

FRAMING RECONCILIATION IN CANADA:  
INDIGENOUS AND GOVERNMENT  
PERSPECTIVES ON AN EVOLVING  
RELATIONSHIP

By

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## Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned **Katya McClintock** hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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## **Abstract**

Reconciliation in Canada's post-colonial context is a varied and complicated notion, with numerous perspectives on the reasons why it is needed, what it entails, and how best to implement measures to improve the relationship with Indigenous peoples. The endeavour to heal wounds and move the country forward with positive and respectful nation-to-nation relationships is ongoing and ever evolving. Recognition and reconciliation theories provide an understanding that key elements in rebuilding the relationship include the acknowledgement of rights and opportunities for healing. In Canada, it is important to understand the relationship between the government and Indigenous peoples, and how the framing of the relationship has evolved over time. This thesis uses the critical frame analysis approaches of Carol Bacchi and Mieke Verloo to examine and compare Government of Canada and Indigenous texts. This approach offers an opportunity to uncover where differences in the diagnosis and prognosis of the problem may occur, as well as where there may be silences. These silences present the finding that there exists a tension in determining to what extent Indigenous peoples will have their right to self-determination met. This thesis argues that cultural awareness and a shift in the power dynamic between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples will be essential to establishing a renewed relationship focused on reconciliation. One avenue for redress in this regard will be the Canadian government's implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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## Introduction

As Canada celebrates 150 years as a nation in 2017, the legacy of its colonial past cannot be overlooked. Canada was formed around the people who inhabited the land before Europeans arrived. Canada's Indigenous population consists of three distinct groups: First Nations, Inuit and Métis. The terms Aboriginal or Indigenous refer to members of these groups; historical terminology may be used as the context requires. There are competing interpretations and narratives regarding the historical relationship between colonial powers and the Indigenous people who had lived on the land for thousands of years (McCormack 2005, 112). The way Canada frames the history of the founding of the country can be considered problematic. The settler narrative includes a focus on modernizing, growing, diversifying, and expanding while the Indigenous narrative sees their way of life altered with the loss of their sovereignty and their land (114). Treaties and agreements were made that enacted policies and structures which were often designed with the explicit intention of segregation and marginalization. Indigenous peoples in Canada have experienced forced resettlement, children being removed from their families, and cultural genocide. They are over-represented in prisons and underrepresented in education and employment. Centuries of neglect, distrust, and abuse have created a deep a rift, the existence of which is well known, and yet efforts to date have been insufficient in narrowing the income, education, health, and well-being gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. Inuit politician John Amagoalik articulates the divergence in understandings of Canada's history, stating: "[n]on-Aboriginal Canadians cannot fully understand the crushing effect of colonialism on a people. They do not appreciate the negative self-image that people can have about themselves when another culture projects itself as being "superior" and acts to impose its laws, language, values, and culture upon the other" (Amagoalik 2012, 38).

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, a shift in awareness began with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous advocates speaking out about the ramifications of colonialism. There has been a demand for more freedom and self-determination in addition to the acknowledgement and justice for the hardships Indigenous peoples have endured. In 1996, the Canadian government commissioned an analysis on the state of affairs of Indigenous life in Canada. The findings contained in *The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) unveiled many realities of the marginalization of Indigenous peoples. It pointed at the unjust power relationship and the need to honour the original tenets of the Treaties and agreements made at the formation of the country (1996, 13). The RCAP made numerous recommendations to restore the rights and dignities that had been denied and begin a process of reconciliation, however, much of this went unheeded and the power structures did not change (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015, 7).

A decade after the RCAP, the current era of reconciliation in Canada began when the reality of the abuse, neglect, and trauma caused by the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) system came to light. In 2007, a class action lawsuit was filed against the Canadian government and the churches responsible for the operation of the schools. For many non-Indigenous Canadians, this was the first they had heard of the schools' existence, and thus began discussions and acknowledgement of the negative elements in Canada's history. In 2008, then Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized for this assimilationist policy. Accompanying this apology was the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) whose process concluded with the release of its Final Report in 2015. The TRC consisted of six years of testimony collected from across Canada (25). The Final Report of the TRC put forward 94 Calls to Action as steps to "redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation" (143). These Calls to Action place reconciliation as central to all aspects of Indigenous life in Canada that continue to

perpetuate inequalities including child welfare, health, justice, and education. As these Calls to Action are implemented, questions arise regarding what is necessary to develop strategies and policies that foster reconciliation and ensure they do not languish as the RCAP recommendations did.

Reconciliation is a word to which individuals invariably ascribe their own meaning. Yet, in Canada it has become a catch-all phrase used to evoke themes of national unity and improving the lives of Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation can be defined as a process of coming together, or returning to a state of unity once again (Daly and Sarkin-Hughes 2007, 5; Little and Maddison 2017, 147). The theoretical debate regarding the nature of reconciliation centres on key questions of its purpose, its effectiveness, and who benefits. Reconciliation is commonly associated with post-conflict transitional justice and democratization. However, in post-colonial countries, it is associated with mending relationships with Indigenous peoples as a result of historical injustice (145) . In the government framing of the concept there is a focus on truth, strengthening the country and, moving forward. Additionally, Indigenous framing sees the necessary change as structural and related to self-determination and land rights. It is important to understand where these tensions in the definition of reconciliation occur in order take efficient and effective steps to implementation that build trust and positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.

The lack of consensus regarding the nature of reconciliation in Canada and the inherent tension between the disparate Indigenous and non-Indigenous understandings of the concept necessitate an examination of the theories and practices associated with the concept. The process of

reconciliation in Canada will be ongoing and forever changing, but it must start with understanding the Indigenous perspective and ensuring this voice is clearly reflected in policies and decision making. An important element of this is acknowledging and sustaining Indigenous culture and rights. This thesis analyzes Government of Canada texts and compares them with Indigenous perspectives in order to determine how the relationship, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, has been framed over time. The texts in question represent three distinct eras before and after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: the first is the 1969 proposed White Paper to abolish the *Indian Act*, the second is the 2008 IRS apology, and the third is the current government led by Justin Trudeau who has committed to renewing the relationship with Indigenous peoples. This comparison traces the diagnosis of the strained relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canada, the prognosis of how to move forward, and highlights how the Indigenous voice is, or is not, represented in these solutions to achieve reconciliation.

As Schön and Rein state, “[a] policy frame is the frame an institutional actor uses to construct the problem of specific policy situation” (Schön and Rein 1994, 33). Through the use of critical frame analysis, this thesis aims to contribute to the discussion of reconciliation by uncovering omissions and silences in the construction of situation. Reconciliation is presented as a solution to social issues that have become ‘problems’ (Bacchi 2009). Policies are designed as a result of interpretations of these problems. Examining and comparing both the manner in which the social issues, as well as the solution of reconciliation, are represented will be beneficial in uncovering where limitations to successful implementation may be found. Reconciliation has an important element of relationships and emotions; thus, an interpretivist approach is appropriate in order to understand the social realities that are present in the concept (Yanow 2014, 4). Reconciliation is also about power relations, the nature of which can be uncovered using methodologies such as

Carol Bacchi's 'what's the problem represented to be' approach, and sensitizing questions articulated by Verloo (2005). These approaches allow for an interrogation of the ways in which the underlying need for reconciliation is expressed. This will provide insight into the debate's progress, as well as areas where there continues to be tension.

This thesis argues that the framing of the relationship has evolved to one where both Indigenous and Government convey similar statements regarding rebuilding, however, there remain tensions, particularly in the realm of Indigenous rights obligations and decision-making. This thesis will examine the framing of reconciliation using the following structure. The first Chapter will begin by providing a background of Canadian and Indigenous history and will place the examined texts in context. The second Chapter will describe applicable theories of minority rights and recognition, and will present the broader conceptual debate regarding reconciliation within this framework. The third Chapter will outline the methodological approach of critical frame analysis and problem representation. The fourth Chapter will contain analysis of the texts and the way in which reconciliation has been framed.

## Chapter 1 Historical Context

Three modern eras demonstrate the shifting approaches and policies related to Indigenous peoples in Canada, where, despite progress, the legacies of colonialism remain visible to this day. The first is the era of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in the late 1960s and early 1970s when controversial amendments to legislation were proposed. The second time-frame is 2008 after the IRS settlement when Prime Minister Stephen Harper made an historic apology for the policy and its impacts. The third time-frame is the present, where under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Canada has vowed to change the relationship with Indigenous peoples and move forward with reconciliation in a visible manner, for example, by formally accepting all terms of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The historical foundation for all Treaties and agreements in Canada is the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, the document in which King George III established the Crown's position on Indigenous land ownership and title (Hall 2006). The subsequent Treaties consisted of land negotiations that created the country's system of reserves on which First Nations peoples live, and also included provisions for education, health and infrastructure (Canada. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada 2011). To First Nations, the Treaties are considered to be the definitive texts that outline their relationship with the Government of Canada, in particular they are the agreements that their ancestors, as representatives of their nations, entered into to preserve their rights and their land (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015).

The *Indian Act* serves as the primary piece of legislation pertaining specifically to the First Nations Indigenous peoples. It sets out the way in which the Government will fulfill its obligations as defined by the Treaties, however, it is also contentious in its power over the affairs of First Nations

people. The *Indian Act* and the Treaties established a problematic power structure where opportunities for self-reliance were systematically taken away. They specify the way reserve lands would be managed and maintained, as well as the way First Nations were able to conduct business, move freely, practice religion and culture, farm, and hunt (Henderson 2006).

The first modern era is during the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau who, in 1969, proposed a complete overhaul of the legislation related to Indigenous peoples, drafting a policy proposal that outlined the way the government sought to achieve this. The government intended to rewrite or abolish all previous legislation related to Indigenous peoples including the Treaties, the *Indian Act* and the *Constitution Act, 1867* (Granatstein 1990, 498). Despite criticism indicating that many of the stipulations of the Treaties had yet to be honoured, and that Indigenous people were suffering hardships across the country, Trudeau felt that if the special legal status of Indigenous peoples was removed, they would be better able to achieve equality and integrate within a multicultural Canadian society (McCormack 2005, 114). The reaction to the White Paper was indignant and vocal, as many First Nations leaders felt the proposal of equality amounted to further assimilation and was in defiance of the Treaties made between nations (Granatstein 1990, 498; Manuel and Derrickson 2015, chap. 3). In response, the Indian Association of Alberta developed The Red Paper, which listed the government obligations that had not been met and demanded for this to occur. Trudeau withdrew the White Paper, and this event is seen as a turning point for Indigenous insistence on being consulted regarding matters related to their historical rights.

The second era began in 2007 with a class action lawsuit and concluded with the Final Report on 2015. When the First Nations leaders entered into Treaties with the Crown, there were provisions for education. This was seen by the First Nations as a way to ensure children were able to find new ways to sustain themselves. The government saw this as an efficient means of ensuring assimilation. For more than 100 years, Indigenous children were sent to residential schools in a program designed to eradicate Indigenous language and culture (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). The consequences of the IRS are visible in the trauma felt by survivors, the families that were torn apart, and the culture and language that were taken away from communities (158).

On June 11, 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to survivors of the IRS on behalf of the Canadian government. On that day, there were also official statements made by Indigenous leaders from across the country. One of the elements of the settlement agreement was that a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) be established to heal the wounds and educate Canada on what had occurred as means of bringing the nation together. The TRC process spanned several years and compiled the oral and written testimonies of residential school survivors. They spoke of the pain of being taken from their homes and of physical, mental, and sexual abuse committed by the various religious orders charged with running the schools. The official apology and the subsequent TRC began the modern era of reconciliation in Canada, where non-Indigenous citizens are learning about the true history of the country and, with the Calls to Action, steps are being taken to reduce the marginalization of Indigenous peoples.

The third, and most recent era, involves a government commitment to implement the TRC Calls to Action and renew the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples. Current Prime

Minister Justin Trudeau has outlined his government's priority in renewing its relationship with Indigenous peoples, including a review of laws and policies through consultation and removing previous spending increase caps. This includes adopting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that, for nearly a decade, Canada was unwilling to adopt, due primarily to Article 32.2 which stipulated that consultation and consent occur prior to development on Indigenous lands or territories (Canada. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada 2012). Canada formally announced the removal of its objections in April 2017 (Canada. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada 2017). This has been touted as an important step in acknowledging and formalizing the Indigenous connection to the land, which is seen as a crucial component of reconciliation in Canada.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

Examining the way reconciliation is framed in the conceptual debate can shed light on where there may be gaps that inhibit the successful implementation of measures and policies. Kymlicka and Bashir (2008) suggest that while many countries must contend with their exclusionary and discriminatory histories with solutions such as reconciliation, theorists often choose to focus on the politics of difference or reconciliation, but rarely are they examined simultaneously (6). This Chapter contributes to the literature by acknowledging that recognition theories serve as a crucial foundation for the subsequent discussion regarding reconciliation. The multicultural and colonial nature of Canada creates a unique context in which a solution to the problem of marginalization of groups is often presented as recognition of the equality of cultures. Building on recognition, reconciliation is then seen as a process with which to rectify the emotional and structural damage that has been done in the past. Reconciliation is thus presented as a mechanism with which to rebalance power and mend fractured relationships. This analysis of the texts in Chapter 4 will then occur vis-à-vis this theoretical overview.

### 2.1 Recognition

Theorists contend that due to the legacy of colonialism, Indigenous peoples are faced with adverse structural and institutional power dynamics (Peach and Green 2007, Kymlicka 1992, 1995, 1999, 2000, 2007, Tully 2000). Kymlicka (1992) holds the position that granting specific rights to marginalized and minority groups is defensible due to the disadvantages they have experienced. He concludes that not all minority groups have endured the same disadvantages and, consequently, additional rights are merited to establish a balance. Kymlicka further notes the distinction of Indigenous peoples in post-colonial settings as being “nations within” (2000, 218),

which is supported by the contention that colonized peoples were “dispossessed in their own homelands” (Bell 2008, 851) . In this assertion, stronger rights to self-determination are a necessary element of cultural preservation that can be justified due to exclusion and denial of sovereignty (Kymlicka 1999, 286; Tully 2000, 46). While Canadian policies have progressed from an assimilation approach to one of recognition, what is lacking are substantive reductions in inequality (Kymlicka 2007, 147). There remain legal and structural hurdles regarding Indigenous land and self-governance rights that imply that recognition, in practice, is often more symbolic and does not address the power imbalance of the colonial relationship (Peach and Green 2007, 267, Thobani 2007, 60–64). In part, this can be due to an insufficient definition of recognition.

The notion of recognition aims to create a space for multicultural identities. In his essay, “The Politics of Recognition”, Charles Taylor (1994) shapes the importance of recognition around respect, dignity and equality. He notes an urgency in the need for recognition due to its connection with encouraging an individual’s sense of identity. Recognition can be achieved with equal respect, which includes the worthiness of different cultures (68). Taylor contends that without the necessary recognition, oppression, and the harm it causes, continues (25). Taylor further emphasizes that in multicultural societies there can be further oppression when recognition is withheld (36).

However, Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous allies have expressed concerns regarding Taylor’s notions of recognition. Moulton agrees that recognition as defined by Taylor is an important element in ensuring Indigenous cultural survival and for the guarantee of political and social justice (Moulton 2016). Yet, he, and Bell before him, note the critical dilemma in recognition in that it furthers the existing power dynamic between the state and Indigenous

peoples, and that going beyond recognition to change asymmetrical power relations is necessary (352, see also Bell 2008, 854). Indigenous scholar Gerald Taiaiake Alfred (2010) builds on this by stating that recognition amounts to “the friendly face of assimilation” (7). This debate highlights a central tension in the subject of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and states.

Much of the tension between understandings of the purpose of recognition and what it entails can be traced to a fundamental difference in interpretation of what is deemed as necessary by Indigenous peoples in order to revitalize and to thrive. For many Indigenous scholars, what is central to their interpretation is the cultural and spiritual basis from which all political and social beliefs originate (5). This spiritual and cultural framework is often at odds with the non-Indigenous world who experience privilege as a result of colonialism. Peach and Green (2007) note that in order to alter the power dynamic, society must confront the realities of racism and colonialism to properly address Indigenous “needs, aspirations and rights”, which is a fundamental step in shifting the dynamics based on privilege (281).

One hindrance to successfully shifting away from old power structures is a lack of awareness, particularly in the Indigenous cultural context. This includes a lack of understanding of traditions, religion, and culture, as well as the details and effects of colonial history. Many authors link the inability to properly develop Indigenous policies and services to a lack of cultural awareness on the part of the state, politicians, and citizens. Brascoupé (2009) describes a spectrum where cultural awareness, cultural competency, and cultural safe space are important elements of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and institutions. He sees cultural safety as the opposite of multiculturalism in that it “requires the explicit and detailed recognition

of the cultural identity of the Indigenous people and the historical legacy of power relations and repression” (Brascoupé and Waters 2009, 14). These are important foundations in ensuring that the necessary knowledge and understanding are in place to develop policies and practices that foster reconciliation (18). Going beyond merely recognizing the difference of Indigenous peoples will be a critical step in building trust and reconciliation in Canada. Reconciliation endeavours can be facilitated by non-Indigenous citizens and officials who attain a level of cultural competency and are thus able to appreciate the peoples with whom they will work together to renew the relationship.

## 2.3 Reconciliation

The following sections will examine the literature as it relates to two themes used to define the need for reconciliation and these themes’ corresponding mechanisms. The first is political, where transition, democracy, and justice are central to the need for reconciliation (Daly and Sarkin-Hughes 2007; Maddison 2017; Little and Maddison 2017; Kymlicka and Bashir 2008; De Costa 2017; Nagy 2012). The second theme is aspirational where notions of apology, healing, respect, and guilt are primary in the framing of reconciliation (Minow and Rosenblum 2002; Gibson 2006; Johnson 2011; Little 2017; Muldoon 2017). The challenges of reconciliation, and the variations in framing that are presented in this section, will be further reflected on in the analysis Chapter 4 as the tensions are exhibited in practice as well as theory.

### 2.3.1 Reconciliation as Political

Reconciliation and political transition are closely linked in literature, particularly in the post-conflict context where the transition to peace and democracy are considered to be paramount. The post-conflict literature on reconciliation is robust due to the numerous examples ranging from post-

Apartheid South Africa to the former Yugoslavia (Hayner 2011, 8). Additionally, the theoretical framing of post-conflict societies presents numerous avenues of research when focus is on democratic transition. As a solution to discord, political transition through democratization is offered as a mechanism of reconciliation (Schaap 2006, 256). As Maddison (2017) explains, one of the biggest risks to reconciliation is a simple and narrow definition that the purpose is to “move on” (156). She writes that there is a danger in neglecting to acknowledge and address the complexities and nuances of reconciliation (156). Agonistic democracy is offered as a process of engagement and discussion regarding past injustice for the prevention of future violence (Maddison 2017, 157; Schaap 2006). Yet Muldoon (2008) believes that while agonism is a valid approach to consensus building in a post-conflict society, it is not sufficient in a post-colonial context where there are differences in interpretations and articulations of historical events (127). Ultimately, what would be required in Canada would be for a continued questioning of the legitimacy of the democratic nature of the state as this relates to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination (134).

De Costa (2017) further highlights the unique nature of transition in a colonial context, noting that in a democratic society the reliance on discursive institutions such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are not sufficient to mobilize the wider society. He argues that transitional justice mechanisms such as a TRC are more common in transitional societies and, when used in democracies, they are more of a discursive nature. De Costa also questions the mandate of Canada’s TRC and whether or not it truly grasped what would be necessary to foster reconciliation. He frames reconciliation as improving the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada (186). Yet, he believes that the TRC developed a definition of reconciliation and its abilities that was too simple, and questions whether or not the TRC as an institution would

be able to actually improve relations in Canada (188) as it may be unable to shift the mindset of those who are not already inclined to do so. This perception brings into the discussion the second theme of reconciliation – the aspirational elements.

### 2.3.2 Reconciliation as Aspirational

Reconciliation is aspirational when the concept is framed around notions of truth, healing, forgiveness, respect, moving on, and assuaging guilt. Framing reconciliation around the emotional, psychological, and relational elements involves reshaping individual and national identity, which is of particular note in a colonial context where the effects of these elements are less visible than after a conflict.

In many post-conflict contexts, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are used as mechanisms of justice to allow victims and perpetrators a space in which to rebuild and restore fractured relationships. Hayner (2010) examines the role of truth commissions and questions whether knowing the truth fosters reconciliation (4). She notes that the focus of truth commissions is on the past, with the examination of events used as a means of understanding which policies and structures need revision (11). In an analysis of reconciliation in South Africa, Gibson (2006) observes a scale of truth telling that occurred on the individual and community level (86) and which formed a collective memory and helped reshape the discourse in the country by exposing atrocities committed by all sides (90). He goes on to comment that there is a justice and healing in hearing perpetrators express remorse (102). Minow (2000) affirms the power of truth to heal through the participation of all actors (243). Yet Canada's TRC regarding the IRS is notable in its difference in this regard. The majority of the TRC consisted of testimony given by survivors. There were few testimonies from those who were employed the schools, or by those who made

policy decisions (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). This lack of critical reflection presents an incomplete version of the truth, and Nagy (2012) compares the South African and Canadian reconciliation processes and notes that beyond truth telling, South Africa also addressed the structures that perpetuated inequality (354). Without addressing the macro level truths (364) and establishing a notion of justice as seen in other contexts, the linkage between truth and reconciliation is even more tenuous in Canada.

The emotional element of reconciliation can also be associated with apologies, where the act of apologizing is seen as both healing and retributive. Johnson (2011) notes that a public act of apology to Indigenous peoples is about more than politics, but rather it is an acknowledgement of past wrongs that can bring the nation together (193). Yet, Muldoon (2017) frames reconciliation as a means of alleviating the settler's feelings of guilt and shame (217). He notes that in the act of apology there is an element of what he described in Australia as the desire to recover "the nation's ideal image of itself" (213). Apology is a necessary component of reconciliation, however, the concern is that the result is for the benefit of the settler, not the Indigenous peoples (218). Muldoon concludes with the contention that "settler societies ought to reflect more deeply upon their desire for reconciliation and the extent to which it is underpinned by an understandable, but ultimately regressive, wish not to carry the stain of colonization anymore" (225).

## 2.4 Chapter Conclusions

Hayner (2010) notes that the scope of work on the subject of reconciliation is vast due to the number of examples of reconciliation, as well as to the differences of each circumstance (8). As such, there is potential for the goals of reconciliation to not be aligned with what is required due to a misrepresentation of the problem. The Canadian example of reconciliation is ongoing and it

will be crucial to ensure that the conception of reconciliation is appropriate given the context and the Indigenous perspective. The following Chapters offer a discussion on critical frame analysis and use this approach to examine the Canadian context.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

There are numerous ways to understand and respond to the need for reconciliation in Canada. There are similarities, but also very wide gaps in interpretation of how to improve the relationship with Indigenous peoples. When the problem at hand is interpreted and understood in different ways, the solutions to the problem will naturally reflect those interpretations. As Schön and Rein (1994) define this situation: “[t]heir problem formulations and preferred solutions are grounded in different problem-setting stories rooted in different frames” (29). Two approaches to critical frame analysis will be used to further investigate the way reconciliation has been framed in the Canadian discourse.

The first approach involves using a comparative analysis technique outlined by Verloo (2005) through which the texts are analyzed according to a series of sensitizing questions in order to determine the diagnosis and prognosis of the policy problem, and the voice given to the relevant actors (26). The second is the ‘what’s the problem represented to be’ (WPR) approach developed by Bacchi (1999, 2009, 2012) as a means to better understand and reflect on the interpretations and assumptions that are often taken for granted in policy making. Bacchi contends that in examining how a problem is represented, or framed, we are able to consider the subsequent effects of policies that are designed based on these assumptions (2012, 5). Evaluating Government of Canada texts regarding the relationship with Indigenous peoples and reconciliation and comparing them with Indigenous reflections on the same topics will demonstrate where there are conflicts in the ways in which problems and solutions are represented. This comparison highlights where challenges to successful implementation may occur.

Critical frame analysis is conceived as an examination of interpretations and assumptions which may occur as a result of power dynamics and exclusion (Verloo 2005, 18). Bacchi makes it clear that the framing of a problem is not necessarily intentional, rather it emerges as a result of power dynamics and language (2009, 30). This thesis utilizes Bacchi’s six questions to unearth the way in which the problem of reconciliation has been represented, which can be utilized to unravel limitations and silences that result from the framing of the issue. The questions that are designed to interrogate and scrutinize problematisations can be found in *Table 1*. For the purposes of this thesis, these questions serve as the guiding framework for the analysis of the texts.

Table 1 Bacchi’s ‘*What’s the Problem Represented to Be*’

Question 1: What’s the ‘problem’ represented to be in a specific policy?
Question 2: What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the ‘problem’?
Question 3: How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?
Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently?
Question 5: What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?
Question 6: How/where has this representation of the ‘problem’ been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?

### 3.1 The Texts

The texts to be analysed (see Table 2) were selected with two considerations in mind. The first was that they represented different modern eras in the relationship between the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples. Tracing the progression of how reconciliation has been represented by both the Government and Indigenous perspectives is helpful in gaining an understanding of how the framing has evolved. The second consideration is the comparative

aspect, where the Government and Indigenous perspective, the language that is used, and the way the problem is represented will uncover where similarities, differences, and silences emerge.

*Table 2 Documents Analyzed*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
1969	Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy – Known as the White Paper	Government of Canada - Honourable Jean Chrétien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
1970	Citizens Plus – Known as The Red Paper	Indian Association of Alberta
2008	Statement of Apology	Government of Canada – Prime Minister Stephen Harper
2008	Statement	Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine
2015	Mandate Letter for Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
2016	Making Reconciliation Work	Assembly of First Nations National Chief, Perry Bellegarde

### 3.2 Text Analysis

Each text was first examined using sensitizing questions related to its prognosis and diagnosis of the problem, as well as to the authoritative voices reflected in the texts. This analysis allowed for a comparison of the ways in which the texts are similar, different, and how the relationship between the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples has shifted over time (Verloo 2005, 19). Bacchi’s 6 questions regarding problem representation were then posed for each text for further analysis and comparison of the texts’ problem representations. This approach traced the progression of the problem representation, and provided insight into where assumptions and perceptions have changed, where previous silences have been given voice, and where silences remain. The following Chapter summarizes the findings of the analysis and reflects on the implications based on the representation of the problem, as well as how the representation of reconciliation fits with the literature as reviewed in Chapter 2.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

The following Chapter will examine texts from the three eras of the relationship between the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples. The texts from each era will be described using their diagnosis of the problem, the prognosis of how to address the problem, and the text's authoritative voice. The texts in each era will then be compared using Bacchi's questions related to problem representation. The Chapter concludes with remarks on the framing of the relationship and reconciliation over time, as well as an assessment of how the current framing fits into the literature regarding reconciliation.

### 4.1 First Era – Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, 1969-1970

#### 4.1.1 Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy (The White Paper), 1969

Written from the Canadian Government's perspective, the White Paper offers solutions to the "present situation of the Indian people" (4), where the term Indians refers to First Nations peoples. The diagnosis of the problem is the special treatment and different policies that apply to Indians. The text expresses concern regarding this treatment, stating that different policies and services keep Indians separate from other Canadians. This is determined to be discriminatory and does everyone a disservice by perpetuating disadvantage. The contention is that if Indians were subject to the same policies, received the same benefits, and participated in society in the same manner as other Canadians, that they would be capable of improving their well-being. The diagnosis is that the agreements and Treaties were made in the past and, therefore, no longer reflect modern Canadian realities.

The White Paper's proposed policy is based on the prognosis of ending the reserve system through the transfer of land title, eliminating the *Indian Act*, and removing the special status and mention

of Indians in the *Constitution*. The prognosis includes recognition of Indian culture and expresses that it is important for both Indians and non-Indians to ensure the culture remains a part of Canada's diversity. Funding for cultural appreciation and Indian economic development is offered in the policy alongside the legal and legislative changes.

The voice evident in this text is that of the federal government. The suggestion for action is based on government assessments and beliefs on how best to proceed. The text remarks that the policy was based on Indian concerns related to their marginalization which led to the government's review and subsequent policy change, however there is no mention of review by any Indian association. The success of the change is identified as hinging on partnership with all levels of government and Indians, as well as the changing attitudes of society towards Indians.

#### 4.1.2 Citizens Plus (The Red Paper), 1970

The Red Paper was written by the Indian Association of Alberta as a response to the White Paper. The text counters the Government interpretation of the problem as well as its solutions. It rejects the framing of the problem in the White Paper that implies Indians are receiving "welfare" or "handouts". The diagnosis in this case is that the government has not done enough to honour their obligations as set out in the documents such as the Treaties, the *Indian Act* and, the *Royal Proclamation*. Absolute reliance on the government is not how Indians want to continue, but serious social wrongs have been committed and Indian's concerns will not be solved with their removal from the *Constitution*, eliminating the *Indian Act*, or transferring ownership of reserve land.

The prognosis in the Red Paper offers a way forward that is based on government obligations being fulfilled and the support and attention paid to Indians being commensurate with their needs and

rights. Reserve land should be protected and the Treaties' promises should be honoured. The prognosis regarding preserving Indian culture is that this can only be achieved by also preserving their status, rights, and traditions.

The voice reflects Indians and their assertion that the Government's proposal is not a viable solution. Regarding the partnership proposed in the White Paper, the Red Paper indicates that the co-operation of Indians is contingent on the government's recognition of Indian views on the Treaties, and that decisions regarding how to move forward should be made in consideration of these views.

#### 4.1.3 First Era Problem Representation Comparison and Analysis

The White and Red Papers present differing perspectives on how to address growing inequalities in Canada. The texts differ in their problem representations, where the White Paper seeks to change a system that perpetuates separation and difference, and favours one that ends discrimination through equal treatment. The Red Paper considers this to be an attempt at further paternalism and assimilation with the problem represented as the government having not lived up to the obligations established in the Treaties and agreements. The problem in the White Paper is represented to be that there are different service provisions for Indians and non-Indians, which has associated costs to society, and leads to discord and discrimination. As the Red Paper points out, this approach does not address the long-term ramifications of current Indian policies, nor does it offer solutions other than short-term funding for economic development.

The underlying assumption behind the White Paper is that Indians should be full participants in Canadian society, as this is in all citizens' best interests. The Red Paper presents the opposite view – that strong Indian communities, connected to the land, are the way in which all of Canada can

prosper. This reveals two primary assumptions and presuppositions on which the texts have been based. The government perspective is that Indians, as individuals, want to be part of the wider society. It also presupposes that the Government should be able to decide how Indians see their future. The policy change implies that it is one of choice, however, the Red Paper counters this, stating that no choice has been offered in whether or not to remove all mention of Indians from the *Constitution*, and, in fact, for Indians, this is not negotiable. This brings in a second assumption of the White Paper, which is that the government is the most qualified arbiter of the contents and intent of Treaties. The Red Paper counters this, stating that Indian concerns and grievances are not due to their lack of understanding of the true purpose and intent of the agreements, rather, that their interpretation of their rights is based on the true intention of their forefathers.

The divergent problem representations can be traced to two factors. The first factor is that Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had a desire to establish a multicultural society in which all Canadians were equal and free from discrimination. Whereas in the Red Paper, justice for Indians is based in their status and it is stated that: “to be a good and useful Canadian we must first be a good, happy and productive Indian” (193). The second factor that led to the different problem representations is interpretation of the Treaties with respect to their longevity and the stipulations they make regarding land rights. Indigenous ownership is presented as being a solution to the Indian request for more control over their land. Yet this fails to recognize the Indigenous cultural and spiritual connection to the land. As the Red Paper notes, the land belongs not to the present, but to those who will be born in the future.

There is one silence found in the White Paper that can be seen as having led to the need for the Red Paper to be written. The policy presents itself as a way in which Indians are able to continue

practicing their culture, but in discounting the cultural and spiritual connection to the land and animals, this is not possible. In proposing to end discrimination, the White Paper neglects to acknowledge Indian belief systems. This demonstrates a lack of understanding or recognition of the Indigenous way of life. For example, in stating that hunting for sustenance is a practice that is ending among young people, the government does not consider or examine the possibility that there is more to the hunting and gathering practices, including a strong connection to spiritual and cultural traditions. The proposal is offered as a means through which to remove discrimination, however, the Red Paper indicates that the effect that would be produced by a removal of Indian as a recognized and protected people would, in essence, be a final attempt at assimilation under the guise of equality.

One potential effect of the White Paper is that in representing the problem as Indians receiving different services and benefits, non-Indian discrimination could increase. Ending the difference could further encourage the stigma that Indians did not deserve their status and benefits and there could be little sympathy for those that may struggle when these are rescinded. Yet, the Red Paper's strong stance could have a similar effect on those who do not feel that Indians deserve special status, let alone further rights protection.

The White Paper was retracted after Indigenous peoples became increasingly vocal in their questioning of government policy. In stating its position and displaying its assumptions in such a divisive document, the government ultimately opened itself up for further questioning and scrutiny, as demonstrated by the IRS class-action lawsuit that led to the second era discussed below.

## 4.2 Second Era – Prime Minister Stephen Harper, 2008

### 4.2.1 The Statement of Apology (The Apology) 2008

The Statement of Apology (The Apology) was made on behalf of the Government of Canada. The statement acknowledges that the Indian Residential School policy was one of assimilation which represents a “sad chapter” in Canada’s history. The diagnosis in this text is the connection between the IRS policy and current social problems facing aboriginal peoples. The Apology acknowledges the policy’s consequences, stating that they were: “profoundly negative and that this policy had a lasting and damaging impact on aboriginal culture, heritage and language” (6850). A further diagnosis is that, to date, steps taken to recover from the trauma have not included the government.

The prognosis is that the legacy of the IRS needs to be resolved for healing and reconciliation to occur. The Apology notes that the IRS settlement agreement includes the formation of a truth and reconciliation commission which will educate Canadians, help foster respect, and start a new relationship. The second prognosis element in the Apology is that by strengthening families and communities, as well as culture and traditions, Canada will also be strengthened. It must be noted that this second prognosis does not specifically refer to strengthening aboriginal families.

The voice in the Apology is the Federal Government, which has determined that the Apology and the TRC will repair the relationship and lead to healing and reconciliation. However, the text also notes that the TRC is as a result of the settlement agreement with IRS survivors, which indicates the aboriginal role in bringing about change and shaping the course of action.

#### 4.2.2 Statement by Assembly of First Nations Grand Chief Phil Fontaine, 2008

This statement was given after the government Apology, and focuses as much on the future as on the past. This statement also invokes the bravery of survivors to come forward and share their stories, yet it goes further in terms of the significance, stating that in voicing the truth, the former legitimacy and authority of white supremacy is over. Fontaine uses stronger language again in describing this chapter of Canadian history, calling it deplorable rather than sad. The diagnosis of the problem is clear, the IRS was devastating, stating that: “[t]he attempts to erase our identities hurt us deeply, but it also hurt all Canadians and impoverished the character of this nation” (6855).

Consequently, the prognosis notes that reconciliation is about recognition and hope – avenues that bring about change to a greater degree than legal or political avenues. Fontaine speaks of moving forward together with non-Aboriginals, and reflects on the work that is still required in order to strengthen Canada and to put an end to the “racial nightmare” (6855).

The voice in Fontaine’s statement is shared between the First Nations peoples, the government, and all Canadians. The way forward will only be successful with “a respectful and, therefore, liberating relationship between us and the rest of Canada” (6855).

#### 4.2.3 Second Era Problem Representation Comparison and Analysis

The Apology offered by Prime Minister Stephen Harper for the IRS is a clear assertion that previous attitudes and policies did not serve Indigenous people or their needs. The problem in the Apology is represented to be the IRS policy, its implementation, and its legacy; the burdens of which were borne by aboriginal communities alone. The problem representation in Grand Chief Fontaine’s statement is similar in its focus on the IRS, yet the difference is in the prognosis, where the path forward is also represented as a problem and an ongoing struggle.

An underlying assumption in the Apology is that, with an acknowledgement and understanding of the IRS history, the country can heal. Whereas, the underlying assumption of Fontaine's statement is that the effects of this history are devastating to individuals and to Canada as a nation, and that to move on from this will be difficult, as there are other "fights still to be fought" (6854).

The Apology, in limiting the representation of the problem to the IRS, leaves silent the connection to broader policies as well as the ongoing power dynamic and structures that continue to marginalize. Representing the problem as the IRS and framing the solution as an apology and journey forward creates the impression that there is an end to the "sad chapter in our history" (6849). Implying that it is only the legacy of the IRS that has contributed to the "social problems that continue to exist in many communities today" (6850) takes away the space for examining what other policies and mechanisms have had a negative impact.

The effect of framing of the problem as an apology is that this does not open up the discussion to broader issues of other mechanisms of colonialism and what else might be required for meaningful reconciliation to occur. Fontaine's statement is more explicit in noting that further work will be required, and expresses the hope that this process and increased knowledge will galvanize the country.

Despite the narrow manner in which the problematic relationship with Indigenous peoples was represented, the Apology is important in achieving a shift towards reconciliation and partnership. That these statements were made in the House of Commons brought the discussion to the national consciousness.

## 4.3 Third Era – Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, 2015-2016

### 4.3.1 Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Mandate Letter, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, 2015

The Mandate Letter outlines the Prime Minister's expectations for the new Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs. The diagnosis is that sufficient progress has not been made in key issue areas such as housing, education, employment, and health. This has been due to a relationship that has been ineffective and unequal.

The prognosis is to renew nation-to-nation relationships that are based on respect and notions of partnership. One top priority is implementing the recommendations of the TRC, with specific attention paid to the adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Much of the action that is called for in the text is framed around collaboration between Indigenous peoples and government agencies to review laws and policies related to government obligations, increased funding, and consultation regarding rights and government obligations.

The priorities are noted to be based on commitments made during the election, signifying that the prognosis comes from the government. While several priorities listed include references to collaboration or consultation, the extent to which Indigenous peoples will have a voice and a decision-making role is not clear.

### 4.3.2. Interview with Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde, 2016

This interview presents the First Nations perspective on reconciliation. While many aspects of reconciliation refer to all Indigenous peoples, there are specific items of importance to First Nations peoples who, as Bellegarde notes, equate reconciliation with decision making as much as with mending relationships.

Bellegarde diagnoses two primary problems in reconciliation. The first is that the socio-economic gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous people in Canada is large, and the 2% funding cap is a limitation in improving services such as education, health, and infrastructure. As Bellegarde states: [t]he gap holds all of us back from reaching the full potential of this country” (25). The second is that the relationship between First Nations and Canada is broken, due in large part to First Nations being kept out of the process of making the decisions that affect their lives.

The prognosis calls for increased funding for housing, education, and infrastructure, as well as for First Nations languages and environmental protection. Bellegarde also calls for full participation of First Nations in decision making as this is an integral element of ensuring rights are guaranteed. This was emphasised in relation to how land and resource development decisions are made.

The UNDRIP and TRC Calls to Action are cited as two key documents whose recommendations and mechanisms should be used for guidance. The authoritative voice in this text is the Assembly of First Nations. Bellegarde speaks to the importance of working together, however, the priorities that are being addressed are those set out by First Nations.

#### 4.3.3 Second Era Problem Representation Comparison and Analysis

The problem represented in the Mandate Letter is the flawed prior relationship with Indigenous peoples. This representation shifts in the power dynamic and frames reconciliation as a collaborative process. The notion of renewed relationships is also seen in Perry Bellegarde’s problem representation. The Mandate Letter indicates that a review of policies and laws must occur in order to ensure the government is adhering to its obligations as outlined in Canadian and international documents such as the UNDRIP. Bellegarde presents that in the Assembly of First Nations view, the government is not currently adhering to these obligations and thus action, rather

than review, is required. This is a subtle, yet problematic difference in how the problem is represented in these texts which could lead to consequences in the implementation of these reconciliation initiatives.

It is in the underlying assumptions where these two texts demonstrate their differences. Underlying the Mandate Letter are assumptions that what has been lacking to date has been a concerted effort to collaborate, and that achieving the desired results will require working together more effectively, and recognizing that discussions must happen on a nation-to-nation level. The assumptions underlying the problem representation in Bellegarde's interview are that government words have not yet led to action, and that the relationship is still not based on respect. Bellegarde equates recognition and reconciliation with changing laws and policies to align with the rights of Indigenous peoples. The Mandate Letter presupposes that by articulating that a renewed relationship is needed, that this will necessarily occur. Bellegarde, is rather more explicit and articulates that a renewed relationship requires full First Nations participation, particularly in discussions regarding resource and development.

What fails to be problematized in both texts is the difficulty in rebuilding fraught relationships and achieving consensus. The tone of the Mandate Letter is forward looking and positive, yet veers into the territory of potentially overestimating the ease of mending a very fractured relationship. Bellegarde's interview is insistent that reconciliation is only possible when policies and laws are changed. The expectation of both is that the other party will acquiesce, and that what has prevented successful negotiations in the past was lack of will. This relates to the authoritative voice identified in each text as being the government, which ultimately retains decision making authority. The

power dynamic and the socio-economic gap have the potential to remain unchanged unless the government is willing to include First Nations in decision making.

Both texts highlight the importance of renewed and respectful relationships. The effect of this on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens is that the topic of reconciliation remains a part of the national discourse. The Mandate Letter makes it clear that the government's most important relationship is with Indigenous peoples. Bellegarde echoes the importance of reconciliation and the role everyone can play, including individual citizens. He notes that "Canadians can do all they can to open their hearts and minds to an accurate understanding and perception of First Nations people" (26). An improvement of relationships could be achieved through the messaging of nation-to-nation relationship renewal by affirming the equal status of Indigenous governments.

Justin Trudeau's Mandate Letters to ministers were the first to be made available to the public. This wide dissemination of his priorities and commitment to the relationship with Indigenous peoples has the ability to be read and repeated, with the potential for further spillover effects on provincial and municipal governments and on individuals. Bellegarde's interview was in a public policy magazine which brings the First Nations perspective to an important and influential audience. The accessibility and openness of the two texts demonstrates the reach and level of interest of the topic of reconciliation in Canada today.

#### 4.4 Chapter Analysis and Conclusions

Critical frame analysis has helped to identify how the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples has changed over time and in what manner. It is possible to examine where there has and has not been progress, and where the tensions will require further consideration. In considering the framing of these 6 texts, there are clear points of agreement as well as contention.

The government texts display a notable progression in how its relationship with Indigenous people has shifted over time. The Pierre Trudeau era texts had divergent diagnoses and problem representations, reflecting a relationship that was contentious and fractured. The result of the White Paper's divisive policy proposal was that Indigenous peoples began to claim their voice and work to ensure that the decisions related to their lives were not solely in the hands of the government. By 2007, the IRS survivors' class-action lawsuit prompted a formal government apology for the assimilationist policy and a notable shift in the problem representation of the relationship with Indigenous peoples occurred. This was a move from a framing that, in many ways, dismissed the Indigenous voice, to one that was shaped by the acknowledgement of past misdeeds. Both Indigenous and government prognoses articulated that the fractured relationship needed to be mended through a process of reconciliation. The findings of the TRC then further shifted the discussion to highlight where hindrances to a positive relationship remained, including the uneven power dynamic. The Canadian Government of the present era is attempting to build on documents such as the Calls to Action and the UNDRIP to strengthen the reconciliation process and move it beyond the symbolic.

While the government framing of the relationship has evolved, the Indigenous perspective has remained far more consistent and firm in what it sees as necessary for a strong, reconciled relationship. There are shifts in priority and focus, as well as in language, that reflect the progress made over time, however the fundamental intentions and interests have remained virtually unchanged. The significance and value placed on the Treaties and the rights they guarantee particularly with respect to land has never wavered. The demand for Indigenous participation in decision making was also a constant in the texts, culminating in Bellegarde's assertion that

respecting First Nations decisions and full participation in decision making is essential to reconciliation.

The affirmation of the importance of land rights and the Treaties has shifted for the Canadian government as well, however, there is no indication that decision making power will be shared equally, or offered to Indigenous government bodies completely. The government frames the steps to partnership and consultation as renewing the relationship by focusing on nation-to-nation discussions. However, the Indigenous framing is that what must be renewed is the power structure itself. Bellegarde indicates that “full participation” is required in resource development projects, while the Mandate Letter indicates that Indigenous capacity to review and monitor projects should be enhanced. This may remain a key policy disagreement should there continue to be this difference in interpretation. As Schön and Rein (1994) note, the resolution of conflicts in framing such as this are made more complex when one of the actors, in this case, the Canadian government, is also responsible for determining policy solutions (29).

The Indigenous and government perspectives differ on what is fundamental to reconciliation. The following section will consider the themes of culture, rights, power, apology, and truth in light of recognition and reconciliation literature in order to further demonstrate the importance of consensus. Ensuring that the discussion of reconciliation in Canada occurs with as much understanding and cohesion as possible will be crucial for its success.

#### 4.4.1 Analysis Regarding Recognition

Kymlicka (1999) notes that Indigenous peoples are more than members of different cultures and distinguishes them by stating that they are “‘distinct civilizations’, rooted in a premodern way of life that needs protecting...” (12). The Canadian government attitude towards such a

pronouncement has changed since the era of the White Paper when the proposal was to bring Indians into the modern world. The current government acknowledges the distinctiveness of Indigenous culture, however, as noted in Bellegarde's interview, there is more to be done, for example in the preservation of Indigenous land rights and languages. As identified by Bell (2008), Moulton (2016) and Alfred (2010), recognition must go beyond an appreciation of culture. For example, the Indigenous connection to land goes beyond the ties non-Indigenous peoples have. The connection to the land is spiritual, as well as an important element of the Indigenous collective identity (Johnson 1995, 194). Indigenous languages suffered as a result of the IRS when students were prevented from speaking them, which has led to a decline in fluency (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015, 82). This lack of attention paid to Indigenous language as a crucial element of culture demonstrates that the recognition the government is offering remains wanting. In the Calls to Action, the TRC recommends cultural competency training for people working in several fields including health care and the public service. This indicates that there remains a lack of knowledge that continues to hinder the relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples.

#### 4.4.2 Analysis regarding Political Reconciliation

The progression from government policies that proposed further assimilation to those that promote partnership is notable. Yet, the silences in the more recent texts point to continued tensions in the theme of Indigenous rights, and the government obligation to uphold these rights. The literature regarding political reconciliation in a post-colonial context suggests that political participation is necessary for a society to move beyond its history (Verdeja 2017, 236). In Canada, there remains a tension in the discussion related to self-government and land rights which demonstrates that this element of reconciliation has not been achieved. Bellegarde and others such as Arthur Manuel

(2015) point to certain policies that directly impede this aspect of reconciliation in the eyes of Indigenous peoples. The contention is that the Canadian government continues to have the ability to control Indigenous land claims and land use. The current government's priority of reviewing legislation in this regard will be a critical test to determine whether or not the balance of power will shift. The TRC Calls to Action note the importance of returning to the stipulations of the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* and ending the divisive concept of *terra nullis* that gives the impression that Canada was uninhabited prior to the arrival of Europeans (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015, 4, Manuel 2015, chap 1).

The power dynamic between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples is the second factor related to political reconciliation that is uncovered in the framing discussion of the texts. As De Costa (2017) noted, the TRC focus was on the IRS, and it primarily included survivor testimonies, while the Calls to Action address the broader structural system that perpetuates Indigenous marginalization. Within Indigenous scholarship there is an appreciation for apology, moving forward, and healing, however, greater focus is on addressing the structural legacies of colonialism that continue to marginalize (Rice & Snyder 2008, Alfred 2010, Manuel 2015, Simpson 2011, Newhouse 2016). The concern is that if the discussion remains focused on the Indian Residential Schools, there is no room for the wider discussions related to the policies and practices that amounted to assimilation and political genocide (Simpson 2011, chap. 1). One particular area where the discussion of Indigenous rights and power is evolving is land rights in relation to development projects. There is a tension between the Mandate Letter and Bellegarde's interview regarding the difference between consultation and full participation, that is, who has the voice as decision maker regarding whether or not development can occur. The implementation of the UNDRIP and its stipulation for free and prior consent to development projects will be a crucial

test to the government's commitment to its nation-to-nation relationship and reconciliation beyond apologizing for the IRS. As Borrows notes, without the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in Canada's institutions and structures "the country will not create a legitimate framework or legal foundation on which to build an appropriate political relationship" (Borrows 2002, 130).

#### 4.4.3 Analysis regarding Aspirational Reconciliation

The Apology was an important truth telling exercise, as was the TRC. The references to the relationship between Indigenous, non-Indigenous Canadians, and the government were more inclusive and respectful in the third era of texts examined. The TRC expressed aspirations of building on this truth in their Final Report (2015) stating that: "reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour" (6-7). The report notes, however, that this is not where the country currently is situated, a conclusion that is also noted by Regan (2010), who believes that Canadians are in danger of not doing what is necessary for reconciliation to occur. She speaks of denial and a lack of understanding as forces that inhibit non-Indigenous Canadians from truly decolonizing, which she believes is necessary to the reconciliation process (11-12). Chung (2016) also notes that while reconciliation has aspirations for transformation and togetherness, there are non-Indigenous people who do not feel vested in the outcome of reconciliation and thus potentially dismiss the issue (404-405).

Where non-Indigenous people or politicians may see reconciliation as a means to an end, or a goal to attain, Indigenous people see it as an ongoing and critical component of their survival as distinct

peoples (Manuel 2015, Chapter 5). As Muldoon (2017) notes, the motivation in post-colonial countries can be to erase the “stain of colonization” (225). In Canada, the Indigenous rhetoric is to *decolonize* the country (Simpson 2011). This has been primarily an Indigenous notion, however, in April 2017 when Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett announced Canada’s official endorsement of UNDRIP at the 15th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, she stated that “[r]ecognition and decolonization are ongoing journeys. As governments, we will always need to listen and heed the advice of Indigenous peoples when course corrections are required” (Canada. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada 2017). This statement, as Canada celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, speaks to the progress that has been made in mending the broken relationship with Indigenous peoples. It also speaks to the country’s ongoing journey towards learning and growing together.

## Conclusion

This thesis explored the way the framing of the relationship between Indigenous people and the Government of Canada has evolved over time. The purpose of this was to determine where there are tensions in the framing of reconciliation that may limit the country's ability to successfully implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Texts from three eras in modern Canada's history, representing both the government and Indigenous voice, were examined using critical frame analysis in order to compare and contrast problem representations, diagnoses and prognosis of the problem, and the authoritative voice.

The progress that has been made is evident, however to reconcile after colonialism is not a simple task. The government rhetoric regarding Indigenous peoples in Canada has evolved into one that espouses reconciliation. Indigenous perspectives also express the importance of reconciliation. However, as the frame analysis of the six texts has demonstrated, the concept of reconciliation is not framed in the same manner. The government has shifted its perspective from assimilationist policies to be more respectful and cooperative with Indigenous peoples, and to recognize not only cultural contributions, but also inherent rights. This shift is crucial to reconciliation endeavours, as the literature indicates. However, Indigenous scholars and leaders articulate that recognition will not be sufficient. The distinctive language used by Indigenous scholars, politicians, and individuals in defining reconciliation includes terms such as *resurgence*, *decolonization*, and *self-governance*. These terms convey the message that the existing power dynamic is no longer tenable.

This thesis highlights the fact that the Indigenous perspective of what reconciliation entails is not adequately reflected by the government, nor are there sufficient acknowledgements of the cultural revitalization and awareness that are required in order to strengthen the bond between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canada. As the current Government of Canada strives to implement the TRC Calls to Action and the UNDRIP, it will be vital to ensure that they follow through on the necessary power sharing and rights recognition stipulations contained within these documents.

The government framing of reconciliation does not yet reflect the notions of power-sharing and decolonization as clearly as does the Indigenous framing. This is particularly evident when the discussion of reconciliation moves beyond truth and apology to notions of rights and self-determination. Recognition and political reconciliation literature articulate that a primary requirement in improving the well-being Indigenous peoples is related to structures and institutions that perpetuate marginalization. This entails going beyond the present, and, understanding that further change is necessary. Where non-Indigenous people or politicians may see reconciliation as a means to an end, or a goal to attain, Indigenous peoples see it as critical to their survival. The post-colonial reconciliation process is one that, therefore, requires political and emotional will to preserve rights and culture, while ensuring that the country heals and learns about its history. Perseverance and patience from all stakeholders will be necessary. In order to have a pervasive effect, non-indigenous Canadians must be engaged in a meaningful way, with cultural awareness as an integral step towards recognition and reconciliation.

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