Education for reconciliation:

Indigenous peoples and national memory in Canadian history curriculum

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Abstract

This work seeks to explore how the goal of promoting reconciliation through education has impacted the stories told about Canada and Indigenous peoples in national history curricula. Building on the literature of settler colonialism, master narratives, and past scholarly work examining Indigenous depictions in Canadian education, this work concentrates on two provinces that have recently reformed their curricula in light of the *Calls to Action* by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: British Columbia and Ontario. Using discourse analysis, two grade 10 history/social studies courses are compared against previous editions and one another for an inter- and intra-provincial examination of this topic. The findings of this analysis demonstrate that despite employing contemporary pedagogical approaches designed to promote critical thinking skills instead of the memorization of narratives, these courses continue to reproduce dominant nationalist stories about Canadian history. Moreover, while there has been a considerable increase in the quantity of Indigenous representation in the updated texts, the curricula still depict Indigenous peoples in ways that uphold colonial imagery and stereotypes. The surveyed curricula therefore demonstrate how settler provincial governments have co-opted the concept of reconciliation into the existing master narrative of Canada as a country of justice and social harmony. In interpreting colonialism as a past event that has since been rectified by the state, the form of 'reconciliation' enacted in the curriculum reforms works to maintain the existing settler structure rather than promote meaningful change.

Ce travail cherche à explorer comment la promotion de la vérité et de la réconciliation par l'éducation a eu un impact sur les histoires racontées sur le Canada et les peuples autochtones dans les curriculum de cours d'histoire nationaux. S'appuyant sur la littérature relative au colonialisme de peuplement, aux récits maîtres et aux travaux universitaires antérieurs portant sur les représentations autochtones dans l'éducation canadienne, ce travail se concentre sur deux provinces qui ont récemment réformées leurs programmes à la lumière des appels à l'action de la Commission de vérité et de réconciliation du Canada: la Colombie-Britannique et l'Ontario. En utilisant l'analyse du discours, deux cours d'histoire/études sociales de 10e année sont comparés aux curriculum précédents et l'un à l'autre pour un examen inter- et intra-provincial de ce sujet. Les résultats de cette analyse démontrent que, malgré l'utilisation d'approches pédagogiques contemporaines conçues pour promouvoir la pensée critique plutôt que la mémorisation de récits, ces cours continuent de reproduire les récits nationalistes dominants sur l'histoire du Canada. En outre, bien que la représentation autochtone ait considérablement augmentée dans les textes mis à jour, les programmes scolaires continuent de dépeindre les peuples autochtones d'une manière qui confirme l'imagerie et les stéréotypes coloniaux. Les programmes étudiés montrent donc comment les gouvernements provinciaux colonisateurs ont coopté le concept de réconciliation dans le récit principal du Canada en tant que pays de justice et d'harmonie sociale. En interprétant le colonialisme comme un événement passé qui a été rectifié par l'état, la forme de réconciliation mise en œuvre dans les réformes des programmes scolaires contribue à maintenir la structure coloniale existante plutôt qu'à promouvoir un changement significatif.

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I did not enter this program intending to study Canada, much less to focus on education, but I am grateful to have fallen into this topic. This thesis has been a labour of, maybe not love, but certainly passion, and a means of exploring my own relationship to the place I live as an uninvited settler. I am indebted to the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation, whose lands I have lived and worked on for the last three years, as well as the many other Indigenous nations across what is now considered Canadian territory.

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1.0 Introduction

Since the end of the twentieth century, the government of Canada has begun addressing the long history of colonialism inherent to the state, which culminated in policies that have been described as "cultural genocide," (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, *Summary of the Final Report*: 1). Indeed, over the past decade, reconciliation has become a staple of recent political and social discourse as the Canadian state attempts to establish better relationships with the Indigenous peoples of this land.

Central to the reconciliation project has been debates over the (re-)education of the Canadian public. As former Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), Justice Murray Sinclair has argued, "Education is what got us into this mess… but education is the key to reconciliation," (quoted in Madden, 2019: 292). This quote exemplifies the high priority education has taken as a means towards reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government. Echoing Sinclair, the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) also called for all levels of governance to collaborate with Indigenous peoples in creating mandatory curriculum on "residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada" throughout all levels of schooling (7). As a result, many provinces and territories of Canada have begun to reform curricula. While all the provinces and territories in Canada teach about the history of residential schools, this material is not mandatory in all regions and there are differing levels of content across the country. To date, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon, British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have all undertaken or began curriculum reforms to incorporate a greater degree of Indigenous content into their respective education systems (CBC News, *Beyond 94*).

Despite these reforms, multiple studies indicate that most Canadian students have little to no knowledge of Indigenous peoples (cited in Lamb and Godlewska, 2021: 106). In this respect, a focus on the re-education of the Canadian public is direly needed. Moreover, the site of education policy also provides an interesting opportunity for crucial questions of citizenship and national identity. History education specifically reveals a great deal about how the state perceives itself and how it conceives of ideal forms of citizenship. Examining education offers potentially the most accessible means of viewing the national memory, particularly in its relationship to Indigenous peoples.

By understanding education as a politically contentious field that aims to address the sometimes-contradictory goals of teaching both critical skills and fostering national identity, I seek to understand how the state conception of reconciliation has been enacted in curriculum reform through the examination of two recently updated social science and history curricula (in British Columbia and Ontario secondary schools). Central to the goals of this research is investigating how perceptions of Indigenous peoples have been changed as a result of curriculum reform specifically aimed at complying with the TRC's *Calls to Action* (*CTA*). In this respect, this project examines the relationship between formal education, national identity and perceptions of national history.

2.0 Research Questions

Following these research aims, the primary questions that animate this project are:

1. What stories are told in the curricula? How is the Canadian nation portrayed in these stories?
2. How are Indigenous peoples portrayed in these stories?
3. Do these stories change across different time periods and different provinces?

3.0 Literature Review

In conducting this research, I rely on three main categories of literature: that of settler colonialism, national identity, and existing empirical studies on history curriculum in Canada.

3.1 Settler Colonialism

This research relies on foundational theoretical approaches put forward by scholars of settler colonialism. As Patrick Wolfe states, "settler colonialism is a structure, not an event," based on a logic of elimination (quoted in Miles, 2018: 303). This logic is inherent to all settler colonial action and structures and works to make settler status and whiteness invisible (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013).

Many scholars of settler colonialism apply a skeptical lens to the premise of reconciliation put forward by the TRC and the Canadian state. The TRC *Final Report* (2015) identifies reconciliation as "establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country, [which requires] …awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been incited, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour," (6-7). While there are many different understandings of reconciliation, including amongst Indigenous peoples, the interpretation of the TRC reveals perhaps the most official perspective on reconciliation. By working within the settler colonial system, reconciliation as a policy pursued through government-supported structures like the TRC is unable to address the ongoing system of dispossession.

Understanding the settler colonial lens provides a beneficial means of investigating the current governmental policy of reconciliation. As Miles contends (2021), the state agenda of reconciliation may in effect be a strategic effort of the Canadian government to suppress the more radical political goals of decolonization and/or Indigenous sovereignty. For example, Tuck

and Yang describe (2012) the phenomenon of settler moves to innocence: “the strategies or positionings 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,” (10). From this perspective, reconciliation acts to restore settler normalcy and forever end the “Indian problem” (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Other scholars have questioned the logic of the Canadian state’s use of transitional justice discourse in its policy of reconciliation (Miles, 2018). Unlike traditional models of transitional justice in post-conflict societies, Canada has not undergone a clear transformation: there has been no radical break in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the colonial government. By invoking repeated references to temporality and positioning past colonial policies of “wrongdoing” as a “sad chapter in Canadian history,” the state creates an artificial boundary with the past, without actually addressing the system that created such injustices.

As scholars like Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013) and St. Denis (2011) note, education and curriculum play an important role in the maintenance of colonial systems. Projects like multiculturalism, which have become particularly ingrained in the Canadian national imaginary, portray public education as neutral and tolerant spaces, denying the politically contentious role it occupies. St. Denis (2011) argues that multicultural policies are dependent on the deep structures of settler colonialism and therefore enable a refusal to acknowledge the ongoing presence of colonialism. Moreover, positioning schools as neutral and multicultural spaces justifies denying Indigenous education initiatives by treating Indigenous peoples as just another cultural group.

My research engages a bifocal perspective to analyze how the concept of reconciliation has been incorporated into the revised history curricula. This starts with comparing the previous

and current curricula to see how the material has been revised in line with the TRC *CTA*. Through this lens, I build off the TRC conception (*Final Report*) of reconciliation as requiring not just awareness of the past but also acknowledgement of harm, atonement for the causes of this harm, and action to change behaviour (6-7). Situating itself within the existing literature on settler colonialism, my project questions whether or not meaningful change for Indigenous peoples in Canada can be achieved through institutions like the TRC which are grounded in the legitimacy of the colonial state.

3.2 Narratives and National Identity

Scholars of nationalism have long noted the connection between education and national identity. Gellner (1983), in particular, argues that mass education is one of the most crucial devices in the emergence of nationalism, emphasizing that the monopoly over education is now more important than the monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Carretero and Van Alphen (2017) note the existence of two contrasting objectives of history education. The first is the goal of fostering a bond with the collective community through positive identification with one's own political history. A fundamental technique for executing this goal is through the use of historical narratives. Narratives provide a means of presenting an individual or group as being the same throughout a period of time, which is essential for the formation of identity (Carretero and Van Alphen, 2017).

The second goal of history education is cultivating critical assessment skills to promote a more nuanced understanding of the past. While more recent educational reforms have been increasingly focused on the latter objective, most often both objectives are working simultaneously within a single curriculum. For both objectives, the nation overwhelmingly acts as the conceptual and narrative unit, providing a guiding frame for the 'story' being told.

While these two dual objectives may not be explicitly acknowledged, the subject of national identity and its role in education has been a longstanding issue in Canadian public discourse. The lack of apparent sources of national identity have led to conscious efforts to generate and foster affiliation with the nation. Carr notes (2003) that the 1990s saw "widespread cultural concerns" about Canadians' apparent ignorance of national history, which was subsequently blamed on education (58). Faden's research (2014) comparing national history education in Canada and the United States found that unlike their American counterparts, most Canadian teachers surveyed stated instilling national pride as a pedagogical goal of their work.

Based on this literature, I categorize three phases of Canadian national history education corresponding primarily to the master narrative employed. While these categories are somewhat temporally organized, they are not strictly ordinal or mutually exclusive: they represent dominant views of the time rather than concrete events. The dynamic and fluid nature of this phenomena means it is quite likely that there will be overlap between these categories.

The first master narrative is one of a traditional ethnonationalist vision of Canada. Common in the late nineteenth to mid twentieth century, this narrative showcases a linear progressing "colony-to-nation storyline" with male, Western-European figures as the protagonists (Anderson, 2017: 16). As Anderson notes (2017), those outside of this "cultural project" are typically marginalized or omitted, particularly Indigenous peoples who are portrayed as primitive, exotic, or in need of European guidance.

The second category is based around a more civic nationalist master narrative arising in the mid to late twentieth century. Canada is portrayed as a "generous, tolerant, multicultural mosaic" (Anderson, 2017: 19). Much of the research on Canadian education in recent decades demonstrates the prevalence of this framework. Faden's work (2014) notes that perceived

"central values" of English Canada such as multiculturalism, peacekeeping and communitarianism are held as central to the conception of Canada in Ontario history education. Her findings demonstrate a master narrative of Canada as a nation of peace, despite much of the curricula being centred on war history (Faden, 2014).

While this narrative is more inclusive, it commonly appropriates Indigenous and racialized peoples in Canada, characterizing them as unstable until they have been included in the narrative or collapsing their differences into a singular "minority culture" in the multicultural mosaic. As Anderson notes (2017), this colourblind, multicultural motif obscures that differential access to power is achieved through racial formations. In a similar vein, the works of both Stanley (2006) and Montgomery (2005) analyze how racism is taught in national history education, highlighting how dominant narratives of Canada as a progressive country are upheld by presenting racism as held within individual values and attitudes and constrained to exceptional circumstances in the Canadian context. Rather than challenging the trope of Canada as an inclusive, tolerant society, Montgomery argues (2005) that the inclusion of stories about racism enforce this narrative by imagining racism as the exception and positioning fighting injustice as the norm.

The final category represents not a master narrative but rather the current dominant pedagogical approach informing history education in Canada. Recently there has been a shift away from teaching narratives: contemporary literature on social science education instead encourages the emphasis of teaching critical thinking skills. The influence of this perspective on Canadian education policy has been significant: in the last decade, curricular reforms have been implemented across the country with this objective in mind (Anderson, 2017; McGregor, 2017). One key piece of literature on this subject has been the Historical Thinking Project by education

professor Peter Seixas. The hallmark of this approach is the concept of historical consciousness, which differentiates knowing history from understanding how history is used for various purposes (Anderson, 2017). It is based on six key concepts: "establish historical significance; use primary source evidence; identify continuity and change; analyze cause and consequence; take historical perspectives; and, understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations," (McGregor, 2017: 7).

While historical thinking was developed explicitly to address the "problem" of competing narratives common in a multifaceted country like Canada, many scholars have identified shortcomings of this approach (Cutrara, 2018). One issue raised is that the rational, skills-focused pedagogy of historical thinking ignores how identity and culture impact students' understanding of past events (McGregor, 2017). Additionally, there are concerns with the incompatibility of this approach with Indigenous epistemologies. McGregor argues (2017) that the widespread adoption of the historical thinking approach across Canada has facilitated a universalist understanding of its concepts, positioning this approach as "epistemologically neutral," and potentially reproduces colonization in dismissing Indigenous forms of knowledge (10).

Finally, Anderson finds issue (2017) with the fact that this approach only addresses specific narratives rather than more abstract master narratives, arguing that the concepts of historical thinking alone cannot confront "the silenced histories and urgent identity questions… that permeate and shape contemporary Canadian society," (6). The current curriculum based around historical thinking still exists within the wider master narrative, and as such is maintaining and reproducing common perceptions of the Canadian nation. However, the

epistemological commitment to objectivity and neutrality may in turn obscure power dynamics inherent within the material.

My work builds on these works by addressing the relationship between education and national identity in the Canadian context. Of particular influence are the master narratives identified by scholars like Anderson (2017), which provide a framework for my research design and a lens through which to analyze portrayals of the Canadian nation and assess the two implicit goals of history education. I intend to build on this literature by examining how narratives of Canadian identity and history have shaped current curricula, particularly considering recent pedagogical developments such as historical thinking and reforms to address reconciliation. I thus aim to fill a gap in the current scholarship by undertaking a contextual analysis of these curricular documents to understand how traditional, progressive, and postmodern frames of national history have interacted with the recent policy goal of incorporating greater Indigenous content and fostering reconciliation in Canadian students.

3.3 Indigeneity and Education

There has been a great deal of valuable research conducted examining the role of Indigenous peoples within Canadian history curriculum and textbooks. This includes case studies from British Columbia (Lamb and Godlewska, 2021; Miles, 2021), Newfoundland and Labrador (Godlewska et al., 2017), Ontario (Schaefli et al., 2018) and Quebec (Di Mascio, 2014). Additionally, potentially the most extensive work, Clark (2007) examines Indigenous portrayals in textbooks used in British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Ontario.

There are several overlapping themes presented in this literature. The first is the continued assumption of the Euro-settler position framing the textbooks and curricula. In the context of Indigenous content and material, the importance of this topic is justified through its

relation to settler society. Furthermore, the settler state is presented as unambiguously innocent and benevolent to Indigenous peoples. From this perspective, state policies such as multiculturalism are presented as the "end point of justice," in effect positioning Indigenous peoples as simply a minority group and undermining their claims of sovereignty (Schaefli et al., 2018).

A further issue relates to the quantity of Indigenous topic coverage in the curriculum. Indigenous content decreases throughout the grades: there is very limited Indigenous-based material at the secondary level. Additionally, most Indigenous content is confined to the subject of early colonization and European contact, thus confining Indigenous peoples to the past as historical objects. Finally, the content that is included is often marginalized or segregated to sidebars and appendices: positioning Indigenous peoples as an afterthought or at least not central to Canadian history.

Though most of the work concludes that overall, the amount of Indigenous content in the curricula has increased throughout recent years, scholars contend that this has not necessarily translated into a more nuanced understanding of Indigenous peoples and their relationships with the Canadian state (Di Mascio, 2014; Schaefli et al., 2018; Lamb and Godlewska, 2021). Indigenous peoples and practices are often presented without context, leaving students unable to understand these topics with the understanding necessary for critical thinking. This is particularly problematic through the continued depiction of Indigenous communities as plagued by social problems without acknowledging the role of governmental policies and structures in creating material disparities between the settler and Indigenous populations.

Finally, a great deal of the newly incorporated Indigenous content is optional, shifting the responsibility of fostering reconciliation in education from policymakers entirely to teachers who are often ill-informed and without the resources to adequately achieve this objective.

4.0 Contributions to existing research

My work builds on the previously cited literature while also aiming to offer six main contributions to the fields from which I have referenced. The scholarship I have studied offers me a great deal of theoretical and practical information for which to base my research.

First, the literature of settler colonialism offers considerable theoretical insights. Broadly, this scholarship informs my viewpoint towards a critical analysis of state policies aimed at advancing the position of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Concepts like "settler moves to innocence" enable a concrete examination of implicit goals of policies like multiculturalism and reconciliation and make clear that the fundamental priority is the maintenance of the colonial state system.

Second, the literature on national identity and education provides valuable perspectives primarily through structuring my research around three identified approaches to Canadian national history education. The explicit description of influential master narratives allows greater contextualization of the role of Canadian national identity in history education, especially considering the recent reforms to promote reconciliation.

Third, the existing literature on Indigenous portrayals in Canadian education offer significant insights into how this field has changed in the last century. As the scope of my research is necessarily limited both regionally and temporally, this literature provides an expansive overview on the subject across the country and across different time periods. Overall, the findings from the previous scholarship suggests that the incorporation of greater content

about Indigenous topics does not inherently create better understanding of Indigenous peoples and cultures, and moreover that the recent TRC-based curricular reforms exist as part of a pattern of largely tokenized Indigenous inclusion.

In this way, this project expands the current work in this field. One notable gap in the literature on Indigenous representations in Canadian education has been a lack of contemporary inter-provincial comparisons. While Clark (2007) undertakes this position in reviewing textbooks used in different provinces across the country, her aim is more focused on presenting a holistic perspective of Canadian education widely: comparison between the provinces is not a central goal of her research. Additionally, without undermining the incredible value of her work, this was published before the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2008. Therefore, my work aims to build on the work of Clark (2007) by analyzing the impact of TRC on Canadian education.

Moreover, in comparison to that of Miles (2021), whose work addresses the revised BC curriculum, my research aims to demonstrate how the TRC Calls to Action have been interpreted and addressed differently by two different provincial governments. In this way, the comparative nature of my research aims to understand how regional differences in political culture and institutions impact how elites from two different governments interpret and conceptualize reconciliation and Canadian national identity (a point that will be elaborated below). Moreover, as both provinces that I will examine (British Columbia and Ontario) are home to different Indigenous nations with their own political and social systems, it may be valuable to see how these groups have impacted the curricula in their respective provinces, especially considering that both curricula have professed a commitment to working with local Indigenous communities and focusing on more localized content.

Fifth, my research also aims to bridge a gap between the aforementioned fields of literature. There exists a lack of scholarly work examining the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the portrayal of national identity in Canadian history education; thus my work aims to build on a combination of these theoretical backgrounds. Though literature on portrayals of Indigenous peoples and national identity in education may refer to one another, my research examines this relationship explicitly as a central focus. This seems especially relevant in the context of the reconciliation era, which has been espoused by the Canadian government as a priority and recently has been invoked in official discourse celebrating "what it means to be Canadian" (Nijhawan et al., 2018: 345).

Additionally, in considering the role of reconciliation and Indigenous peoples in the Canadian self-image, and informed by settler colonial theory, my work aims to answer the question proposed by scholars like Miles (2018) and Stanley (2006) of whether or not a national narrative can ever meaningfully address issues like racism and settler colonialism. This then leads to questions about the efficacy of educational pedagogies like Historical Thinking, with the goal of teaching history in a neutral manner focused on critical thinking instead of narrative learning. As such, my work aims also to provide a reply of sorts to the work of scholars like McGregor (2017) and Cutrara (2018) by offering a practical application of the points they raise. Thus, my work is not only a recent update to previous literature but aims to combine these previously isolated theoretical perspectives to address emerging phenomena common to these fields.

Sixth and finally, I hope to offer potentially useful insight into the field of reconciliation more broadly. The notion of reconciliation, though increasingly invoked in state discourse across the globe, remains a somewhat abstract concept, at least for much of its history in Canadian

discourse. Thus, my work aims to offer a site of examination into how reconciliation as a vague or often misunderstood idea is translated into official policy. Internationally, the Canadian government has referenced its policy of reconciliation to present itself as a leader on the subject of vergangenheitsbewältigung (Nijhawan et al., 2018), a German concept invoking dealing with a difficult past on a national scale. Considering this with the Trudeau government's continued use of discourse traditionally aligned with transitional justice, it may prove worthwhile to analyze the Canadian case against that of other countries which have also conducted truth and reconciliation commissions and/or invoked similar goals of addressing past state atrocities. Though this is beyond the scope of my research, I think my research may contribute to the wider emerging field of reconciliation studies, particularly as a case study of how this language can be invoked in a country where the national imaginary is centred around being peaceful.

5.0 Methodologies

5.1 Theoretical Approach

At its most general level, this project is theoretically grounded in a Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis. For Foucault, discourse is composed not just of text and speech but the rules and structures that account for their production, making it an ideal theoretical starting point for this project (Bischoping and Gazso, 2016). The constructivist logic of this approach acknowledges that discourse exists within a larger system of meaning: discourse cannot be understood outside of the material conditions and procedures that influence its production, selection and organization (Macias, 2015). This approach is particularly useful for studying questions of how truth is constructed and how power is employed through discourse. This lends especially well to my goals of examining how particular narratives and frames of knowledge

become so ingrained into public understandings to become invisible or viewed as neutral. In the field of education, which is not traditionally seen as highly politicized, this lens is valuable.

I also employ the concept of what I call "master narratives" through my analysis. While narratives do not exist in isolation but rather in constant dialogue and forceful contact with one another, master narratives operate even more implicitly. Many scholars note the significance of dominant or overarching narratives that permeate in popular understanding of a nation's history. Carretero and van Alphen describe (2017) master narratives as "general patterns of imagining the nation… [which] act as both official and general interpretations of the past but also legitimate the present and set an agenda for the future," (284). Faden invokes (2014) the term "schematic narrative template" as a basic story repeated frequently within a narrative tradition, typically so common within a cultural tradition that they are invisible to those within it, as opposed to specific narratives. Anderson refers (2017) to this concept as "master national narrative templates," while Stanley (2006) and Montgomery (2005) term this a "grand narrative." The concepts of master narratives and Foucauldian discourse analysis are quite interrelated: both go beyond the explicit to consider the forces that shape and influence how discourse is produced, selected and organized. Therefore, I use the concept of master narratives as the lens through which to conduct discourse analysis.

This theoretical position directly informs my methodology: beyond what is written in the curriculum, I consider and question which events and actors are included and excluded, and how these actors are presented relative to one another and to the nation-building process. In this way, my project builds on the work of scholars like Anderson (2017), Faden (2014), and Stanley (2006) in questioning how master narratives inform the implicit goals of the curricula -beyond the stated objectives- as it relates to the larger aim of state-sponsored education to produce

valuable national citizens. This path informs my research in comparing the current curriculum against its previous edition to see if/how the master narrative has changed because of the TRC *Calls to Action*, as well as comparing the curriculum of BC and Ontario to see if the master narrative of the nation is different in different provinces.

5.2 Case Studies

In the context of this theoretical approach and the existing literature on this subject, several factors influenced the research design of this work. This is true for both the site of analysis (curriculum) and the particular case studies (BC and Ontario).

While there is a great deal of existing literature examining Canadian national memory through history textbooks analysis (Clark, 2007; Di Mascio, 2014; Godlewska et al., 2017; Lamb and Godlewska, 2021;), there is limited work concentrating on curriculum. Without discounting the merit of these works, focusing on curriculum allows examination of explicit government policy, offering the clearest insight into how settler governments officially interpret history, nation, and citizenship. Moreover, concurrent with the wider pedagogical movement of historical thinking, there has been a recent trend in Canadian education, particularly within the social sciences, away from the use of textbooks as the main teaching device. Though some educators, such as those involved in the development of the current BC curriculum, suggest that this transition has more to do with the material realities of reduced funding to education, than solely ideological motivations (Gacoin, 2018).

In addition to serving as "an official statement of what students are expected to know and be able to do," (Levin, 2008: 8) curriculum also performs important political functions. As Kridel notes (2010), these documents act as public statements, periodically re-articulating the public consensus, and as ideologically layered documents, merging new and existing

understandings of various stakeholders. Curriculum is thus the outcome of competing discourses from educators, elected officials, government bureaucrats, academic experts and the general public in a highly politicized process.

In the heavily centralized educational structures of the Canadian provinces/territories, the process of developing and producing curricula is almost exclusively the domain of the ministry of education (MoE). Moreover, the dynamics of curriculum development are largely private: there is limited information available to the public about how these processes operate. This monopolization of authority shapes the interrelations of other dimensions of education policy: as Wallner notes (2012), Canadian MoEs are able to enforce curricular mandates across districts with overwhelming compliance through the control of school funding.

The cases I have chosen to examine in this research, British Columbia and Ontario, offer several meaningful sites of comparison. For several reasons, these cases demonstrate an example of most similar systems design. One such factor of similarity between these cases is based on demography. Ontario and British Columbia are the most populous English-majority provinces in Canada, as well as the first and third most populous provinces overall with 14 million and 5 million inhabitants respectively (Statistics Canada, 2023). Both have diverse populations as the majority of newcomers to Canada choose to settle in these two provinces (Wallner and Chouinard, 2023).

More closely related to my topic specifically, these provinces have followed similar policy decisions related to national history education. I have chosen to examine the curriculum for Social Studies “Canada and the World: 1914 to the Present” in British Columbia and Canadian and World Studies “Canadian History since World War I” in Ontario, because of the parallels between these two courses. Both courses are aimed at the grade 10 level, for students

roughly 15-16 years old. Additionally, both are centred around the same time period and thus primarily address the same topics. Finally, both courses have been altered specifically in line with the *CTA* of the TRC in 2018 from previous updates in 2015 (British Columbia) and 2013 (Ontario).

While many provinces, including British Columbia and Ontario, offer courses specifically on the subject of Indigenous peoples, I have chosen not to examine these curricula. As noted by Lamb and Godlewska (2021) and Schaefli et al. (2017), the registration for these courses comprises a small minority of students in their respective education streams and the availability of these courses being offered are limited. The aim of this research is to understand the portrayals of Indigenous peoples and content in education received by most students.

Additionally, these cases offer a compelling site for similar comparison based on the governing parties ruling these provinces. Both provinces instituted plans for reforming the curriculum in light of the publication of the TRC *Calls to Action* under Liberal governments, however, there have been subsequent changes in governments since this period. Since 2017, British Columbia has been governed by a New Democratic government under John Hogan and now David Eby. Since 2018, Ontario has been led by a Progressive Conservative government under Doug Ford. It is necessary to posit that political parties at the provincial level are autonomous and there are no horizontal (nor typically vertical) relationships between parties: the Liberal parties of Ontario and British Columbia are completely independent of one another, a fact that is more evident now as the latter has renamed itself as the "BC United Party," largely in an effort to distance itself from the more leftist associations of other Liberal parties in Canada. Nonetheless, both provinces underwent a change in government administration at a critical time with regards to these proposed changes to curriculum, accounting for a clear shift to political left

in British Columbia and the political right in Ontario. It is worth examining the impact of changing regimes during this critical period of policy reform in education, especially considering that curricular reform sessions, including one aimed at responding to the TRC *Calls to Action*, were abruptly cancelled by the incoming Ontario Ministry of Education in 2018 (Crawley, 2018).

Finally, it is worth considering how these cases represent a most dissimilar systems design in regards to colonial history and policy. The regions now commonly known as British Columbia and Ontario are the ancestral homelands of many different Indigenous peoples with different cultures, languages, practices, and political systems. Settler colonial governance in these regions pursued somewhat different policies regarding their relations with Indigenous peoples, setting course for divergent historical developments.

As Europeans colonized what is now the eastern part of Canada beginning in the early eighteenth century, they made treaties with Indigenous peoples. As of today, more than 40 treaties between the Crown and Indigenous nations cover the land of Ontario (Ontario, Ministry of Indigenous Affairs, 2023). By comparison, despite the existing framework of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 mandating that colonial forces must negotiate treaties with Indigenous peoples when creating settlements on Indigenous land, the colonial forces that would eventually become the Government of British Columbia largely ignored this process[1]. In other cases, such as the Kitsilano Indian Reserve #6 in what is now metropolitan Vancouver, the colonial government made cuts to the size of the reserve before eventually forcibly relocating the residents of the Skwxwu7mesh Nation in the early twentieth century.

Of course, the existence of formal agreements and treaties has not prevented settler governments from reneging on the commitments accepted as part of these agreements, however,

[1] Notable exceptions to this are the Douglas Treaties which covers part of Vancouver Island and Treaty 8 which covers parts of modern-day Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and North West Territories. These treaties were signed by the Crown and Indigenous nations in the mid to late nineteenth century.

treaties remain important legal, social, and political documents framing relationships for many Indigenous nations. In the absence of treaties, Indigenous nations across British Columbia have pursued means to secure formal recognition of their rights from the settler government. Most prominently, after a long legal battle by the Nisga'a Nation, the landmark Calder decision of 1973 recognized that Aboriginal land title existed prior to colonization and is not just derived from statutory law. This legal development ushered in new legal possibilities for Indigenous peoples across the country and in BC in particular, where the provincial government enacted a formal treaty process 1993. Since then, 66 "self-determining First Nations, representing 113 Indian Act bands… have entered and participated in, or have completed treaties" through the current treaty negotiations process (BC Treaty Commission, 2023).

These historic differences have shaped the relations between Indigenous nations and the settler provincial governments of BC and Ontario. In the context of this research, it is worthwhile to consider how this trajectory has impacted the pursuit of Indigenizing education. Moreover, considering the diversity between (and among) the nations of 'British Columbia' and 'Ontario,' it is reasonable to assume that there would be different perspectives regarding education and sharing traditional knowledge, practices, and histories.

5.3 Discourse Analysis

Building on the premise of Foucauldian discourse analysis, I sought to understand beyond just what is said but how it is said and how it is included in the wider objective. To achieve this goal, I conducted analysis for this research using two different approaches to discourse analysis: a coding dictionary and a less structured, holistic approach based on the existing literature on master narratives.

The first step of this process required establishing sources to code. Four texts were selected: the current and previous edition of the Canadian studies and social studies curriculum of Ontario and BC, respectively. These four sites of analysis allow not only a before and after approach to studying the respective provincial curricula, but an intertextual comparison of the documents across the provinces. The following table identifies the shorthand titles of these curricular sources used throughout the analysis (fig. 1).

Figure 1: Curricula Sources and Shorthand Titles

Province	**Document**	**Shorthand title**
Ontario	World Studies 9/10 curriculum (2013)	ON-1
	World Studies 9/10 curriculum (2018)	ON-2
British Columbia	Social Studies 10 curriculum (integrated resource package) (2015)	BC-1
	Social Studies 10 curriculum (2018)	BC-2

My first means of conducting analysis was originally through the employment of a coding dictionary. This methodology allows both a quantitative and qualitative comparative analysis of this data to obtain a clearer understanding of how the curriculum has changed as a result of the TRC reforms. The coding process underwent several rounds of revision. In the first round, preliminary codes were developed based on the existing literature. I established several criteria to analyze in the data based upon previously identified common narratives and tropes, and furthered this with my own developed criteria to act as a counter image to these depictions. Aligning with the three sites of narrative analysis I sought to study, I created three categories of examination. The first category examines depictions of Indigenous peoples, with codes built off

the tropes highlighted work of Clark (2007). The second examines the depiction of the Canadian nation, building on the narratives noted by scholars such as Anderson (2017) and Faden (2014). A third, related strain examines the interconnection of these points by examining the presence and depiction of reconciliation within the discourse.

The next stage of the coding process I engaged with was open coding. Typically considered an initial stage in qualitative coding, open coding involves reviewing the source material and generating codes to capture the main ideas and concepts found in the data (Neag School of Education, 2023). After subsequent reviews of the source material, a revised coding dictionary was established, based less on the existing literature and more on the realities of the source texts. While the previous coding dictionary was organized around the three foci of analysis for my research, I subsequently found these categories to be constraining in establishing appropriate codes. While the category of 'Indigenous depiction' was maintained, the other categories organizing the codes were abandoned in this reworked edition. Instead, I created rough categories (solely for organization purposes) based on the source texts and narrative tropes identified in the existing literature. The complete final edition of the coding dictionary can be found in the Appendix.

The coding dictionary approach was particularly useful in comparing sources that were relatively similar such as the two versions of the Ontario curriculum. In processing these sources, the documents were put through a basic program to automatically identify changes to the texts, which allowed a clear picture of the updates. Moreover, this approach was well suited to analyzing and comparing the quality and quantity Indigenous representations in the sources (see fig. 2 for a quantitative comparison of Indigenous representations in the sources).

However, this method of analysis was not well suited to other aspects of this research. The vast differences between many of the sources made it difficult to identify parallel sections within the texts and allow meaningful comparative analysis. This was true both interprovincially, as the curriculum was not only unique between the two provinces, but in fact based around different subjects (history in Ontario versus social studies in BC), and intraprovincially in the case of BC, as the current curriculum (BC-2) represents an entirely new course based on a different time period from the previous curriculum (BC-1). In this context, I pursued a more intuitive, qualitative approach based on building summaries of the main narratives based on the dominant narratives and tropes identified in the literature. This was accomplished through comparison of the 'big ideas' or main points identified in the curricula, and careful examination of course material addressing key thematic topics such as identity, conflict and cooperation, and in/justice. This allowed a more holistic image of the courses overall, thus providing a better means of interpreting the narrative of the course.

6.0 Findings

In this section I outline my findings from the analysis, organized around the three previously identified research questions.

6.1 Research Question 1: What stories are told in the curricula? How is the Canadian nation portrayed in these stories?

In reviewing the selected curricula, the Canadian nation is portrayed in ways that simultaneously reinforce traditionally dominant tropes while also enacting a postnationalist, universalist conception of the nation. I have chosen to explore this issue through focusing on two stories that are presented in each of the courses reviewed: the role of Canada internationally, and the interactions between peoples domestically in Canada. After presenting how the stories are

depicted in the curricula, I then use these narratives to analyze two themes: identity and conflict/cooperation.

In the courses studied, there is a narrative employed in portraying the international actions of the Canadian government. To varying degrees, the curricula all tell a story of the Canadian nation valiantly participating in international events through which the state gains greater autonomy and develops into an independent and cooperative member of the international community. Both the Ontario and British Columbia courses begin with the World Wars: Canadians valiantly contribute to the war effort, and through these heroic actions, the Canadian nation gains autonomy from Britain. From this, the Canadian state participates in subsequent international events: motivated by the moral convictions of Canadians (justice, human rights) as well as community commitments of the state (such as a member of NATO, a neighbour and partner to the United States). This narrative arc is evident throughout the texts, such as in the overview of the Ontario course (2018), which includes a 'Framing Question' for the period of 1929 to 1945 that asks, "In what ways did events during this period reflect Canadians' views on human rights?" (108). This template is also visible in the BC course. For example, one of the curriculum's sections is "Canadian autonomy," which includes the following sample topics:

> – Canada and Britain (e.g., World War I; Statute of Westminster; Constitution Act, 1982)
>
> – Canada and the United States (e.g., free trade, bilateral defence, Montreal Protocol on acid rain)
>
> – Canada and the world (e.g., League of Nations, World War II, United Nations, Paris Climate Agreement)
>
> – Canada (treaties with First Peoples, Quebec sovereignty movements) (British Columbia, 2018: 5).

The second main story told in the curricula is that of domestic life in Canada. Overall, this story depicts Canada as a country with many diverse peoples, some of whom have faced discrimination, but together these peoples have shaped the dynamic society and subsequently, identities in Canada. From the outset, there is conflict among the people in Canada, including among major groups such as the English and French, evident in the Ontario curriculum (2018) in expectations such as "B2.3 describe some major instances of social and/or political conflict in Canada during this period, including conflict between French and English Canada" (113). Faced with hardship, many individuals devote themselves to noble causes and fight for justice, either individually or by forming groups and organizations. The work of these activists, plus artists, athletes, and other cultural figures builds a rich, multifaceted society that shapes how people in Canada come to conceptualize heritage and identity.

These two stories compliment one another by demonstrating both the diversity and complexity of Canadian society, and the shared, collective identity of Canada. The domestic story is largely centred on individuals: it is nuanced and often highlights the diversity of people in Canada by exploring different experiences and perspectives. Moreover, this story includes 'difficult' aspects of history including discrimination and injustice, thus challenging the narrative of Canada as inclusive and egalitarian. The international story follows a more traditional narrative approach: 'Canada' as a singular actor is the protagonist with clear opponents, challenges, and goals. Though both of these stories are inextricably linked within the courses, by parsing them out individually, one can see that they are mutually beneficial: they are both essential to the fine line these curricula occupy in achieving the two goals of this education: teaching critical skills and fostering a bond with the collective. The balancing role of these story interrelated stories is evident in quotes from the texts, such as one 'Big Idea' of the Ontario

curriculum (2018) which notes: “Although this period [1945-1982] was marked by conflict and tensions, both nationally and internationally, Canada also participated in cooperative ways in the international community” (109). While the domestic story highlights the postmodern complexity inherent to contemporary conceptions of Canadian identity, the international story is by contrast unambiguous and heroic.

While both courses are epistemologically centred around skill building, the importance of identity is plainly evident: it is explicitly stated in the themes for both curricula. Despite this focus on identity, both courses take efforts to conceptualize identity in postmodern terms and portray identity in Canada as pluralistic. This outlook is not fully realized in the texts and it seems that despite this inclusive portrayal of Canadian identity (or rather identities), there are still implicitly nationalist narratives at play within the courses. In the current Ontario curriculum, one of the most frequent minor changes has been updating references to “Canadian identity” to “identities in Canada,” and further, “Canadians” to “people in Canada.” Additionally, in one instance, the updated curriculum has amended a reference to multicultural society to now include “multicultural and *pluricultural* society,” (2018: 125, 145, italics added), a term which is described as “[t]he idea that individuals belong to multiple groups, nations, identities, and cultures that shape their beliefs, awareness, and actions” (2018: 190). These updates, though semantic, suggest a move away from the understanding of a singular, or even plural Canadian identity/ies, towards a postnationalist perspective. This transition away from the previously dominant multiculturalist narrative of Canadian nationhood may be in keeping with contemporary official state discourse, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has espoused so called postnationalism (Biscahie, 2019).

The subject of identity in the BC curriculum is also presented in a way that emphasizes the complexity and multiplicity of the subject. The section "Identities in Canada" indirectly highlights the underlying subjectivity and affective aspect of identity, noting examples such as, "place-based identities and sense of belonging (e.g., Haida Gwaii versus Queen Charlotte Islands; "up North" and "back East"; affinity for ocean air, wide-open spaces; spiritual ancestors)" (2018: 5).

However, the curricula are not fully convincing of this postnationalist tone, and this approach seems to be applied haphazardly and inconsistently. In the case of the Ontario course, the most significant failing of this approach is the substantial discrepancies in how this narrative is presented in the academic versus applied versions of the course. According to the Ontario MoE (2013; 2018), the primary difference between the two educational streams is learning style: applied courses focus more on essential concepts and real world examples, while academic courses devote greater attention on theory and abstract thinking (18). Though both iterations of the course are largely similar, the applied course employs a more distinctly nationalist tone at times compared to that of the academic, particularly in the thematic category of "Identity, Citizenship, and Heritage." While both versions of the course maintain the key point that heritage and identities in Canada have been shaped by the actions of different individuals and communities, the applied course omits mention of the role that dominant attitudes towards marginalized groups have played, instead adopting a somewhat teleological lens to the role that heritage and identities have played in creating Canada as a multicultural welfare state (see fig. 3 for a comprehensive comparative table). This latter position clearly demonstrates the 'progressive' master narrative identified by Anderson (2017) as commonly employed in Canadian national memory of the late twentieth to early twenty-first centuries. While the

majority of Ontario students enrolled in this course are in the academic stream (roughly 73% in the 2022-2023 school year[2]), this difference constitutes a significant shift between the narratives employed across the academic streams.

Within the BC curriculum, while the portion of the course on identities does begin to address the complexity and individuality of the topic, this section overwhelmingly replicates traditionally dominant conceptions of Canadian identity. For example, the sample topics included in the curriculum are "First Peoples identities," "Francophone identities," and "Immigration and multiculturalism." Moreover, a significant portion of this section is dedicated to "manifestations and representations" of identities in Canada, which focuses on material aspects of culture. This section of the text highlights examples central to the settler colonial national memory: "media and art" such as the Group of Seven, the CBC, and the NFB; "scientific and technological and innovations" such as insulin and snowmobiles; and "sports and international sporting events" such as hockey and the Olympics (2018: 5). While Indigenous identities are included, they are described simply as "status, non-status, First Nations, Métis, Inuit;" and examples of manifestations and representations are referenced only as "First Peoples arts, traditions, languages" (2018: 5). Beyond these scant examples, this portrayal of Indigenous identities exemplifies St Denis' critique (2011) that "multiculturalism permits a form of participation on the part of those designated as 'cultural others' that is limited to the decorative and includes 'leisure, entertainment, food, and song and dance'" (308).

The courses both explicitly highlight "conflict and cooperation" as thematically important within the curriculum. The centrality of 'conflict' in particular highlights the apparent

[2] The data of the past several years suggests this trend is increasing with greater share of students being enrolled in academic (CHC2D) rather than applied (CHC2P) versions of "Canadian History since World War I, Grade 10" (Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2023)

postnational and objective contemporary approach to teaching Canadian history that does not shy away from covering ‘difficult’ topics. However, as Stanley (2006) and Montgomery (2005) have found previously, inclusion of topics such as racism and injustice in Canada has not altered the overall nationalist narrative in history education. While the courses do include content regarding discrimination and injustice in Canada, these topics are largely positioned in the curricula as taking place in the distant past.

In the BC curriculum (2018), there is an entire section explicitly dedicated to “discriminatory policies and injustices in Canada and the world,” particularly noting “residential schools, the head tax, the Komagata Maru incident, and internments” (5). This section offers five examples of discriminatory policies and injustice: women’s rights, LGBT2Q+ rights, national or ethnic discrimination, political discrimination, and discrimination on intellectual or physical grounds (BC-2, 2018: 5-6). Throughout this section, all specific examples are from the first half of the twentieth century. The examples under the heading of national or ethnic discrimination are listed temporally, from the Chinese Exclusion Act (1923) to the destruction of Africville (expressed in the text as simply “Africville,” 1964).

The topic of injustice comes up throughout the Ontario curriculum (2018), though framed in different ways across the different temporal based chapters. For example, in strand B, focusing on the period from 1914 to 1929, two expectations ask students to describe the impact and long term consequences of governmental policies and attitudes on Indigenous peoples and communities, as well as “the discrimination against and other significant actions affecting on non-Indigenous ethnic groups in Canada” (B2.5, B2.6: 114). In later chapters, the language shifts from explicitly acknowledging ‘discrimination’ to more benign framing, asking students to consider political developments and actions affecting different individuals and communities at

the time. Moreover, specific attention to the experiences of non-Indigenous ethnocultural minority groups is essentially eliminated after the first period. Both of these developments suggest that discrimination has not been present in Canada for the last century and moreover, that since this period, all settlers in Canada have been treated the same by the state. Furthermore, the only expectation in the Ontario curriculum (2018) which does highlight discrimination against "non-Indigenous ethnocultural groups in Canada" is not focused explicitly on racialized peoples: a sample question of this expectation addresses British Home Children, though Canadians were also British subjects at this time (114). Without undermining the mistreatment of this group, it seems inappropriate to compare this demographic to other "ethnocultural groups" such as African Canadians, the subject of the following sample question. This also demonstrates an issue of both curricula: minimizing or obscuring the role of the state when addressing instances of injustice and discrimination in Canadian history. This is largely done through framing such content as 'conflict and cooperation.'

While domestic conflict in the BC curriculum (2018) is largely portrayed as political conflict between elected representatives, there is also an example of 'First Peoples actions and organizations' included. Specific examples under this category include "involvement in the Meech Lake Accord, Oka Crisis, Gustafsen Lake Standoff, Ipperwash Crisis, Shannon's [sic] Dream (Attawapiskat), Idle No More" (7). It seems noteworthy that the curriculum has omitted more recent examples of Indigenous activism, especially considering significant local instances. For example, though the issue rose to national prominence in 2019 (after the publication of this curriculum) Wet'suwet'en has expressed their will to prevent all pipelines through their territory since 2007, with physical land defence being active since 2009 (Unist'ot'en Camp).

In the Ontario curriculum, the topic of conflict and cooperation is a major recurring theme, though these terms are used in very broad ways, encompassing intergroup tensions as well as systemic discriminatory policies and state perpetrated injustices. For example, an expectation in Strand D which explicitly asks students to consider "significant cases of social conflict and/or inequality," includes "racial segregation" and "the Sixties Scoop" as examples (121). While these are undoubtedly examples of inequality, this framing seems to undermine the role of the settler governments (federal and provincial) in perpetuating these acts. This is compounded by similar expectations in other strands, such as that in Strand C which is framed around "ways in which people in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals and communities, cooperated and/or came into conflict with each other" and includes examples such as internment camps for 'enemy aliens' and the Christie v. York court case of 1940 (117). Once again, the text describes legislative and judicial actions by the state as simply "individuals and communities coming in conflict with each other."

In both cases, the curricula both 'balance out' coverage of difficult aspects of Canadian history with more positive examples and events. Throughout the courses, the role of state is highlighted in instances of 'righting past wrongs,' demonstrating the just character of the nation and its institutions. In the case of the BC curriculum (2018), this is best expressed in a section entitled "advocacy for human rights, including findings and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission," (6) which highlights the role of the state in correcting past wrongdoing without acknowledging that such advocacy for human rights are a reaction to discriminatory legislation in Canada. Some of the sample topics in this section include state institutions and legislation such as human rights tribunals, the Canadian Bill of Rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and Supreme Court Challenges, highlighting the significance of

the Canadian judiciary as the protector and guarantor of rights. Another example listed is "international declarations," including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, despite the fact that the Canadian delegation was one of only four states to reject this resolution and that it would take three years before the Canadian government endorsed this declaration.

Throughout both texts, the culpability of the state is minimized. One major cause of this in the case of the Ontario curriculum is the focus on individuals and their everyday lives, which as Faden points out (2014), excludes mention of political elites and leaders, and thus presents a narrative where no one is responsible for injustice. The BC curriculum does not have the same focus on individuals but instead addresses topics with a focus on its composite parts. In both cases, there is a tendency to miss the bigger picture. Thus, the courses can present a picture of Canada that has had instances of injustice without recognizing the systemic nature of discrimination in the state.

6.2 Research Question 2: How are Indigenous peoples portrayed in these stories?

Congruent with the findings of other scholars, my research reaffirms that the current curricula includes a greater quantity of content related to Indigenous peoples, though this content does not necessarily challenge existing narratives of Canadian history, nor harmful Indigenous stereotypes.

It is worth noting areas in which the current curricula have improved in regards to Indigenous content. One area of improvement is the implicit legitimacy granted to Indigenous governance structures in the BC curriculum. This section in the course explicitly includes "First Peoples governance" (2018) and includes such examples as "consensus-based governance" like that of Nunavut, and "First Peoples self-governance models" including the Sechelt, Nisga'a, and Tsawwassen, which are all included as examples (4). Moreover, the sample topics listed with this

section includes reference to the Indian Act and "Crown- and federal government- imposed governance structures on First Peoples communities (e.g., [sic] band councils)" (2018: 4). This section thus validates Indigenous governments and governance structures, while also (albeit briefly) acknowledging the colonial legacy of governance structures like band councils being forced on Indigenous communities. Another example of improvement is the greater acceptance of Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies. This is evident in several expectations in the Ontario curriculum which ask students to use primary historical sources to identify major demographic changes during a select time period. While the overall direction has not changed, the updated curriculum now explicitly lists "oral traditional knowledge" as a potential source. Additionally, a new sample question on one of these expectations now offers a critical perspective on the legitimacy and objectivity of sources like census data, asking: "Is statistical information on Indigenous communities and individuals during this period reliable and valid? Why or why not?" (2018: 112). Unfortunately, this explicit validation of Indigenous ways of knowing is rather limited in the curriculum and only included in two expectations throughout the course.

Another evident change in the current curricula is a substantial increase in Indigenous content in the texts. Looking at this from a purely quantitative perspective, figure 2 demonstrates that there has been an increase in explicit Indigenous references and portrayals in the updated curricula. As noted, in the previous edition of the respective course curricula, the majority of the content did not include Indigenous peoples at all.

Figure 2: Quantifying Indigenous Representation in the Sources.

	Ontario (2013) *Academic / Applied*	Ontario (2018) *Academic / Applied*	British Columbia (2015)	British Columbia (2018)
Trope: Indigenous	32 - *Academic*	6 - *Academic*	35	21

as invisible (no mention in the expectation).	31 - *Applied*	3 - *Applied*		
Total percentage of course content which does not mention Indigenous peoples.	62% - *Academic* 70% - *Applied*	11% - *Academic* 6% - *Applied*	73%	48%

Despite this increased content, the ways in which Indigenous peoples are depicted in the text demonstrates that greater quantity does not necessarily constitute meaningful change and reconciliation. Based on the existing literature on Indigenous portrayals in Canadian education, I address three overall problems concerning the role of Indigenous peoples in the current Ontario and BC history curricula: continued stereotypical or decontextualized depictions, the continued use of settler perspective, and a framing of colonialism as a past event. Overall these issues prevent the curricula from meeting the goals of reconciliation.

Many of the depictions of Indigenous peoples in these two courses replicate harmful tropes and contribute to stereotypical perceptions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in the settler majority. Most significantly, Indigenous peoples are overwhelmingly portrayed passively in the curricula: individuals and communities are the object of policy and events, however, not as actors in their own right.[3] This is especially a problem in the applied version of the Ontario curriculum, in which Indigenous peoples are portrayed passively in the vast majority of representations included in the text.

Perhaps unsurprisingly in relation to the extensive passive portrayal, the most common depiction of Indigenous peoples is that of victims. In some ways, this is to be expected

[3] It is worth noting that some specific expectations include both passive and active depictions, as numerous examples and sample questions are included with each specific expectation.

considering the logic of elimination employed by the settler establishment since early colonization of Canada: Indigenous peoples have long been the object of genocidal policies and practices and to omit this history would be an inaccurate representation of Canadian history. However, it is inaccurate to depict Indigenous peoples and communities as merely victims. Without including necessary coverage regarding Indigenous resistance, the narrative of Indigenous peoples as merely recipients of the state government's benevolence continues colonial narratives and prevents meaningful reconciliation. Students should consider *how* Indigenous languages, cultures, traditions, and people themselves continue today despite centuries of power exerted to eliminate them. This was hardly coincidental but the product of dedicated resistance, both individually and collectively across communities and nations.

The Ontario curriculum in particular portrays Indigenous peoples differently in different chapters of the course, however, always framed in relation to the settler state. The temporal based narrative depicts Indigenous peoples largely as victims in early chapters of the curriculum and then adopts a largely protestor image of Indigenous peoples in the later half of the twentieth century. This transition has been similarly identified by Clark (2007), who noted that inclusion of Indigenous peoples in Canadian history education was typically confined to the first-contact period and then emerged in portions addressing the 1960s and beyond, in which they occupied the role of protestor. While the curriculum now includes content on Indigenous peoples in all periods, their roles are different in different eras. As in Clark's findings (2007), the temporal focus of Indigenous activism as largely *beginning* in the 1960s fuels a false but pervasive narrative that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples were silent until the White Paper.

Within the administrative and instructional sections of the Ontario curriculum, there are several instances which address considerations specifically for Indigenous students. In the

context of the achievement gap between Indigenous and settler students, it seems essential that the curriculum addresses how the existing education system structurally disadvantages the former group, or at the very least, outlines strategies to provide Indigenous students with the supports necessary to succeed in this system. However, the curriculum largely differentiates Indigenous students without context, resulting in representations that are "othering" towards Indigenous students and their families, or are overtly racist. One such example is the description of the Ontario education system's "English Literacy Development" program. This program is described first as "primarily for newcomers whose first language is a language other than English, or is a variety of English significantly different from that used for instruction in Ontario schools, and who arrive with significant gaps in their education[;]" highlighting that these students "generally come from" countries with limited access to education or have had limited literacy development (2013, 2018: 44). The text then states, "Some First Nations, Métis, or Inuit students from remote communities in Ontario may also have had limited opportunities for formal schooling, and they also may benefit from ELD instruction." While colonial languages (English and/or French) may be secondary to native speakers of Indigenous languages in Ontario and throughout Canada, the text makes no mention of this fact. Without making any reference to English being an additional language, especially in the context of concerted efforts by many Indigenous nations towards language revitalization to combat the decades of policy aimed at destroying Indigenous languages, the curriculum provides no context for why Indigenous students may require greater help in English literacy. Instead, the text situates Indigenous communities alongside underdeveloped countries, implicitly suggesting Indigenous-run and on-reserve education is lacking compared to 'regular' Ontario schools, thus promoting an image

of Indigenous students as uneducated and primitive. This section is unchanged from the previous to current versions of the curriculum.

While that section may be the most egregious instance of othering Indigenous peoples in the administrative sections of the Ontario curriculum, it is not the only example. In another case, a section dedicated to addressing the importance of parental/guardian involvement in students' education, Indigenous families are once again compared to that of 'newcomer' families: the text notes that, "Special outreach strategies and encouragement may be needed to draw in the parents of English language learners and First Nations, Métis, or Inuit students, and to make them feel more comfortable/welcomed in their interactions with the school," (2013, 2018: 48). While the long history of residential and day schools has promoted painful relationships between colonial government schooling and many Indigenous peoples, this context is not mentioned, instead leaving the reader with the impression that Indigenous parents and families are unengaged or uninterested in their children's education.

This leads to the second major issue regarding Indigenous portrayals in the curricula: positioning the state as innocent or having solved its past colonial actions. Alongside content on Indigenous activism and protest, particularly in more recent history, there is a great deal of focus on examples of the state rectifying past injustices. Overall, the root causes of Indigenous activism are often omitted or minimized in the curricula, while simultaneously highlighting institutional based measures such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. As previously noted, this allows the state to maintain its innocence and position itself as the arbiter of justice.

Subtle language in the curricula also allows the narrative that structural injustice against Indigenous peoples ended long ago. For example, while expectations addressing the beginning of

the twentieth century in the Ontario curriculum mention "policies of discrimination," later expectations are framed around 'conflict.' Though the introduction to the history course in the Ontario curriculum states (2018) that "Students learn about the historical and contemporary impact of colonialism, the Indian Act, the residential school system, treaties, and systemic racism on Indigenous individuals and communities in Canada" (11), neither course acknowledges colonialism as ongoing, nor the structural conditions of this system. The closest either course comes to recognizing this is a sample question from the Ontario curriculum (2018) which asks, "What are some ways in which political developments and government policies that have affected First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada since 1982 continue to reflect colonial attitudes and perspectives?" (126). This once again demonstrates the findings of Montgomery (2005) and Stanley (2006) that Canadian history education frames racism and colonialism as an attitude, thus minimizing the role of institutions in maintaining this system.

This leads to the final key issue: the continued dominance of the settler perspective. Overall, both courses seem to take an approach to incorporating Indigenous content into the existing settler narrative, thus presenting a tokenized and one-dimensional version of inclusion. This is evident in the Ontario curriculum from the very structure of the course, which is organized temporally around key dates in the settler Canadian historical narrative: the First World War and Great Depression, the interwar years and the Second World War, the patriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982. As the BC curriculum is not structured temporally this is more difficult to ascertain, but the centrality of the settler perspective is evident in sections such as that on 'identities in Canada.' As stated previously, this section summarizes Indigenous identities as "status, non-status, First Nations, Inuit, Métis," while the rest of the topic addresses

traditional conceptions of Canadian identity such as multiculturalism, immigration, and French and English bilingualism (2018: 5).

Finally, examining how the courses frame the necessity of Indigenous content in sections of the curricula dedicated to program considerations and instructional approaches reveals that maintenance of the dominant settler framework is often upheld at the expense of the goals of reconciliation. In the context of fulfilling the TRC *CTA*, specifically those addressing Indigenous based content for all students, as well as the existing educational achievement disparities between Indigenous and settler students in both provinces, it is critical that the curricula address topics related to Indigenous histories, cultures, and epistemologies explicitly. However, the surveyed texts do not indicate that the respective BC and Ontario MoEs adequately prioritize these concerns.

The Ontario curriculum demonstrates a greater commitment to improving Indigenous educational outcomes and addressing the *Calls to Action* than that of BC. This is perhaps unsurprising considering that this was the core rationale for updating this curriculum, as evident in the start of the preface of the Canadian and World Studies curricula package which states "This edition of the curriculum includes a revision of the history curriculum, developed in collaboration with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit educators, community members, and organizations. The revision was undertaken in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's calls to action numbers 62 and 63" (2018: 3). This statement is reiterated in a new section of the updated curriculum dedicated to "Indigenous Education." In this section, the curriculum aligns itself within the wider policy platform of "Ontario's Indigenous Education Strategy," which aims to address the wellbeing and achievement of Indigenous students and also "[raise] awareness about First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures,

histories, perspectives, and contributions among all students in Ontario schools" (2018: 15). Among the stated goals of this strategy are a need for accurate portrayals and authentic materials related to Indigenous peoples and cultures, and a strengthening of "learning connected with Indigenous perspectives, cultures, histories, and contemporary realities, including those related to the residential school system and treaties" (15).

Like the Ontario curriculum, the new BC curriculum highlights the Ministry's priorities of improving academic outcomes for Indigenous students as well as increasing Indigenous "languages, cultures, and histories" in the education system (British Columbia, "Curriculum Overview"). The text however, does not make reference to the TRC or the *CTA*, and instead frames these goals in the context of wider education reforms. The curriculum states that "British Columbia has long had the goal of improving school success for all Indigenous students" and maintains that over the past decade, the Ministry has been integrating Indigenous content within specific courses ("Curriculum Overview"). The updated curriculum is thus intended to build off these developments and integrate "Indigenous perspectives into the entire learning journey, rather than into specific courses or grade levels". Throughout the document, there is repeated acknowledgement of implementing indigenous content for all students at all grade levels, however, these statements are vague and largely hollow. For example, one section notes that, "references to Indigenous perspectives and knowledge are both explicit and implicit in the redesigned curriculum and are evident in the rationale statements, goals, learning standards, and some of the elaborations," however, this is not readily apparent in the revised Social Studies 10 curriculum. Moreover, Gacoin's findings (2018) on the development process of this curriculum contradict this claim of the BC MoE. While the Ministry describes the new curriculum as "a shift from curriculum 'about Aboriginal people' to engaging with 'how Aboriginal perspectives and

understandings help us learn about the world and how they have contributed to a stronger society,'" the experiences and statements of educators involved in the curriculum development process "directly contradict" the claims of that 'Indigenous worldviews, perspectives and content have been built into all new and redesigned curricula (K–12)'" (Gacoin, 2018: 21, 23).

6.3 Research Question 3: Do these stories change across different time periods and different provinces?

Having presented an analysis of the current BC and Ontario curricula for the selected courses, I find it useful to compare these courses both against one another and previous versions of the curricula. While there has been both minor and major changes to the subsequent editions of these courses, there is common overlap in the narrative of all four curricula. Overall, this comparison demonstrates that the courses are increasingly similar, and though both represent an improvement from its previous iteration, both curricula fall short of the overall goals of reconciliation.

For clarity, the main points of each course are summarized below in a table (fig. 3). This table was compiled based on the "Big Ideas" of the curricula: a concept employed by both editions of the Ontario curriculum as well as the most recent edition of the BC curriculum. Big Ideas are described by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013; 2018: 14) as "an enduring understanding, an idea that [the course creators] want students to delve into and retain long after they have forgotten many of the details of the course content," and by the BC Ministry of Education (Glossary: 1) as "the key concepts, principles, and theories that are used to organize knowledge within an area of learning," intended to be broad, abstract, and cross-disciplinary.

While the summaries included under "BC 2018" are directly quoted from the curriculum, as the previous edition of the curriculum did not use this concept, I have compiled the narrative

summaries of this table based on the Prescribed Learning Outcomes for the course content, as well as the description of each curriculum organizer in the introduction of the curriculum. Finally, the "Ontario" contents of the table are based on summaries of the Big Ideas for each thematic category across the four temporal chapters (strands) of the course. Overall, there are only minor changes between both streams and across revisions of the courses, with the exception of thematic category three, "Identity, Heritage, and Citizenship," which is notably different in academic and applied versions of the course in both the 2013 and 2018 editions. Thus, both are noted in the table.

Figure 3: Main Narratives of Each Source

ONTARIO (2013 & 2018)	**BRITISH COLUMBIA (2015)**	**BRITISH COLUMBIA (2018)**
Many international and national developments have resulted in major changes to Canadian society and thus the lives of people and communities in Canada, though often with different impacts.	Societally, culture during this time was influenced by the interactions between and among societies in Canada, including new immigrants and Indigenous peoples. These changes shaped national identity.	Worldviews lead to different perspectives and ideas about developments in Canadian society.
The relationships of different communities in Canada have shifted over time, and have often been tense or conflictual in the past. While there has also been conflict abroad, Canada has played a cooperative role in the international community.	Politically, internal conflict and cooperation shaped the Canadian democratic system, while external issues influenced national autonomy and the governance structures in place today.	The development of political institutions is influenced by economic, social, ideological, and geographic factors.

ACADEMIC: Identities, heritage, and citizenship in Canada have been impacted by the actions of various individuals and communities, as well as dominant attitudes towards marginalized groups.	*APPLIED:* Canada has been, and continues to be, shaped by various individuals, communities and events, to form a multicultural welfare state.	Policies such Mcdonald's National Policy, as well as new technologies, helped develop the economies of Canada and British Columbia.	Global and regional conflicts have been a powerful force in shaping our contemporary world and identities.
		The country's diverse physical geography has shaped patterns of settlement and economic development, while resource practices from this period in BC have impacted current sustainability practices today.	Historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada as an inclusive, multicultural society.

The Ontario curriculum reviewed, Grade 10 History *Canadian History Since World War I*, was originally released in 1999 and has undergone two revisions prior to the current (2018) edition, most recently in 2013 (Butler and Milley: 2020). As evident by the singular category of Ontario in the table of narrative summaries, there are only minor changes between the previous and current editions of the curriculum. The differences are in two areas: identity in Canada and the place of Indigenous peoples in the story of Canada. As previously mentioned, the curriculum has replaced previous references to a singular Canadian identity to that of identities in Canada, as well as changing many mentions of "Canadians" to "people in Canada." Additionally, the course has added references to "communities" where the previous edition described only "individuals and groups." Though these are minor, semantic changes, taken together they constitute a shift away from the previous nationalist master narrative identified by Anderson (2017) that highlighted Canada as a multicultural though singular society, towards a more postnationalist perspective. In this way, the curriculum has moved further away from the goal of history

education to foster a bond with the collective and instead embracing a more postmodern interpretation of Canada in comparison to the multiculturalist narrative dominant since the 1970s.

As this revision was a direct response to the *Calls to Action*, it should come as no surprise that the updated course also focuses a great deal more on explicit recognition of Indigenous peoples. The most common change across the Ontario curriculum was the explicit inclusion of "First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals and communities." Additionally, five new specific expectations were added to the curriculum, all specifically addressing the experiences of Indigenous peoples in each chapter of the course. Numerous sample questions and examples related to Indigenous peoples and their experiences have been added as well. As noted however, this infusion of Indigenous based content to the course has been merely that: an addition on the existing curriculum. These changes have not radically altered the master narrative in the curriculum, which is fundamentally settler colonial in nature.

In contrast, the BC curriculum has been radically altered in comparison to the previous edition of the course. The current BC curriculum reviewed, *Social Studies 10: Canada and the World: 1914 to the Present*, was originally released in 2018 as a part of wider reforms to education in the province. The previous Social Studies 10 course[4] was originally published in 1997 and underwent revisions in 2006 and 2015, the latter of which was used for comparison. The most evident difference between the courses is the time period covered: the previous course addressed the period of 1815 to 1914, while the current concentrates on 1914 to the present. Both curricula employ a non-temporal outline to the course, instead the curriculum is organized around topics. However, while the former course can be interpreted as being organized roughly corresponding to subject matter (sociology, history, civics, economics and geography) the current

[4] The course was titled simply "Social Studies 10".

curriculum does not so clearly delineate these subjects. While the first two sections of the course address civics topics (government, political structures, and ideologies, and environmental, political, and economic policies), the rest of the sections address issues more firmly rooted in history (identity, autonomy, international and domestic conflict, discriminatory practices and advocacy of human rights). Thus the previous focus on other subjects under the umbrella of social studies such as economics and geography have been largely omitted from the updated course. Additionally, though the previous course employed many instances of focusing on BC specific content such as the natural resource practices and industries of the province, this provincial focus has been largely elemented, though there are many BC based examples.

There is also clear overlap between the master narratives employed in both versions of the BC curriculum. The previous Social Studies 10 course contains many elements of both traditional and multicultural master narratives identified by Anderson (2017). The curriculum tells the story of a country coming into fruition: while peoples from across the world come to escape hardship and build new lives off the land, the political landscape is also being cultivated amidst internal conflict. In the face of external threats, differences were put aside to come together to create the nation of Canada and ultimately fulfill the goal of a country from sea to sea. Despite a greater emphasis on a more traditional narrative approach in the previous course, both BC curricula share narrative similarities, particularly in regards to the international story. Though there is considerably less attention to issues of discrimination and injustice, there are references to this in the former course, particularly in relation to discriminatory attitudes faced by newcomers and exclusionary policies such as the Chinese Exclusion Act, demonstrating at least a surface level attempt to present a balance between conflict and cooperation. Despite taking place a century apart, the overall narrative template of the international narrative is largely

similar: the fledgling Canadian nation must defeat both external threats and conflict (from the United States, fenian raids) and internal conflict (Upper/Lower Canadian rebellions; the Red River and Northwest Rebellions) to gain autonomy (Confederation) and subsequently a place among the countries of the world. Though the conflict is different, there is a clear enemy (in this case, the United States) and a clear end goal towards autonomy, only achievable through cooperation. This overlap demonstrates that despite massive changes to the structure and content of the course, the narrative template of Canadian national history is pervasive, despite more recent attempts to move away from teaching narratives and instead focus more on the cultivation of skills.

This leads to another element of the curricula that has been altered in both BC and Ontario courses: a pedagogical shift towards a skills based curriculum associated with the disciplinary thinking approach. This approach, which is present in both versions of the Ontario curriculum, emphasizes greater flexibility of content and learning methods and encourages a move away from traditional narrative based learning of history.

Flexibility is referenced in all the course curricula to varying degrees to allow greater localized content, individual choice for students, and active learning opportunities. The 2015 BC curriculum notes that while a course at the level of Social Studies 10 requires 120 instructional hours, the curriculum has been designed to require approximately 90 to 110 hours of instructional time, allowing extra time to accommodate localized content as well as individual choice teachers and students (7). This focus is further expanded in the updated curriculum, which emphasizes greater "individualized learning." The new 2018 curricula notes that much of the previously mandatory content of past courses has been eliminated to enhance flexibility; a decision based on the "diverse needs of students," as well as the ability for educators to delve

deeper into a smaller number of topics, specifically on subjects relevant to the local context (British Columbia, "Curriculum Overview"). Justification for increased flexibility of content is also framed in the context of rejecting past pedagogical approaches. Both provincial curricula note that by allowing choice in topics and removing some of the mandatory material, students are able to better engage actively rather than simply memorize information. The current BC curriculum notes that removing much of the previously required content should allow teachers to "focus less on rushing through a long list of factual details," and provide more opportunities for a variety of teaching strategies which promote hands-on learning ("Curriculum Overview"). This new method moves away from "prescriptive learning" and focuses more on skills development and disciplinary thinking, which allows students to be involved in building their own concepts of understanding important concepts rather than receiving them from authoritative sources like their textbook or teacher. This point is made also in the Ontario text (2013; 2018), which justifies enhanced flexibility of content as allowing students to focus on the process of doing history as opposed to "simply assimilating content" (40).

The emphasis on skills development has been noted previously in the literature review as the increasingly dominant approach to history and social studies education in Canada. In the courses reviewed, these skills can be summarized broadly as critical thinking and communication. In the Ontario curriculum (2013; 2018), the centrality of skills acquisition is evident throughout the text, beginning with the "Visions and Goals" of the Introduction, which references students developing the necessary skills for problem solving and communicating ideas and decisions, to a section specifically on "Disciplinary Thinking," which outlines the importance of these skills both inside and outside the classroom. The updated BC curriculum is presented as a "concept based curriculum" which is described as "replac[ing] the study of factual

information with the development of conceptual understanding and disciplinary skills," and highlights interconnections between subject matter and grade levels ("Glossary of Terms": 2). Courses like Social Studies 10 are organized around both content and curricular competencies, the latter of which represents "the skills, strategies, and processes that students develop over time" ("Glossary": 3).

The skills associated with the current social studies curriculum centres on six concepts of "historical and geographical thinking": significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, perspective, and ethical judgment (British Columbia, 2018). As such, eight curricular competencies based off these concepts are identified as to be developed through the Social Studies 10 course: "establish historical significance, use primary source evidence, identify continuity and change, analyze cause and consequence, take historical perspectives, and understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations" ("BC Curriculum Comparison Guide," 2019: 272). This echoes the Ontario curriculum (2013, 2018) which identifies four specific skills associated with historical thinking (historical significance, cause and consequence, continuity and change, and historical perspective) that form the basis of all the course expectations (13). Furthermore, the course begins with a chapter (strand A) specifically on historical inquiry and developing transferable skills, which is intended to be interwoven within the teaching of the other chapters and to be assessed throughout the course. Like the rest of the content on historical/disciplinary thinking in the curriculum, strand A remains unchanged in 2013 and 2018 editions.

The result of these pedagogical changes demonstrates that the BC and Ontario courses are increasingly similar. Reviews of both courses suggest that the respective ministries of education in BC and Ontario have currently prioritized the goal of teaching history to cultivate

skills, though examination of the curricula reveals that there are still underlying nationalist narratives at play in the texts. However, a comparison of the courses structure and content suggests that while both curricula are centred around skills development and postnationalist conceptions of identity, there is divergence in the conceptualization of the role of narrative. While the Ontario curriculum attempts to create a narrative that is universal and inclusive to all, the BC curriculum attempts to eliminate narrative.

The updated BC curriculum makes explicit reference to challenging the role of narrative in history and historical memory. For example, one of the four "Big Ideas" of the course states, "Historical and contemporary injustices challenge the narrative and identity of Canada as an inclusive, multicultural society," (2018: 1). Moreover, a sample question provided in an elaboration of one of the "curricular competencies" (requisite skills to be developed in the course) asks, "Whose stories are told and whose stories are missing in the narratives of Canadian history?" (2018: 2). By contrast, both editions of the Ontario curriculum display some degree of acknowledgement and appreciation for the role that narrative plays in history education. The introduction to the course (2013, 2018) explicitly notes that the study of history "appeals to our love of stories," and that "through the narrative of history, we learn about the people, events, emotions, struggles, and challenges that produced the present and that will shape the future," (103). The text also outlines the goals of the course by stating that "students learn that Canada has many stories and that each one is significant and requires thoughtful consideration," (2013, 2018: 11) demonstrating that the approach of the Ontario curriculum may be more accurately described as an attempt to include more diverse narratives and voices, rather than an attempt to move away from teaching narratives altogether.

This rejection/acceptance of narrative in history education is made obvious when comparing the structures of both courses: the Ontario curriculum is organized temporally, while the BC curriculum is organized by topic. It would be false to attribute this formatting to the current pedagogical framework and goals of minimizing the role of narrative, as the previous BC course employed a similar outline though also demonstrated an obvious narrative. Moreover, this difference cannot be accounted for by the different subject matter (Ontario being classified as history, BC as social studies) as previously noted the current BC curriculum is less clearly organized by discipline than that of its predecessor and the material is now more centred around history. Regardless of the different organizational and structural features of the courses, as well as the adherence to pedagogical trends, my analysis demonstrates that both Ontario and BC curricula convey a master narrative in which the Canadian nation is diverse and complex, but ultimately is committed to cooperation and justice as evident in the state's addressing of past wrongdoing. Though this narrative may be less obvious in the BC curriculum, it still persists, confirming the concerns of scholars such as McGregor (2017) that the approach of historical (disciplinary) thinking alone cannot 'solve' the goals of creating an inclusive Canadian history education and instead merely obscures the underlying master narrative.

The current BC and Ontario curriculums analyzed represent, in some ways, an improvement with regards to depictions of Indigenous peoples and content in national history/social studies courses, however, neither sufficiently challenges the existing master narrative of the settler state. In considering the TRC based conception of reconciliation as requiring not just awareness of the past but also acknowledgement of harm, atonement for the causes of this harm, and action to change behaviour, I would argue that the ministries of education for both Ontario and BC have not sufficiently met these requirements in the selected

curricula. Though there has been a significant increase in the quantity of Indigenous based content in these courses, the underlying narrative minimizes the role of state in causing harm towards Indigenous peoples and largely portrays colonialism as past events rather than a structural condition of the state. While this is perhaps to be expected by these settler government institutions, it reduces the goals of reconciliation to tokenized inclusion and furthers a narrative of the Canadian nation as just and tolerant.

7.0 Conclusion

The political function of education has always been important in Canada: from Vincent Massey's declaration that "To our schools we must look for the Good Canadian" (quoted in Tomkins: 1977: 17) in the early twentieth century, to Murray Sinclair's more recent proclamation that "education is the key to reconciliation" (quoted in Madden, 2019: 292). Through this research, I sought to understand how recent curricular reforms aimed at fostering reconciliation have conceptualized these two goals. In concluding this work, I would like to note some caveats to this research, then lay out the three main findings of my analysis, and finally, present three recommendations for the development of Canadian history curricula that promotes meaningful reconciliation.

There are of course some limitations to this research framework. Perhaps the most central caveat is to acknowledge that the official curriculum does not fully encompass the extent of all classroom content. The role of teachers themselves is therefore critical, a subject which has been explored in numerous works[5] which conclude overall that teachers shape students' understandings, especially in politically and socially contentious topics like colonization, through structural choices like scheduling, and through discursive means such as framing and language.

[5] This includes Faden (2014), Clancy (2019), Dion (2007), Gebhard (2017), and Zanazanian and Moisan (2012).

Moreover, a related drawback is that this approach is not suited for analyzing reception to these official narratives. This is a much more challenging question to determine: what impact does this curriculum/content have on students' perceptions of Canadian history and its relations to Indigenous peoples?[6] A final concern is that focusing only on official memory discourse obscures the role of "counter-memories:" contestations of official state representations by non-state actors (Vom Hau, 2011). In this context, as Wallner and Chouinard note in their research (2023), it is necessary to acknowledge the work that is being done by Indigenous communities to regain control over education. While this work focuses only on settler colonial governments, Indigenous peoples and governments across the land now known as Canada continue to provide "counter-memories" to the official state representations of history.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this research does offer new contributions to the literature. I submit three main findings about how the *CTA* based curricular reforms have been interpreted and implemented by two Canadian provinces. First, offering an interprovincial examination of this topic, my findings demonstrate very clearly that the two surveyed provincial curriculums are becoming increasingly similar, in terms of both content and epistemology. This confirms the findings of scholars like Wallner (2012), who notes that despite the unique position of Canada as the sole industrialized state without a national department of education, provincial boards of education have pursued similar curricular and structural trajectories, resulting in a de facto national education platform.

This finding goes against the traditional notion that Canadian identity is marked by greater regional and provincial affiliation than that of the nation (cited in Faden, 2014). This is unsurprising in the case of Ontario, the one province where national affiliation is stronger than

[6] One particular work that takes on this complex inquiry is Tinkham's research (2018), which interviews Mi'kmaq students in schools on and off reserve about their perceptions of Canadian national history education.

that of the province,[7] however this is noteworthy in the case of BC. While the previous edition of the BC curriculum devoted considerable attention to provincial-specific content, this is largely omitted in the updated course. This is also noteworthy considering these courses fall under different subjects (history versus social studies), and that these reforms have been implemented by administrations from different ends of the political spectrum, in polities with different historical relationships between colonial governments and Indigenous nations.

The second major finding has come from combining previously isolated fields of literature: settler colonialism, Indigenous representations in education, and master narratives of national identity. From this perspective, my findings demonstrate that the current Canadian history curriculum has adopted a narrative where Indigenous peoples have been incorporated (though not entirely absorbed) into the existing dominant national identity. Unlike past master narratives described in the existing literature, this master narrative exhibits a few notable differences from previous approaches based around traditional ethno-nationalist perspectives and multicultural civic nationalist perspectives.

One unique feature of this narrative is the explicit recognition of Indigenous peoples as distinct in Canadian society: having distinct cultural and historical experiences and identities to that of settlers. This seems to challenge the dominant logic imposed by multiculturalism (often criticized by Indigenous scholars[8]) that Indigenous peoples are simply another ethnic group in the Canadian mosaic, and to specifically recognize one group would disrupt the foundation of equality inherent to multicultural society. Beyond this explicit recognition and the heightened prominence of Indigenous experiences, this narrative does not go so far as to challenge the legitimacy of settler colonial governance or recognize colonialism as an ongoing, structural

[7] The same finding was identified by Faden's research (2014) on Ontario history education.
[8] For example, St Denis (2011).

condition. Instead, this narrative approach largely presents colonialism (a term very rarely stated in the text) as confined to past events which have since been rectified. Overall, despite an increase of Indigenous based stories and representations in the courses, the curricula continues to reproduce colonial subjectivities about Indigenous peoples.

Another feature of this new conception of the Canadian history master narrative is a reduction of explicit references to multiculturalism. Though many of the tropes common to the multicultural master narrative remain, there is now a more postnationalist approach employed that aims to be more inclusive and objective in considering the perspectives of different peoples and individuals in Canada across the last century. While the curricula take somewhat different approaches in presenting this story (whether that be aiming to be more inclusive and universal or attempting to do away with narratives entirely), it is evident that elements of previously dominant narratives remain in both courses. Moreover, while there appears to have been a concerted effort to develop curricula that is more neutral, objective and less reliant on explicitly nationalist narratives, the dominance of master narratives continues (implicitly) to shape ways of thinking about Canadian history.

The final major finding concerns the role of reconciliation in potentially altering official conceptions of Canadian nationality. Considering the high esteem placed upon this topic in recent official state discourse (for example, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's assertion that reconciliation is "part of what it means to be Canadian" during the sesquicentennial celebration of Canadian confederation[9]), it could be expected that reconciliation would feature prominently in curricula updated to promote its implementation. However, my research demonstrates that reconciliation receives very little explicit recognition in the course texts, despite being promoted as doing so in introductory or explanatory sections of the curricula. Moreover, as identified in my

[9] Nijhawan et al., 2018: 345.

previous point, the master narratives which structure the courses demonstrate considerable similarities to those employed in the past, before the formation of the TRC or the formal adoption of its *CTA*. Concurrent with the existing literature, my findings conclude that these curricular reforms have continued to advance tokenized inclusion of Indigenous peoples and incorporate references to past colonial atrocities in order to present an image of the nation as having overcome past challenges in its commitment to human rights and justice. Overall, these findings demonstrate that curriculum development, especially in the subject of national history remains politicized and subject to forces including master narratives, which may be highly influential though unrecognized. Additionally, these findings demonstrate that reconciliation has been interpreted by two settler colonial governments in Canada in ways that solidify settler structures.

Based on these findings, I offer three recommendations to improve the curricula. Firstly, the curriculum must challenge the master narrative, especially the international story of Canada told in these courses. This will require *politicizing* this story: at present, the texts omit any reference to the political actors who have made these policy decisions, though certain political figures and parties are referenced as relevant to the historical period. As Faden notes (2014), this omission holds no one accountable for the decisions of the government and naturalizes policy decisions. Moreover, this framework essentially obscures opposition to the international actions of the Canadian state in order to present a simplistic, unified narrative. Though the internal story told in the text of life in Canada is not without its own issues, it acknowledges the complexity inherent to Canadian society. The international story must also be challenged, though this will be

perhaps a greater obstacle, as past attempts at challenging this narrative have produced major public backlash.[10]

Secondly, I would recommend incorporating other pedagogical approaches and frameworks and moving away from the current devotion to the historical/disciplinary thinking approach. This is not to say that this approach is without any merit: as McGregor notes (2017), at its core, this framework represents an attempt at resisting or countering teaching a singular interpretation of history. However, my findings from these two curricula confirm McGregor's assertion that the historical thinking approach is increasingly presented in Canadian education as a fixed, uncontested way of constructing knowledge. Furthermore, as stated previously by scholars such as Anderson (2017) and as confirmed in my findings, this approach cannot counter the dominance of implicit master narratives. Without acknowledging how these master narratives shape the way one interprets history, and more broadly, acknowledging that students' interpretations are shaped by their own subjective realities and experiences, the overwhelming reliance on this methodology will only strengthen the underlying master narrative by further obscuring its existence.

The suggestion of decreasing reliance on this approach is also premised on the findings of scholars such as Curtrara (2019) who argues that historical thinking denies space for and invalidates Indigenous pedagogies and ways of knowing. This leads to a related recommendation: a greater focus on Indigenous epistemologies and educational practices. While the texts incorporate an increased amount of Indigenous depictions, these peoples are still portrayed in the curricula as passive objects from the assumed settler perspective. In addition to the need to challenge these tokenized inclusions, the courses do not reflect meaningful

[10] For example, the CBC 1992 documentary series, "The Valour and the Horror," which offered a critical perspective on Canadian military leadership in WW2. As Carr notes (2003), this launched massive controversy, including concerns about Canadian history education.

reconciliation without better accepting Indigenous knowledge as valid and worthwhile. This suggestion runs the risk of furthering the settler colonial agenda: incorporating and appropriating Indigenous knowledge and practices without Indigenous peoples and thus promoting their elimination (Calderon, 2014, cited in Cutrara, 2019). Therefore, this recommendation is proposed only with the active and meaningful involvement of Indigenous nations and educators as leaders in this initiative.

This leads to my final recommendation, which primarily concerns the implementation rather than development of the curriculum. Educating the next generation of students in Canada to better understand Indigenous cultures and histories will not be successful until educators understand this subject themselves. The literature on this subject demonstrates that even teachers and school administrators committed to reconciliation education do not feel properly equipped to address these topics and thus accomplish these goals (Clancy, 2019). Moreover, other research (Gebhard, 2017) finds that even 'well-intentioned' settler teachers reproduce harmful, colonial subjectivities upon Indigenous peoples as a result of deeply ingrained master narratives about residential schools.

The current approach taken by the Ontario MoE in addressing this problem has been the creation of the position of Indigenous Education Leads to promote Indigenous education initiatives within the school boards. Burm's research (2019) on this subject demonstrates that this position is underfunded, understaffed, and overburdened, leading to high rates of professional burnout. Teachers and all educational/school board personnel must recognize the necessity of reconciliation, and this requires more resources devoted to this goal. This recommendation is especially important considering the transition towards flexible and localized classroom content in BC and Ontario. This approach has great potential: it fits with many Indigenous

epistemologies and ontologies that are highly placed-based and relational (Madden, 2019: 287), and would allow students to better understand their relationship to the traditional territories they live on and build connections with local nations. However, some educators in BC have argued (Gacoin, 2018) that in the absence of a coordinated, province-wide plan to develop the localized content with necessary time and resources, this project depends entirely on leadership within individual districts and schools, and will result in unequal and inequitable access for both teachers and students (12). At present, it seems unlikely that the majority of teachers in both provinces will go beyond the text provided sample content considering the lack of requisite knowledge, resources, or interest necessary to adequately promote a curriculum that actively advances reconciliation and educational practices of local Indigenous nations.

Though the ministries of education of BC and Ontario have formally answered the call to change curriculum to foster reconciliation, the results of this effort demonstrate that the official interpretations of reconciliation from two settler governments are insufficient. Overall, in reviewing the selected national history curriculum of two provinces, the impact of master narratives of Canadian history remains a major influence, despite pedagogical approaches aimed at moving away from teaching narratives. Though narratives of Canadian identities adopted in these courses (implicitly and explicitly) aim to present an inclusive and even postnational perspective, these curricula present a valorized image of the state. Moreover, while the depiction of Indigenous peoples and content in these courses has improved, the ministries of education responsible for these curricula have sought to simply add Indigenous content to the existing and inherently settler colonial framework. While these curricula may check a box for the settler state's participation in its own conception of reconciliation, these courses are unable to provide meaningful change.

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Appendix: Codebook

Description	*Code*
Indigenous Depiction	
Indigenous as passive	I-pas
Indigenous as active	I-act
Indigenous as protestor	I-prot
Indigenous as problem	I-prob
Indigenous as victim	I-vic
Indigenous as uniquely spiritual/connected to the land	I-spir
Indigenous - settler perception of	I-setper
Indigenous - settler saviour	I-setsav
Indigenous - contribution to settler nation building	I-cont
Indigenous - in relation to settler developments	I-rel
Indigenous as nation/sovereign	I-nat
Indigenous as another minority	I-min
Indigenous - perspective	I-pov
Indigenous - invisible (no mention)	I-i
explicitly Indigenous focused	I-foc
Traditional trope	
economic	trad-e
military	trad-m
explicit culture	trad-c
international events	trad-i
demographics/statistics	trad-d
technological/material developments	trad-t
Injustice	
injustice - attitude based	inj-att
injustice - elsewhere (outside of Canada)	inj-els
injustice - policy based (federal government as perpetrators)	inj-pol
injustice - provincial/municipal government as responsible	inj-pro
injustice - government rectifies case	inj-sol
injustice - legacy	inj-leg
injustice - systemic	inj-sys

injustice - apology/commemoration	inj-apo
injustice - naturalized (no perpetrator/responsible party)	inj-nat
injustice - racism	inj-rac
Contemporary trope	
diversity	div
progress/tolerance	prog
Anglophone and Francophone relations	Eng/Fr
peaceful/promoting peace	pea
multicultural (explicitly referenced)	MC
immigration	imm
human rights	HR
regionalism	reg
Canada as autonomous agent	Can-aut
conflict - domestic	conf-d
conflict - international	conf-int
cooperation - domestic	coop-d
cooperation - international	coop-int
UK referenced	UK
US referenced	US
colonialism explicit	col
nationalism/nationalist	nat
identity	ID
community	com
citizenship	cit
different experience for different groups	dif-exp
welfare policies	wel
activism	act
Politics	
electoral politics	pol-elec
judicial politics	pol-jud
specific policy/federal government action referenced	pol-act
provincial political focused	pol-prov
Individual/group - example	
activist	who-a
cultural figure	who-c

military personnel	who-m
political elite	who-pe