015b).

In the wake of the TRC, however, it seems there is genuine opportunity for change. Constituted and created by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the TRC aimed to 'guide and inspire Aboriginal peoples and Canadians in a process of truth and healing on a path leading toward reconciliation and renewed relationships based on mutual understanding and respect' (TRC, 2010, p. 2). Between 2009 and 2015, the commission gathered over 6000 statements from Survivors of residential schools, members of their families and other affected individuals. The harrowing truths uncovered in these testimonies were eventually included in a multi-volume Final Report, released in December 2015. Simultaneous to the TRC proceedings, a grassroots social movement, Idle No More, was also bringing attention to Indigenous issues through peaceful protest action across the country.

The combination of the Idle No More movement, the TRC, and activities of the global Indigenous movement has resulted in to unprecedented attention on Indigenous issues in Canada. In June 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau claimed 'no relationship is more important to our government and to Canada than the one with Indigenous peoples'. While much of Trudeau's rhetoric has not materialized in practice, recent years have seen some significant policy shifts on Indigenous issues[14]. Thanks to these interrelated processes a longstanding national silence on Canada's colonial history is beginning to let up. As a result, settler Canadians are starting to understand the ways historical and ongoing injustices have had lasting impacts on Indigenous peoples (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2016).

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[13] A poll carried out by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation found that around 40% of people living in the Prairie Provinces would not be comfortable living next to or working for an Indigenous person (Levasseur, 2014).
[14] For example, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the federal government's commitment to fully adopt and implement UNDRIP.

In their Final Report, the TRC states 'the Commission believes that education is the key to reconciliation' (2015b, p. 234). Though the Commission acknowledges that the education system 'bears a large share of the responsibility for the current state of affairs' (2015b, p. 235), they argue, mainstream education 'must remedy the gaps in historical knowledge that perpetuate ignorance and racism' (2015b, p. 234). But it must also go further than simply providing information. According to the TRC, education for reconciliation requires schools to 'teach history in ways that foster mutual respect, empathy and engagement' (2015b, p. 21); content relating to Indigenous peoples must be taught 'in ways that change both minds *and* hearts' (2015b, p. 234).

In their effort to advance reconciliation, Alberta Education has made explicit commitments to honour the TRC's Calls to Action and UNDRIP as they pertain to mainstream education (2016b, p. 10). Call to Action 62.i. specifies the need for age-appropriate curricula on *residential schools*, *treaties*, and Indigenous peoples' *historical and contemporary contributions* to Canada (TRC, 2015b, pp. 238, 331). The most relevant section of UNDRIP is Article 15.1, which reads 'Indigenous peoples have the right to the *dignity and diversity* of their *cultures*, *traditions*, *histories* and *aspirations* which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information' [my emphasis] (United Nations, 2007). As such, a central task of this thesis will be considering the extent to which these criteria are fulfilled within the draft curriculum documents.

In Alberta, K-12 social studies is 'the study of people in relation to each other and to their world,' which 'draws upon history, geography, ecology, economics, law, philosophy, political science and other social science disciplines' (Alberta Education, 2005b, p.1). As social studies involves history and the study of society, it provides a crucial site for education for reconciliation in Alberta.

1.4 Data

There are two documents which form the primary data for my analysis: the *Draft Subject Introduction for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Social Studies* (Subject Introduction)*; and the Draft Scope and Sequence for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Social Studies* (Scope and

Sequence)[15]. Henceforth, these two documents will collectively be referred to as "the Drafts". A third document, *The Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum (Programs of Study)* (the Guiding Framework)*,* has also been significant in my research, and is referred to on several occasions in this thesis. A detailed description of these documents and the process leading to their creation and release will be provided in chapter three.

1.5 Methods

As the data for this study are curriculum documents, the primary methods fall within textual analysis, and content analysis in particular. However, in order to familiarize myself with the field, I also met with several education scholars in Alberta. Though the responses from these informal interviews do not form data for my analysis, the knowledge shared has greatly enhanced my understanding of the research problem. As the interview participants are experts in the field of study, quotations from these talks occasionally appear throughout the analysis to support arguments being made. With permission, the individuals quoted have been named in the text.

1.5.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis involves careful, systematic, flexible examination of a particular set of data in order to identify patterns, themes, and relationships to ascertain meaning. For this study, a combination of quantitative, enumerative tools and qualitative, thematic coding were used. This combined approach allows for interpretive analysis of latent meanings within the texts, supported by quantitative statistics – which provide a general overview of the data, and a sense of objectivity. When categorizing the data, inductive, data-driven and deductive, theory-based codes were used. Afterwards, patterns emerging from the coded data were considered in light of relevant literature and theory (Berg & Lune, 2012; Grbich, 2007; Schreier, 2012).

In the initial open coding stage I continued to read and reread the data line-by-line, word-by-word to determine concepts and categories that fit the data (Berg & Lune, 2012). Because the

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[15] The Draft Subject Introduction and Draft Scope and Sequence for social studies are the intellectual property of the Government of Alberta and therefore have not been included within this thesis. Request for access to these documents should be made to Alberta Education directly, via their website: https://education.alberta.ca/alberta-education/contact-us/

documents that form my data are drafts, much of the content is presented in bullet point form. As such, gaining general meanings of the data as a whole through initial readings proved fairly difficult. However, it did become evident that certain words and concepts appeared very frequently throughout the documents. As such, the logical next step was to carry out enumerative content analysis on the data (Grbich, 2007). This involved counting and ranking the number of occurrences of particular words, phrases, and concepts within the data. This counting process provided means for organizing, and indexing the data (Berg & Lune, 2012); it also provided means of supporting and disproving the general impressions gained in the preliminary exploratory phase.

Each set of data was submitted to a frequency ranking procedure. In this process, the number of occurrences of each word was counted and a ranking of the frequency of different words was produced. Alone, the statistics produced through this enumerative analysis stage provide a limited picture of the data and do little in terms of answering my research question. However, these counts of textual elements can provide a "snapshot" of the data (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 354). Frequency counts allow for comparison of the proportion of curricular content afforded to different topics, revealing those items that are being prioritised within the curriculum. These findings were useful in providing direction toward more interpretive, thematic analysis (Grbich, 2007).

After words and phrases were ranked and counted individually, key words were analyzed in context. Through this process, frequently co-occurring words were highlighted. This was done to get an idea of how key concepts have been framed within the curriculum. This information informed category creation in further analysis. An important step within this process involved cautiously sorting data into the categories of *explicitly*, *implicitly*, or *not* related to Indigenous peoples and/or reconciliation. Compared to basic "counts" of words and phrases, this categorization provides a more accurate picture of the magnitude of the content related to Indigenous peoples and reconciliation. After categorizing the data to identify those most relevant to my research question, I was able to interrogate the data to reveal how the various concepts included in the curriculum are being connected, and what narratives are being presented. This involved grouping terms and phrases into tentative, non-discrete categories. In some cases these categories emerged inductively from the data, while others

were deductive categories arising from existing literature or previous knowledge (Berg & Lune, 2012; Schreier, 2012). Throughout the coding process and afterwards, the apparent trends and patterns arising from the data were considered in relation to relevant literature and theory.

While some proponents of content analysis argue this method should be limited to analysis of only what exists in the text (Grbich, 2007), this study also considers facts and concepts that are absent from the curricular texts. Taking inspiration from discourse analysis, the consideration of that which is absent is intended to highlight the way changing priorities and "truths regimes" within wider society are reflected in the development of curricula over time (Olsen & Andreassen, 2017).

1.6 Position of the Researcher

I am a settler Canadian born and raised in Treaty 6 territory, in modern-day Alberta. Historically, this territory provided a travelling route and home to the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakoda, Tsuu T'ina, Chipewyan, and other Indigenous peoples. Growing up and attending mainstream school in this area, I remember hearing stories of the bravery, ingenuity, and industriousness of the first Europeans to settle in these lands. In social studies class, we celebrated Clifford Sifton, the man for which our school was named, by creating posters offering "free land" in "the last best west" for European settlers, based on those of Sifton's early 20th century campaign[16]. Absent from these narratives was acknowledgement that the land on which our community is based came to us through the signing of Treaty 6 and the displacement of Indigenous peoples.

In some ways I am an insider, and in other ways an outsider in this research (Espinosa-Dulanta, 2004; Kovach, 2009; Olsen, 2016). My experience growing up and going to school in Alberta gives me "insider knowledge" into the society, the experience of being a settler, and the subject of social studies. I am also an outsider in this research. I moved away from Canada in 2007. While I have returned for the occasional visit, for the most part I have not

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[16] Clifford Sifton served as Minister of the Interior in Canada from 1896 to 1905 and is credited with leading an immigration campaign which brought over three million settlers to western Canada (Hall, 1977).

been there to witness the impacts of the reconciliation movement firsthand. I am also not a social studies teacher. In some ways, my experience as an English teacher in China has given me insight into the complex relationship between written curriculum and classroom teaching (Aoki, 1986). Still, the extent of my "insider knowledge" of teaching in Alberta is limited. Most significantly, I am not an Indigenous person. Undoubtedly, my non-indigenous identity limits my ability to understand Indigenous peoples' experiences, perspectives, and ways of knowing. While writing this thesis has been a solo project, I have looked to conversations with and texts by Indigenous scholars and educators for much of my knowledge and understanding.

In some ways, my insider position has benefitted my research, but it has also left me laden with assumptions. In order to expose and confront these assumptions, I have constantly engaged in reflexivity – thinking about my background, identity, ideological biases, and experiences and asking myself how it is that I have come to think or know what I do (Ali & Kelly, 2012; Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999). As will be discussed in this thesis, I believe this type of critical self-reflection is key to unsettling colonial dispositions and positioning oneself toward committed reconcili*action*.

1.7 Relevance of the Study

The draft curricular documents that form my data are very much *drafts*. Since their release in 2016, they have been reviewed and edited[17]. As such, it is likely that much of the content in the Drafts has changed, and equally likely that many of my findings will not apply to the final version of the curriculum if and when it is released. Furthermore, as written texts, they provide only limited insight into the lived experience of teaching and learning (Aoki, 1986; Goodlad, 1979). When this thesis is completed, the current NDP Government are likely to have finalized their proposed program of studies for social studies. As discussed in the initial pages of the thesis, the leadership of the Conservative opposition party have every intention of cancelling all proposed changes to the social studies curriculum if they are elected.

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[17] Subsequent drafts have not been made available to the public.

So, why bother? In the post-TRC era, *reconciliation is not optional*. Although the Conservative opposition party do no want these particular Drafts to enter into classrooms, they too acknowledge the need to address the TRC's calls to action within curricula (Kenny, 2017). While the NDP may have finished this round of curriculum development, they have made commitments to continuously review and renew curriculum at least every four years (Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 14). Other provinces across the country are also developing curricula aimed at facilitating reconciliation (French, 2018). The next provincial election in Alberta is set for May 2019. I would hope that, regardless of the result, my findings could shed light on good practice, reveal potential problem areas, and inform future decision-making on education for reconcili*action*

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter one has introduced the reader to the primary research question, data, methods, and methodology and provided some background information on the topic. Chapter two will include a review of key literature and outline theoretical tools used within this thesis. Chapter three provides a detailed description and analysis of the curriculum development project and the structure of the data. The amount and diversity of content relating to Indigenous peoples in the Drafts is discussed in chapter four. Chapter five focuses on the ways Canadian history and society are imagined in the Drafts. The content of the Drafts is analyzed in terms of the ways they challenge and disrupt different chapters within dominant narratives of Canada. Chapter six looks at the Drafts as a whole and considers the way the content could stimulate productive discomfort and reconcili*action*. Chapter six also includes an analysis of the particular understanding of reconciliation being articulated in the content and structure of the Drafts. The final chapter provides a summary of the findings from the analysis, outlines limitations of the study, and proposes recommendations for future research.

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Tools

Much of the theoretical underpinning for this thesis has been derived from literature focusing on social studies education in Alberta and Canada. As such, I have chosen to present both literature review and theory together in one chapter. The first few sections of the chapter will explore findings and theoretical tools which, for the most part, have arisen from empirical studies of social studies curricula and teaching in Alberta. As the chapter progresses, more general theories arising from contexts within Alberta and beyond will be presented. The final paragraph will explain the way these tools combine to form the theoretical framework for the thesis.

2.1 Indigenous Perspectives in Social Studies

My study focuses primarily on content relating to Indigenous peoples within the proposed, draft social studies curriculum for mainstream K-12 social studies in Alberta. In order to provide context for this study, this section will outline some predominant studies in the field of social studies education in Alberta. In doing so, it will highlight some key curricular challenges which have impeded education for reconciliation in Alberta.

In his 2002 book, *The Death of the Good Canadian,* George Richardson charted the evolution of Alberta social studies curricula throughout the 20th century, illustrating the ways conceptions of the "Good Canadian" changed with every wave of curriculum development. In the early 1900s, notions of the "Good Canadian" were inextricably linked to those of the "Good Briton," as colonial ties to Britain remained strong. Toward the end of the 20th century, a more distinctly Canadian identity was promoted based on notions of tolerance, peacekeeping, and appreciation of diversity (Richardson, 2002). In order to reinforce a unified, peaceful image of Canada, Indigenous peoples' experiences and perspectives were generally excluded or presented on the premises of the majority settler population (Berg, 2017; Richardson, 2002).

The current social studies curriculum was introduced incrementally between 2005 and 2010. These curricular documents reflect a very different approach from those of the 20th century. The program of studies states that students are expected to 'appreciate and respect how multiple perspectives, including Aboriginal and Francophone, shape Canada's political,

socio-economic, linguistic and cultural realities' (Alberta Education, 2005b, p. 2). Elsewhere in the documents it is specified that teachers are expected to incorporate Indigenous perspectives for all topics across the social studies curriculum. Findings of a 2016 survey revealed high levels of support for the mandate to include Indigenous perspectives among social studies teachers (Alberta Teachers Association, 2016b).

Despite this support, studies by Andrea Berg (2017), David Scott (2013b), and Ottman and Pritchard (2010) reveal that many educators in Alberta avoid teaching Indigenous perspectives, or limit their inclusion to presentation of pre-contact "traditional" Indigenous cultures. Yatta Kanu (2011) found similar tendencies among teachers in Manitoba. Various obstacles have been cited as impeding the effective inclusion of culturally respectful Indigenous content. These obstacles include differing understandings of the meaning of the multiple perspectives mandate; lack of appropriate resources; teachers' lack of knowledge and/or confidence; and feelings that the curriculum is not conducive to multiple perspectives (Berg, 2017; Kanu, 2011; Ottman & Pritchard, 2010; Scott, 2013b). Dwayne Donald (2009b) argues that many teachers willfully avoid teaching Indigenous perspectives, excusing themselves with the *cultural disqualification argument,* whereby only those who are authentically Indigenous are seen as able to teach Indigenous perspectives. Several teachers in studies by Berg (2017) and Scott (2013b) invoked this cultural disqualification argument. While all of these issues pose barriers to meaningful inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, the above studies and others (den Heyer & Abbott, 2011) demonstrated that the most significant over-arching obstacle is 'the general acceptance of a grand narrative based on a Euro-centric perspective which offers an easily digestible plotline that fails to acknowledge the complexity of issues' (Berg, 2017, p. 6).

2.2 The Role of Myth

Throughout the 20th century, curricula repeatedly presented the same simplified version of Canadian history in order to foster notions of national identity and cultivate "Good Canadians" (Richardson, 2002; Seixas, 2000). This section will outline key arguments focusing on the ways dominant narratives have shaped settlers' understandings of themselves and Indigenous peoples.

Any historical account is constructed, with some events being included and told from a specific perspective, and other events and perspectives being excluded. However, when a particular story of the past is repeatedly presented from the same perspective, generation after generation, it often comes to be seen as the 'true past as it was' (Scott, 2013b, p. 34). Scholars have variously termed this as a "single-best story" (Seixas, 2000); "grand narrative" (Stanley, 2007; den Heyer & Abbott, 2011; Berg, 2017); "myth" (Donald, 2009a; Regan, 2006, 2010); or "mythhistory" (Létourneau, 2007).

In this thesis, I will primarily use the terms *myth*, *mythhistory*, and *dominant narrative*. Use of the term "myth" is not to imply that these histories are invented or false. They are referred to as myths because they are simplified, idealized histories made coherent through the careful selection of 'particular events and institutions which seem to embody important cultural values and elevate them to the status of legend' (Francis, 1997, p. 11 cited in Donald, 2009a, p.3). According to Paulette Regan, all national histories 'contain some element of myth that serves to reinforce shared cultural values and a sense of ourselves as moral beings' (2006, p. 87).

Through repeated telling, the stories come to be accepted as neutral and value free, thereby rendered beyond critique or interrogation (Berg, 2017; Scott, 2013b). Jocelyn Létourneau (2007) explains that national *mythhistories* rely on basic narrative structures framed around reference points such as binary notions of insiders and outsiders, simplifying the complexity of the past. Indigenous peoples' knowledge systems, values and historical perspectives have been systemically 'written out' of simplified official histories of Canadian nationbuilding (Donald, 2009a, p. 9). When Indigenous peoples have entered the narratives, it has primarily been on the premises of the majority (Stanley, 2007). Acts of colonial violence have been framed as generous "gifts of civilization" from the "benevolent" Canadian colonizer (Regan, 2006). According to Penney Clark, representations of Indigenous peoples in Canadian textbooks fall into six categories: spectators on the sidelines of the main story of Canadian history; exotic, savage warriors; uniquely spiritual people; members of the 'Indian problem'; protestors; or simply invisible (2007, pp. 103-111).

Regan argues these mythical archetypes of Indigenous peoples have become 'deeply engrained in the Canadian national psyche, reinforced by popular culture and media representations' (2006, p. 84). According to Edward Said, construction of national identity 'involves the construction of opposites and "others" whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their difference from "us"' (Said, 1978, p. 332). In line with Said's thinking, Donald (2009a) contends that settlers' historical understandings are marred with *colonial frontier logics* based on an imagined dichotomy of an "uncivilized" (Indigenous) "them" and a "civilized" (settler) "us". Incessant othering of Indigenous peoples has excluded Indigenous peoples from conceptions of Canadian identity and positioned Indigenous peoples outside of settlers' realm of concern. The systemic absence, othering and marginalization of Indigenous' perspectives 'ignores a long history of contact, cooperation, collaboration, integration, and inter-mixing through marriage that occurred over hundreds of years on this land we now know as Canada' (Scott, 2013b, p. 35; Donald, 2009a).

2.3 Decolonizing Mainstream Education

The premises of many of the arguments outlined in the above section can be seen as intimately linked to those of decolonizing education. This section will present key strategies and models for the "demythification" of history, and for effectively infusing Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum.

In her seminal text, *Decolonizing Methodologies,* Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) encouraged scholars to *reread* and *reframe* Indigenous peoples' place in national histories. Regan (2006) contends that 'reflecting critically on our own myth, ritual and history is a necessary step in Settler decolonization' (p. 86). Tupper and Cappello (2008) and Tupper (2014) have proposed the inclusion of *(un)usual narratives* in curriculum as a means of reframing and demythifying history. (Un)usual narratives offer alternative "stock stories," filling gaps in dominant narratives, functioning to question their dominance and allow students more nuanced readings of history (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 570). As such, (un)usual narratives 'interrupt the commonsense understandings' (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 570) and offer 'hope for disrupting epistemologies of ignorance' (Tupper, 2014, p. 484).

Dwayne Donald (2009a) proposes *Indigenous métissage* as a curricular sensibility based on *ethical relationality*. Indigenous métissage is based on the premise that curricular and pedagogical work dedicated to the goal of decolonization must engage critically with the colonial nature of the relationships connecting Indigenous peoples and Canadians and the logics that circumscribe them (2009a, p. 6). Donald uses the metaphor of a braid to describe 'how personal and family stories can be braided in with larger narratives of nation and nationality, often with provocative effects' (2009a, p. 8). The curricular form of métissage 'demonstrates that Aboriginal peoples and Canadians have deeply historical relationships that continue to manifest themselves in ambiguous ways to the present day' (2009a, p. 9). The Indigenous métissage approach to curriculum emphasizes relationality and connectivity, premised on an understanding of colonialism as 'a shared condition wherein colonizers and colonized come to know each other very well' (2009a, p.6).

The idea that destabilizing dominant narratives can provoke, unsettle, or produce discomfort in settlers is a highlighted by Regan (2006, 2010); Tupper (2014); and Battell Lowman and Barker (2015). These settler Canadian scholars also argue that this feeling of discomfort is necessary to "unsettle the settler within" (Regan, 2006, 2010) and reposition settlers as committed participants in meaningful decolonization.

Torjer Olsen (2017) identifies three distinct strategies which curricula follow when it comes to content relating to Indigenous peoples: *absence, inclusion,* and *indigenization. Absence* means Indigenous peoples are omitted, more or less on purpose from curricula. Next there is some *inclusion* of content relating to Indigenous peoples, but on the terms of the majority society. Finally, *indigenization* involves the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and issues 'which add an indigenous perspective, listen to indigenous peoples or even are written by indigenous authors' (Olsen, 2017, p. 72; Olsen & Andreassen, 2017).

2.4 Understanding Curriculum

According to Elliot Eisner, 'There is no more important area in the field of education than that of curriculum, for it is the curriculum that is at the very heart of any educational enterprise' (1964, p. 7). Despite, or perhaps because of, its pronounced significance, there is no definitive definition of "curriculum" in educational studies.

John Goodlad describes curriculum as occuring within and across five domains. *Ideological* curricula 'emerge from idealistic planning processes' and define or propose ideal aspects of curriculum (1979, p. 60). The *formal* curricula, differ from ideal curricula in that they have gained official approval from the state (1979, p. 61). *Perceived* 'curricula of the mind' involve the varied ways teachers perceive the intentions of policy makers, based on their own values, competencies, and beliefs (1979, p. 61). *Operational* curricula are what are actually taught; what 'goes on hour after hour, day after day in school and classroom' (1979, p. 63). Finally, the *experienced* curriculum is comprised of what students experience and actually learn (Goodlad, 1979; Klein, Tye, & Wright, 1979). Tetsuo Aoki (1986) makes a distinction between curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived-experience. The reality of the education experience, Aoki argues, exists in the tensionality that emerges from dwelling between these two curricular worlds.

Throughout this study the Draft Subject Introduction and Scope and Sequence for social studies are referred to as curriculum. However, as written documents, and drafts, they only account for *ideological* (Goodlad, 1979) *curriculum-as-planned* (Aoki, 1986). The drafts represent an idealized version of the total social studies curriculum, and provide no insight into the curriculum-as-lived-experience. As such, this study can provide only a limited view of the education for reconciliation endeavour. Though they may not provide a comprehensive picture of the learning experience, content within the Drafts provide useful insight into shifting discourses within Albertan society.

Pinar, Reynolds, Slatter, and Taubman (1995) argue curriculum development should be understood in terms of movement from one "location" to another. As Eisner explans, 'if different curriculum designs do not produce different results, curriculum development is a futile enterprise' (1967, p. 22 cited in Robinson, 2010, p. 2). As social studies is the study of people and society, movements in curriculum development at the ideological and formal level reflect shifts in policy makers' ideas about how society is and how it should be. Political processes contribute to the making of *truth regimes*, which in turn affect curriculum development (Olsen & Andreassen, 2017). Though not yet officially approved, in their normative, idealized state, the 2017 Drafts can be viewed as statements encompassing the

wishes and intentions of the provincial government. Mainstream curriculum also plays a role in forming discourses, as it holds the power to legitimize content as "official knowledge" of and for society (Beyer & Apple, 1998; Kanu, 2011). Therefore, content in the Drafts could potentially reframe understandings of Indigenous peoples among the majority settler population.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is based on the arguments and concepts outlined in this chapter. This thesis takes a power critical perspective on curriculum and curriculum development. Dominant, mythic narratives are understood as playing a formative role in shaping public historical understandings. As Donald explains, though official histories 'begin as cultural and contextual interpretations of events,' they inevitably 'morph into hegemonic expressions of existing value structures and worldviews of dominant groups in a society' (2009b, p. 3). Myth can therefore be understood as *'ideology in narrative form'* (Lincoln, 1999, p. 207). A central premise of this thesis is that dominant narratives of Canadian history pose a significant challenge to education for reconcili*action*. As such, the analysis endeavours to examine the extent to which the proposed drafts "demythify" Canadian history. In doing so, the thesis considers the way (un)usual narratives (Tupper & Cappello, 2008; Tupper, 2014) included in the curriculum stand to indigenize the curriculum (Olsen, 2017), unsettle settlers (Regan, 2006, 2010), and promote an understanding of Indigenous-settler relations based on ethical relationality (Donald, 2009a). These theoretical perspectives combine to give my thesis a unique approach to doing curricular content analysis.

3 The Curriculum Development Project

This chapter describes the ongoing curriculum development project in Alberta. In doing so it provides details on the creation and release of the Drafts, and approximate timelines for curriculum development and implementation. The second part of the chapter provides the reader with a detailed description of the structure of the Drafts.

3.1 The Process

According to Alberta Education, provincial curriculum consists of *programs of study* for all K-12 subjects (2016b). These programs of study consist of *subject introductions*, *scope and sequences*, and *learning outcomes*, which collectively outline what students are expected to understand, know, and be able to do while developing dispositions to act (2016b, p. 12). Alberta Education has divided the process for developing these programs of study into three interconnected and overlapping phases: *shaping, developing*, and *implementing* (Alberta Education, 2016a).

During the shaping phase, Alberta Education carried out a review of Alberta's current curriculum and curricula from other national and international contexts. Research on student learning needs was also conducted (Alberta Education, 2016a). Based on this research, Alberta Education wrote the Guiding Framework. Released in July 2016, this document is the "preamble" to all K-12 curriculum, intended to set a common direction for how curriculum is to be developed across all subjects and grades. It includes common principles, standards and considerations which reflect government policy and commitments (Alberta Education, 2016b).

The developing phase consists of several steps. The first step involved the writing of draft subject introductions, and scope and sequences for each subject (Alberta Education, 2016a). The drafts for each subject were written by curriculum working groups, and then reviewed and edited by Alberta Education. These groups included K-12 teachers, ministry staff, inclusive education and early learning specialists and post-secondary professors and instructors, with K-12 teachers forming the majority. While the names of the groups have not been released, a document detailing selection criteria was made available on Alberta Education's website in which it is stated that members selected would represent Alberta's

geographic and demographic diversity. This document specified that 18 per cent of participants of the curriuclum working group for social studies would be First Nations, Métis, or Inuit (Government of Alberta, 2017). These curriuclum working groups met several times between autumn 2016 and spring 2017. The draft documents produced, including the social studies Drafts, were released as part of a 'validation survey' in May 2017. This survey allowed Albertans to provide feedback on the draft curriculum materials.

The second step of the development phase was the review and validation process. This involved review of results from the validation survey and focus group meetings. The focus groups consisted of teachers, post-secondary professors and instructors, and representatives from education stakeholder organisations. They were tasked with reviewing and editing the drafts. This second step occurred during spring 2017.

The final step of the developing phase commenced in fall 2017. This phase involves the developing of learning outcomes for each subject and grade. The cycle of developing and validating learning outcomes will occur over several years, with ministerial approval coming at different times for different grades. The targeted timeline for ministerial approval for the forthcoming programs of study are as follows: grades kindergarten-4, December 2018; grades 5-8, December 2019; grades 9-10 (3 subject areas), December 2020; grades 9-10 (3 subject areas) and grades 11-12 (3 subject areas), December 2021; and finally grades 11-12 (3 subject areas), December 2022 (Alberta Education, 2016a). The third, implementing, phase, will begin once the developing phase has been completed. Timelines for implementation have not yet been released by Alberta Education.

3.2 The Drafts

The primary data for this study are the Draft Subject Introduction and Draft Scope and Sequence for social studies. In what follows, the structure of each of these documents will be described in detail.

3.2.1 Subject Introduction

The Subject Introduction outlines the philosophy and rationale for social studies as a field of study. It is intended to provide the "why" behind the subject matter explored in the Scope and Sequence, and establish the intended major "take aways" for students of social studies. The

2017 draft Subject Introduction is four pages in length, considerably more concise than it's 12-page predecessor from 2005 (Alberta Education, 2005b). The document is presented in 8 sections with the following headings: 'What is Social Studies?'; 'Why is Social Studies Important?'; 'Inclusive Education'; 'First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Experiences and Perspectives'; 'Francophone Perspectives'; 'Literacy'; 'Numeracy'; and 'Competencies'. The section titled 'First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Experiences and Perspectives' consists of two paragraphs, of four sentences each, covering approximately half a page in total. The only section that exceeds it in length is 'Why Is Social Studies Important?'.

3.2.2 Scope and Sequence

The Scope and Sequence outlines what students will learn and when they will learn it. *Scope* refers to the breadth and depth of learning, and *sequence* refers to how the learning is ordered, and scaffolded (Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 20). The document is in the form of six tables, spanning 12 pages. Across the top line of each table is an essential understanding. Below each essential understanding, the table is divided into 13 columns, one for each grade, kindergarten to grade 12. For each grade, there are one to three guiding questions, with corresponding possible concepts and procedures, presented in bullet point form. The first page of the Scope and Sequence is displayed below, in Figure 1.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Essential Understanding	Active citizenship builds inclusive, respectful and resilient communities in which diverse people live well together.												
Guiding Questions	How can stories teach me about others and being together?	Why do my actions matter, and how do they affect others?	Why should we value the voices of others in our communities?	How can we create change?	In what ways have individuals and groups in what is now Canada taken action to effect change?	How and why should individuals and groups advocate for their rights and the rights of others?	How and why do global connections and interactions influence the actions of citizens?	How can events, groups and individuals shape views on freedom, responsibilities, rights and reconciliation?	To what degree should diverse communities within a society share a common worldview?	How and why do citizens participate in local and global movements?	To what extent have understandings of diverse Canadian identities and issues strengthened communities?	To what extent have citizens played a role in shaping social, political and economic systems?	To what extent do ideologies shape how and why citizens take action in response to local and global issues?
Possible Concepts and Procedures	• engaging in inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • discussing community affairs • listening • personal responsibility • respect for self • respect for others • belonging • oral tradition	• engaging in inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • discussing community affairs • personal choices and responsibilities • cooperation • connections • respect for others • cultural awareness	• engaging in inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • discussing community affairs • listening • personal voice • official bilingualism • ideas and needs of others • experiences	• engaging in inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • connecting to current events • modelling respect • individual actions • participation • contributions • equality • reconciliation • social justice	• engaging in critical inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • connecting to current events • welcoming others • actions in the community • stories of First Peoples and settlers • opportunities and challenges • treaty and agreement relationships	• engaging in critical inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • connecting to current events • taking action for self and others • community action • individual and collective rights • human rights • equity • justice • resiliency	• engaging in critical inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • analyzing current events • respecting diversity • influence • cause and effect • types of interactions • Indigenous rights and activism • interdependence • migration • climate change	• engaging in critical inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • analyzing current events • causation • freedom and security • self-determination • conflict • cooperation • human rights	• engaging in critical inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • interpreting current events • factors that shape worldviews • Indigenous worldviews • social cohesion • recognition and accommodation • conformity and assimilation • official languages	• engaging in critical inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • interpreting current events • origins of local and global movements • Indigenous rights and self-determination • types of local and global movements • forms of participation and protest • revolution • responsible citizenship	• engaging in critical inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • assessing current events • dialogue • community well-being • diverse national identities • democratic values • community vitality • official bilingualism • pluralism	• engaging in critical inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • assessing current events • types of social, political and economic ideologies • roles and responsibilities • agents of change • contributions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit governance structures • active engagement • apathy • resilience	• engaging in critical inquiry • engaging in active citizenship • assessing current events • multiple perspectives on ideologies • Indigenous rights globally • responding to issues • activism • implications of ideologies • ethical citizenship

Figure 1: Scope and Sequence Structure

3.2.2.1 Essential Understandings and Strains

Essential understandings are broad statements that frame what students will learn within the curriculum (Alberta Education, 2016b). The six essential understandings in the draft Scope and Sequence stem from various component disciplines of social studies. This is made clear by the inclusion of possible procedures related to discipline-specific dimensions of thinking; i.e. 'foundations in geographical thinking', 'engaging in economic thinking', etc. Though Alberta Education does not use the term in the Drafts, I have interpreted the essential understandings and corresponding groupings of content as disciplinary *strains* and will therefore occasionally refer to them as such. It should be noted, however, that the strains are far from discrete and in many cases it is clear that the subject matter grouped under an essential understanding spans more than the named dimensions of thinking. Unsurprisingly, the disciplines of citizenship and history have more content than other disciplines (Peck & Herriot, 2015); with each having their own essential understanding and strain, while the other four strains are shared by two disciplines or dimensions of thinking each.

The essential understandings are as follows:

- 'Active citizenship builds inclusive, respectful and resilient communities in which diverse people live well together.' (EU1: citizenship strain)

- 'Exploring diverse historical narratives informs actions and decisions to promote pluralism and reconciliation.' (EU2: history strain)

- 'Stories of place and knowing the land and how it sustains us fosters a sense of belonging and personal and collective responsibility to be stewards of the land.' (EU3: geography/ecology strain)

- 'Exploring diverse identities, experiences, stories and ways of life builds cultural awareness and a sense of belonging to foster social cohesion.' (EU4: anthropology/sociology strain)

- 'Power influences governance and relationships and contributes to reconciliation and an equitable, just society.' (EU5: political science/law strain)

- 'Exploring diverse perspectives on quality of life informs decision making to promote the well-being of self and others.' (EU6: economics/ holistic thinking strain)

While not numbered in the Scope and Sequence, I have attributed numbers to each essential understanding based on the order they appear in the Scope and Sequence so as to enable greater specificity in referencing. If an essential understanding is referenced, it will be referred to as EU and the relevant number, e.g. (EU1) is the essential understanding in the citizenship strain. When referencing specific conceptual knowledge from the text, I will provide the essential understanding, grade, and guiding question the content falls under. As an example, the concept 'duty to consult' (1.8b) is included in the citizenship strain (1), in grade eight, under the second guiding question (b).

3.2.2.2 Guiding Questions

Guiding questions are intended to be 'engaging and challenging questions for students' written at a grade-appropriate level (Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 21). They are derived from the essential understandings and will frame learning outcomes. The questions typically begin with "Why", "How", "In what ways", or "To what extent" and are therefore interpretive and open-ended, encouraging critical thinking. In the draft Scope and Sequence for social studies, there are between 20 and 26 guiding questions within each strain, and 134 in total. Some examples of guiding questions are: *'Why is it important to keep promises with others?'* (5.1a); *'In what ways have individuals and groups in what is now Canada taken action to effect change?'* (1.4); *'How can evolving ideologies support reconciliation?'* (2.12c).

3.2.2.3 Possible Concepts and Procedures

Possible concepts and procedures represent the 'what' that students will learn to know, understand, and be able to do within each strain and grade (Alberta Education, 2016b). In the Draft Scope and Sequence, they are presented as bullet point form. Some bullet points are skills-based procedures, or *procedural knowledge* outlining techniques, strategies, and approaches which students are expected to be able 'to do' (Alberta Education, 2016b, pp. 12, 21). Examples of procedural knowledge include 'engaging in critical inquiry', 'engaging in ecological thinking', or 'interpreting current events'. There are also concepts or *conceptual knowledge* bullet points. The conceptual knowledge is 'what students should know', including 'the facts, symbols, rules, principles and concepts that constitute the subject' (Alberta Education, 2016b, pp. 12, 21). Some conceptual knowledge bullet points refer to relatively specific, concrete information or events to be covered, such as 'Métis settlements' (3.4b),

'land claims' (2.5b; 3.4b), or 'official bilingualism' (4.4b; 4.9a). Many are more abstract concepts such as 'inclusivity' (2.8b; 4.8b), 'intersectionality' (4.10b), or 'redress and restitution' (6.10a). Others identify social phenomena, such as 'cultural accommodation' (4.8a), 'marginalization' (4.12b; 5.11b), or 'institutionalized discrimination' (5.11b).

In total there are 1272 separate 'possible concept an procedure' bullet points in the Scope and Sequence. Out of these, 491 can be classified as 'procedural knowledge,' and the remaining 781 can be viewed as 'conceptual knowledge'[18]. Within both of these categories, some bullet points are repeated across grades and strains, but this is especially true of the procedural knowledge. For example, either 'engaging in inquiry' (K-3) or 'engaging in critical inquiry' (4-12) occurs under every guiding question in the Scope and Sequence, with a total of 134 mentions. If each frequently repeated procedure is counted only once, the total number of possible concepts and procedures is 810.

Throughout this thesis I will use the term *unit* to refer to a single guiding question and its associated possible concepts and procedures. This term is not used by Alberta Education at any point in the drafts. I have simply found it necessary to give these segments of content a label to facilitate analysis.

3.2.2.4 A Note on Grades
The six essential understanding span every grade, from kindergarten to grade 12. Age-appropriate guiding questions and possible concepts and procedures add 'gradedness' (Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 21). As is to be expected, generally speaking, the amount and complexity of content increases as grades advance. The amount of procedural knowledge remains the same for each unit in each strain, but the number of units and amount of conceptual knowledge in each unit increases with grades. In kindergarten there are six units, one for each strain, with an average of nine possible concepts and procedures in each; whearaes in grade 12 there are 14 units, with an average of ten concepts and procedures.

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[18] For this count, only those processes which are repeated across multiple grades in each strain, such as 'engaging in inquiry' or 'analyzing current events', have been classed as 'procedural knowledge'. As such, some bullet points classed as 'conceptual knowledge' in this count could also be considered 'procedural' – such as 'listening' (1.K) or 'modelling respect' (1.3).

There are clear themes guiding the content within some grades, but this is less apparent in others. Some grades with apparent themes include grade two, where 'communities' appears in five of eight guiding questions; grade eight, where 'worldviews' occurs in ten out of 12 guiding questions; and grade 12 where 'ideologies' appears in 11 of 14 guiding questions. In other grades, such as grade four, there are no clear overarching themes.

3.3 Learning Outcomes and Competencies

The Subject Introduction and Scope and Sequence will be accompanied by learning outcomes, and together these components will form the complete program of studies for social studies. The *learning outcomes* are formed by the integration of subject conceptual and/or procedural knowledge with one or more competencies. The learning outcomes will be observable and measurable and will be used to assess and communicate students' achievement (Alberta Education, 2016b, pp. 21-22).

Competencies are defined as interrelated sets of attitudes, skills and knowledge that arise from and are applied to particular contexts for successful learning. There are eight competencies which apply across all subjects and grades. These are critical thinking; problem solving; managing information; creativity and innovation; communication; collaboration; cultural and global citizenship; and personal growth and well-being. Literacy and numeracy are also stressed as core elements of curricula for all subjects (Alberta Education, 2016b, pp. 16-17; Subject Introduction, pp. 3-4).

3.4 Discussion

The emphasis on competencies, literacy, numeracy and procedural knowledge in the forthcoming curriculum is based on international research and is consistent with global trends within curriculum development (Christensen & Lane, 2016; Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 15). Alberta Education describes this as 'going beyond "learning about" to include "learning to do"' (2016b, p. 21). This move has been largely inspired by changes in the way learning experiences are understood. The out-dated "banking model" of education, where knowledge is seen as 'a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those they consider to know nothing' (Freire, 1970, p. 72), has been firmly abandoned within curricular studies (Pinar et al., 1995). Partly influenced by Indigenous pedagogies, Education specialists

at Alberta Education now understand learning as 'complex, non-linear,' 'an embodied and embedded dynamic web' (Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 4). Student values such as 'integrity and respect' and 'belonging and identity,' and a vision of students as 'inspired' 'lifelong learners' are also central considerations of the curriculum (Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 3). The result is a social studies curriculum with fewer "facts" and more emphasis on abstract ideas, attitudes, and skills. This move can be seen as one explanation for why particular events that have been emphasized in previous curricula are absent in the Drafts. The "factual" content that *has* been included can be seen as a reflection of changing discourses in society.

Olsen and Andreassen reason 'as public and normative governmental documents, national curricula are official statements' which can be seen as 'expressions of states wanting to constitute truth regimes' (2017, p. 256). The pre-validation Drafts cannot yet be classified as "formal" curricula or "official" statements, as they have yet to receive official governmental approval (Goodlad, 1979, p. 61). However, the Subject Introductions and Scope and Sequences for social studies were produced by a curriculum working group consisting of around 60 diverse members of the Alberta public (Government of Alberta, 2017). As such, I believe Alberta Education's claim that these curricula are a 'declaration of what Albertans value in education' is a valid one (2016b, p. 1). The ways content relating to Indigenous peoples is included and framed in the Drafts can be seen as a reflection of both the current government's, and wider Albertan society's overarching understandings of Indigenous issues, and intentions toward reconciliation.

4 From Absence to Inclusion

The backdrop of the current curricular development project is an atmosphere of unprecedented Indigenous political empowerment. Indigenous activism and political organization since the 1960s has brought formerly ostracised Indigenous peoples to the centre of Canadian politics. Resulting political processes have had a direct impact on curriculum development in Alberta. Alberta Education's vows to include Indigenous content are suggestive of progressive shifts in wider discourses surrounding Indigenous issues in Canada. But, at the same time, settler Albertan understandings of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous issues continue to be marred with ignorance, misunderstanding, and prejudice (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2016). As mainstream curricula can establish "official knowledge" in society (Beyer & Apple, 1998; Kanu, 2011), the widespread inclusion of content relating to Indigenous peoples can strongly impact the way Indigenous peoples are perceived by the settler majority.

This chapter charts Indigenous peoples' move from absence to inclusion in Alberta social studies curricula. The first section will provide a description of the magnitude and spread of content relating to Indigenous peoples across grades and strains. The second section discusses the degree to which the diversity of Indigenous peoples is reflected in the Drafts.

4.1 Magnitude of Indigenous Content in the Drafts

In the Guiding Framework, Alberta Education outlined 12 'standards' intended for the entire K-12 provincial curriculum. Standard Three states 'Curriculum includes ways of knowing and diverse perspectives, in historical and contemporary contexts, of First Nations, Métis and Inuit' (2016b, p. 14). Standard Three is further described as requiring inclusion of content relating to Indigenous peoples' cultures and histories, including treaties and residential schools (2016b, p. 24). In accordance with this standard, the Subject Introduction for every subject contains a separate section regarding Indigenous peoples' perspectives in the curriculum. The Subject Introduction for social studies commits to the inclusion of diverse 'worldviews, experiences and perspectives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit' as well as content relating to treaties, agreements and 'the complete history of residential schools and their legacy' (p. 2).

Content relating to Indigenous peoples is prevalent across the entire Scope and Sequence. Significantly, two out of six essential understandings explicitly mention 'reconciliation' (EU2; EU5). In order to roughly quantify the proportion of the curriculum which could be considered "education for reconciliation", each unit was considered one-by-one and classified as being *explicitly*[19]*, implicitly*[20] or *not* related to Indigenous peoples and reconciliation. Out of 134 total units, across all strains and grades, not one was classified as being "not related" to Indigenous peoples and reconciliation; 56 (42%) were considered "explicitly related" and 78 (58%) "implicitly related". This does not mean that 100%, or even 42%, of *all* content in the curriculum is related to Indigenous peoples and/or reconciliation, but that 100% *of units* include *some* content which is implicitly or explicitly related. Each unit has approximately 8 to 10 possible concepts and procedures; in order to be classed as related, only one of these needed to relate to Indigenous peoples (though in the majority of cases, more than one did relate). My initial intention was to categorize every essential understanding, guiding question, and concept separately. It soon became clear, however, that organizing the content in this way created a superficial picture as it obscured the ways essential understandings and guiding questions frame conceptual and procedural knowledge, and impact their connotations. While this unit-by-unit system of counting may not provide a conclusive picture of the magnitude of Indigenous content, these numbers give an insight into the way Indigenous content is spread across the entire social studies curriculum.

Studies of teachers' interpretations and presentations of multiple perspectives within the current social studies curriculum have revealed that many teachers avoid teaching Indigenous content, or only include simplistic representations of pre-contact Indigenous cultures (Berg,

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[19] In order to be considered explicitly related, the unit (guiding question and associated possible concepts and procedures) contained one or more of the following terms: "Indigenous"; "First Peoples"; "Aboriginal"; "First Nations"; "Métis"; "Inuit"; "reconciliation"; "treaty/ies"; "residential schools"; "oral tradition"; "oral history"; "colonization"; "colonialism"; "traditional knowledge"; "ancestral knowledge"; "duty to consult"; "land claims"; or "calls to action".

[20] In order to be considered implicitly related, the unit fell under an essential understanding which included one of the above "explicitly" related words; included reference to "diverse peoples" or "diverse identities" in Canada; contained language relating to Indigenous ways of knowing such as "kinship", "relationship to the land", "ancestors", "stories of place" or "holistic"; contained terminology relating to Indigenous peoples' historic and contemporary experiences such as "assimilation", "indoctrination", "genocide"; "collective rights" or "self-determination".

2017; Scott, 2013b; Ottman & Pritchard, 2010). Both the TRC Call to Action 62 i. and UNDRIP Article 15.1 specifically call for a wide-range of topics relating to Indigenous peoples to be included in the curriculum – including historic experiences, but also *contemporary* experiences, cultures, contributions, and aspirations. Though there is a great deal of content on Indigenous peoples' historic experiences, the curricular Drafts also include content relating to Indigenous peoples contemporary experiences, perspectives and ways of knowing. The fact that content related to Indigenous peoples is spread across all grades and strains in the Scope and Sequence is significant as it indicates learning outcomes will specifically demand students can demonstrate knowledge about a wide-range of content relating to Indigenous peoples. As such, it will no longer be possible for teachers to avoid teaching about contemporary Indigenous experiences.

Another interesting, though potentially misleading, aspect to consider is how the amount of content relating to Indigenous peoples compares with amount of content devoted to other topics in the Drafts. Some Albertans have criticized the absence of content on Alberta's military history in the Drafts (Kenny, 2017; The Canadian Press, 2017). In response, representatives from the NDP Government have insisted that military history *will* feature in social studies, despite the lack of explicit mentions in the draft (The Canadian Press, 2017). The explanation for this apparent contradiction can be found in the emphasis on competencies, procedural knowledge and abstract concepts in the Drafts. In order to fulfil learning outcomes related to these criteria, factual knowledge would need to be used as case studies (Alberta Education, 2016b). While some of this factual knowledge will come from explicitly mentioned conceptual knowledge in the Scope and Sequence, it is likely that teachers will also provide factual knowledge of their own choosing. As such, it is impossible and misleading to say definitively that anything will not be included in the curricula. However, at this stage, it is only the written words within the Drafts from which comparisons can be drawn. The relative prevalence of "factual" conceptual knowledge relating to Indigenous peoples compared to such things as World War battles can be seen as evidence of the curricula as a means of implementing national and international agreements and policy.

The centrality of education for reconciliation in this curriculum is further demonstrated by the relative prevalence of Indigenous content compared to Francophone content. As in the 2005 program of studies, the 2017 Drafts encourage the inclusion of Francophone perspectives. Indeed, as with Indigenous peoples, the forthcoming curriculum includes a standard[21] specifically requiring the inclusion of Francophone perspectives across all curricula (Alberta Education, 2016b, pp. 14; 24). Compared to Indigenous content, however, content relating to Francophones is far less prevalent in the Scope and Sequence. While 56 out of 134 units held explicit reference to Indigenous peoples and/or reconciliation, only 19 were explicitly related to Francophones[22].

This section considered the magnitude of content relating to Indigenous peoples as a whole in the Drafts. Based on these findings, it is evident that this content represents a considerable proportion of the curriculum. The next section will consider the terminology used to refer to Indigenous peoples in the Drafts, and the balance of curricular content between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

4.2 Diversity of Indigenous Peoples in the Drafts

Alberta classrooms today are incredibly diverse. The combination of a rich history of multiculturalism with recent increases in Indigenous, Francophone, and immigrant populations has led to more cultural diversity than ever in Alberta (Berg, 2017, p. 1). As mainstream curricula, the 2017 Drafts are intended for all Albertans. While social studies curricula of the 20th century deliberately aimed to cultivate "Good Canadians," based on a unified, one-size-fits-all model (Richardson, 2002), this curriculum is clearly being created in a different world, under different truth regimes. According to Alberta Education, 'embracing diversity is essential for fostering social cohesion in a pluralistic society' (2016b, p. 8). Standard Two, outlined in the Guiding Framework, reads 'curriculum includes multiple, diverse perspectives that reflect our pluralistic society' (p. 14). This standard is reflected in

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[21] Standard Four: 'Curriculum includes the diverse perspectives, in historical and contemporary contexts, of Francophones living in Alberta, Canada and the world' (Alberta Education 2016b, p. 14)
[22] To be considered explicitly related to Francophones, the unit included one of the following terms: "Francophone"; "French"; "bilingualism"; or "official language(s)".

the Scope and Sequence for social studies, where 'diverse' occurs 45 times, 'diversity' 12 times, and 'pluralism' or 'pluralistic' six times.

While the curriculum is for all diverse Albertans, based on Standard Three and the amount of content specifically related to Indigenous peoples, First Nations, Métis and Inuit have been afforded special significance within the Drafts compared to other minority groups. One reason for the widespread inclusion of Indigenous content is to address calls from the TRC and UNDRIP (Alberta Education, 2016b). Article 15.1 of UNDRIP explicitly calls for the 'diversity' of Indigenous peoples to be reflected in public education (United Nations, 2007). Diversity and Indigenous peoples are both major themes within the Drafts, but is the diversity within the Indigenous peoples of Alberta reflected in the curriculum?

Alberta is home to many diverse Indigenous peoples. There are 48 First Nations belonging to five distinct language groupings, eight Métis settlements, and thousands of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit living in urban and rural settings across the province[23]. Alberta Education has committed to ensuring students from all diverse Indigenous communities see themselves in the provincial curriculum (2016b, p. 10). In the Subject Introduction it states that social studies includes 'diverse worldviews, experiences and perspectives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit' (p. 2). Within the Scope and Sequence 'diverse Indigenous peoples' (4.10a) occurs as a concept once. But, as "diverse" is prevalent within essential understandings and guiding questions, it can reasonably be inferred that diversity of Indigenous peoples' perspectives and experiences is to be considered more frequently.

There are several terms that are, or have been, used to refer to Indigenous peoples in Canada. The following terms occur throughout the Drafts, with varying frequency: Indigenous, First peoples, Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Collectively, these terms occur on 36 occasions throughout the drafts[24], on seven occasions in the Subject Introduction and 29 in the Scope and Sequence. The most frequently used term is 'Indigenous', which occurs 21 times

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[23] A map showing First Nations communities and Métis Settlements can be found in Appendix 1.
[24] First Nations, Métis, and Inuit occur together on 8 occasions, 6 within the Subject Introduction, and twice in the Scope and Sequence. I have considered each of these as one occurrence, rather than counting each word separately.

throughout the Drafts. The least frequent is 'Aboriginal' which occurs just once, within the concept 'Aboriginal title' (3.12b). This disparity is intriguing as "Aboriginal" was the most commonly used term in Canada until very recently. Even the TRC primarily use "Aboriginal" to refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit collectively within their 2015 Final Report. Significantly though, "Indigenous" is used in UNDRIP, and indeed this is the term most commonly used in UN proceedings and documents generally (Dahl, 2009). The term "Indigenous" has gained unwavering authority as a unifying label for peoples of the international Indigenous movement. As this international movement has gained momentum, the connection and increasingly shared identity of Indigenous people from different parts of the world has paved the way for changes at the national level (Olsen & Andreassen, 2017). As such this term, "Indigenous", carries special weight and legitimacy. The frequent inclusion of this term in the Drafts is significant for reconciliation as it holds the potential to fixate the concept into public discourses – underlining the link between Indigenous peoples, the international Indigenous movements, and globally recognized Indigenous rights. However, the use of "Indigenous" over more specific terms can also blur or distort the diversity within Indigenous populations.

In the Drafts, 'First Nations', 'Métis', and 'Inuit' typically occur together. This is the case on six occasions in the Subject Introduction (p. 1, 2), and two in the Scope and Sequence (2.4a; 1.11a). These are the only times the word 'Inuit' occurs. 'First Nations' occurs once on its own in a guiding question specifically regarding treaties (2.4b). 'Métis' occurs alone on three occasions (2.5b; 3.4b; 4.4b). The fact that 'Indigenous' occurs far more frequently than these three terms could indicate limited appreciation of Indigenous diversity in the forthcoming curriculum. Saying this, it could also indicate that "Indigenous" is seen as inclusive of the diversity represented within this category.

Collectively, First Nations represent the largest constitutionally recognized Indigenous group in the province[25]. 'First Nations' (2.4b) appears separate from Métis and Inuit on only one occasion in the Scope and Sequence. However, because First Nations represent the largest

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[25] Based on the 2016 census, the population of each group in Alberta is approximately: First Nations: 136,585; Métis: 114,370; Inuit: 2,500 (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Indigenous population, and have been relatively more prevalent in curricula and dominant narratives historically, it could reasonably be expected that their experiences and perspectives will be included more frequently than the others when the collective term 'Indigenous' appears.

Though commonalities can be drawn between different First Nations groups, there is much diversity in terms of language, culture, and historical and contemporary experiences. First Nations people commonly identify primarily with the specific First Nation they are from, such as Ermineskin Cree Nation or Dene Tha' First Nation, (Alberta Teachers Association, 2016a). There is no reference to specific nations, or even differing language groups such as Cree or Blackfoot, within the Drafts. As Alberta is vast, it makes sense that individual nations are not specifically named. Specific content on Kanai (Blood) nation of southern Alberta, for instance, would be of little relevance to students in or around Fort McMurray, nearly 1000 kilometres to the north. However, significantly, there is also no mention of "local" First Nations or Indigenous communities within the Drafts.

There are more Métis people living in Alberta than in any other province (Pratt, Andersen, Contreras, & Dokis-Jansen, 2014). Despite their sizable population, Métis have been far less present than First Nations in dominant narratives and curricula in Alberta (Andersen, 2014; Contreras & Pratt, 2015; Stanley, 2007). 'Métis' occurs independently more often than either First Nations or Inuit in the Drafts. These separate occurrences refer to Métis 'settlements' (3.4b; 2.5b) and 'Métis culture' (4.4b). Though few in number, these independent occurrences are significant, given the history of absence of Métis perspectives in mainstream curricula. However, the question remains as to whether the diversity within Métis peoples of Alberta is reflected in the curriculum. The focus on Métis settlements is important because Alberta is the only province in which Métis have a legally recognized land-base (Alberta Teachers Association, 2016a). However, today only between five and ten per cent of Métis in Alberta live within these settlement, with the rest living off-settlement, primarily in urban settings (Pratt et al., 2014). There is no specific reference to off-settlement, or urban Métis in the Drafts – and it remains to be seen whether the diversity within the Métis population will be addressed in the curriculum. More than just accurate portrayal of living distribution, the inclusion of content relating to urban Indigenous peoples is significant for dispelling

understandings of Indigenous peoples based on *oppressive authenticity,* whereby city-dwelling Indigenous people are seen as "less Indigenous" than those who live on First Nations reserves or Métis settlements (Sissons, 2005).

The number of Inuit people living in Alberta is considerably smaller than Métis or First Nations. The vast majority of Inuit in Alberta live in the major cities of Edmonton and Calgary (Statistics Canada, 2017). Many have moved from the arctic regions to pursue education or employment opportunities (Alberta Education, 2005a). Because the Inuit population is relatively small and new to Alberta, it is to be expected that they feature less frequently in those sections of the Drafts specific to Alberta – especially the history of the province. That being said, citizenship education is an important part of social studies. As Inuit are a constitutionally recognized Indigenous people in Canada, it is important that citizens learn about Inuit histories, culture, ways of knowing, and contemporary experiences. Like most Indigenous peoples, mainstream popular and news media have perpetuated stereotyped representations of Inuit people, which have impeded accurate understandings among the majority population (Singer, 2001). Because Inuit have only been living in Alberta in relatively recent times, Albertan settlers, arguably, have even less awareness of Inuit peoples than First Nations and Métis. While the term Indigenous may hold certain weight in terms of communicating global unity and legitimacy, the prevalence of this blanket term in the Drafts, may give teachers a "free pass" to avoid including content relating to Inuit people, as more familiar examples from First Nations will suffice. As such, there is a risk that the frequent use of 'Indigenous' could make the Inuit even more invisible to Albertans.

There is not a great deal of acknowledgement of the diversity of Indigenous peoples within the Scope and Sequence. Though the collective term Indigenous is mentioned many times, little content is afforded to consideration of the three groups separately, and there is no mention of diversity within each of the three groups. Explicit inclusion of content relating to *diverse* Indigenous peoples in Canada is important in terms of education for reconciliation for many reasons. Significantly, acknowledging diversity may counter Othering tendencies based on essentialism and oppressive authenticity. Because the curriculum documents are drafts it is unclear whether the limited acknowledgement of diversity is cause for concern, or whether diversity will be addressed in later stages of development and implementation. Based on the

Guiding Framework and Subject Introduction, it seems that the diversity of Indigenous peoples is not something that will be overlooked. It is possible that consideration of diversity is deliberately being left to implementation so attention can be paid to developing relationships between school boards and *local* Indigenous communities.

The findings of this chapter give an idea of *how much* curricular content relates to Indigenous peoples as a whole and with regards to separate Indigenous groups. Clearly, the amount is considerable, and can be seen as a concerted effort to implement policies in line with reconciliation. The widespread inclusion of Indigenous content represents a significant move from absence to inclusion in the curriculum. However, based only on numbers of occurrences, it is not clear whether or not this content can be seen as indigenization (Olsen, 2017). In order to determine whether this content represents meaningful education for reconcili*action*, it is necessary to consider *what* is in the content and *how* it is framed.

5 Mythic and (Un)usual Narratives

Understandings of Canadian history and contemporary society have been strongly influenced by oversimplified, mythic, dominant narratives. These dominant narratives have silenced and marginalized Indigenous peoples' experiences and perspectives, leading settlers to view modern day social realities and policies divorced from accurate historical understanding. The lack of nuanced understanding of Canada's colonial history among the majority settler population poses a significant barrier to meaningful reconciliation. According to the TRC:

> *Non-Aboriginal children and youth need to comprehend how their own identities and family histories have been shaped by a version of Canadian history that has marginalized Aboriginal peoples' history and experience. They need to know how notions of European superiority and Aboriginal inferiority have tainted mainstream society's ideas about, and attitudes towards, Aboriginal peoples in ways that have been profoundly disrespectful and damaging. They too need to understand Canada's history as a settler society and how assimilation policies have affected Aboriginal peoples. This knowledge and understanding will lay the groundwork for establishing mutually respectful relationships. (2015b, p. 185)*

The Drafts position exploration of *diverse* narratives as a central component to social studies (Alberta Education, 2016b). In line with the TRC, the notion of 'diverse narratives' is explicitly linked to facilitating reconciliation in the Drafts (Subject Introduction, p. 2; EU2; 2.10b). The emphasis on diverse narratives in the Drafts provide space for (un)usual narratives from Indigenous perspectives which stand to challenge mythhistories and disrupt 'epistemologies of ignorance' (Tupper, 2014, p. 484). This chapter will consider the ways the content within the Drafts represent a demythification of Canadian history and society. In doing so, it will address whether the proposed curriculum stands to reframe understandings and instill commitment to reconcili*action* among settler Canadians (Smith, 1999).

5.1 The Period of Mutual Discovery

There is considerable curricular content on the period of initial contact between Indigenous peoples and Euro-Canadians in the Drafts. In dominant narratives this period has typically been presented solely from the perspective of the settler majority, based on Doctrine of

Discovery[26] understandings of the past. When Indigenous peoples have been made visible they have often been positioned as outsiders to the nation-building process - represented as unfortunate remnants of a bygone era or barriers to progress (Scott, 2013b; Stanley, 2007). This type of thinking has had profound impacts on historic relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples in Canada and continues to impede meaningful reconciliation in powerful, though often subtle, ways (TRC, 2015b). In the Drafts, however, space has been provided for Indigenous perspectives which challenge and contradict Doctrine of Discovery understandings. Rather than glorifying Europeans "discovering" "empty lands", the Drafts present this period as characterized by 'mutual discovery' and interdependence (Coates, 2004, p. 64).

Dominant mythhistory accounts of the Canadian West typically begin with the fur trade. The "heroes" of this period are the "explorers" who are credited with "discovering" the lands now called Alberta. After the fur trade, the mythhistory focuses on 'later European arrivals carving civilisation out of a largely unoccupied wilderness' (Scott, 2013a, p. 16). European settlement in the West is glorified, with great attention given to '"nation-building" by far-seeing "great men"' (Stanley, 2007, p. 34) and the "hard work and industry" of "pioneers" (Gebhard, 2017, p. 6).

If we consider language used to describe this period of history in the Drafts, it is clear that these Euro-Canadians are not receiving the same mythic glorification they have in the past. The terms 'fur trader,' and 'explorer' are never explicitly mentioned in either document. The term 'exploration' occurs once, under the guiding question 'How can diverse stories about the past shape understandings about Canada and peoples on this land today?' (2.5a). Included within these 'diverse stories' are 'oral histories and tradition' and stories of 'colonization'. The term 'pioneers', often used to describe the first generations of settlers who moved to western Canada from Europe, is also absent. But other concepts are included that suggest consideration of the experiences of early settlers; for example, 'origins of settler populations'

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[26] The Doctrine of Discovery is based on the notion that European colonial powers had a God-given right to colonize lands of the so-called "New World" based on their supposed superiority over Indigenous peoples (TRC, 2015b).

(1.6b), 'origins of community members' (2.2), and 'stories of the past' from 'diverse groups of settlers' (2.3). According to Alberta Education, social studies 'provides opportunities for students to develop an understanding of their relationship with the past and who they are' (Subject Introduction, p. 1). As many of the students in Alberta social studies classrooms are descendants of early settlers in the area, it is important that stories of their ancestors are included. However, the popular term "pioneers" implies that these settlers were the first people to call Alberta home and "carved civilisation out of wilderness" (Scott, 2013a, p. 16). By contrast, in each of the units where references to early settlers occur in the Scope and Sequence, Indigenous peoples' perspectives are also included. Indigenous histories tell us that the lands which newcomers have been credited with "discovering" had in fact been home to many diverse Indigenous nations since time immemorial. By including Indigenous perspectives, the curriculum provides space for acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples' priority of settlement. This recognition dymithifies history and could lay the groundwork for understandings of treaty relations and Indigenous rights, which are covered elsewhere in the Drafts.

While the term 'fur trade' does not occur within the drafts, there are several guiding questions and possible concepts that suggest coverage of this historic episode. Once again, the content focusing on the fur trade period differs from dominant narrative understandings in substantial ways. Indigenous accounts describe the fur trade as the beginning of a long history of contact, cooperation, and intercultural exchange between settlers and Indigenous peoples. The TRC explains 'the newcomers' journeys of exploration depended on the support of Aboriginal guides' and the fur trade 'could not have functioned without Aboriginal labour' (2015a, p. 10). Indigenous peoples, for their part, valued many of the goods offered by the newcomers (TRC, 2015a). But official narratives of Canada do not emphasize the mutually interdependent nature of cross-cultural relations in this early period (Scott, 2013b). Donald argues that the trading *fort*[27] has become a *mythic symbol* in dominant Canadian history. The mythic fort represents the centre of the burgeoning Canadian civilization, while Indigenous

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[27] During this period, hundreds of trading posts or forts were built across the lands now called Canada to facilitate the trade of European goods such as flour or cloth with fur pelts.

peoples outside of the walls are seen as nomads 'alien to civilization and culture' (Bassett, 1986, p. 134). These divisive civilization myths perpetuate what Donald refers to as colonial frontier logics (2009a, p. 4), whereby Indigenous peoples and settlers are seen as inhabiting separate realities divided by (imagined) fort walls. Indigenous peoples are positioned outside of what it means to be Canadian, and outside settlers' realm of concern. According to Donald, understandings based on the fort as a mythic symbol 'have found expression in the stories told to children in classrooms, teaching them to divide the world in these ways' (2009a, p. 4).

The Drafts, however, emphasize the interactive nature of the trade and subsequent periods and the impact these cross-cultural interactions have had on Canadian society and conceptions of national identity. This is illustrated in the following guiding questions: 'In what ways did interactions between First Peoples and first settler populations in what is now Canada influence cultures, identities and ways of life?' (4.4b), and 'In what ways have interactions among diverse communities shaped the province?' (5.4b). Included as concepts within these and other units are 'interactions among cultures' (5.4b); 'intercultural connections' (4.5a); 'intercultural contact' (2.7; 4.6), 'cultural adaptation and affirmation', 'interdependence' (4.6); 'cultural adaptation' (4.8a); 'cultural diffusion and diversification' (4.7); 'conflict and cooperation' (2.8a); 'cooperation among groups', 'contributions to national identity' (6.5a); and 'historical interactions among nations' (5.8a). While not exhaustive, this list provides an idea of the way the historic relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers is presented in the drafts. Rather than a one-sided story of Euro-Canadian "heroes" "discovering" the West, the stories being presented are characterized by 'mutual discovery' (Coates, 2004, p. 64) and continued cultural exchange.

The historical reference points within Canadian mythhistories, such as the "opening up of Western Canada", "civilizing new frontiers" and "settling empty lands" (Regan, 2006, p. 84) create an imagined past where these lands were empty and untouched simply waiting for Europeans to put them to productive use (Scott, 2013b, p. 34). This thinking is in line with the *Terra Nullius* Doctrine, which had devastating consequences for Indigenous peoples around the world. Inspired by John Locke, this doctrine dictated that lands of the so-called "new world" were *terra nullius* or *"land belonging to no one"* (Bassett, 1986; Åhrén, 2016). Under terra nullius thinking, peoples who did not practice European-style agriculture were seen as

not worthy of possessing property rights. Though terra nullius has now been officially rejected in national and international law, it continues to impact Indigenous peoples lives in profound ways (Åhrén, 2016). Today, many Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world engage in land claim battles in court, in attempts to get some kind of compensation for the lands taken under terra nullius thinking (Coates, 2004). However, the fact that it is up to Indigenous peoples to prove their pre-existing occupation of the land in court cases is in itself underpinned by terra nullius thinking (TRC, 2015b, p. 194). Furthermore, while verdicts may lead to small tracts of land being returned, or monetary compensation, they cannot give back centuries of suffering caused by displacement and disruption to ways of life.

As is to be expected, the term 'terra nullius' does not occur within the Drafts. Certainly though, space is provided to challenge this line of thinking and educate students on the detrimental effects it has had on Indigenous peoples. The concepts 'Aboriginal title' (3.12b); 'traditional territories' (2.6b); and 'land claims' (2.5b; 3.4b; 3.11a) are unambiguously related to Indigenous peoples' rights to land. Also included are more open-ended references, which could lead to discussion of the moral aspects of the Terra Nullius Doctrine and the resulting experiences of Indigenous peoples. For example, 'To what extent can people own the land?' (3.4b); 'To what extent have differing views on place and people's relationship to the land affected decision making in Canada?' (3.5a). Relevant concepts include 'perspectives on ownership and control' (3.9a), 'values and beliefs regarding the land' (3.11b), and 'traditional perspectives on land use' (3.7a). Concepts such as 'treaties, agreements, and mineral rights' (3.12b) and 'duty to consult' (1.8b; 3.10a) provide space to discuss Indigenous peoples' rights to natural resources. This is significant because in Canada today, Indigenous peoples often find themselves in struggles over natural resource development in their territories. Exploration of these concepts is highly important as ignorance and misunderstanding about the historic basis for Indigenous peoples' claims to lands and resources has led to much discrimination against Indigenous peoples in Canada (Kanu, 2011).

The absence and marginalization of Indigenous peoples' perspectives and experiences in dominant narratives and social studies curricula have left many settlers, including educators, 'unable to comprehend historic and ongoing Aboriginal presence and participation within Canadian society' (Donald, 2009b, p. 23). Colonial frontier logics have impeded efforts to

integrate Indigenous perspectives into curricula as settler educators have learned to perceive Indigenous experiences and ways of knowing as existing outside of Euro-Western civilization, and therefore wholly unknowable. Teachers often avoid teaching Indigenous content by invoking the 'cultural disqualification' argument, whereby Indigenous cultures are viewed as existing outside of Euro-Western civilization, and therefore unknowable and unteachable by non-indigenous people (Donald, 2009b; Scott, 2013b). Alternatively, teachers have taken the "tipis and costumes" approach, only including content on pre-contact Indigenous cultures which are presented as 'static, apolitical, ahistorical' ignoring the 'evolution and adaptive nature of cultures' (Ottman & Pritchard, 2010, p. 39). If we relate this to Olsen's (2017) model for decolonizing education, historical understandings based on the Doctrine of Discovery have permitted Indigenous absence, and limited inclusion but have blocked the possibility for meaningful indigenization.

The ways this period of history has been represented in the Drafts provides space to overcome these problems. Unlike dominant mythhistory accounts, in the Draft Scope and Sequence this period of early contact and settlement is not told only from the perspective of the colonizer. Infusing Indigenous peoples' perspectives throughout familiar historical landscapes repositions Indigenous peoples from outsiders to insiders within national history. This positionality emphasizes the layered, intertwined nature of Indigenous peoples' and settlers' historical experiences. Illuminating the long history of contact, cooperation, and cultural exchange within national histories could enable understandings based on *ethical relationality* (Donald, 2009a). This presentation of Canadian history as a shared experience, in which Indigenous peoples and settlers have come to know each other very well, denies teachers the opportunity to invoke the cultural disqualification argument (Donald, 2009b). The focus on cultural exchange and adaptation also contradicts the image of Indigenous cultures as ahistoric and fixed. As such, the historic relationship presented in the Drafts challenges teachers to delve into the complexity of genuine experiences of modern indigeneity in Canada. Through the inclusion of (un)usual narratives from Indigenous perspectives, the Drafts stand to disrupt 'epistemologies of ignorance' (Tupper, 2014, p. 484) based on Doctrine of Discovery thinking.

5.2 Treaties and Agreements

Though the history of treaty making is contentious, many Indigenous people view treaty relationships as an important basis for a reimagined future. According to the TRC 'The Treaties are a model for how Canadians, as diverse peoples, can live respectfully and peacefully together on these lands we now share' (2015b, p. 196). Call to Action 62.i. specifically calls for the inclusion of age-appropriate curricular content on treaties. This call has been enthusiastically met within the Drafts. In the Subject Introduction, it states 'Treaties and agreements are addressed in social studies as foundational to fully understanding First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories' (p. 2); and 'treaties and agreements' appears very frequently within the Scope and Sequence.

This section will consider content relating to the historic processes of treaty and agreement making in the Drafts. First the magnitude of content relating to treaties and agreements will be discussed. Next, in order to provide context for analysis, some background information will be provided. Then, the framing of treaties and agreements in the Drafts will be discussed in terms of education for reconcili*action*. Based on the context in which they appear in the Drafts, historic content on 'treaties and agreements' has been divided into four categories: *Diverse stories of treaties and agreements; nation-to-nation relationships; terms of treaties and agreements;* and *spirit and intent of treaties and agreements*. Content regarding the contemporary implications of treaties and agreements, including the significance of the permanent relationships established in these processes, will be considered in subsequent sections of the analysis.

In total, 'treaty and agreement' or 'treaties and agreements' occur 19 times throughout the Drafts. Apart from 'reconciliation', treaties and agreements are the most commonly occurring specific "factual" concepts in the Scope and Sequence. While most First Nations in Alberta signed treaties with the colonial government, Métis and Inuit were excluded from this process. Still, Métis and Inuit have made several agreements with federal and regional governments of Canada, which have been significant in securing their rights as Indigenous peoples. While Call to Action 62.i calls for content on treaties alone, the frequent presence of 'agreements' with treaties can be seen as an effort by Alberta Education to be inclusive of all Indigenous peoples.

Most often treaties and agreements appear together, but they are also occasionally mentioned separately. 'Treaties and agreements' occurs once in the Subject Introduction (p. 2), within four guiding questions, and within 16 possible concepts. 'Treaty' occurs separately in one unit within the Scope and Sequence (2.6b) and 'treaties' appears on its own in a guiding question (2.4b), though 'Treaties and agreements' is included as a concept within the same unit. 'Agreement(s)' occurs separately six times, though only two of these can be unambiguously interpreted as referring to agreements made with Indigenous peoples (2.2; 2.10b). Occurrences of treaties and agreements are primarily within the history strain, but there is at least one mention within all strains except the anthropology/sociology and economics/holistic thinking strains. The occurrences span from grades three to twelve. While 'treaties and agreements' with Indigenous peoples are not explicitly mentioned in the lower grades (K-2), content related to 'promises' (5.1a), 'promises and agreements' (2.2), 'fairness' (5.K; 5.1b; 5.2), and 'inherent rights' (5.2) could be seen as laying the groundwork for understanding of treaty and agreement relationships in later grades.

5.2.1 Background on Treaties and Agreements

Many, but not all, First Nations peoples in Alberta negotiated treaties with the British Crown, through the newly formed government of the Dominion of Canada. Treaty 6, (1876) covers central regions of Alberta and Saskatchewan, and includes 17 First Nations; Treaty 7 (1877) covers southern Alberta and includes 7 nations; and Treaty 8 (1899), covers parts of northern Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories and includes 25 First Nations (Government of Alberta, 2013, p. 11)[28].

Throughout the Métis nation's history, they have negotiated several agreements with the federal and regional governments of Canada, including the Government of Alberta. Among the most significant historic agreements are the Scrip system of the late 19th century and the Métis Betterment Act of 1938 (Rupertsland Institute, 2018; Augustus, 2008). More recently, the decision in the 2016 Supreme Court of Canada case *Daniels v. Canada (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)*, and the 2017 Framework Agreement between the Métis Nation

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[28] Appendix 1 contains a Treaty Map of Alberta.

of Alberta and the provincial government have been instrumental in gaining recognition of Métis' rights.

The Inuit have also negotiated several important agreements with the federal government. The most significant of these include the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975, the Inuvialuit Accord of 1984, the Inuit Tapirisat/Nunavut Agreement of 1999, and the Labrador Inuit Agreement of 2005 (Coates, 2004; Government of Canada, 2018). These agreements have provided extensive powers of self-government, revenue sharing, sizable land allocations, cash, and resource rights (Coates, 2004, p. 250). Though the lands that these agreements concern are outside Alberta, it is significant for settlers to understand the ways these agreements govern relationships between the Inuit and other peoples in Canada.

5.2.2 Diverse Stories of Treaties and Agreements

Treaties and agreements frequently occur with the notion of *diverse* narratives or stories within the Drafts. The majority of the content relating to treaties and agreements in the Drafts occurs under the essential understanding 'Exploring diverse historical narratives informs actions and decisions to promote pluralism and reconciliation' (EU2). This implies, to a certain degree, that *all* content within this strain should be explored through diverse stories. 'Diverse stories of treaties and agreements' appears as a specific concept once (2.10a), but 'treaties and agreements' also falls under, or with 'stories' or 'narratives' (plural) in three other units (1.4; 2.3; 2.10b).

The emphasis on *diverse* stories of treaties and agreements is significant because settlers and Indigenous peoples have interpreted treaties and agreements very differently. Treaties are a foundational element of what Regan (2006, 2010) has called the *Benevolent Peacemaker Myth* of Canadian history. Officially sanctioned versions of history frame treaties as bringing 'peace and progress, the "gifts of civilization", to the frontier and salvation to the "disappearing" Indians' (Regan, 2006, p. 89). First Nations' oral and written histories remember the treatymaking process and subsequent treaty relationship very differently. Treaties had long been a common practice among First Nations. But in First Nations cultures, treaties were seen as sacred, living covenants bonding two parties together in a permanent relationship based on mutual respect. By contrast, many settler Canadians understand treaties

to be one-off "land for civilization" business transactions between the First Nations and the Canadian government (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015; Coates, 2004; TRC, 2015a).

While dominant narratives have presented treaty negotiations almost exclusively from the perspective of the majority, agreements with the Métis and Inuit have generally been left out entirely. (Andersen, 2014; Pratt, et al., 2014; Stanley, 2007). According to Métis education scholar and advocate Yvonne Poitras Pratt, Alberta Education' inclusion of "agreements" next to "treaties" in the 2017 Drafts is due to the insistence of the Métis Education Council, of which she is a founding member. Prior to these Drafts, Pratt explained, 'there was no mention of our [Métis] rights as Aboriginal peoples in Alberta curriculum' (personal communication, August 25, 2017). On the rare occasions that Métis or Inuit agreements have entered public discourses they have generally been framed in ways that support the benevolent peacemaker myth. In the late 19th century, the Government of Canada introduced a "scrip" policy in order to allocate land to the Métis. As with the treaties, this system is often framed as a benevolent act of the Canadian government. What is not included is information on the government sanctioned settler encroachment onto Métis' lands that preceded and necessitated the policy. Contemporary research on Métis peoples' experiences of scrip policy history shows unscrupulous, fraudulent activity, and unchecked abuse on the part of government administrators (Rupertsland Institute, 2018; Augustus, 2008). When mentioned, the Tapirisat/Nunavut Agreement is often celebrated as a shining example of the Canadian government's continued generosity. As this agreement resulted in the creation of the first Indigenous-dominated political jurisdiction in North America, it is certainly an important achievement. However, what is left out from dominant narratives is the long history of resistance, conflict, and "political wrangling" that led to this and other historic agreements with the Inuit (Coates, 2004, p. 249).

Differences in understandings of treaties and agreements have led to difficulties in establishing cross-cultural relationships based on mutual respect (TRC, 2015b). The emphasis on *diverse* stories of treaties and agreements in the Drafts provides opportunities to reveal gaps, or inconsistencies in dominant narratives allowing for reframing of historical understandings.

5.2.3 Nation-to-nation relationships

At multiple points within the Scope and Sequence, treaties and agreements are framed as 'nation-to-nation negotiations' (2.4b), 'nation-to-nation agreements' (2.10b) or paired with the term 'founding nations' (2.6b; 2.10a). Other occurrences, not explicitly relating to treaties or agreements, also frame the relationships as 'nation-to-nation' (4.10a; 5.12c). Also included in the Scope and Sequence is acknowledgement of the role 'contributions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit governance structures' have played in 'shaping social, political and economic systems' (1.11a).

According to Regan, the positive self-image of Canada as a nation of benevolent peacemakers is based on untruths rooted in a 'fundamental disregard for Indigenous history, law and diplomatic principles and practices' (2006, p. 81). Contrary to dominant narrative depictions, pre-contact First Nations societies had complex systems of law, diplomacy, and peacemaking. Revisionist historical literature has shown that Indigenous diplomatic practices, grounded in notions of peaceful coexistence amongst diverse peoples, have been foundational in North American societal structures (Regan, 2006, p. 111). Treaties were a well-established practice among many First Nations, prior to the arrival of the Europeans. According to the TRC, 'Treaty negotiations often took place at First Nations' insistence' and 'there were First Nations leaders who, despite often desperate economic conditions, rejected the Treaties as not being in the best interests of their people' (2015a, p. 116). The acknowledgement of pre-contact systems of governance and diplomacy in First Nations societies in the Drafts challenges understandings of Europeans bringing "gifts of civilization" to "uncivilized" "Indians".

Similarly, characterizing agreements as "nation-to-nation" negotiations formally recognizes the status the Métis as a *nation*. Though the Métis have been recognized as Aboriginal people in the constitution since 1982, other legislation and public discourses have moved slower (Andersen, 2014). As the Métis were excluded from treatymaking, until very recently, they were denied the protection of Indigenous rights afforded to First Nations through the treaties and various federal laws. In April 2016, in *Daniels v. Canada (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)*, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Métis and non-status Indians are "Indians" under section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. This means that, like so called

"Treaty Indians" the Métis now fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government and are owed more-or-less the same rights recognition as First Nations. The recentness of the Daniels decision illustrates the difficulties Métis have faced in gaining recognition of their rights compared to First Nations. Though the Métis have suffered centuries of colonial violence and marginalization, settler Canadians often doubt their legitimacy as an Indigenous people[29].

In a conversation regarding the curriculum development, Yvonne Poitras Pratt powerfully expressed her frustration with recurrent hostility toward her people:

> *I remember being a student in my undergraduate classes and again in my graduate classes where there was always a smirk or a sideways glance or a rolling of the eyes whenever our people were mentioned. I don't need one more smirk. I don't need one more misguided perception about who we are. That's racism, and I'm done with that.* (Personal communication, August 25, 2017).

Considering widespread ignorance about Métis history, the hard-won inclusion of Métis agreements, and recognition of the status of the Métis as a nation, is extremely important for facilitating reconciliation.

Recognition of nationhood is of central importance to the struggle for self-determination. Self-determination is a cardinal rule within international law – whereby all *peoples* have the right to sovereignty, without interference from other sovereign peoples. Gaining recognition, in theory and practice, of Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination has been a central concern of national and international Indigenous movements (Anaya, 2004; Åhren, 2016; Broderstad, 2014). The recognition of Indigenous peoples as *nations* sets the stage for meaningful consideration of Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, which is included as concept elsewhere in the Drafts.

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[29] This is perhaps partly due to misunderstandings about the differing meanings of "indigenous". The term "indigenous" can refer to plant and animal life that is native to a particular environment; this is different from "Indigenous" as it applies to Indigenous peoples. "Indigenous peoples" has not been explicitly defined in international law. However, it has been established that priority of settlement is not a necessary condition for a people to be defined as Indigenous (de Costa, 2015).

5.2.4 Terms of Treaties and Agreements

Treaties and agreements are positioned along with references to general or specific terms or rights at several points in the Drafts. 'Terms of treaties and agreements' (2.4b) and 'treaty rights' (2.6b) are mentioned once each within the Scope and Sequence. On several other occasions 'inherent rights' (2.5b; 2.8c; 5.2), 'constitutional rights' (5.6a; 6.5b), and 'Indigenous rights' (1.6a; 1.6b; 1.9a; 1.12a) are mentioned. Specific terms or implications of treaties and agreements also occur. For example, 'reserve system' and 'Métis and other settlements' occur under the guiding question 'In what ways have treaties and agreements affected and continue to affect peoples in Canada?' (2.5b). As has been discussed, 'land claims' (2.5b; 3.4b; 3.11a), 'Aboriginal title', 'treaties, agreements, and mineral rights' (3.12b), 'consultation' (2.7; 6.10b) and 'duty to consult' (1.8b; 3.10a) also occur in the drafts. Significantly, 'Indigenous self-determination' (1.9a; 2.9b); 'Indigenous governance' (2.11a; 5.12a; 1.11a); 'Indigenous self-government' (2.7); 'self-determination' (1.7a; 2.9a; 5.12a; 6.8b); and 'self-government' (2.7) appear frequently within the Drafts.

The inclusion of information on Indigenous peoples' specific rights, as outlined through treaties, agreements, and associated national and international law mechanisms, is highly significant in terms of facilitating reconciliation. The absence of accurate information about Indigenous rights has led to prejudiced understandings about Indigenous peoples in Canada. Because most settlers do not know the details of the written and spoken agreements, Settlers commonly complain about Indigenous peoples "not paying taxes" or "living off government handouts" (Kanu, 2011; Tupper & Cappello, 2008). Enabling informed understanding about Indigenous rights among settlers is key to overcoming these stereotyped understandings.

5.2.5 Spirit and Intent of Treaties and Agreements

The phrase 'spirit and intent' (1.7; 2.6b; 2.7; 3.4) or just 'intent' (2.4b) appears before 'treaties and agreements' several times in the Drafts. This phrase "spirit and intent" of treaties has become a rallying cry of sorts for Indigenous peoples and settlers committed to reconciliation in Canada (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015).

According to numerous oral histories, during treaty negotiations First Nations leaders were assured that the government's obligations would go beyond the written terms specified in the agreements. Language barriers made communicating specific demands difficult during treaty

negotiations, but the permanent nature of the government's commitments was repeatedly stressed. Representatives of the Crown told First Nations that the agreements would 'last as long as the sun shines and yonder river flows' (TRC, 2015a, p. 119). Leaders were presented with a *Treaty Medal* depicting a representative of the British Crown and a First Nations Chief shaking hands. To Indigenous leaders, the Treaty Medal symbolised the spirit and intent of the relationships being agreed to in the treaties – relationships between equals, based on mutual respect for one another's sovereignty as nations, and agreement to peacefully share the lands (TRC, 2015a). The Indigenous leaders trusted that the written documents captured the essence of their talks; 'they were angered and dismayed to discover later that what had been pledged in words, leader to leader, was not recorded accurately' (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). As time has transpired, the Canadian government has failed to uphold even the poorly translated written terms of the treaties.

The regular inclusion of the phrase 'spirit and intent' in the Drafts brings attention to the legacy of broken treaties and agreements, which directly contradicts the intended purpose of these supposedly binding agreements. Consideration of the spirit and intent of treaties provides space for reflection on the moral implications of treaty and agreement legacies and the very real implications these legacies have had on the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada. In doing so, it provides opportunity for reframing and reimagining of Indigenous-settler relations, based on the Treaty Handshake vision.

Based on the explicit mention of treaties within Call to Action 62.i, the TRC clearly view building understandings about treaties as central to education for reconciliation. Alberta Education has met this criterion by including extensive content on treaty history in the Drafts. The presence of "agreements" along with treaties provides space for consideration of Métis' and Inuit' histories, and rights, on equal footing with those of First Nations. This is significant, as Inuit and Métis have been even more marginalized, relative to First Nations, in past curricula (Andersen, 2014; Stanley, 2007). The approach of diverse stories, and framing of treaties and agreements as nation-to-nation contradicts dominant understandings of treaties as "gifts of civilization" from "benevolent" colonizers. Specific focus on terms, spirit and intent of treaties and agreements could disrupt stereotyped understandings and provide opportunity for a reimagining of Indigenous-settler relations based on the original Treaty

Handshake vision. Because of the centrality of the relationships imagined within treaties and agreements within education for reconcili*action,* the ongoing implications of treaties and agreements will be returned to frequently throughout the subsequent analysis.

5.3 Unsilencing Silence

Histories of treaty and agreement relationships in Alberta are tantamount to continuous structural and symbolic violence inflicted on Indigenous peoples by settlers and settler governments (Tupper, 2014). The reality of broken promises, assimilationist policies, and colonial violence stands in stark contrast to the spirit and intent of the treaty negotiations, and to Canada's self-image as a "nation of peacemakers" (Regan, 2006). In order to support the image of Canada as peaceful and just, for many years there was a pervasive *national silence* on Canada's colonial history (MacDonald, 2015; Morantz, 1998; Reynolds, 1999). The history of settler-Indigenous relations was rewritten to support a narrative of "conquest through benevolence" (Regan, 2006, p. 103). Settler Canadians congratulate ourselves on the fact that armed confrontation between Indigenous peoples and settlers is rare (though not nonexistent) in Canada, but we do not see 'the many ways that other forms of violence, such as racism and cultural domination, power and privilege, shape everyday interactions between Indigenous peoples and the majority Settler population' (Regan, 2006, p. 11). Regardless of its accuracy, the Benevolent Peacemaker Myth is now deeply situated within understandings of Canadian history and identity, limiting people's ability to see the past in ways that depart from this mythical dominant narrative (Létourneau, 2007; Scott, 2013b; den Heyer & Abbott, 2011). This section addresses the ways the Drafts stand to "demythify" history by *unsilencing silence,* and challenging "conquest through benevolence" understandings of history.

There is much conceptual knowledge included in the Drafts, which stands to contradict the "conquest through benevolence" tale. This includes mentions of 'historical injustice' (5.9b), 'discriminatory laws and policies' (5.7b), [historical] 'discrimination' (2.8a; 2.10a; 4.9a; 4.9b; 4.11a; 5.10c), 'residential schools' (Subject Intro p. 2; 2.6a; 5.7b), [historical] 'colonialism' (2.8a; 3.9a; 2.10a; 5.10c), 'colonization' (2.5a), 'disenfranchisement' (2.10a), 'assimilation' (1.8a; 2.8b; 2.10a; 4.6), 'indoctrination' (1.11b), 'imposition of ideologies' (2.12b; 4.12a), 'cultural genocide' (4.10a), and 'genocide' (1.11b; 2.12b). An example of an (un)usual

narrative not related to Indigenous peoples is the mention of 'internments' (5.7b), likely referring to internment camps where presumed enemies of the state were detained during both world wars.

Along with treaties, the TRC's call to action 62.i. explicitly calls for age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools. In the Subject Introduction, it states 'social studies calls for understandings of residential schools and their legacy, including their impacts on relationships in Canada. Healing and reconciliation is further advanced by including a complete history of residential schools and their legacy' (p. 2). Residential schools are mentioned twice within the Scope and Sequence, within the concepts 'history of residential schools and their legacy' (2.6a) in grade six and 'legacy of residential schools' (5.7b) in grade seven.

The Indian Residential School system is the most violent chapter in Canadian history. The policy was set in motion with the *Indian Act* in 1876 and continued for over a century, with the last school closing in 1996. Alberta was home to more residential schools than any other province. Attendance was mandatory for First Nations children and many Inuit and Métis children also attended the schools (TRC, 2015a). In contrast to on-reserve education promised in the treaties, the residential schools were usually located far from reserves and were explicitly intended to assimilate Indigenous children into the mainstream settler culture: to "kill the Indian in the child". Students in residential schools were subjected to various forms of abuse, and forbidden from speaking their languages, or practicing their culture (Tupper, 2014, p. 477). Reports into the health conditions within residential schools revealed statistically high levels of illness and death (Lorenz, 2016).

Olsen (2017) claims that there is a general unwillingness to directly deal with conflict within mainstream curricula. Similarly, Carla Peck and Lindsay Herriot (2015) contend that educators, justifiably, tend to avoid controversial subject matter that could make their students feel alienated or uncomfortable. Learning the details of residential school students' experiences of abuse would undoubtedly be an uncomfortable experience for sixth grade

students. As such, teachers could be tempted to create distance between the students and subject matter by using depersonalized language and teaching methods[30]. When the history of residential schools appears in grade six, however, it is under an essential understanding that explicitly calls for 'diverse narratives' (EU2) and a guiding question that includes the word 'stories' (2.6a). Both the essential understanding and guiding question therefore prompt teachers to use the mode of *stories* to teach about residential schools. This demands consideration of students' actual experiences, which negates the urge to teach residential schools at arm's length, effectively *humanizing* the history and providing space to reflect on the moral implications of the policy.

On the first page of the TRC's Executive Summary report it states that Canada's policy towards Indigenous peoples 'can best be described as "cultural genocide"', and later statements vaguely suggest "biological" and "physical" genocide have occurred (2015b, p. 1). Accusations of genocide, the "crime of crimes" (MacDonald, 2015, p. 412), are particularly hard pills for western democracies to swallow, especially when notions of peace making are central to national identity. This term, 'genocide', occurs as a concept three times within the Scope and Sequence (1.11b; 2.12b; 4.10a). On one such occasion 'cultural genocide' is directly linked to the experiences of Indigenous peoples 'in various parts of the world', (4.10a). In grade 12, the inclusion of 'domestic and international contexts' along with 'genocide' demands a consideration of genocide within Canada. According to the TRC, 'States that engage in cultural genocide *set out to destroy* the political and social institutions of the targeted group' [my emphasis] (TRC, 2015b, p. 1). Based on a review of House of Commons debates from the residential school era, Danielle Lorenz explains that 'the terrible treatment of Indigenous children was well-known' and still 'the Canadian government actively chose to keep the residential school system going' (Lorenz, 2016, p. 114). By approaching Canada's policy through the lens of genocide, it becomes impossible to deny the

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[30] In this case, depersonalized teaching methods might entail focusing on constructing timelines of the residential school policy or memorizing key names and dates, rather than discussing students' experiences or engaging in moral discussion about the rationale behind the creation and continuation of the schools.

violent intent of the residential school policy, as has been a common refrain among settlers who wish to remain in comfortable denial (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015).

5.3.1 Settlers in Denial

As Regan puts it 'moving from the rhetoric of "cheap reconcilation" to the substantive actions necessary to decolonize and transform our relationship will require unsettling the Settler within, beginning with a fundamental questioning of our most deeply cherished myth' (2006, p. 90). Within the above sections it has been shown that the Drafts repeatedly challenge mythic understandings of national history. At each stage of the dominant national history, the curriculum has included (un)usual narratives from Indigenous perspectives which have revealed ommisions and contradictions within the classic "conquest through benevolence" tale.

However, based on wider discourses in Canadian society, simply knowing that these things happened is not enough to stimulate commitment to decolonization. The events leading to the TRC, and the commission's proceedings and final report received extensive media coverage. As a result, though it had been silenced for many years, the fact that Indigenous students suffered extreme emotional, physical and sexual abuse within residential schools is now common knowledge in Canada. Even prior to the formation of the TRC, in 2008 then prime minster Stephen Harper made a formal apology in the House of Commons for the treatment of Indigenous children in residential schools. Within this apology, he admitted 'two primary objectives of the Residential Schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture' (Harper, 2008). Just one year after this apology, however, Harper proudly told the G20 that Canada has 'no history of colonialism' (cited in Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 4).

How has this pervasive denial been sustained despite the unsilencing of a clearly colonial history? The answer is in the unshaking salvation of the benevolent peacemaker myth. As Regan (2006) puts it, 'in the face of Indigenous peoples' accusations of genocide, racism, political non-recognition and the illegal theft of lands and resources, we comfort ourselves with the peacemaker myth – we like to believe we were 'kinder, gentler' colonizers' (p. 140).

Despite knowledge of the thousands of Survivors' horrific experiences within residential schools, the policy is still understood by many as springing from 'some level of altruism mixed with mismanagement' (MacDonald, 2015, p. 419) or 'the fault of "a few bad apples"' (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 4). As Regan puts it, 'while Settlers may feel guilt or remorse about the past, we often argue that we are not responsible for the "sins of our ancestors" and that we cannot "remake" the past' (2006, pp. 127-128). Even when settlers are aware of past injustices, the problems are often seen as *reasons for sadness*, not for action (Coates, 2000, p. xiv). If the social studies curriculum is to unsettle settlers' colonial dispositions, the content must be taught not as 'reasons for sadness' but as reasons for reconcili*action*.

5.4 Unsettling Settlers

While Canada's violent past has been silenced or pardoned in dominant narratives, more recent events and policies that support the Benevolent Peacemaker Myth have been emphasized. Since the 1970s, the official policies of multiculturalism and bilingualism have been central themes in discourses surrounding Canadian identity, and Alberta social studies curricula (Berg, 2017; Kymlicka, 1998; Richardson, 2002). Largely based on these policies, modern day Canada is proclaimed a utopia of justice and peace by many of its residents. But the focus on multiculturalism as encompassing *all* peoples in Canada on equal terms denies important differences between Indigenous peoples and settlers and reinforces what Battell Lowman and Barker describe as a 'colonialism-blind notion of equality' (2015, p.75). In her book, *Unsettling the Settler Within,* Regan states, 'experiences showed me that most non-Native people resist the notion that violence lies at the core of Indigenous-settler relations' (2010, p. 21) but 'once most non-Natives understand the ways in which colonial violence is embedded in the institutional structures of Canadian society they genuinely want to do something to remedy the situation' (2010, p.22). This section addresses the need to demythify conceptions of modern-day Canada as a utopia of equality and tolerance. In particular, this section considers the ways the Drafts facilitate understandings of the unique relationships between settlers and Indigenous peoples – and the way historic and ongoing colonialism continue to reproduce injustice.

There are some clear examples of historic colonialism being explicitly linked to current realities within the Drafts. The 'legacy' or 'legacies' of residential schools (2.6a; 5.7b) and treaties and agreements (2.6b) are included as conceptual knowledge. Consideration of *legacies* of these chapters of Canadian history holds the power to illuminate how the social problems Indigenous peoples face today have come to be through long silenced processes of colonization. There are also many concepts relating to present-day[31] inequality and injustice in the Scope and Sequence. Several units deal with 'inequity', (5.9b) 'disparity', (5.7a; 6.10a) 'inequality' (5.7b) or differences in quality of life (6.6b; 6.11a; 6.7a). Also included are 'injustices' (5.9b; 5.10c); 'marginalization' (5.11b; 4.12b); 'social barriers' (5.11a); 'stereotypes' (5.10b; 6.11a); 'prejudice' (4.9b; 5.11b); 'discrimination' (5.7a; 5.10b; 5.10c), and 'institutionalized discrimination' (5.11b). Five of these units include conceptual knowledge which can be seen as explicitly linked to Indigenous peoples[32]. In others, relation to Indigenous peoples is implicit. In some cases these concepts appear but are not the central focus of the unit. In others the guiding questions and all related data are related to the issue. For example: 'To what degree are inequities and injustices present in societies and why?' (5.9b); 'In what ways is quality of life different in other communities?' (6.3); and 'To what extent does quality of life differ among individuals and groups in Canada?' (6.7a).

The inclusion of these types of issues – framed within the context of contemporary Canada – makes it difficult to uphold notions of Canada as wholly just and good. But, these could still be seen as *reasons for sadness* rather than *reasons for action*. As Regan puts it, we settlers are sorry, 'not sorry enough to want to change our comfortable lives, but we feel quite badly about what has happened to Indigenous peoples. We keep trying to help them remedy the Indian problem, but despite our best efforts, they just have not been able to tap into all the benefits that Canadian citizenship offers them' (2010, p. 129). What is missing in this type of understanding is recognition that Canada's colonial present is not an "Indian problem" but a shared reality in which all residents of Canada live.

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[31] The examples provided here are limited to those which have been framed in a way that implies that these are to be discussed in the context of contemporary Canada.
[32] These units are: 5.7a; 5.7b; 5.10c; 6.10a; 6.11a

While colonization has produced profound and long lasting disadvantages for Indigenous peoples, settlers have been and continue to be complicit beneficiaries of colonial systems. To return to the issue of treaties and agreements, while the displacement of Indigenous peoples caused long lasting economic and social hardship, the lands ceded to the Canadian government within the treaties have provided and continue to provide a landbase for settler life and prosperity. Yet, in a study involving K-12 students in Saskatchewan, Tupper and Cappello found that 60% of students did not know how treaties affected them, and 73% could not provide examples of the benefits of treaties to settlers (2008, p. 565).

Treaties are often understood as being between the Canadian state and Indigenous peoples, therefore separate from the daily lives of individual settlers. Settlers find comfort in the thought that, while *we* are sorry, there is nothing *I* can do personally. But as Battell Lowman and Barker argue, 'Settler colonialism requires that Settler people, in exchange for many purported but often immaterial benefits, submit themselves to systems that commit genocide and erasure of Indigenous identities in their name' (2015, p. 79). The crucial point here is that political systems operate in the name of settler Canadian people. This is because it is ultimately the public mind of the majority settler population that dictates political will (Regan, 2006, p. 131). Meaningful political action to confront ongoing colonialism requires the active support of the majority settler population. If simply learning of Indigenous peoples' experiences of injustice was enough to instigate this kind of change, it would have happened by now. As such, 'we must find ways to reach not just the mind…of Settler society, but its heart, soul and conscience as well' (Regan, 2006, p. 131). Reaching settler consciences requires shedding light on the role individual settlers play in the continuing systemic injustices today, and to bring about understanding of how we as settlers can work towards '*becoming something other than colonial'* (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 111).

The essential understanding for the political science/law strain reads 'Power influences governance and relationships and contributes to reconciliation and an equitable, just society' (EU5). As this essential understanding is the overarching idea that frames all the proposed content within this strain, it is not surprising that the theme of power occurs frequently. In grade 10, a guiding question reads 'To what extent do power and privilege influence relationships and shape identities?' (5.10b) with 'expressions of identity,'

'discrimination' and 'stereotypes' as possible concepts. Elsewhere the concept of "power" appears within the phrases 'power relationships' (3.4b; 5.4a); 'power and influence' (2.11a; 5.5a); 'power and privilege' (2.9a); 'power imbalances' (5.9a; 5.11b); 'power and control' (5.9b; 2.12b) and 'power dynamics' (6.12a). This repeated acknowledgement of power as an important aspect of relationships is key to illuminating the ways inequalities in society are not natural or inevitable, but rather the result of unequal distributions of power between groups, brought about through historical processes.

It must be acknowledged that not all settlers enjoy the same levels of privilege. There is great diversity in terms of power, privilege, and experiences of marginalization among settlers – just as there is among Indigenous people. Being white, middle-class, and English speaking may produce higher levels of privilege within settler society, but this is not to say that only these people should be considered settlers. Privilege is dynamic, and changeable based on different settings and different relationalities. As suggested by Battell Lowman and Barker, 'it is entirely possible – and in fact quite common – for communities of marginalized peoples to buy into structures of invasion, to identify strongly with Settler Canadian myths and narratives, and to participate in systemic dispossession of Indigenous peoples, all while struggling with their own marginalization' (2015, p. 71).

The curricular content discussed above, relating to power imbalances in societal relationships, is relevant for many more relationships than those between settlers and Indigenous peoples. But, while 'privilege in any political economic system may come and go, the conflict over belonging on the land remains' (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 70). The relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers, established within treaties, agreements, and national and international law, are permanent and have significant implications for all peoples in Canada. But the permanent two-way relationship established during treaty and agreement negotiations is often overlooked. This oversight contributes to understandings of Indigenous peoples and settlers inhabiting separate realities, which leave many settlers unable to comprehend the ways colonial structures simultaneously benefit settlers while disadvantaging Indigenous peoples. Donald claims 'it is an ethical imperative to recognize the significance of the relationships we have with others, how our histories and

experiences are layered and position us in relation to each other, and how our futures as people similarly are tied together' (2009a, p. 7).

As has been discussed, historic treaty and agreement negotiations are frequently framed as being nation-to-nation. The Drafts also include many references to the *continuing* implication of the relationships formed in these historic negotiations. Examples include: 'treaty and agreement relationships' (1.4); 'Why are all people in Canada treaty people, and what rights and responsibilities do we have as treaty people?' (2.6b) 'In what ways have treaties and agreements affected and continue to affect peoples in Canada?' (2.5b) with 'settlers' included as a concept; 'To what extent do treaties, agreements and other interactions among diverse peoples in Canada shape emerging issues?' (2.7); 'How is decision making by individuals, groups and governments shaped by the past?' (5.5a) with 'treaties, agreements and constitutional commitments' as a concept; and others (1.7b; 2.8c).

According to Tupper, a key element of education for reconciliation involves 'helping students make connections to treaties and the treaty relationship, to see how their lives continue to be shaped by these agreements, to understand the very real material and psychic implications of dishonouring the treaties for Aboriginal–Canadian relations' (2014, p. 483). By framing treaties and agreements as bases for ongoing relationships which bestow certain 'rights and responsibilities' (2.6b) on all peoples in Canada and continue to 'shape emerging issues' (2.7) and affect all peoples (2.5b), the Drafts hold the power to disrupt understandings of the legacies of (broken) treaties and agreements as "Indigenous problems" separate from the lived realities of present-day settlers. The Drafts also specifically highlight benefits enjoyed by settlers as a result of treaty and agreement negotiations. In grade 4, one guiding question asks 'In what ways did treaties between the Crown and First Nations and agreements shape relationships among all Canadians?' with 'land ownership' as a concept (2.4b). Another guiding question asks 'To what extent can people own the land?' with 'spirit and intent of treaties and agreements,' and 'significance of land ownership' as concepts (3.4b).

Dealing with controversial, unsettling subject matter regarding settler complicity in ongoing colonialism in curriculum is no easy feat. While enabling understanding of ongoing colonialism is crucial for navigating settlers towards reconcili*action,* there is also a real risk of

oversimplifying relations between Indigenous peoples and settlers. It is important that the curriculum enables understanding of Canadian society that goes beyond a simplistic divide between "disadvantaged Indigenous victims" and "privileged settler oppressors". Thus, education for reconcili*action* faces a dilemma*:* unsettling settlers *requires* understandings of Indigenous peoples' experiences as victims of colonial oppression, but curriculum also needs to ensure that students are not left with the impression that Indigenous peoples are *only* victims. As such, it is crucial for Indigenous content in the curriculum to move beyond a *'narrative of cultural loss'* to a *'narrative of survival'* (Nakata, 2006, p. 273).

5.5 Victimization Myths and Indigenous Survivance

Indigenous peoples have often been positioned as "victims of progress" (Regan, 2006, p. 84) within mainstream discourses and curricula in Canada. As with perceptions of Canadian history as "conquest through benevolence" – understandings of Indigenous peoples as mere victims are fundamentally misguided. Victimization narratives ignore the reality of historic and on-going Indigenous resistance and revitalization. Throughout Canadian history there have been countless instances of Indigenous peoples actively resisting colonialism[33]. The last half a century has seen a wave of cultural and linguistic revitalization within Indigenous communities across Canada and the world. The determined efforts of Indigenous activists have brought forth an era of rights recognition on a global scale. Gerald Vizenor (1999) uses the term *survivance* to counter narratives of victimization. Rather than reactionary stories of mere survival, survivance denotes active agency and resistance as fundamental elements of modern indigeneity. This section outlines the way the Drafts combat victimization myths by highlighting narratives of Indigenous survivance. This section also addresses the ways content in the Drafts represents the dignity and vitality of contemporary Indigenous cultures. As part of this discussion, this section will end with a brief analysis of Indigenous ways of knowing in the Drafts.

There are several concepts which occur in the Drafts that can be seen as highlighting Indigenous survivance. The concept of Indigenous rights occurs 10 times, in varying

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[33] Opposition to the proposed White Paper of 1969, the Meech Lake Accord of 1987, the Oka Crisis of 1990, and the Idle No More movement beginning in 2012 are obvious examples that come to mind.

iterations; and self-determination or related terms[34] occur 12 times throughout the Scope and Sequence. Indigenous activism (1.4; 1.6a); 'Revitalization' (3.6; 4.12a) and 'resistance' (2.9b; 2.10a; 5.7a) are also included as conceptual knowledge.

In the past, victimization narratives have been reinforced through the "tipis and costumes" approach to teaching. This approach has positioned Indigenous peoples as "unfortunate historical remnants" (Scott, 2013b, p. 34) giving the impression that Indigenous peoples are *unable* to adjust to present circumstances. Victimization narratives may produce emotional responses from settlers, but they support perceptions of Indigenous peoples as downtrodden and helpless - worthy of pity, but not genuine empathy or respect. Rather than encouraging settlers to actively oppose colonial violence, victimization narratives send the message that opposition is of no use as Indigenous peoples are already too far down the path to extinction to be helped (Martin, 2013). The curricular attention paid to Indigenous survivance demands educators move beyond ahistoric "tipis and costumes" representations of Indigenous peoples. Narratives surrounding concepts such as 'Indigenous rights' and 'revitalization' demonstrate the incredible resiliency of Indigenous peoples – despite centuries of violent oppression and marginalization. Rather than pity, narratives of survivance evoke feelings of admiration and respect, and provide reasons for hope.

Article 15.1 of UNDRIP states that Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity of their cultures, traditions, histories, and aspirations appropriately reflected in education (United Nations, 2007). Through narratives of survivance, some key aspirations of Indigenous peoples in Canada are being reflected within the Drafts. Previous sections have discussed the way Indigenous peoples' histories are being included. But the question remains as to whether the Drafts include content regarding Indigenous peoples' diverse cultures and traditions. Communicating the vitality and dynamic nature of Indigenous cultures is another key means of overcoming victimization myths. Yes, Indigenous peoples experienced intense cultural genocide at the hands of the Canadian government. Residential schools and other policies forced many Indigenous peoples to grow up estranged from their cultures and languages, with

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[34] Here, "Indigenous governance" or "self-government" are considered related to self-determination.

debilitating effects on the maintenance of Indigenous identities (Anaya, 2014). But, their cultures were *not* eradicated and through concerted efforts of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous cultures across Canada and around the world are experiencing dramatic revitalization.

In the Subject Introduction, it is stated that social studies is inclusive of and honours diverse cultures and languages of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in historical and contemporary contexts (p. 2). In the Scope and Sequence, 'culture', 'cultures', or 'cultural' is explicitly linked to Indigenous peoples on five occasions (3.5b; 4.4a; 4.4b; 4.5; 4.12a). There are also several others mentions of 'diverse cultures', which imply consideration of Indigenous cultures. The anthropology/sociology units in grade four place particular focus on Indigenous cultures with concepts such as 'Indigenous cultures and languages', 'ceremonies and traditions', 'roles of ancestors', 'importance of oral tradition' (4.4a), 'First peoples', 'ways of life' and 'Métis culture' (4.4b). 'Cultural vitality' (4.5) and 'cultural and linguistic revitalization' (4.12a) also occur, bringing attention to the fact that Indigenous cultures are not "of the past".

The Subject Introduction also explicitly states that the social studies curriculum is inclusive of diverse Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing (p. 2). A *worldview* can be understood as the way a people perceive and respond to their world through the lenses of their own cultural background. *Ways of knowing* are particular epistemologies of different cultural groups. Both worldviews and ways of knowing are shaped by complex factors and circumstances and determine what people value, believe, and think – together these factors motivate people's actions and behaviours (Alberta Teachers Association, 2016a). As such, worldviews and ways of knowing are intrinsically linked to cultures. In the Scope and Sequence, 'ways of knowing' occurs 7 times. On four of these occasions (2.8c; 3.5b; 4.4a; 4.4b), 'ways of knowing' occurs along with content that is explicitly linked to Indigenous peoples[35], on the other three occasions (6.1; 6.2; 6.11b) the phrase can be seen as implicitly related to Indigenous peoples. 'Worldviews' occurs 11 times in the Scope and Sequence, once in grade four (4.4b), where it is explicitly linked to Indigenous peoples, and 10 times within

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[35] The explicitly linked content is: 2.8c 'treaties and agreements'; 3.5b 'reconciliation'; 4.4a 'Indigenous', 'oral tradition'; and 4.4b 'First peoples', 'Métis culture'.

grade eight, where worldviews are a major theme and are used to refer to diverse worldviews, not only those of Indigenous peoples.

There are also many references to specific values and ideas, which seemingly stem from Indigenous worldviews across the curriculum. There are many diverse Indigenous peoples living in Alberta and Canada, each with their own unique cultural values and worldviews. Making generalizations about "pan-Indigenous" worldviews can be misleading, as it blurs diversity within the broad category of Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, because settlers and Indigenous peoples' historic and contemporary experiences are intertwined, it can be counterproductive and misleading to draw binary distinctions between Indigenous and settler worldviews. As Martin Nakata puts it, 'explorations at this interface where two different sets of knowledge and historical understandings meet, reveal, not simple oppositions of black and white, us and them, but a tangled web of where we are caught up' (2006, p. 272). Though the cultural interface is indeed messy and entangled, there *are* some discernable differences in the core value systems of Indigenous peoples and settlers. However, it is important to keep in mind that, though these differences exist, they do not render Indigenous peoples and Indigenous worldviews as "unknowable" to settlers. As Donald explains 'colonialism is a shared condition wherein colonizers and colonized come to know each other very well' (2009a, p. 6).

There is a wealth of scholarship by Indigenous scholars both in Canada and around the world which point toward shared Indigenous ways of knowing and values. Scholars' descriptions of Indigenous worldviews often centre around a *holistic* view in which human beings exist in webs of reciprocal relationships with the land and all other human, animal, spiritual beings (Deloria, 1999; Moreton-Robinson, 2017; Wilson, 2008). This holistic vision implies that learning and knowing take place within and across interconnected physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual realms (Kuokknen, 2000). According to Donald, 'Aboriginal peoples come to know the land and identify with significant places through the stories' (2009a, p. 10).

While a thorough analysis of the inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing in the Drafts is outside the scope of this thesis – a few overarching observations can be made. There is a considerable amount of language included in the Drafts that seems to arise from Indigenous

worldviews. For example, 'holistic thinking' has been included as a foundational dimension of thinking in the Drafts and is repeated, along with 'economic thinking' within every unit under the sixth essential understanding, with a total of 21 occurrences. Other terms that could be connected to a holistic worldview, such as 'interconnectedness' (4.7), 'interdependence' (1.6a; 4.6; 3.8), and 'interrelationships' (3.3) are also appear as conceptual knowledge within this and other strains. Furthermore, Standard Six, outlined in the Guiding Framework and intended to apply to curricula in all subjects, reads: 'Curriculum is written to facilitate holistic student development'. A further description of the standard states 'curriculum provides students with opportunities to develop…across interconnected learning domains: intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, and emotional' (Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 25).

Donald contends that 'in the context of Canadian education, place-stories can help people reread and reframe their understandings of Canadian history as layered and relational, and thus better comprehend ongoing Indigenous presence and participation' (2009a, p. 10). The concept of "stories of place" is included within the essential understanding for the geography/ecology strain, which reads: 'Stories of place and knowing the land and how it sustains us foster a sense of belonging and personal and collective responsibility to be stewards of the land' (EU3). It also appears on three other occasions in the Scope and Sequence, all within the lower grades (K-2). Elsewhere, a guiding question asks 'Why are names of places important?' with 'cultural values', 'landmarks and sacred places' and 'cultural identity' (3.5b). Also prevalent in the geography/ecology strain is the concept of humans existing in relationship with the land. In its various iterations, the idea of relationship to the land appears 11 times throughout the strain.

Based on this brief summary, it is clear that effort has been made to include Indigenous ways of knowing in the Drafts. This widespread inclusion of language relating to Indigenous ways of knowing represents an indigenization of curricular content, and is therefore commendable. However, upon closer inspection, it could be said that the framing of these ways of knowing and the balance of inclusion between differing features of Indigenous worldviews could indicate that their inclusion is still being dictated on settler terms. For example, the positioning of "holistic thinking" within one of six superficially divided strains is inherently contradictory. Holistic thinking, based on the way it is articulated by Indigenous scholars,

applies to all experiences of learning and being, and rejects arbitrarily divided organizational structures (Deloria, 1999; Kuokknen, 2000). Furthermore, while Standard Six supposedly requires acknowledgement of the "spiritual" learning domain, acknowledgement of Indigenous spirituality is virtually absent within the Scope and Sequence. Donald claims that in the context of secular mainstream education 'the spiritual dimension of Indigenous ways of knowing is often stripped away', reducing Indigenous worldviews to 'pure epistemology' based on 'enlightenment-based understanding of how knowledge is presented' (personal communication, July 5, 2017). But, many Indigenous scholars see spirituality as central to learning and being. Native-American educator Jack Forbes argues that without spirituality, learning remains at the superficial level where ideas can be developed without consideration of morals. Forbes contends that 'knowledge without the spiritual core is a very dangerous thing' (1979, p. 11, cited in Kanu, 2011, p. 105).

Genuine infusion of Indigenous spirituality throughout the curriculum and learning process would require a significant shift in the fundamental values and approaches to learning in mainstream schooling. On the other hand, instilling environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviours among students through consideration of Indigenous perspectives of relatedness to the land is fully compatible with the values of many settlers and the agenda of the current Alberta Government. The inclusion of stories of place and relatedness to the land, and simultaneous exclusion of spirituality, can therefore be seen as an example of *interest convergence* – whereby dominant culture settlers offer concessions to minorities, only so far as those concessions do not constitute a major disruption to the self-interest of settlers and their 'normal' way of life (Kanu, 2011, p. 48). The implications of this kind of comfortable *incremental change* (Kanu, 2011, p. 48) understanding of reconciliation will be discussed in the following chapter. In this discussion, Indigenous ways of knowing in the curriculum will be returned to, and the issue of "education for reconciliation: on whose terms?" will be explored more thoroughly.

Curricula taught in formal, mainstream schooling hold the power to validate and legitimize content as "official knowledge" of and for society (Beyer & Apple, 1998; Kanu, 2011; Romanowski, 2017). Scholars within Indigenous studies have repeatedly argued that the validation of colonial thinking and subjugation of Indigenous knowledge within mainstream

education exemplifies continuing colonial oppression (Battiste, 2013; Smith, 1999). The infusion of some Indigenous ways of knowing, experiences, and histories throughout the curriculum, therefore, holds the power to validate Indigenous knowledges, and position them as relevant and significant within the hierarchy of valued knowledges (Kanu, 2011, p. 4). This chapter has shown the ways the Drafts infuse (un)usual stories and ways of knowing from Indigenous perspectives into familiar landscapes of Canadian history and society. This braided approach to curriculum can disrupt societal common sense, providing space to challenge the "given" supremacy of majority settler values and knowledges (Tupper & Cappello, 2008). This process stands to highlight the cultural situatedness of all knowledge and understandings, which in turn provides space for critical self-reflection on one's own values and position within society. Along with other settler Canadian scholars (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015; Regan, 2006, 2010), I see this critical self-reflection as a key site for dislodging colonial dispositions and repositioning settlers toward concerted reconcili*action.* The limited inclusion of some Indigenous ways of knowing, and virtual exclusion of others, represents a comfortable, non-transformative approach to education for reconciliation. But, if considered in their entirety, I believe the Drafts *do* provide significant *space for discomfort.* The next chapter will begin with a discussion of the centrality of reflective discomfort within meaningful education for reconcili*action* and consider the extent to which space for discomfort exists in the Drafts.

6 Reflective Discomfort and Reconciliation

In August 2017, Conservative leader Jason Kenny claimed 'if all you knew about Canada was from this draft curriculum, you would think that Canada is just a terrible, unjust place of colonialism and oppression' he went on to say 'I think this is deeply troubling' and 'my inclination would be to repeal the NDP curriculum changes'. Another widely supported former Conservative politician, Brian Jean[36] (2017), has also publicly insisted that the social studies Drafts need repealing, arguing that 'Alberta's the best province in the best country in the world, and our students need to be taught exactly that. These men interpreted the curriculum as "troubling", and their immediate response was to ignore, deny, and silence the cause of their discomfort. Though frustrating, this response is not surprising.

6.1 Negotiating Discomfort

Feelings of pronounced discomfort and immediate attempts to restore comfort are likely to be very common among many settlers who encounter the unsettling truths contained in the Drafts. The (un)usual narratives of colonialism in Canada 'may provoke…feelings of guilt, shame, anger and outrage, or fear and despair' (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 21). Students 'may face an internal crisis in that the new knowledge does not fit into their current frames of understanding' (Berg, 2017, p. 35). This discomfort will likely hit teachers even harder than students, as teachers have had more time to digest and internalize dominant narratives of Canada.

Though this kind of discomfort may not seem like a desirable classroom experience, scholars have repeatedly and convincingly argued that discomfort, and critical self-reflection, are crucial elements of meaningful social justice-oriented education (Banks, 1988; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2001; Grande, 2004; Kumashiro, 2002). Battell Lowman and Barker argue that before we can move toward meaningful change, 'we need some outrage, some unsettlement, to destabilize our assumptions about what it means to be Canadian by revealing and engaging

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[36] Brian Jean is the former leader of the Wildrose Party of Alberta. The Wildrose Party was the official opposition party before dissolving and merging with the Progressive Conservatives to form the United Conservative Party in July 2017. Jean also ran for the leadership of the United Conservatives and was second in the polls, behind Kenny.

with the settler colonial reality of our nation' (2015, p. 21). Though not an antidote to colonialism in itself, the experience of discomfort 'can work as a compass, pointing away from settler colonial security' (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 106).

Of course, it is impossible to say definitively whether students will engage in critical self-reflection about their own role in continuing colonial structures. Much will depend on processes of implementation and on the experiences, interests, knowledge, and beliefs that teachers and students carry with them (Goodlad, 1979). However, the infusion of (un)usual narratives within historical and contemporary accounts of Canada certainly provide space for discomfort within the Drafts. As Tupper explains, 'engaging with a destabilizing narrative that challenges the conceptions of nation-building as relatively peaceful can be difficult' (2014, p. 478). New knowledge about present-day Canada may "unsettle the Settler within" (Regan, 2006, 2010) as it brings about the realization that 'colonialism is a real, active part of Settler Canadian life and also requires the imagination of something beyond the settler colonial situation' (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 90).

There is also some content, especially within the highest grades (10-12), which explicitly calls for procedures of critical self-reflection. For example, grade 11 includes concepts such as 'reflecting on personal values' (1.11b); 'values and beliefs regarding the land' (3.11b); and 'underlying values and beliefs' (6.11a). The fact that these concepts fall within grade 11 is significant because this means much of the unsettling curricular content discussed within previous analysis chapters will have been covered in previous grades. Also, ideology is a recurrent theme in grades 11 and 12, occurring 29 times within 19 units between the two grades. Ideologies often shape human action in ways that are largely unacknowledged and unseen. Ideologies based on ideas of *terra nullius* and the superiority of the white race drove the British Canadian colonial government to displace millions of Indigenous peoples. Ideologies created explicitly assimilationist policies, such as the residential school system. The continuing force of ideologies based on colonial thinking produce imaginary "fort walls" between settlers and Indigenous peoples, limiting settler understanding of and engagement in reconciliation (Donald, 2009a). Transformative pedagogy scholars Megan Boler and Michalinos Zembylas argue that reflecting on emotional reactions and personal values better enables settlers to 'identify unconscious privileges as well as invisible ways in which one

complies with dominant ideology' (2003, p. 111). Engaging in critical self-reflection about one's own ideologies and assessing the validity of these in the face of new knowledge about Canadian history and present society is a key site for education for reconcili*action*.

Also included as a concept within grades 10 and 12 is 'dominant cultures' (2.12a; 4.10a). Like ideology, culture guides our actions and understandings in largely unseen and unknown ways. In Canada, settlers commonly understand themselves to be of-the-mainstream, and therefore without culture. This type of understanding is based on ideas that "culture" is equal to "exotic" and contributes to ideas of Indigenous peoples and settlers inhabiting different realities. These kind of understandings dehumanize, and Other non-dominant members of society by accentuating differences and ignoring or downplaying similarities. In reality, all peoples have culture – and all individuals' values, understandings, and behaviours are deeply affected by their own cultural background. As Kanu suggests, it is important 'that students deconstruct their own cultural situatedness in order to appreciate the ways in which the "other" is framed' (2011, p. 49). The inclusion of "dominant cultures" provides space for students to understand the complex, invisible ways that hegemony permeates society from an unnamed, unperceived centre.

Discomfort is important for education for reconciliation because it is 'required to perceive both the *necessity* and the *possibility* for positive change' (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 22). But, crucially, discomfort and self-reflection are not actions in themselves and if discomfort is not carefully negotiated, it can obstruct meaningful reconcili*action*. Kumashiro (2002) argues that challenges to one's pre-established frames of understanding can leave students feeling *paralyzed* by the feeling of discomfort. Tuck and Yang (2012) suggest that settler discomfort is often met with *Settler moves to innocence.* Moves to innocence, they explain, are rationalization strategies 'that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all' (2012, p. 10). Building from this concept, Battell Lowman and Barker (2015) argue that settlers often respond with *moves to comfort.* Rather than rationalizations, 'moves to comfort' are 'emotional shifts, inspiring often irrational or illogical statements designed to dispel fear' (2015, p. 99). Kenny, Jean, and others' overwhelming desire to 'cancel, revoke, and reverse changes' to the curriculum (Kenny, 2017) can be seen as moves to comfort as they illustrate

their desire to 'restore the comfort of not knowing even once ignorance is not possible' (Battell Lowman & Barker, p. 99). According to Battell Lowman and Barker, another typical response of settlers is to get "stuck on guilt" (2015, p. 101). They explain, 'guilt can be useful *if* it is part of a journey toward critical acceptance of responsibility, but not as an end goal in itself…However, there is a problem when a Settler person insists on centralizing feelings and expressions of guilt to the exclusion of addressing what happens next' (p. 101).

The discomfort encountered through coming to know differently is not something that should be shaken off or ignored. According to de Leeuw, Greenwood, and Lindsay, 'Colonialism always was, and is right now, uncomfortable – particularly so for colonized subjects, but also for settler-colonial subjects. Unsettling colonialism…must similarly never be comfortable' (2013, p. 391). Discomfort stems, in part, from the realization that there is no clear, easy road out of the present state of affairs. Accepting the undeniable difficulty of the reconciliation endeavour is important. Taiaiake Alfred (1999) insists we must "Beware the magic!" of "quick fix" solutions to settler colonialism. Once encountered, discomfort and critical self-reflection become a constantly recurring state of being for settlers seriously engaged in reconcili*action*. But, it is crucial that settler teachers and students do not get stuck in a state of paralyzing discomfort, or use moves to comfort in order to avoid meaningful action. As such, discomfort needs to be carefully negotiated in order to ensure it can become *productive discomfort*.

If discomfort is to be *productive* rather than *paralyzing,* it is important to communicate that while some elements of the past, and the present, may be bleak – the future does not have to be. There are many reasons to hope, and many routes to change. Looking to the Drafts – it could be argued that the inclusion of narratives of survivance may instil hope that decolonization is possible. However, it is also important that students do not come to understand decolonization, and reconciliation, as "Indigenous issues" which should be left to Indigenous peoples. Though the immense accomplishments of international and national Indigenous movements should not be understated, the structural changes to Canadian society needed to combat oppression and marginalization of Indigenous communities necessitates meaningful commitment from *all* Canadians.

6.2 Reconciliation

With all of the above analysis in mind, it is time now to turn our attention to the central concern of this thesis: reconciliation. How is reconciliation to be understood and navigated? In the TRC's Executive Summary Report, it states 'the TRC considers "reconciliation" to be an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships at all levels of Canadian society' (2015b, p. 187). Reconciliation requires settler Canadians to take action in concrete ways, always working in collaboration with Indigenous peoples (2015b, p. 185). Reconciliation requires not only changes in understandings and attitudes but 'real social, political, and economic change' (2015b, p. 183). Advancing reconciliation should be done 'in ways that honour and revitalize the nation-to-nation Treaty relationship' (2015b, p. 183). This means that meaningful reconciliation must embrace the inherent right of self-determination envisioned in treaty negotiations (2015b, p. 195).

Because of the explicit aims of the Ministry of Education to 'advance reconciliation for all Albertans' (Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 10), this thesis has considered all content within the social studies drafts as potential education for reconciliation. But, there is also much content in the Drafts which is explicitly linked to reconciliation. In fact, 'reconciliation' is mentioned more than any other specific conceptual knowledge in the Drafts. In total, 'reconciliation' occurs 24 times throughout the Drafts – including three times in the Subject Introduction, and within two essential understandings, six guiding questions, and 13 possible concepts and procedures in the Scope and Sequence. The term occurs at least once in every strain, but the highest concentrations of occurrences are in the citizenship, history, and political science/law strains. In terms of grades, 'reconciliation' is first mentioned in grade three (1.3) and occurs maximum once in each grade, except in grades 10 and 12 where there are seven and six occurrences respectively.

The magnitude of content explicitly relating to reconciliation is considerable. But how is reconciliation framed within the Drafts? And does this framing comply with the TRC's understanding of reconciliation? As well as being related to diverse histories, which has been dealt with extensively throughout Chapter Five, framing of reconciliation was sorted into the three non-discreet categories based on the subject matter occurring in each unit where the term 'reconciliation' appears. These are: *reconciliation as complex;* reconcili*actio*n; and

reconciliation in relationship. In what follows, each of these themes will be considered in turn. Examples of explicit occurrences of 'reconciliation' in the drafts for each themes will be outlined. The theme will also be discussed in terms of other content within the curriculum. The conception of reconciliation will then be discussed based on differing arguments around reconciliation and theory.

'Reconciliation' is often framed as a complex issue – which is understood differently by different members of society. For example, 'perspectives on reconciliation' (1.12b; 2.10b; 2.12c) occurs three times. Reconciliation is also framed as a potential site of 'ideological conflict' (2.12c) once, and is linked to ideology in two other units (1.12b; 2.12a). All of these occurrences appear in the final grades of high school, where subject matter is generally more abstract and complex. I have interpreted these occurrences as *reconciliation as complex* because they provide space for unpacking the meanings and gravity of reconciliation. This is significant amidst an atmosphere of rampant reconciliation rhetoric, which risks ridding the term of all meaning. Furthermore exploring the relationships between ideology, 'underlying values and beliefs' (6.11a), and reconciliation, provides space for critical self-reflection and productive discomfort. Coming to terms with the complexity of reconciliation may also bring about understanding of the difficulty and permanence of the reconciliation project.

Several occurrences of "reconciliation" within the Drafts occur with guiding questions or conceptual knowledge regarding citizen or government action toward change. For example, the first occurrence of 'reconciliation' as a specific concept appears with 'social justice', 'equality', and 'individual action' under the guiding question 'How can we create change?' (1.3). While this unit suggests that individuals' actions *can* contribute to reconciliation – it does not necessarily imply that this is an obligation, or responsibility. Nor does it provide specific reconcili*action* strategies. Elsewhere, the question is asked: 'To what extent are governments today responsible for addressing historical and contemporary injustices?' with the concepts 'roles and responsibilities' and 'reconciliation' (5.10c). Here, there is space for reflection on *responsibility* the government has to address reconciliation. Other content offers specific reconcili*action* strategies. A guiding question in grade 12 asks 'To what degree can reconciliation be achieved among and within nations, and how*?'* (5.12c). The concepts included in this unit, including 'engaging in dialogue', 'nation-to-nation reciprocity',

'restorative justice', and 'implementation of treaties', along with concepts from other units, such as 'national inquiries', 'truth and reconciliation commissions locally and globally' (5.10c), 'redress and restitution' (3.10a); 'calls to action' (2.10c; 5.7a), and 'being stewards of the land' (3.9b) offer a "how to guide" for reconcili*action*. The inclusion of specific strategies or routes to reconciliation is significant as it could help guide students from paralyzing to productive discomfort. While some of these, such as 'national inquiries' and 'truth and reconciliation commissions' are government level actions, others such as 'being stewards of the land' apply to individuals. The governmental level actions are also important for individuals, as it is individuals who vote for governments, and ultimately who influence policy direction.

As the TRC explains, reconciliation requires concrete action from all citizens in order to bring about 'real social, political, and economic change' (2015b, p. 183). The change needed to overcome the continuing systemic discrimination and inequality in Canadian society will require significant changes to settler lives. Do the examples of reconcili*action* included in the Drafts amount to this kind of transformative, decolonizing change? Or are they examples of incremental change, which remains comfortable for settlers?

According to Alfred, though settlers often talk about meaningful reconciliation, in practice our actions often amount to giving Indigenous peoples 'a place inside Settler society with no requirement for Settlers to forego any of their ill-gotten gains personally or collectively' (2009, p. 151). This conception of reconciliation is essentially no different from understandings of the "accommodation" and "generosity" of benevolent peacemaker practices of the past. There is one instance where 'reconciliation' appears with 'social, political, and economic systems' (6.11a), but the framing of the content does not imply an emphasis on action. While reconcil*action* such as 'redress and restitution' (3.10a), 'restorative justice' (5.10c) and 'land claims' (2.5b; 3.4b; 3.11a) may be necessary in the current state of affairs, they amount only to "accommodating" Indigenous peoples 'by *returning to them small fragments of what we have taken'* (Regan, 2006, p. 21).

It could be argued that many of the strategies for reconcili*action* contained in the curriculum could be seen as reconciliation on settler terms. Certainly though, this does not apply to all

of the strategies provided. For example as the TRC 'calls to action' (2.10c; 5.7a) have been produced by the TRC based on thousands of testimonies of Survivors, these are certainly routes to reconciliation on Indigenous terms. Also, among the "reconciliation: how to" concepts are 'engaging in dialogue' and 'nation-to-nation reciprocity' (5.12c) implying the importance of approaches to reconciliation being grounded *in relationship*. Indeed, across the curriculum there are numerous mentions of the significance of the ongoing relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers based on the spirit and intent of treaties and agreements.

In many instances in the Scope and Sequence, mentions of 'reconciliation' occur along with treaties and agreements and notions of relationships. For example, 'treaties and agreements' occur alongside 'reconciliation' in four units (2.10b; 3.9b; 5.4b; 5.12c). In some cases, 'honouring' (2.10b) or 'implementation' (5.12c) are explicitly framed as strategies for reconcili*action*. The term 'relationship(s)' (1.10b; 3.9b; 4.10a) occurs alongside reconciliation on three occasions. The terms 'nation-to-nation' (2.10b; 4.10a; 5.12c) and 'reciprocity' (1.10b; 5.4b; 5.12c) also appear with 'reconciliation' denoting that this is the nature of the relationship in question. The inclusion of 'engaging in dialogue' (5.12c) under a question asking "how" reconciliation should be achieved indicates understanding that reconcili*action* should be a shared endeavour, not a "gift" bestowed on Indigenous peoples by "benevolent" settlers (Regan, 2006).

Apart from these units, which include explicit reference to reconciliation, content relating to treaties and agreements and Indigenous-settler relationships is extremely prevalent in the Drafts. The term "spirit and intent" and notion of "honouring" treaties are also frequently mentioned, and one guiding question specifically positions all Canadians as "treaty people" (2.6b). Treaties and agreements are foundational for understanding the historic and present-day relationships between settlers and Indigenous peoples in Alberta. The entire history of settler Albertan life was enabled through the displacement of Indigenous peoples enacted through treaty. Settler misunderstandings of treaty history have also led to stereotyped representations – which impede meaningful reconciliation. While the treaty documents themselves represent inaccurate translations of the spoken negotiations, Indigenous peoples continue to look to the spirit and intent of the treaty relationship – envisioned by the Treaty

Medal – as a basis for establishing a renewed relationship based on mutual empathy and respect. As Alberta Education have explicitly committed to directing the curriculum development toward reconciliation, the emphasis on relationships based on the spirit and intent of treaties and agreements implies that the government views developing settlers' understandings of the treaty relationship as an important dimension within reconciliation. This vision of reconciliation is in line with that of the TRC, who contend that efforts toward advancing reconciliation should be done 'in ways that honour and revitalize the nation-to-nation Treaty relationship' (2015b, p. 183). Therefore, the emphasis on Indigenous-settler relationships, based on treaties and agreements, is a major strength of the Drafts in terms of their capacity to facilitate reconciliation.

However, as Battell Lowman and Barker explain, 'caution is necessary: the full meaning and import of "being a treaty person" is still too often ignored and misunderstood' (2015, p. 66). In the post-TRC era, the terms "treaty person", "spirit and intent of treaties," and the notion of "honouring" treaties and agreements are said so frequently, but unpacked so infrequently, that they risk losing meaning. While assertions of honouring treaties, because "we are all treaty people" are easy, and self-affirming, being a "treaty person" requires more than just words or attitudes. In the Drafts, the notion of "honouring" the treaties and agreements is prevalent (Subject Introduction p. 2; 2.4b; 2.6b; 2.8c; 2.10b), while the more concrete 'implementation of treaties and agreements' (5.12c) appears just once. Battell Lowman and Barker (2015) advise that 'claiming status as a treaty person cannot be a panacea for Settler Canadian uncertainty, discomfort, or guilt' (2015, p. 67); being a "treaty person" needs to involve in-depth understandings of 'one's own relationship with Settler Canadian society and present day settler-colonialism' (2015, p. 67).

Within the content of the Drafts, reconciliation is articulated as complex, action-oriented, and in relationship. Based on descriptions of reconciliation in the TRC's final report, this understanding is valid and appropriate. Saying that, there is a danger that the action implied, with a focus on *restorative* justice and *honouring* treaties, could amount to "cheap gifts of reconciliation" (Regan, 2006) rather than meaningful reconcili*action*. But, the approach to

reconciliation as in relationship – founded on dialogue and reciprocity between nations – provides space to develop reconcili*action* strategies that are not solely on settler terms.

6.3 Reconcili*action* Realized?

As the curriculum development project has an explicit aim of advancing reconciliation, the Drafts can reasonably be viewed as an act of reconciliation by the Alberta Government. So, looking at the curriculum as a whole, can the proposed drafts be seen as *embodying* the understanding of reconciliation articulated within the content of the Drafts?

In a conversation with Dwayne Donald, he claimed that though the last several years have seen increasing space being made for Indigenous perspectives and experiences in the mainstream curriculum, these are still seen as existing outside of the *real* curriculum of dominant perspectives and understandings (personal communication, July 5, 2017). Looking at the Drafts from this perspective reveals a different sort of relationship than the one described within the conceptual knowledge of the Scope and Sequence. If we consider the Subject Introduction, 'First Nations, Métis and Inuit Experiences and Perspectives' (p. 2) and 'Francophone Cultures and Perspectives' (p. 2) are afforded separate sections in which Alberta Education vows to include these across the social studies curriculum. Significantly, though, there is no acknowledgement of whose cultures, perspectives, and experiences these are being added to. In the Scope and Sequence, space is provided for students to reflect on concepts such as 'dominant cultures' (4.10a; 2.12a) and 'privilege' (2.9a; 5.10b), yet in the Subject Introduction the privileged, dominant majority perspective remains an *unnamed centre* in the curriculum. Indigenous and other cultural perspectives are added on to this unnamed centre, described by Dwayne Donald as 'adhesions…almost like a fungus that grows on the side of a tree' (personal communication; July 5, 2017). As with the "demythification" of history, revealing the many forms which hegemony and privilege take in society is a key means of unsettling settlers and inspiring reconcili*action*. Though the content within the Scope and Sequence makes room to do this, by not explicitly naming the unnamed centre in the Subject Introduction, Alberta Education have failed to exemplify this principle in action.

Arguably, along with history, citizenship education is the most central discipline in social studies (Peck & Herriot, 2015). All social studies curricula promote a particular *citizenship vision* based on what are considered desirable qualities and values by the society of the day (Westheimer, 2015). Throughout the 20th century, the citizenship vision of Alberta social studies curricula promoted a model of "Good Canadians" based on tolerance and benevolence (Richardson, 2002; Berg, 2017; Regan, 2006). In recent years, Joel Westheimer's work on citizenship education has been highly influential in discourses surrounding social studies in Canada. Westheimer (2015) describes three kinds of citizens promoted in curricula: the Personally Responsible Citizen, the Participatory Citizen, and the Social Justice-Oriented Citizen. With extensive focus on critical thinking[37], and citizenship action[38] toward social justice[39], the predominant citizenship vision in the Drafts can be understood as a combination of the latter two of Westheimer's citizens. For Westheimer, this is ideal for fostering ideal values and behaviours in Canada today (2015, p. 67). The citizenship vision put forward in the Drafts, based on the idea that students need to be *active* and *shape* the society they want to live in, implies that the society at present *needs changing*. It is a necessary prerequisite of reconcili*action* that Canadian citizens accept this notion. Therefore, in some ways, this participatory, social justice-oriented conception of "Good Canadians" can be seen as a meaningful component of education for reconcili*action*. However, it is still a vision of citizenship on settler terms, imposed upon all students.

Recall Donald's (2009a) concept of the *fort as a mythic symbol* where imagined walls separate Indigenous peoples from settlers. According to Donald, the increasing inclusion of Indigenous content within a curriculum that promotes an idea of citizenship based exclusively on settler terms represents a *widening* or *permeating* of these walls, but the fort remains standing (personal communication, July 5th 2017). I propose that the problem lies in what Melissa Williams describes as '*citizenship as shared identity*' (2004, p. 103). According to

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[37] "critical thinking" appears within a procedural knowledge concept in all 134 units in the curriculum
[38] E.g. 'Social Studies fosters the empowerment of students as active citizens' (Subject Introduction, p. 1); 'Active citizenship builds inclusive, respectful and resilient communities in which diverse people live well together' (EU 1); and "engaging in active citizenship" as procedural knowledge within the citizenship strain (21 occurrences); this citizenship vision is also reflected in many guiding questions
[39] "Social justice" occurs 4 times in the Scope and Sequence (1.3; 2.12c; 5.8b; 6.9a) and is reflected in much other content – as discussed in sections 6.4 and 7.1 of this thesis.

Melissa Williams (2004) much contemporary theory around citizenship stems from the supposed requirement that citizens share a sense of membership in a single political community defined by a commitment to core values of that community. Conceptions of citizenship based on shared identity inevitably marginalizes Indigenous peoples, requiring that they become absorbed into the wider Canadian citizenship vision, and in doing so risk forgoing the values, ways of knowing, and behaviours of their own local culture (Williams, 2004). Williams offers an alternative conception of citizenship in Canada: *citizenship as shared fate* (p. 104). Citizenship as shared fate does not demand citizens be bound to each other by shared values but by the shared experience of living together on the land. This vision of citizenship is based on the premise that all human beings exist within webs of relationships with other human beings that profoundly shape our lives (Deloria, 1999 Moreton-Robinson, 2017; Wilson, 2008). Because of these reciprocally interdependent relations, Indigenous peoples' and settlers' 'histories and experiences are layered and position us in relation to each other' meaning 'our futures as people similarly are tied together' (Donald, 2009a, p. 7).

Williams (2004) uses the imagery of the *Kaswentha* or the two-row wampum belt to explain the way citizenship as shared fate should be understood. Exchanged as part of treaty negotiations in Eastern Canada during the 18th Century, the two-row wampum is often invoked as a symbolic model for the relationship between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Canada. The multilayered beaded rows of the belt are said to represent a river, in which Indigenous and settler peoples travel side by side, in separate vessels (Borrows, 1997; Williams, 2004). The two-row wampum captures the original values that governed the treaty relationship – equality, respect, dignity and *'sharing the river we travel on'* (Mercredi & Turpel, 1993, p.35, cited in Williams, 2004, p. 107). In Alberta, the Treaty Handshake depicted on Treaty Medals exchanged during negotiations is understood as symbolizing a similar relationship based on mutual respect and non-interference. As such, I argue that the idea of citizenship as shared fate based on the Treaty Handshake vision ought to be reflected in Alberta curricula.

If the curriculum is based on relationships between equal, self-determining nations, the Drafts should not only promote a "Good Canadian" citizenship vision based on settler values, but

also numerous citizenship visions based on the values of diverse Indigenous peoples in Canada (Ngai, Bæck, & Paulgaard, 2015). As Dwayne Donald explained, 'just as settlers have a citizenship vision, each Indigenous group has its own vision of what it means to live well' (personal communication, July 5 2017). A multiplicity of citizenship visions would enable individuals to imagine themselves 'in a network of relationships with other human beings, some of whom they may never meet face to face' (Williams, 2004, p. 105).

What would a curriculum including multiple citizenship visions entail? As Williams (2004) explains, a danger of citizenship as shared identity is the subjugation of local Indigenous' values, ways of knowing, and ways of being. Therefore, a curriculum promoting citizenship as shared fate ought to include Indigenous' values, ways of knowing, and ways of being on equal terms of those of the majority citizenship vision. As has been discussed, the Drafts *do* include extensive language and concepts stemming from Indigenous ways of knowing. However, the balance of inclusion of differing features of Indigenous worldviews dictates that they are being included largely on settler terms. Furthermore, as the curriculum presently remains in written draft form, it is impossible whether these *ways of knowing* will be taught *about* or taught as ways *to be*. Much of this will depend on how the curricular content in the Drafts is further developed and implemented. However, the reality is that this curriculum is intended for mainstream education, and will be taught in formal schooling institutions with established practices of exams-based assessment, and learning generally carried out in classrooms, organized around tightly timed schedules. These features of *schooling as usual* stand in the way of a meaningful integration of Indigenous ways of knowing – based around different conceptions of time, knowledge, and learning (Kanu, 2011). While some space has been made for Indigenous values and ways of knowing in the curriculum, the Indigenus citizenship vision(s) being promoted have been adapted and mutated to make them more palatable for the settler majority. In other words, while the curricular content promotes an understanding of reconciliation based on a respectful relationship between equal, self-determining nations, the structure of the Drafts indicates that this relationship is not being realized in practice.

7 Summary of Findings and Final Remarks

7.1 Summary of Findings

The relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers in Canada has been characterized by extreme colonial violence and mutual distrust. Mythic dominant narratives within public discourses and mainstream school curricula have systematically denied settlers the knowledge necessary to move past ongoing settler colonialism. Only through coming to know the uncomfortable truths of settler complicity in historic and ongoing colonialism can Canadians be equipped to engage in meaningful reconcili*action*. Alberta Education prioritised facilitating reconciliation as a central concern of the curriculum, which they are still in the process of developing. This study set out to answer the following question:

> *In what ways could the 2017 curriculum drafts for mainstream kindergarten to grade 12 social studies facilitate reconcili*action *in Alberta?*

As has been shown, the draft curriculum documents include ample content relating to Indigenous peoples. This extensive inclusion demonstrates distinct changes in the positioning of Indigenous peoples within dominant understandings of Canadian history and contemporary society. Whilst mainstream curricula of the 20th century excluded, Othered, and marginalized Indigenous peoples from stories of Canada's past – this curriculum includes Indigenous experiences throughout every historic chapter. In the Guiding Framework for the curriculum design, Alberta Education pledged to honour the TRC Calls to Action and UNDRIP (2016b, p.10). Call to Action 62.i. and UNDRIP Article 15.1 call for curricular content on diverse Indigenous peoples' cultures, histories, aspirations, and contributions to society. As has been shown, in the social studies Drafts there is content covering all of these criteria.

By prioritizing diverse narratives as a core component of the curriculum, space has been provided for the inclusion of (un)usual narratives from Indigenous perspectives which challenge and disrupt mythhistories which stand as barriers to meaningful reconcili*action* (Tupper, 2014; Tupper & Cappello, 2008; Regan, 2006). Doctrine of Discovery histories are challenged through the curricular focus on the inter-dependent nature of early Indigenous-settler relations, and through content relating to Indigenous claims to land. The inclusion of

Indigenous perspectives on treaties provides space for disrupting settler understandings of treaties as "gifts of civilization" from "benevolent peacemaker" Canadians (Regan, 2006). The inclusion of 'agreements' with treaties allows for consideration of Métis and Inuit histories on equal terms with those of First Nations. "Conquest through benevolence" understandings of history are challenged through content that unsilences silence on colonial violence in Canadian society of the past and present. Narratives of survivance hold the power to dislodge conceptions of Indigenous peoples as victims. Through the braided juxtaposition of settler and Indigenous' stories of the past and present – the curriculum challenges conceptions of Canadian society based on colonial frontier logics which position Indigenous peoples and settlers in separate imagined realities. This type of braided curricular approach could potentially be a realization of Donald's (2009a) curricular sensibility: Indigenous Métissage. Collectively, the content in the Drafts provides space for discomfort, which, if carefully negotiated, could position settlers to meaningful engagement in reconcili*action.*

Significant space has been afforded within the curriculum for exploration of the concept of reconciliation itself. Reconciliation is framed as complex, action-oriented, and based on a Treaty Handshake relationship. This understanding of reconciliation is in line with that of the TRC. The extensive focus on the spirit and intent of treaties and agreements, including acknowledgement of Indigenous self-determination, as well as inclusion of values and ways of knowing from Indigenous worldviews offers space for limited inclusion of Indigenous citizenship visions. Based on these conclusions, it has been shown that the draft curriculum for social studies could facilitate reconciliation in many ways.

Potential shortcomings of the curricular drafts as education for reconciliation include limited recognition of the diversity of Indigenous peoples, lack of explicit acknowledgement of the hegemonic unnamed centre of the curriculum, and the promotion of an Indigenous citizenship vision largely on settler terms. Especially of note is the virtual absence of Indigenous spirituality, which is understood as inseparable from Indigenous worldviews by many Indigenous scholars (Battiste, 1998; Deloria, 1999; Smith, 1999). Based on these conclusions, it could be said that the Treaty Handshake relationship that has been articulated within the content of the Drafts, has not been fully reflected in practice within the Drafts' structure.

Curricula play a profound role in shaping public discourses and political processes. The inclusion of particular concepts, with particular meanings, can effectively fixate the curricular concepts into mainstream understandings. As such, while the Drafts may not represent reconcili*action* realized, the indigenization of curricular content within the Drafts provides hope for reshaping settlers' understanding of their own, and Indigenous peoples', place in Canadian history and society. This shifting understanding could set the stage for future curricular that embodies as well as promotes a model of education for reconcili*action* based on the Treaty Handshake vision.

7.2 Limitations and Recommendations

Finally, I would like to reflect on the limitations of this study and propose recommendations based on its findings.

The data for this study are draft curricular documents, which are still in the process of being developed. As such, they contain an aspirational, idealized version of curriculum. Based on understandings of curriculum put forward by Aoki (1986) and Goodlad (1979), there are great differences between what curriculum planners write in curriculum documents, how teachers perceive these documents, and what students actually take away from the learning experience.

Studies have shown that past attempts to include Indigenous perspectives in the Alberta social studies curriculum have been met with many obstacles (den Heyer & Abbott, 2011; Berg, 2017; Scott, 2013b). Among these obstacles are low levels of knowledge of Indigenous issues among teachers, resulting in low feelings of efficacy. Most teachers of social studies in Alberta are settlers. Like me, most of these teachers attended mainstream school in Alberta during a time where very different truth regimes dictated a very different social studies curriculum from the one proposed in the Drafts. Much of the material contained within the Drafts will likely be as new to many teachers as it is to students. The result is that many of the teachers who will be teaching the new curriculum will have internalized mythic dominant narratives of history and may find it very difficult to reframe their understanding.

If students' experiences of reflective discomfort are to become productive rather than paralyzing, their teachers will need to help them negotiate this discomfort and guide them toward concerted reconcili*action*. If teachers are to understand the importance of this process,

it is crucial that they have experienced this discomfort and are still dwelling within this space of productive discomfort themselves. While the findings of this study reveal that the content of the Drafts could facilitate reconcili*action* in many ways, it is ultimately up to teachers to interpret the content and teach it in a respectful manner. In the Guiding Framework, it states 'While Alberta Education determines "what" students need to learn in provincial curriculum, teachers use their professional judgement to determine "how" students achieve the learning outcomes in the provincial curriculum' (Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 12). If the potential of these Drafts for facilitating reconcili*action* is to be realized, it is crucially important that teachers understand *why* this curriculum contains the content it does.

Findings from a 2016 survey of Alberta social studies teachers revealed high levels of support for the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum. In general, it is clear that settlers in Alberta are becoming increasingly interested in Indigenous peoples and reconciliation[40]. Undoubtedly, many settlers, including teachers, *want* to learn about Indigenous peoples and reconciliation. An important recommendation for this study is that settler teachers be given the necessary opportunities and tools to develop the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for them to feel confident teaching in ways that facilitate reconcili*action*. These kinds of opportunities may include *building relationships* between schools and local Indigenous communities, effective *professional development* activities led by Indigenous education specialists, and *indigenizing teacher education* programs.

Of particular importance are teacher education programs. If teachers have only ever been exposed to typically "Western" education practices, it will be difficult for them to effectively integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into the curriculum. It is therefore essential that teacher education programs introduce pre-service teachers to Indigenous ways of knowing which they can learn to utilize in their own teaching. As such, it is imperative that future research addresses the question of education for reconciliation within professional development and teacher education programs.

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[40] Recently, the University of Alberta reported that 21,000 people had signed up to a free massive open online course called "Indigenous Canada" within the first 12 months of the course being available (Mulholland, 2018).

While centralizing Indigenous narratives and knowledges within mainstream education is important, it cannot be the only movement contributing to reconciliation. Establishing and maintaining a relationship based on mutual respect will require wide-ranging social, political, and economic changes. I believe, though, that effective education provides hope for bringing about social change through educating and inspiring young people from all sectors of Canadian society, and repositioning settlers toward meaningful reconcili*action.*

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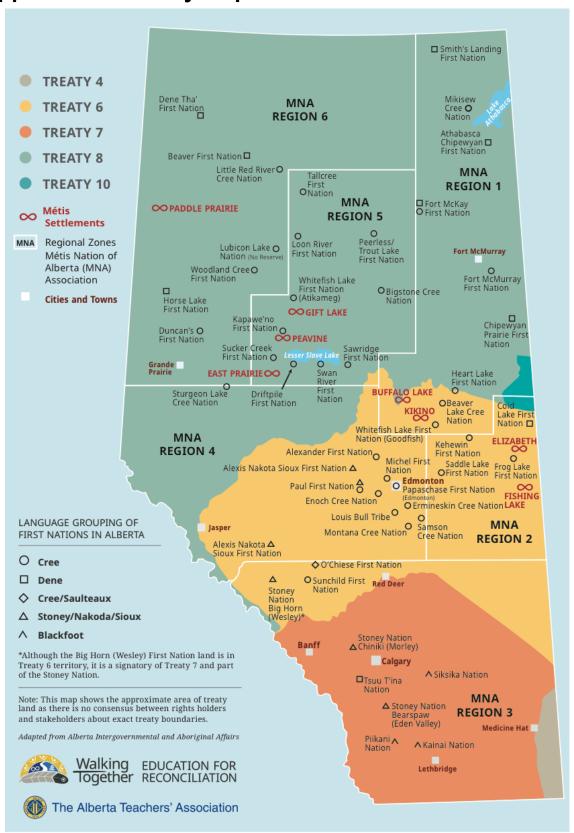
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Appendix 1 – Treaty Map