“A New Way Forward”: Reconciliation through Indigenous Social Innovation

by

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ABSTRACT

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada released 94 Calls to Action including ‘Business and Reconciliation’ (Recommendation #92, TRC, 2015). The recommendation focuses mainly on the role of non-Indigenous Canadians. I argue that reconciliation is a two-way process and the role of Indigenous peoples in reconciliation has been largely overlooked. Thus, this research aims to take an Indigenous perspective on reconciliation, including the role that social innovation and Indigenous entrepreneurship can play in reconciliation processes in Canada.

This research employs a qualitative approach to data collection, including storytelling, narrative analysis and comparative methods. Concepts of reconciliation from an Indigenous entrepreneurial perspective, including personal definitions of reconciliation and social innovation, and how Indigenous businesses contribute to reconciliation processes are analysed. The results indicate that Indigenous entrepreneurs are actively contributing to reconciliation processes including playing a role in cultural awareness building through their goods and services. The research also indicates that the term ‘reconciliation’ takes on various meanings and is tied to life experiences, cultural relations, and community histories and dynamics. The results contribute an ‘Indigenous voice’ to current scholarship on reconciliation and might aid in the development of policy on Indigenous entrepreneurship, social innovation and economic development.

Keywords: Indigenous Peoples, Entrepreneurship, Social Innovation, Reconciliation
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Chi Miigwech! (Thank you).
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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

As an Indigenous scholar and entrepreneur, I am motivated by the concept of improving the lives of Indigenous peoples through social innovation and entrepreneurship. Phills, Deiglmeier and Miller (2008, p. 36) define social innovation as “A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than current solutions. The value created accrues primarily to society rather than to private individuals.” Indigenous social entrepreneurship differs from classical concepts of entrepreneurship because it incorporates Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing (worldview) with business acumen. This is compatible with Indigenous cultural values because it incorporates community development and collaboration (Anderson, 2002).

In addition, I argue that social innovation can contribute to the process of Indigenous reconciliation because business models that incorporate Indigenous knowledge contribute to respect, knowledge, and understanding of Indigenous cultures (Tapsell & Woods, 2010). With the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Final Report, along with the current federal mandate to improve Indigenous relations in Canada, it is evident that reconciliation has become a national priority.

Although current scholarship explores concepts of reconciliation (e.g., reconciliation in the context of healing intergenerational trauma from residential schools), there is no current research that connects Indigenous social innovation to reconciliation.

In addition, by interviewing Indigenous entrepreneurs and through the reflexivity of the author (also an Indigenous entrepreneur and scholar), this research offers an opportunity to explore concepts of social innovation and reconciliation through an Indigenous perspective and lens. The process of ‘speaking back’ to the academy through Indigenous perspectives is
consistent with Indigenous methodologies and ‘Decolonizing Methodologies,’ which encourages Indigenous peoples to contribute their personal and professional expertise, through Indigenous knowledge(s) and ways of knowing (Castleden, Morgan and Lamb, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Louis 2007; Smith, 2012).

1.1 Research Objectives and Research Questions

This research aims to explore whether Indigenous social innovation can play a role in reconciliation in Canada. I hypothesize that when Indigenous entrepreneurs use social innovation to create unique business models that incorporate decolonizing processes, societal transformation will occur in the form of reconciliation (e.g., greater understanding and respect through socially innovative products and/or services).

Although there are many different definitions of reconciliation (to be explored throughout this thesis), for the purposes of this research, I define reconciliation as building respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada through greater understanding and awareness of Indigenous cultures and history.

This research will aim to answer three major research questions:

1. Can Indigenous social innovation be a vehicle for reconciliation in Canada?
2. What are the perspectives of Indigenous social entrepreneurs on reconciliation in Canada in a business context?
3. Are Indigenous social entrepreneurs actively contributing to reconciliation processes in Canada, and if so, how?
1.2 Situating Myself in the Research

As an Anishinaabekwe (Anishinaabe woman), scholar and entrepreneur, it is important for me to situate myself in the research, for cultural and professional purposes. When attending Indigenous events and meeting Indigenous people for the first time, it is traditional for Indigenous people to share their name (including Indigenous name if they have one), Indigenous community and clan or family affiliation. I was first taught to follow this cultural protocol in an Anishinaabemowin (Anishinaabe language) class at Western University by Eli Baxter, an Anishinaabemowin teacher in 2014. I have also personally experienced this cultural practice on several occasions over the past ten years when I have attended Indigenous events in several urban centres and Indigenous communities in Ontario and Nova Scotia.

According to Indigenous scholars such as Smith (2012), Kovach (2009), and Wilson (2008), Indigenous research is relational. This practice of situating oneself as an Indigenous person and scholar is evident in Wilson’s book Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods, when he states, “Respecting [First Nations] protocol… I acknowledged the territory and introduced myself. I shared aspects of my background… tribal and community affiliations, personal background, professional experience – to offer enough identity markers to situate me” (Wilson, 2009, p. 9).

To respect Anishinaabe cultural protocol, and following in the footsteps of Indigenous scholars such as Smith (2012), Kovach (2009), and Wilson (2008), I will provide a brief introduction to situate my relational place within this research.

My name is Shyra Barberstock and my Anishinaabe name is O’Demin’kwe (Strawberry Woman). I was given this traditional Anishinaabe name at a sweat lodge and naming ceremony in 2004 by Peter Migwans, an Anishinaabe elder and renowned artist. My family lineage comes
from Keboewek First Nation in Kipawa, Quebec. I am a member of Keboewek First Nation, but I did not grow up in my First Nations community. I was adopted as a baby and raised by a non-Indigenous family in Ontario. I did not discover my First Nations heritage until 2001, after meeting my birth mother for the first time. Since then, I have spent the last sixteen years learning about my Anishinaabe heritage, including participating in several Indigenous cultural events and ceremonies. I also pursued an undergraduate degree in First Nations Studies at Western University from 2011–2015 so that I could learn more about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

This personal and academic history is significant to how I situate myself as a researcher, because although I am Anishinaabe and a member of a First Nations community, I grew up in a non-Indigenous home. Today, I embrace both Indigenous and Western\(^1\) ways of knowing and being and I honour my Indigenous and non-Indigenous families for what they have taught me.

In academia, I identify with ‘two-eyed seeing,’ which is a methodology and ontology that embraces both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing and being when approaching research with Indigenous peoples (Bartlett et al., 2012). With the foundation of this research being ‘reconciliation through social innovation,’ I argue that two-eyed seeing is an appropriate methodology, as reconciliation involves both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; thus having a balanced perspective of Indigenous and non-Indigenous viewpoints is important.

Since 2013, I have been involved in entrepreneurship. In 2013, my husband Rye Barberstock and I decided to pursue a business idea to create a social network for Indigenous peoples in Canada. The idea behind the social network was born because we observed a need through our experience (academic and professional), that Indigenous peoples needed a safe

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\(^1\) Kovach (2009) defines ‘Western’ as “a descriptive term for a particular ontological, epistemological, sociological, and ideological way of thinking and being as differentiated from… an Indigenous worldview” (p. 21).
online space where they could share ideas, collaborate and network with each other. The social network took one year to build and was officially launched in 2014 (NationTalk, 2014; Winders, 2015).

After the Okwaho Network (our social network) was launched in 2014, we had Indigenous and non-Indigenous members join from Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia, South America, and Africa. Thus, we recognized that the concept of an Indigenous social network was not unique to Canada; Indigenous peoples were interested in connecting online to share global Indigenous perspectives.

The inaugural launch of the Okwaho Network created a ‘buzz’ in media and resulted in over a dozen public speaking invitations at business and academic conferences across Canada. Today, my husband and I are sought after public speakers and consultants for our experience in Indigenous social innovation and social enterprise and related academic research.

Since the launch of the Okwaho Network, our company has expanded to include communications and consulting. In 2017, our company merged with a Maori-owned procurement consulting agency headquartered in Sydney, Australia. Today, our company (Okwaho Equal Source Inc.) is an international brand with offices in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Ontario, Kingston, Ontario and Sydney, Australia. Our global consulting team includes seasoned consultants from Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

Thus, in this research I situate myself as an Anishinaabekwe, scholar and social entrepreneur. My cultural, academic and entrepreneurial background contribute to the inspiration behind the concept of this research topic – ‘Reconciliation through Indigenous Social Innovation.’ For example, my husband and I have given several workshops over the past two years on ‘Doing Business with First Nations’ and have felt that these educational workshops
have resulted in respect and improved relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples; we feel that our work as Indigenous entrepreneurs and educators contributes to reconciliation in Canada.

In addition, through my vast network of Indigenous entrepreneurs, I have had the honour and pleasure of hearing many success stories, and realized before entering my Master’s program at Queen’s University that several of the Indigenous entrepreneurs that I knew had embraced social models of business (i.e., social enterprise and social innovation) because it was synergistic with their Indigenous values, including a strong interest in community building and contributing to solving social and environmental problems within their Indigenous communities. In addition, the Indigenous entrepreneurs in my network shared progressive views on reconciliation, including views that their businesses were actively contributing to reconciliation in Canada through the services and products that they provided (especially in the case of Indigenous relations consultants).

As much of the news over the past few years has been focused on the narratives surrounding reconciliation, along with the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015), I argue that much of the national focus in Canada has been on roles that non-Indigenous peoples and the Government of Canada need to follow for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and communities. However, the (potential) roles of Indigenous peoples in reconciliation have not been widely explored.

It is my hope that this research on ‘reconciliation through Indigenous Social Innovation’ will demonstrate an Indigenous perspective, including case studies from Indigenous social innovators that provide examples of how Indigenous peoples can contribute to reconciliation in
Canada. Thus, I argue that reconciliation in Canada is a two-way process where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples have important roles to play.

In Chapter 2, a literature review explores concepts of reconciliation in Canada, including frameworks for reconciliation. In addition, concepts of social innovation, social enterprise, and Indigenous entrepreneurship are explored, including theoretical contexts. Finally, social innovation is examined as a tool for reconciliation, which is the foundational basis of this research.

In Chapter 3, data collection methods for this qualitative research study are presented, including research questions and ethical guidelines followed. Chapter 4 demonstrates the research findings, including an examination of reconciliation, social innovation and methodological findings. Finally, Chapter 5 provides discussion, conclusions and presents opportunities for further research.
CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Reconciliation in Canada

In the context of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in Canada, reconciliation is a complicated and sometimes controversial concept. In order to reconcile, the Canadian government and the Canadian public must come to terms with the history of their ancestors – including the history of colonialism and residential schools. On some level, this has happened with the government apology in 2008 made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper for the Residential School system in Canada (Geboe, 2015). However, there is still much work to be done for reconciliation.

In this section, a brief overview of the defining features of reconciliation will be considered, as well as an exploration of different reconciliation initiatives and frameworks that are currently being utilized. It is important to note that reconciliation itself is a very broad, complicated, and significant topic; this research focuses specifically on social innovation and how it can be used as process for Indigenous reconciliation, thus only relevant aspects of reconciliation and social innovation will be considered in this literature review.

In order to understand different perspectives of reconciliation, it is helpful to review the literature surrounding Canada and Australia. Although the Indigenous cultures of Canada and Australia differ, both Canada and Australia have Indigenous populations that have experienced the impacts of colonialism in their respective countries, including similar histories of colonialism, residential/boarding schools, and generations of children that were ‘taken’ from their families (i.e., Canadian Indigenous peoples experienced the ‘Sixties Scoop’ and Australian

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2 Historically, in Canada children were taken from their families and communities and sent to residential schools, where they were provided a Western-based education. During that time, Indigenous children were not allowed to practice their culture or speak their Indigenous languages. Many children experienced physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse. The goal of residential schools was to assimilate ‘Indians’ into Western culture (Frideres, 2011).
Indigenous peoples experienced the ‘Stolen Generation’). As such, much can be learned from reconciliation in both Canada and Australia.

For example, Reconciliation Canada was founded as a not-for-profit organization in 2012 to help Canadians through the reconciliation process. According to the Reconciliation Canada website (2015), “Reconciliation is a collective journey and will take the effort of all peoples. Starting at the individual level, each person can play a part in creating something that is collectively significant, inspiring and long-lasting. Together, we are charting a New Way Forward.” (Reconciliation Canada, 2015) When examining the themes and undertones within this quotation, it is evident that reconciliation is a process that includes all Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada (Geboe, 2015).

According to the Reconciliation Australia website, Reconciliation Australia (2017) was founded as a not-for-profit organization that helps to promote reconciliation by “building relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.” Reconciliation Australia shares a similar mandate to Reconciliation Canada and a similar definition of reconciliation, suggesting that reconciliation means, “building better relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the benefit of all Australians…. To create positive change we need more people talking about the issues and coming up with innovative ideas and actions to make a difference” (Reconciliation Australia, 2017).

The key difference in the definitions of reconciliation between Canada and Australia is the introduction of the word ‘innovation’ in the Australian definition of reconciliation. Although the Canadian definition from Reconciliation Canada does not mention innovation, this research
will explore ways in which social innovation can be used as a tool for social impact in reconciliation in Canada.

In the Canadian context, there are common themes that emerge from the research on the process and implementation of reconciliation strategies. They include:

1) Recognition of Indigenous rights as a prerequisite for reconciliation;

2) Reconciliation cannot occur without justice, and reparations, and accountability for Indigenous rights violations;

3) Reconciliation is a process and land claims negotiations, although significant, are only part of this process;

4) Reconciliation will take time and it requires awareness, engagement, and education of the Canadian public;

5) Reconciliation requires new ‘formulas’ for co-existence of differences within the State.

(Geboe, 2015, p. 8; Burkart & Nicholl, 2013, p. 1-3).

Although none of these themes specifically mention innovation, the last two themes relate to concepts of social innovation because they suggest engagement, awareness, and creating new ‘formulas.’ For example, the ‘Kairos Blanket Exercise’ was designed as an educational experiential workshop to teach Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples about the history of residential schools in Canada (Kairos Canada, 2017). Through role playing, participants experience the loss of culture, loss of family members, and loss of land. The Kairos Blanket Exercise is socially innovative because it addresses a social issue (learning about the history of residential schools and colonialism in Canada) through creative expression, which engages
participants to build empathy and awareness of historical injustices in Canada (Kairos Canada, 2017).

On an empirical level, Indigenous reconciliation is complex because it may take on unique meanings and significance to different people, depending on their personal experiences. Processes of reconciliation may also trigger negative emotions for Indigenous peoples that are survivors of past traumas of colonial oppression. For example, for an Indigenous residential school survivor, sharing stories of their time at a residential school may be extremely difficult and painful. However, to them, reconciliation may mean spreading awareness to the mainstream Canadian public regarding the physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse that occurred as part of the attempt to colonize and assimilate Indigenous peoples into mainstream western culture (Frideres, 2011). On the other hand, an Indigenous Residential School survivor may say that reconciliation is not possible because they cannot forgive or forget the abuses and wrongdoings that happened to them.

For other people, reconciliation may have to do with creating mutual respect and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. For example, both Reconciliation Canada (2015) and Reconciliation Australia (2017) mention mutual respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as the main goal of reconciliation. For entrepreneurs, reconciliation may manifest in the form of educational products or games that help to ‘decolonize’ thoughts on Indigenous cultures through cultural awareness.

As this brief overview indicates, reconciliation is a complex process that involves Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. In section 2.1.1., ‘frameworks’ for reconciliation will be explored, and then applied to concepts of social innovation, which will be outlined in the following section.
2.1.1 Frameworks for Reconciliation

In order to understand how reconciliation processes can be established and maintained, it is important to understand which resources and frameworks can be utilized. In terms of resource documents, the most prominent and significant documents on reconciliation in Canada include the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report.

The RCAP was established in 1991 to address many Indigenous issues that came to light after events such as the Oka Crisis and the Meech Lake Accord. The RCAP is a 5 volume, 4,000-page report that covers a vast range of issues. In total, 440 recommendations were made in the RCAP report (Hurley & Wherrett, 1999). In terms of reconciliation, the RCAP is an excellent resource as it explains the issues that are currently experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada, including the impacts of important historical events and contexts for current socioeconomic conditions (e.g., the impact of residential schools). The RCAP also includes suggestions for policy framework including: renewing the partnership with government and non-Indigenous peoples, strengthening Indigenous governance, as well as supporting strong Indigenous communities, peoples, and economies (Hurley & Wherrett, 1999).

According to the TRC website (TRC, 2015b), the TRC Mandate includes: 1) Telling Canadians what happened in Indigenous residential schools; 2) Creating a permanent record of what happened (in residential schools); and 3) Fostering healing and reconciliation within Canada. The TRC Report was released in 2015 and includes 94 ‘Calls to Action.’ In the TRC Report, many different aspects of reconciliation are explored, touching on many different areas including: health, education, residential schools, government, policy, and business (TRC, 2015a).
The TRC Report is an excellent resource document for reconciliation frameworks and processes because the 94 ‘Calls to Action’ can be used to inspire reconciliation initiatives, societal change, and social innovation.

In addition, the TRC Report recommends the use of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as a framework for reconciliation (TRC, 2015a, Recommendation #92). The UNDRIP was established in 2007 and it includes the recognition of Indigenous peoples on a global scale and asserts Indigenous rights, sovereignty, and lays the framework for building mutual relationships between governments and Indigenous peoples (United Nations, 2007). According to Geboe (2015), many experts argue that the ‘spirit’ of the UNDRIP could act as a ‘symbolic guide’ and framework to address reconciliation efforts in Canada.

In terms of methodologies for processes of reconciliation, ‘decolonization’ theory (e.g. Smith, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008) and the ‘two-eyed seeing’ approach (e.g. Martin, 2012; Castelden et al., 2012; Bartlet et al., 2012) are complementary to reconciliation because both concepts promote cultural awareness and respect of Indigenous cultures.

Decolonization theory gained popularity within the academic sphere after the first release of Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s book, Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples in 1999. In Smith’s groundbreaking work, she examines the relationship between Western research methodologies and Indigenous methodologies and explores the ‘tensions’ between the history of colonialism, through a research lens. According to Smith (2012, p. xii), “Decolonizing Methodologies is not a method for revolution in a political sense but provokes some revolutionary thinking about the roles that knowledge, knowledge production, knowledge hierarchies and knowledge institutions play in decolonization and social transformation.
Decolonization theory acts as a powerful tool and methodology for exploring reconciliation and social innovation as it inspires thoughts on how to ‘Indigenize’ different social movements that contribute to reconciliation in Canada.

According to Bartlett et al. (2012, p. 335), the concept of Two-Eyed Seeing was first introduced by a Mi’kmaw (Indigenous) Elder, Albert Marshall in 2004; the Elder described Two-Eyed Seeing as “the gift of multiple perspectives treasured by many aboriginal peoples and explains that it refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to using both these eyes together for the benefit of all.” Since that time, Two-Eyed Seeing has become a well-established concept in academia, used by many academic disciplines such as Health Sciences, Nursing, Geography, and the Social Sciences (Bartlett et al., 2012).

In terms of processes of Indigenous reconciliation, I argue that Two-Eyed Seeing is not only complementary - it is essential. If the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people(s) and communities involved in reconciliation can see and appreciate both Western and Indigenous perspectives, then reconciliation will have a better chance for success.

In the next section, the theory of social innovation and social enterprise will be explored, including mainstream views and theories, definitions of social enterprise and social innovation (2.2.1), social enterprise and complexity theory (2.2.2), why social enterprise is an emerging field of research (2.2.3), human nature and concepts of the marketplace (2.2.4), as well as challenges of social enterprise (2.2.5) and considerations for social enterprise and social innovation (2.2.6).
2.2 Social Innovation and Social Enterprise – Mainstream Views and Theories

Current research indicates that social enterprise, a form of social innovation, is a broad field that has been explored by several academic disciplines. According to academic research, “social enterprises bring new value and practice sets, such as mutualism, collective entrepreneurship and consensual approaches to innovation and development” (Richardson, Healy, and Morgan, 2014, p. 25; Morgan and Price 2001). One major challenge to researching social enterprise and social innovation is that they are trans-disciplinary topics and as such, the ‘theory’ and ‘language’ behind social enterprise and social innovation differ depending on the academic discipline(s) examining them (Avelino et al., 2014). Because of this, there has been a general call from academia to create a universal theory that will be applicable across different academic disciplines (Avelino et al., 2014). For example, social enterprise and social innovation are concepts that are currently being explored by Business, Sociology, Geography, Indigenous Studies, and several other academic faculties and disciplines.

In addition, another challenge to researching and creating ‘theory’ for social enterprise and social innovation is that they are context specific (Tapsel & Woods, 2010). For example, a social enterprise that is created by a First Nations community to share Indigenous knowledge within their First Nations community will be different than a (non-First Nations) social enterprise created within an urban centre that is focused on environmental sustainability (i.e., differences in cultural and historical contexts for First Nations social enterprise). Thus, the context in which a social enterprise is created should coincide with the theory that is created around it (Tapsel & Woods, 2010).

Due to the challenges indicated, this literature review cannot provide an in-depth theoretical exploration of social enterprise and social innovation, as the theories behind these
concepts have only ‘scratched the surface’ as social enterprise and social innovation are emerging fields of research (Tapsel & Woods, 2010; Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern, 2006; Dorado, 2006; Chell 2007; Massetti, 2008). They do not have very established theoretical foundations (Tapsell & Woods, 2010). This both makes research in this field challenging, as well as exciting – it is an exploration of ‘cutting-edge’ research on how entrepreneurship and business paradigms are shifting in order to improve economic and social conditions on a national and global scale.

2.2.1 Defining Social Enterprise and Social Innovation

As mentioned earlier, social enterprise and social innovation are difficult concepts to define, as there is no general consensus on a definition for either concept (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010). In addition, there are also other related concepts/terms in the research that appear frequently with the concepts of social enterprise and social innovation, including: grassroots organizations, social entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurs. The one common thread that weaves all these concepts and terms together is the social value and purpose that they bring; all of these terms refer to business (for-profit or not-for-profit) that is created to solve a social problem in society. For example, for-profit or not-for-profit businesses or organizations may be created to assist with improving the environment or to help developing nations come out of poverty (e.g., through microloan programs).

To understand social enterprise, it is first important to define entrepreneurship. According to Anderson, Dana and Dana (2006), entrepreneurship is the process by which an economy is built and sustained. It is ‘future oriented’ and ‘outward focused.’ Social enterprise differs from other forms of business because there is a ‘social purposes’ that is the principle driver of business activities. Social enterprises can take the form of not-for-profit or for-profit business models, and
although they may generate a profit, most of the profits are reinvested into the organization to create long-term benefit for the individuals and/or communities that they service (Pearce, 2003; Anderson, 2006; Dacin, Dacin & Matear, 2010). Although there are several definitions that have been offered for social enterprises, all the definitions share the social purpose as being the core of a social enterprise (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010).

*The Bureau of European Policy Advisors* (BEPA) (2010: 5) and Avelino et al., (2014: 7) describe social innovation as innovations that are social ‘both in their ends and in their means’ and they argue that social innovations provide an effective way to ‘empower people’ and ‘drive societal change.’ BEPA (2010) and Avelino et al. (2014) further argue that social innovation is an effective way of responding to social challenges because it ‘mobilizes peoples’ creativity to develop solutions to the world’s problems and to make better use of scarce resources (Avelino et al., 2014, p. 5; BEPA, 2010, p. 7).

The research of Avelino et al. (2014) focuses on the concept of ‘transformative social innovation,’ which also ties in with social enterprise as it uses innovative processes to transform society. According to Avelino et al. (2014, p. 5), ‘transformation’ is described as “an irreversible, persistent adjustment to societal values, outlooks and behaviours of sufficient ‘width and depth’ to alter any preceding situation.” In addition, ‘transformative social innovation’ can be understood in three distinct ways: 1) as a specific type of Social Innovation – one that contributes to the transformation of society; 2) as a social innovation with an intention to contribute to the transformation of society; 3) as the process through which Social Innovation contributes to the transformation of society (Avelino et al., 2014, p. 5). Avelino et al. (2014) argue that transformative Social Innovation is best understood as a process.
In the context of social enterprise, transformative social innovation theory offers context and insights for how social innovation can be used to positively impact society. Social innovation may include new social practices, ideas, rules, and/or products that can then be incorporated into a social enterprise to help transform society (Avelino et al., 2014). For example, the Pachamama Alliance is a social enterprise that works with the Achuar (Indigenous) peoples that reside in the Amazon. Through their programs and workshops, the Pachamama Alliance educates the general public on environmental sustainability (Pachamama Alliance, 2015). People also have the opportunity to visit and stay with the Achuar Indigenous peoples to learn more about their culture and their homelands. Through eco-tourism, people learn about environmental sustainability and also gain more awareness of the Achuar peoples, as well as Indigenous cultures (Pachamama Alliance, 2015). It could be argued that this type of program helps to ‘transform’ society because it spreads awareness and it may lead to different decisions and improvements (e.g., gaining an appreciation of the rainforest and ‘opting-in’ to sustainability practices instead of extraction-based industries).

2.2.2 Social Enterprise and Complexity Theory – A Neo-Schumpeterian Perspective

The origins of the word entrepreneurship come from the French word *entreprendre*, which means ‘to take into one’s own hands’ (Tapsel & Woods, 2010). Richard Cantillon, an eighteenth century businessman first recognized the crucial role of the entrepreneur (Tapsell & Woods, 2010). His research provided the foundation for three major economic traditions including the German tradition, the Chicago tradition and the Austrian tradition. The German tradition was built on the research of Schumpeter (1934), with a focus on innovation. The Chicago tradition was developed based on the research of Knight (1921), with a focus on risk.
The Austrian tradition was built on research by Kirzner (1973), with his exploration of ‘alertness to opportunity’ (Tapsell & Woods, 2010; Herbert & Link, 1988, 1989; Cantillon ([1775] 1931).

Although there are differing theories on different aspects of social enterprise, theories of Schumpeter were common in the literature because of his concepts of innovation and self-organization (Tapsell & Woods, 2010). As described earlier, social innovation shares a strong connection with social enterprise because innovation leads to solutions to social and/or environmental problems. Specifically, Schumpeter’s understanding of innovation relates to social entrepreneurship because Schumpeter divides people into “those who are dynamic and do what is new and those who are static and only repeat what has already been done” (Tapsell & Woods, 2010, p. 541).

Schumpeter also offers some understanding of how social innovation and social enterprise fit into today’s capitalism and the tensions that social enterprise can create in a neoliberal society. According to Richardson, Healy and Morgan (2014, p. 19; Schumpeter, 1934), “Schumpeter well understood the barriers facing agents who sought to experiment and generate something new against the forces of inertia in society at large. He highlighted the difficulty of entrepreneurial endeavour ‘amidst the work and care of the daily round’ and he pointed to the ‘scope and time for conceiving and working out’ new ways of doing things and of the ‘mental freedom’ required to do so.” Much of the theory and definitions of ‘Innovation’ today stem from the Schumpeter tradition of economics.

2.2.3 Why Social Enterprise is an ‘Emerging Field’ of Research

Current literature indicates that the economic crisis has resulted in the “social and economic dislocation” of disadvantaged communities (Maclean, Harvey & Gordon, 2012, p.
and has also resulted in a growing mistrust in the dominant neo-liberal capitalist paradigms and constructs of Western society (BEPA, 2011; Richardson, Healy, & Morgan, 2014; Avelino et al, 2014; Nicolopoulou et al, 2015). The dominant neo-liberal paradigm of today focuses on the role of self-regulating markets to provide individual wealth, as well as the potential ‘trickle-down’ effect of providing general improvements in society (Anderson, Honig, & Peredo, 2006). Generally, the economic crisis refers to the world-wide recession that began in 2007-2008, which altered the economic landscape and outlook of investors, resulting in governments ‘saving’ banks and attempting to stimulate the economy through ‘bail outs’ and through the expansion of the money supply (i.e., ‘quantitative easing’), and low interest rates (Avelino et al, 2014, p. 10).

Based on a report by BEPA (2010), there is a “commonly held view that State and the market have failed to successfully address old societal problems and doubt their capacity to address emerging challenges” (Richardson, Healy, & Morgan, 2014, p. 9; BEPA 2011). In addition, Avelino et al. (2014, p. 13) argue that counter-narratives and movements such as anti-globalisation movements or occupy movements demonstrate a loss of trust in the “dominant economic model of the growth society and its associated livelihood model where most material needs are satisfied through impersonal market exchange.” At the root of the increase of the narratives on social enterprise is “a belief that capitalist systems have become increasingly unethical” (Nicolopoulou et al., 2015; Banks 2006, p. 456).

Thus, the economic crisis, coupled with growing dissatisfaction has resulted in society looking for ‘another answer’ to capitalism. Avelino et al. (2014, p. 6) refer to this tension as a ‘game-changer,’ defined as “macro-phenomena (events and trends) that are perceived to change the rules, fields and players in the ‘game’ of societal interaction. The dominant understandings, values, institutions and social relationships through which society is organised and defined may
fundamentally change in response to game-changing events and trends.” According to Avelino et al. (2014), the economic crisis has generated debates about the unsustainability of our current economic and financial systems, which has resulted in new alternative economic narratives. Avelino et al. (2014) further argue that this has resulted in the acceleration of social innovations and thus, social enterprises.

2.2.4 Human Nature and Concepts of the Marketplace – Classical Views and Emerging Paradigms

In general, neo-classical theory argues that humans are inherently and universally self-interested and this drives the creation of public good via private interest. This type of theory originates from Adam Smith, who believed that it is human nature to act according to our own self-interests, as famously captured by Smith’s quotation: “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest” (Smith, 1863, p. 7). Smith’s theory of self-interest led to the formulation of the ‘laws of the market,’ which indicate that our own self-interest will help us to be successful in the marketplace and will by default create the products and services that society needs (Smith, 1863). For example, businesses cannot be successful unless they create products or services that are in demand. Thus, by ‘accident,’ businesses create positive benefits for society (Smith, 1863).

In contrast, there is research to suggest that western concepts of human nature are shifting from seeing humans as one-dimensional self-interested beings to multi-dimensional beings that are capable of being both self-interested and selfless (Yunus, 2010; Richardson, Healy, & Morgan, 2014; Avelion et al., 2014). One of the important thought leaders of this movement is Mohammad Yunus. In 2006, Muhammad Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize (The Nobel
Foundation, 2006) for his work with Grameen Bank, which created change for social and commercial institutions in developing countries by assisting women (who previously had very little to no involvement in business) to access micro-loans (Dacin, Dacin, & Matear, 2010; Alvord, Brown & Letts, 2004). Yunus first created the bank when regular lending institutions would not provide loans to ‘poor’ entrepreneurs (Yunus, 2010).

According to Muhammad Yunus (2010),

The biggest flaw in our existing theory of capitalism lies in its misrepresentation of human nature. In the present interpretation of capitalism, human beings engaged in business are portrayed as one-dimensional beings whose only mission is to maximize profit. Humans supposedly pursue this economic goal in a single-minded fashion…. This is a badly distorted picture of a human being. As even a moment’s reflection suggests, human beings are not money-making robots. The essential fact about humans is that they are multidimensional beings. Their happiness comes from many sources, not just from making money (p. xv).

Yunus argues that the interpretation of human beings as purely self-interested disregards any other aspects of life, including the political, social, emotional, environmental, and spiritual aspects (Yunus, 2010). In addition, Yunus further argues his point that human beings are not just self-interested, but also selfless as well – and that if this were not true, philanthropy and other public institutions would not exist.

According to Yunus (2010),

No doubt humans are selfish beings, but they are selfless beings too. Both these qualities coexist in all human beings. Self-interest and the pursuit of profit explain many of our actions, but many others make no sense when viewed through this distorting lens. If the
profit motive alone controlled all human behaviour, the only existing institutions would be ones designed to generated maximum individual wealth. There would be no churches or mosques or synagogues, no schools, no art museums, no public parks or health clinics or community centers…. There would be no charities, foundations, or non-profit organizations (p. xv-xvi).

There is evidently a ‘tension’ between the concepts of universally single-dimensional, self-interested individuals (Smith, 1863) and the concepts of the multi-dimensional human being that is capable of being both self-interested and selfless, suggested by social entrepreneurs and thought leaders such as Muhammad Yunus (2010). Thus, the very presence of social enterprises creates tension within neo-liberal capitalist society because they ‘shake up’ the very foundation of what capitalism is built upon – which is the notion that we are all self-interested members of society that are only interested in creating benefit and profit for ourselves (Smith, 1863). The presence of social enterprises challenge this theory at the core and suggests that we can move beyond our self-interest, to create businesses that help to benefit society and communities.

If the capitalist, neo-liberal system is built upon the concepts of self-interest (Smith, 1863; Yunus, 2010; Avelino et al., 2014), this leads to the question – if social entrepreneurship is possible, can it successfully exist within a capitalist society, which is based on self-interest? Yunus (2010, p. xvi) suggests that after we have recognized the ‘flaw in our theoretical structure’ and when we have replaced the “one-dimensional person in economic theory with a multi-dimensional person – a person who has both selfish and selfless interests at the same time,” then we can change the ‘business world.’ Yunus further argues that there is a need for two kinds of business: one for personal gain (i.e., self-interest theory) and one that is dedicated to helping
others (i.e., selfless theory). Yunus (2010) refers to the second type of business, built on the selfless part of human nature, as *social business*.

I argue that Yunus’ concept of the multi-dimensional human being – that is capable of being both self-interested and selfless, can apply to social innovation and social enterprise, as social enterprises (for-profit or not-for-profit) are created to be economically sustainable and to solve social problems within society. Thus, social enterprises fulfill the roles of self-interest (i.e., generating profits or being economically sustainable), while also demonstrating selfless qualities (i.e., choosing an entrepreneurial project based on solving a social need, even if it will not generate personal or business wealth). An example of this would be a social enterprise that teaches people about environmental sustainability practices through workshops. Although this business might be created to help the environment through awareness training, the workshops would still generate a profit, which would contribute to the economic sustainability of the business founder(s).

### 2.2.5 Challenges of Social Enterprise

Morgan and Price (2011: 23) identify three constraints that have hindered the innovative capacity of the social enterprise sector. These include: 1) *Leadership constraints* – many social enterprises tend to be overly dependent on the original founders and leaders and when they leave the social enterprise, it cannot sustain itself; 2) *Management constraints* – in general, the social enterprise sector has a shortage of management and skills expertise; and, 3) *Funding constraints* – constraints on internally generated capital are compounded with the challenges of a relatively new sector, which is not as appealing to conventional banks and alternative forms of social finance due to the fact that the conventional banking sector is more risk adverse (Richardson,
As the social enterprise sector is powered by social entrepreneurs that have prioritized social impacts over profits, and passion for change as the reason for entrepreneurship (over relevant experience), it creates challenges, including issues securing adequate funding from mainstream banks. The ‘tension’ here is that social enterprises do not follow the conventional path of business – dedicated to maximizing profits; instead, social enterprises are powered by the need to create social change through entrepreneurship.

According to Morgan (2011), the social enterprise sector is very diverse and depends heavily on the public sector for contracts and grants. This phenomenon may be correlated with the underlying principles of social enterprise, which is a social objective to reinvest surpluses back into the business community (Morgan, 2011; Morgan & Price, 2011). For example, in 2011, the social enterprise sector in Wales had over 3,000 social enterprises, with only 25 percent reportedly self-sustaining (with 100 percent earned income) (Morgan, 2011; Morgan & Price, 2011).

These findings infer that many social enterprises can be considered ‘hybrid models’ of business (e.g., a for-profit business that helps to solve a social/environmental problem), funding models may be more diverse and it may not be inaccurate to label a social enterprise as a ‘failure’ as it has not generated enough funding internally to be economically sustainable. A social enterprise may be partially funded by government grants and through ‘sponsorship’ from the private sector if it fulfills a unique mandate that serves social interests of the public that the public sector is not currently managing.

For example, Indigenous organizations such as the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) and NationTalk (an Indigenous newswire in Canada) both have sponsorship models that include private and public sector funding (CCAB, 2015; NationTalk, 2017). Without
external funding, these organizations would not be economically sustainable. However, both organizations serve an important purpose for Indigenous peoples in Canada. CCAB helps Indigenous businesses to network with the private sector in Canada so that they can take advantage of business and procurement opportunities through business networking (e.g., through the CCAB membership directory, conferences and gala events) (CCAB, 2015). NationTalk provides an exclusive ‘newswire’ for Indigenous news in Canada, including sharing ‘success stories’ and best practices in Indigenous business, and sharing news about Indigenous communities, businesses and organizations (NationTalk, 2017).

The CCAB and NationTalk are excellent examples of social enterprises that are partially funded by government and the private sector to serve a specific social purpose. These types of businesses also infer a ‘gap’ in the research on how to measure ‘success.’ On the surface, these businesses would not be sustainable without some type of sponsorship model. However, they return much value in terms of the services that they provide to Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Research by Ryan and Lyne (2008) indicates that there needs to be additional measurements for social enterprises to measure success, including Social Return on Investment (SROI). SROI is important because the core mission of social enterprises is to help solve a problem in society, so the ‘social return’ must be measured to determine success (along with the economic sustainability of the organization).

### 2.2.6 Considerations for Social Enterprise and Social Innovation

As has been indicated through academic literature, it is apparent that there is a growing dissatisfaction with the neo-liberal capitalist system. Research indicates that some people within society have developed a general mistrust of capitalism because it has not solved our social
Research also shows that social enterprises are not ‘enough’ to replace the current capitalist system (i.e., many social enterprises are small-scale), so it is not a ‘complete solution’ to solving our economic (i.e., economic crisis) and social problems. One of the greatest questions of our time may be – where do we go from here? If people are losing trust and value in the capitalist system, which has created much inequality in our society, and if more socially-motivated business models such as social enterprises are not a ‘complete’ solution, what system (if any) should replace what we currently have?

As it has been discussed in this literature review, current research shows that our views of the one-dimensional self-interested being is shifting to accept the concept of multi-dimensional beings that are capable of being both self-interested and selfless (Yunus, 2010; Richardson, Healy, & Morgan, 2014; Avelino et al., 2014). Research has also indicated that social innovation and social enterprise business models are growing in popularity as an ‘alternative’ to conventional forms of business that traditionally focus solely on wealth creation. Although social enterprises do not offer a ‘complete solution’ to our economic and social problems (i.e., many social enterprises are too small scale), they can assist with helping to solve social and environmental problems that are not currently being managed by the public sectors.

In what follows, concepts of Indigenous entrepreneurship and social innovation will be explored, including an analysis of how indigenous social innovation might contribute to reconciliation in Canada (2.3.1).
2.3 Concepts of Indigenous Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation in Canada

In general, social innovation involves any initiative, product, process, program, platform, or project that contributes to social change (Avelino et al., 2014). In addition, social innovation often ‘challenges’ the status quo through creating new processes and products, and contributes to the empowerment of peoples. ‘Successful’ social innovations have the characteristics of durability, scale and transformative impact on society (Avelino et al., 2014).

According to Tapsell and Woods (2010, p. 539), “Indigenous entrepreneurship operates at the intersection of social and economic entrepreneurship. Within the Indigenous communities, opportunities are culturally influenced and opportunity construction is culturally determined.” In addition, Anderson (2002, p. 66-67) argues that there are certain ‘characteristics’ that embody Indigenous businesses that differentiate them from mainstream ‘classical’ forms of business. These include: 1) An emphasis on communal versus individual ownership; 2) Sharing and group recognition rather than individual recognition; 3) Respect for “mother earth,” Elders, and Knowledge Keepers; 4) A concern about future generations; and, 5) Consensus decision-making.

All of these characteristics emphasize a community-oriented and collaboration approach, where the ‘mission’ of the business takes precedence over the individual(s) that have created the business. This is in contrast to classical Western approaches to business that favour profit and individual wealth and rewards over collaboration and community-building approaches (Avelino et al., 2014). When examining social innovation as a collaborative process to come up with solutions to social problems, it is evident that it is a complementary paradigm to Indigenous business, which also incorporates the ‘spirit’ of collaboration, community-building, and innovative approaches.
I argue that when social innovation is paired with Indigenous business, powerful transformative processes occur on the cultural and societal levels. For example, Tapsell and Woods (2010) outline the concepts for five ‘Guiding Propositions’ that tie together concepts of Indigenous business, social innovation, and reconciliation.

These Guiding Principles include:

1) Innovation is historically and culturally situated;

2) Colonization is a critical component of the historical ‘context’ of Indigenous entrepreneurship;

3) Entrepreneurship can be understood as a dynamic change resulting from innovation which takes the form of the introduction of new combinations: the formation and reformation of cooperating groups;

4) Innovation emerges from the novelty-creating, self-organizing acts of entrepreneurs who are part of cooperating groups; and,

5) Innovation takes place along a continuum at and between the edges of chaos and stability


2.3.1 Bringing the Concepts Together – How Indigenous Social Innovation can contribute to Reconciliation

As described earlier in this paper, social innovation can take many forms, including business models, new processes, products, and services (Avelino et al., 2014). Reconciliation also takes many different forms and movements (e.g. TRC, 2015a). Thus, what ‘Indigenous reconciliation through social innovation’ looks like may differ depending on the context,
industry, and which people(s) are leading the project(s). For example, an Indigenous-led reconciliation project may use social innovation in a different way than a non-Indigenous project (e.g., an Indigenous-led project may include cultural protocols and incorporate Indigenous knowledge).

By embodying a Two-Eyed Seeing approach, it is evident that there are Western-based approaches that are complementary to Indigenous-based approaches to Indigenous business, social innovation and reconciliation. For example, the frameworks of the ‘Seeking Solutions Approach’ and ‘Local Open Innovation’ (Deutsch, 2013; Deutsch & Dancause, 2013) have not historically been used for processes of Indigenous social innovation and reconciliation; however, they are complementary because of how these frameworks function.

For example, ‘Open Innovation’ is the process of presenting problems (traditionally from companies) to ‘outsiders’ so that new knowledge can be uncovered to solve problems that companies were unable to solve on their own, internally within their organizations (Deutsch, 2013).

Deutsch (2013) further developed the idea of ‘Open Innovation’ to include the ‘Seeking Solutions Approach’ and ‘Local Open Innovation,’ which focuses on local community engagement and collaboration to solve problems. In practice, this involves ‘Problem Solving’ conferences where companies submit a problem they would like to work on. This information is posted publically on a website to recruit ‘problem-solvers’ to attend the event. During the event, the problems are presented during group work and problem-solvers help to solve the problems through social innovation within groups (Deutsch, 2013; Deutsch & Dancause, 2013).
According to Deutsch, the ‘Seeking Solutions’ method was quite successful as it often resulted in the ‘problem-solvers’ collaborating directly with the people and/or companies that submitted the problem (Deutsch, 2013; Deutsch, 2013; Deutsch & Dancause, 2013).

I argue that methods such as Local Open Innovation and the Seeking Solutions Approach could be applied to ‘Indigenous reconciliation through social innovation,’ through a similarly focused event. Different concepts of reconciliation could be explored and group-work could be used to inspire social innovation and collaboration. For example, concepts of reconciliation through education and cultural awareness of Indigenous cultures could be explored. In the context of a ‘Problem Solving conference,’ a question could be posed such as “what types of Indigenous businesses could we create to educate the public on Indigenous cultures?” This may inspire ideas such as games, smart phone ‘apps,’ books, and so forth.

In order to fulfill the goals of reconciliation and decolonization, concepts such as Open Local Innovation and Seeking Solutions would need to be re-worked to be culturally appropriate. For example, an Indigenous ‘Problem Solving’ conference might include the presence of Indigenous Elders, and traditional ways of communicating within groups (e.g. ‘talking circles’). Although a hypothetical example, the idea of using concepts such as Open Local Innovation and the Seeking Solutions approach as inspiration for new social innovation models of engagement within the movements of Indigenous reconciliation and social innovation is promising.

2.3.2. A Case Study – Indigenous Entrepreneur(s) Using Social Innovation for Reconciliation

In order to understand ‘Indigenous reconciliation through social innovation’ on a practical level, an examination of positive ‘case studies’ are helpful. In this section, one case
study of an Indigenous entrepreneur will be examined to explore how they have used social innovation to create a business model that contributes to reconciliation. As described earlier in this paper, reconciliation involves the development of meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and also includes a ‘decolonization process’ whereby the public is educated on Indigenous cultures (Tapsell & Woods, 2010). In the following case study of Neeched Up Games³ (an Indigenous-owned business that makes educational Indigenous games), these principles are integrated into the entrepreneur’s business model.

In 2015, Janelle Pewapsconias, an Indigenous woman from Saskatchewan, created a board game to teach Indigenous cultures and history. According to Pewapsconias, the board game is “similar to the Game of Life but incorporates indigenous teachings and tools” (Brace, 2015). In the game, players start off as Indigenous youth from an Indigenous community or city, and through the game, the players are faced with life decisions, comedy, and trivia as they transition from youth to adult, and eventually to Elder (Brace, 2015).

In the game, the first decision player’s encounter is whether to go to college/university or to start a career. The career path is shorter than the college/university route; however, players gain more ‘resilience points’ by going to school (Brace, 2015). Pewapsconias observes that “At the end of each game, it’s not the amount of money that wins you the game, it’s the amount of resilience points, the amount of strength in your character and the experiences you have in your life that makes you the winner” (Brace, 2015). In addition, Pewapsconias argues that her business promotes “decolonized education” and the “empowerment of indigenous peoples by teaching cultural history and contemporary lifestyles” (Brace, 2015).

³ Janelle Pewapsconias is the owner of Neeched Up Games. The name of her new board game has not been released yet, however the CBC News article (Brace, 2015) indicates that Pewapsconias hopes the game will go into production soon.
Pewapsconias’ board game provides an excellent example of ‘reconciliation through social innovation’ because the ‘product’ (board game) is unique and serves a social purpose, which includes educating the public on Indigenous cultures. The game also incorporates Indigenous methodologies for teaching, including storytelling, traditional Indigenous knowledge, and humour. Reconciliation is initiated as a process through decolonizing techniques, which includes cultural awareness education, which can lead to increased respect and understanding for Indigenous cultures.

According to Pewapsconias, “there are a lot of misconceptions about Indigenous peoples here in Canada, for example, free education or not paying taxes…. My overall mission is to address those issues, debunk them, give identity to Indigenous peoples… I feel there isn’t much representation in the media or in textbooks that are specifically from Indigenous perspectives… It’s empowering for Indigenous peoples to hear about themselves within games and board games as well as for non-Indigenous people who want to learn more” (Brace, 2015). Overall, this game provides a powerful example of decolonization because the game teaches about Indigenous cultures and history from the viewpoint of an Indigenous person (Smith, 2012).

2.4 Conclusions and Considerations

This literature review has examined the concepts of reconciliation, social innovation, social enterprise and Indigenous entrepreneurship to illuminate paradigms and frameworks that are complementary and synergistic. Although current scholarship recognizes the unique aspects of Indigenous business, reconciliation, and social innovation, academic research does not currently tie these concepts together within one framework. In this research, I have helped to establish this framework by interviewing Indigenous entrepreneurs, such as Janelle
Pewapsconias of Neeched Up Games, to learn more about how Indigenous entrepreneurs are using social innovation in their business models to initiate processes of reconciliation.

Synthesizing the concepts explored in the literature review, I define Indigenous social innovation as using innovation to create unique solutions to contemporary Indigenous issues, with a focus on social impact, which benefits Indigenous peoples – in urban centres, rural areas, and in Indigenous communities across Canada. As Indigenous social innovation also naturally incorporates social entrepreneurship, I argue that ‘Indigenous social innovation’ is the most effective terminology to utilize in this research to explore concepts of reconciliation through the perspectives of Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Through my initial research on the topic of ‘Indigenous reconciliation through social innovation,’ I have established unique criteria that I have used for framework for my Master’s thesis research. This includes understanding ‘Indigenous reconciliation through social innovation’ in the following ways:

1) Using innovative products and services to educate the public on Indigenous cultures – to create awareness, respect and mutual understanding.

2) Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples working together through social innovation projects creates a powerful partnership of equality – where both parties have a shared vision of a prosperous future that includes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

3) These projects contribute to shared economic prosperity, which benefits all of Canada, through the creation of jobs and through creating an ‘equal playing field’ for Indigenous stakeholders.

It is important to note that although different frameworks can be established for Indigenous reconciliation and social innovation, Indigenous communities and cultures in Canada have
diverse histories, languages and cultures, so their ‘vision’ and processes of reconciliation may differ. On an existential level, Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples can draw inspiration from traditional Indigenous knowledge for social innovation and reconciliation. For example, Haudenosaunee cultures may draw upon the traditional teachings of Dekanawidah (also known as the ‘Peacemaker’), an important Iroquois historical figure. Teachings of Dekanawidah include themes of reconciliation, peacemaking, and unity of nations.

In the book *Hiawatha and the Great Peace* by Torkom Saraydarian (1984, p. 186-187), Dekanawidah said to the Council of Peace: “Unity is the foundation of success… Unity can be sustained only in trying by all means to relate, to unify other nations, especially those who are antagonistic to unity.” Although this quote reflects a time in history centuries ago, it is still relevant today, and especially to the movement of Indigenous reconciliation. It is possible that important historical Indigenous figures have traditional teachings that can still be called upon today for inspiration during this time of reconciliation and healing.

According to Wab Kinew, “[Reconciliation] can be boiled down to a similar ethos: Let’s learn about aboriginal peoples and cultures so we can get on with the business of living together in a good way” (Kinew, 2015). Unity and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is essential for reconciliation. Through this research, I explore how social innovation may play a role in reconciliation by creating respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through the products and services of Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada.

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4 Dekanawidah (the ‘Peacemaker’) was a great leader and historical figure that, along with Hiawatha, founded the League of the Iroquois and brought a ‘great peace’ and alliance of the five tribes (formally enemies) that became the Five Nations Iroquois Confederacy under a constitution of peace in the 12th Century (‘Great Law of Peace’), including the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca peoples. Later, the Tuscarora peoples joined the confederacy and became known as the ‘Six Nations’ (Saraydarian, 1984; “Iroquois Confederacy,” 2015; “Deganawidah,” 2004). It was believed the Peacemaker was born in the 1550s in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Ontario (Jamieson, 2015).

5 Wab Kinew is associate vice-president of indigenous affairs at the University of Winnipeg and an honorary witness for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (Kinew, 2015).
CHAPTER 3 – DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter will focus on the methodologies used to achieve the research objective and questions, and to describe how the data from this research project was collected and analysed. As described in previous chapters, the purpose of this research is to explore Indigenous entrepreneur’s views of social innovation and reconciliation, to explore whether Indigenous social innovation can play a role in reconciliation in Canada. Findings from this research indicate that Indigenous entrepreneurs and social innovation are actively playing a role in reconciliation and these results will be outlined in Chapter 4. The results of this study are relevant to Indigenous communities across Canada (including rural and urban communities), the Government of Canada (i.e. in the development of policy), and for the academic community.

The remainder of the chapter is divided into five sections. In section 3.1, data collection methods are explored. Section 3.2 provides information regarding the research questions that were posed to Indigenous entrepreneurs in this research study. Section 3.3 provides some summary information about the number of interviews and the length of time interviews took, while section 3.4 provides a statistical overview of research participants. Section 3.5 provides additional information on the research methodology, as well as other considerations and section 3.5 explores some of the challenges and considerations in carrying out the research.

3.1 Data Collection and Indigenous Entrepreneurs in this Study

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with Indigenous social entrepreneurs. For the purposes of this research, ‘Indigenous social entrepreneurs’ include Indigenous peoples who are founders/co-founders of business(es), with products or services
focused on solving social or environmental issues. These businesses include early start-ups or established multi-million dollar businesses in Canada.

Prior to carrying out the research, the protocols for data collection and the research instruments were submitted to the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at Queen’s University. The protocols and instruments were reviewed and ethics clearance was granted (See Appendix A).

Initially, only First Nations entrepreneurs were contacted to participate in this research study due to having a relatively small sample group and wanting to narrow the focus to a First Nations perspective. After a few Indigenous entrepreneurs self-identified as Métis or mixed First Nations and Métis heritage, the research study was changed to be inclusive of Métis people to ensure that all participants could be included in the study. These changes were reported and accepted by GREB.

There is no complete list of Indigenous entrepreneurs from which to draw a sample. Indigenous entrepreneurs were selected for this research based on being known for thought leadership and entrepreneurship in Canada. Company and contact information regarding the Indigenous entrepreneurs were found online through news articles, social media accounts, and company websites. Some of the Indigenous entrepreneurs were part of the researcher’s pre-existing business network.

In total, 17 Indigenous entrepreneurs were invited to participate in the research study and 14 agreed to participate. Out of the 14 participants, all except one participant granted permission to be named in this research, along with their company name(s). For the one participant that requested to remain anonymous, all identifying information has been stripped from his/her
interview and a pseudonym of ‘Nathan B.’ has been created for use with direct quotations. This pseudonym does not resemble the participant’s real name.

3.2 Research Questions

Indigenous entrepreneurs were asked a series of questions, which were designed to inspire thought on the motivations for why they started a business, how they identified as entrepreneurs, and their thoughts on how business and social innovation may or may not contribute to reconciliation in Canada. The following questions were asked:

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself and why you decided to become an entrepreneur?

2. Can you describe your business?
   a. What are the main products and/or services?
   b. What is the purpose of your business? What problem(s) are you hoping to solve?
   c. What is the structure of your business? (Sole proprietor, partnership, corporation, joint venture, etc.)
   d. What is the size of your business? (i.e. how many employees do you have? (If any).
   e. Where is your business located?

3. Do you identify with any of these labels? If so, what does it mean to you to identify in this way? If you do not identify with any of these label(s), how do you identify as a business?
   a. First Nations/Aboriginal/Indigenous Entrepreneur
   b. Social Entrepreneur
c. Social Enterprise

d. Social Innovation

e. Other

4. Is your culture an important element of your business? If so, how?

5. In the context of Indigenous cultures and/or business, what does reconciliation mean to you?

6. Do you think that businesses can contribute to reconciliation? If so, how?

7. Do you think your business contributes in any way to reconciliation? (If yes, why? If not, why?)

8. Is there anything else you feel is important to share?

3.3 Data Analysis

Research interviews ranged between 11 minutes (minimum) to 100 minutes (maximum). On average, the research interviews lasted 43 minutes. Local research participants were interviewed in person, while non-local research participants were interviewed over phone or Skype. Each interview was audio recorded and fully transcribed. The transcriptions were analyzed and manually coded for recurring and common themes. The results and main themes will be covered in Chapter Four.

3.4 Research Participants – General Statistics

In terms of Indigenous ancestral backgrounds, 10 participants (71%) were of First Nations ancestry. Of the 10 First Nations participants, three (n = 3) participants identified as having Cree ancestry, three (n = 3) participants identified as having Anishinaabe ancestry, two (n
(n = 2) participants identified with Mi’gmaq (mixed with Celtic) ancestry, one participant (n = 1) identified with Rotinonhsyon:ni (Mohawk) ancestry, and one participant (n = 1) identified with Kwakwaka’wakw ancestry. Of the remaining four participants, two participants (n = 2) identified as Métis and two participants (n = 2) identified as having both Cree and Métis heritage.

Of the 14 Indigenous entrepreneurs, half (n = 7) live in Ontario, three (n = 3) live in Alberta, two (n = 2) live in Saskatchewan, one (n =1) lives in Quebec, and one (n = 1) lives in British Columbia. Thus, the greatest representation from this research is from Central Canada (n = 8, 57%) and the Prairie Provinces (n = 5, 36%), with the least representation coming from the West Coast (n =1, 7%), and no representation from the North or Atlantic Regions.

In terms of age and gender, most of the participants were over the age of 30, but under the age of 65 (n = 12), while two participants (n =2) were between the ages of 18 and 29 years old. Fifty percent of the entrepreneurs interviewed were female, while the remaining 50 percent were male.

3.5 Methodology and Other Considerations

As the purpose of this research project is to examine concepts of social innovation and reconciliation through the lens of Indigenous viewpoints, the researcher’s aim is to use Indigenous methodologies as much as possible. This includes integrating storytelling into the results of the research (i.e., many of the Indigenous entrepreneurs used storytelling to share their thoughts on reconciliation) and using Decolonizing Methodologies (i.e., Smith, 2012; Kovach, 2010; and Wilson, 2008).

In 1999, the release of Māori scholar Linda Thuiwai Smith’s book *Decolonizing Methodologies* started a trend in Indigenous-based research to challenge the western-based
methodologies of academic institutions in favour of Indigenous methodologies, to ‘speak back’
to the institution as Indigenous peoples and scholars. Today, many Indigenous (and interestingly,
non-Indigenous) scholars choose to ground their Indigenous-based research on concepts found in
Decolonization theory. Examples of scholars using Decolonization theory include: Kovach

According to Linda Thuiwai Smith (2012, p. xi),

“[Research] methodology in its simplest definition generally refers to the theory of
method, or the approach or technique being taken, or the reasoning for selecting a set of
methods. This is a broad definition as there are discipline-specific ideas about theory,
methodology and method. Decolonizing Methodologies is concerned not so much with
the actual technique of selecting a method but much more with the context in which
research problems are conceptualized and designed, and with the implications of research
for its participants and their communities. It is also concerned with the institution of
research, its claims, its values and practices, and its relationships to power. It has ‘talked
back to’ and ‘talked up to’ research as an institution of knowledge that is embedded in a
global system of imperialism and power.”

In this research, I also utilize a Two-Eyed Seeing approach, which champions both
(2012, p. 335), “Two-Eyed seeing is the gift of multiple perspective treasured by many
aboriginal peoples and explains that it refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of
Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of
Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to using both these eyes together, for the benefit
of all.”
The Two-Eyed Seeing approach was first introduced by Elder Albert from the Mi’kmaw Nation in 2004 when he was working with participants from an “Integrative Science co-learning journey,” (p. 335) so that they could consider using this approach to better collaborate with others. In addition, Elder Albert suggests that “we need to learn to weave back and forth between our knowledges… because in a particular set of circumstances, it may be that one has more applicable strengths than the other…” (Bartlett, Marshall and Marshall, 2012, p. 335).

Although seemingly contradictory to the concepts of Decolonization theory, I argue that Two-Eyed Seeing is necessary for research on reconciliation as it involves reconciling the past between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. In addition, as a researcher, a Two-Eyed Seeing approach allows for use of Indigenous and non-Indigenous research methodologies, in order to best complement the research being completed.

3.6 Challenges and Considerations

As the Indigenous entrepreneurs involved in this study come from diverse Indigenous cultural backgrounds, traditional teachings, and geographies it is important to acknowledge that this research cannot speak for all Indigenous peoples across Canada. The researcher also rejects a pan-Indigenous approach (the belief that all Indigenous peoples are alike) by consciously not choosing any specific Indigenous framework for data analysis.

For example, it is now common for Indigenous and non-scholar researchers to appropriate traditional Indigenous tools and teachings such as the Medicine Wheel to analyse data; however, as the Medicine Wheel is specific to Anishinaabe culture, it would not reflect the other Indigenous cultures represented in this research study.
This research represents the views of 14 unique Indigenous peoples and may not represent the views of other Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada. However, this research will provide a ‘glimpse’ of what is possible with social innovation and reconciliation, through interviewing Indigenous entrepreneurs that actively feel they are contributing to reconciliation in Canada through their innovative projects, products and services.

One significant challenge on an existential level is what I refer to as the ‘burden of stories.’ In Indigenous cultures, stories are considered animate, holistic and ‘medicine’ as they have the power to heal or destroy (Archibald, 2008; King, 2003). According to Indigenous author Thomas King (2003, p. 122), “The truth about stories is, that’s all we are.” In this research, I had the honour of being told several stories by Indigenous entrepreneurs, whom I respect as thought leaders. In our oral culture, storytelling is important; and as an academic, I have struggled to find balance between conducting ‘good research’ by doing thematic analysis, which degrades stories into bite-sized data for academic consumption. As an Indigenous person and scholar, I have done my best to honour the stories by sharing as much as I can in this thesis research, without degrading the ‘spirit’ of the story. For stories that were not included in this thesis, I apologize to the Indigenous entrepreneurs that participated in this research - your stories provided a great teaching to me, and the stories will not be forgotten. *Chi Miigwech* (Thank you).
CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

Chapter 4 examines the results of this study, organized according to the main themes and focus areas that emerged from the interviews with the 14 Indigenous entrepreneurs that participated in the research. The findings of this research are organized into three major categories: 1) Reconciliation Findings; 2) Social Innovation Findings; and, 4) Methodological Findings.

Section 4.1 provides a general overview (see Table 4.1) of the research findings. In Section 4.2, I analyse the reconciliation findings, including the complexities of defining reconciliation in Canada (4.2.1), as well as exploring the common reconciliation themes (4.2.2) that emerged in this research study. Section 4.2.4 examines how Indigenous entrepreneurs are actively playing a role in reconciliation in Canada, while Section 4.3. explores the social innovation findings in this study, including what has contributed to Indigenous entrepreneur success (4.3.1), as well as challenges to Indigenous entrepreneurship (4.3.2). Section 4.4 explores methodological findings, including the role of storytelling (e.g., “my reconciliation story”) and includes two stories shared by research participants (4.4.1 and 4.4.2).

4.1 General Overview

In Table 4.1, an overview of the research findings is summarized, including participant names, business(es), cultural identity, identification with business labels (Indigenous entrepreneur, social entrepreneur, social enterprise and/or social innovation), and whether the participant felt that business (in general, or their own business) can contribute to reconciliation in Canada.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Business(es)</th>
<th>Cultural Identity</th>
<th>Identification with Business Labels</th>
<th>Can business contribute to reconciliation?</th>
<th>Do you feel your business contributes to reconciliation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Bob Joseph            | Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.                                             | Kwakwaka’wakw           | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                           | Yes                                       | Yes                                              |
| Eli Baxter            | Independent Contractor – Anishinaabemowin Teacher                             | Anishinaabe              | Does not identify with these business labels. (“I don’t like to use any of these ‘colonial’ terms… [b]ecause I’m looking at this from an Anishinaabe worldview or world vision”). | Yes                                       | Yes                                              |
| Jaime Koebel          | Indigenous Walks                                                             | Cree/Métis              | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                           | Yes                                       | Yes                                              |
| Janelle Pewapsconias  | Neeched Up Games                                                             | Cree                    | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                           | Yes                                       | Yes                                              |
| Jim Gladue            | Gladue Designs                                                               | Cree                    | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                           | Yes                                       | Yes                                              |
| Karen MacKenzie       | MacKintosh Canada                                                            | Cree/Métis              | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                           | Yes                                       | Yes                                              |
| Marie Delorme         | The Imagination Group of Companies (incorporated as Imagination Cards Inc.), includes three organizations: NATION Imagination, The Imagination Group, and Authentically Aboriginal | Métis                   | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                           | Yes                                       | Yes                                              |
| Nathan B.*            | N/A                                                                          | Cree                    | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                           | Yes                                       | Yes                                              |
| Paul Chaput           | Creative Consulting                                                         | Métis                   | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                           | Yes                                       | Yes                                              |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Business(es)</th>
<th>Cultural Identity</th>
<th>Identification with Business Labels</th>
<th>Can business contribute to reconciliation?</th>
<th>Do you feel your business contributes to reconciliation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pytor Hodgson         | Three Things Consulting             | Anishinaabe       | • Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                                                  | Yes                                         | Yes                                                    |
| Ryan Barberstock      | Okwaho Equal Source Inc.            | Rotinonhshyon:ní (Mohawk) | • Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                                                  | Yes                                         | Yes                                                    |
| Shannon Monk Payne    | Sakatay Global                      | Mi’kmaq and Celtic | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Innovation                                                                  | Yes                                         | Yes                                                    |
| Sunshine Tenasco      | Her Braids                          | Anishinaabe       | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Entrepreneur  
• Social Enterprise  
• Social Innovation                                                                  | Yes                                         | Yes                                                    |
| Victoria LaBilhois    | Wejipeg Excavation Contracting      | Mi’gmaq           | • Indigenous Entrepreneur  
• Social Innovation                                                                      | Yes                                         | Yes                                                    |

*Pseudonym – Some details removed to remain anonymous.

### 4.2 Reconciliation Findings

Within the context of reconciliation, four major findings emerged from the research.

They include:

1) Concepts and definitions of reconciliation are complex and differ for each person depending on their personal histories and relationship to colonialism through family and/or community history.

2) Education, relationship building and respect, and entrepreneurial success were the most common themes that emerged for reconciliation activities.
3) Findings suggest that Indigenous entrepreneurs are actively contributing to TRC recommendations No. 57 (‘Professional Development and Training for Public Servants’) and No. 92 (‘Business and Reconciliation’) (TRC, 2015a, p. 7 & 10).

4) Findings suggest that Indigenous entrepreneurs are actively playing a role in reconciliation in Canada.

4.2.1 Concepts and Definitions of Reconciliation are Complex

Overall, concepts and definitions of reconciliation are complex; every individual that I interviewed provided a different understanding and definition of reconciliation, based on the nature of their business and/or their personal, family and community histories. According to Ryan Barberstock of Okwaho Equal Source, “Reconciliation [is] difficult… reconciliation means so many things to so many people and it depends on a person’s understanding, their knowledge base, and what stage in their life they’re in.”

Definitions of reconciliation were holistic in the sense that they incorporated not only the Indigenous entrepreneur’s views on business, but also their personal views. For example, Jaime Koebel of Indigenous Walks has a background in the arts and education and stated, “I often tell the people who take the walks, that the very act of taking a walk is a form of reconciliation. Whether they are Indigenous or not, they are participating in an educational activity, which will expand their knowledge and hopefully create better understanding.”

During her research interview, Jaime Koebel revealed that she recognized a need for self-identification (for Indigenous peoples) and awareness in public spaces, including the awareness

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6 In the interest of full disclosure, Ryan Barberstock is my spouse. He was not interviewed because he is my spouse but because he is a partner in Okwaho Equal Source Inc., a social enterprise where I am also a partner. He was interviewed following the same protocols and using the same research instruments in compliance with all the same rules and regulations as outlined in my GREB application and agreed upon by GREB.
of making social, political and cultural changes through the arts. Her business specializes in storytelling and education (“I see the walks as a performative art in terms of storytelling”) and is grounded in research in local Indigenous knowledges and history. She suggests that the walks contribute to reconciliation because the walk participants are “experiencing a new perspective that actually might take them out of their space of comfort, into uncomfortable space and I think that helps with personal growth.”

Janelle Pewapsconias of Neeched Up Games describes that “reconciliation in business means many different things. One thing is infusing Indigenous models and ways of knowing [and] pedagogy into how we conduct business.” The concept of infusing Indigenous cultural teachings and ways of knowing was a common concept within this group of entrepreneurs and was acknowledge as especially important by six (n=6) of the entrepreneurs (Shannon Monk Payne, Jaime Koebel, Eli Baxter, Karen MacKenzie, Sunshine Tenasco, and Janelle Pewapsconias).

Eli Baxter, an Anishinaabe language teacher, suggested that “[I]n terms of business, reconciliation will happen when we start, let’s say, rebuilding our languages again… As Ojibwe’s, we follow three laws… Law of Creation, Law of the Land and Laws of the People. And, the Laws of the People is the third and last because we have to follow the Laws of the Land and if we don’t follow the Laws of the Land, then we suffer. And, then the Laws of the Land, if we continue destroying our lands, the Laws of Creation will step in. And, this is where you get climate change, and stuff gets all messed up.”

For some Indigenous entrepreneurs, the concept of reconciliation was deeply personal. For example, as a residential school survivor, Jim Gladue of Gladue Designs shared that his work in art and architectural design was a tool for his personal healing. Jim Gladue suggested, “I
think for me, it’s is how I heal and, you know, reconciliation and healing is through the ability to
design. And, you know, I self-heal through my architecture and art.” For Ryan Barberstock,
reconciliation also had a connection to family and community – “[F]or me personally, what
reconciliation means associated to culture - it means to remember. It also means to reflect upon
the hardships that my family, my community have faced over many years…”

For both Jim Gladue and Ryan Barberstock, personal connotations of reconciliation were
followed up by concepts of resilience, strength and an interest in moving forward. When talking
about his business and reconciliation, Jim Gladue commented

… sometimes I forget to put that out there, that I’m residential? [i.e., Residential school
survivor]… Because a lot of times I forget about it. But, I think I lead by example [and
that’s how] I think I’m contributing or giving back… but also too, you know, to bring
pride to the peoples; to our peoples… through the symbolism of the design and stuff. So,
a lot of it is what God gave you, and you’ve got to make the best of it… I made the best
of what God gave me, and being, you know, residential as well. But, I think a lot of that
inspires me because of the fact that I’m First Nations… because of the fact that you
know, I’m residential… But, I think I use that to enable me instead of prohibit me.
(Gladue, Gladue Designs)

Ryan Barberstock suggests that moving forward was the “key to our survival as
Indigenous people… to always find ways to advance ourselves, our families and our
communities, as a collective, together. And, that’s where we should be now - is working
together, embracing each other… growing from the experience and moving on… to bigger and
better, so that we don’t have to re-live the traumas of the past. We learn from them, we grow
from them. We carry on.”
The concept of wanting to move forward was a common theme for all the Indigenous entrepreneurs that were interviewed (n=14). This was tied into the process of reconciliation and how it was imagined. Several entrepreneurs had a similar concept of what needed to happen for Canada to move forward with reconciliation. This process can be summarized as, 1) an apology for the traumas that were caused to Indigenous peoples, 2) a commitment to move forward, and, 3) plan(s) of action to move forward:

Reconciliation means an acknowledgement of what has happened in the past and also a commitment to move forward together (Karen MacKenzie, MacKintosh Canada).

“It’s about honouring and respecting what actually happened… and then the part about reconciliation is moving on that. We can’t just stay… we actually have to put it into practice… we need to, number one [#1], identify the action item, but number two [#2], and most importantly, follow through” (Sunshine Tenasco, Her Braids and Pow Wow Pitch).

I believe we are past the point of laying blame. I think reconciliation starts with a sincere and heartfelt apology. It is followed up by restitution…. It is followed up with meaningful actions that seek to right the wrongs of the past… (Marie Delorme, the Imagination Group of Companies).

Along with the concept of moving forward was a common belief that reconciliation is a two-way process where we need to move in partnership towards reconciliation with non-
Indigenous peoples and Indigenous peoples, including the Canadian public and/or Government of Canada:

[I]t’s our responsibility to follow the practices that our ancestors taught us through the Medicine Wheel and to say, we do it in a calm and peaceful and kind, inclusive way. Because that’s what we were all taught and that’s our culture. And, when we do it that way, then it’s up to other people to step up as well as meet us as the halfway point, but it’s also our job to articulate what we need and how we need it” (Sunshine Tenasco).

So, this is what reconciliation is to me. Reconciliation is about moving forward together. It’s about finding solutions together...” (Marie Delorme).

[T]rue reconciliation is that acknowledgement of the past, but also moving forward in a different way, with changed beliefs… and a commitment towards [being] together. And, you don’t need to look like me to be accepted. Your difference is what’s the exciting piece. A different way of thinking can make this bigger and better (Karen MacKenzie).

Overall, the concept of reconciliation in this research study acknowledged that reconciliation is a two-way process, however one concept that was not common was the concept of reconciliation happening inside of our Indigenous communities. Victoria LaBillois suggests that “[R]econciliation from the inside of our communities has to happen, while it’s happening outside of our communities… our own people need… to lift ourselves up and dust ourselves off and shake off… the colonialism and the [beliefs that we are] second-class citizens, and you’re not good enough.” The concept of reconciliation within communities is powerful as it turns the
focus inward to healing within Indigenous communities. As the history of residential schools in Canada left a legacy of intergenerational trauma (Frideres, 2011), it is evident that reconciliation will also involve the healing of families and communities.

The concept of forgiveness also emerged within the context of reconciliation in Canada. Marie Delorme suggests:

[I]ndigenous people ourselves have to play a very significant role in reconciliation. And, here’s what I mean. I don’t think truth and reconciliation is possible until forgiveness enters into the equation. And, when I look at any of us, we all have our strengths and we all have our experiences of racism, or marginalization. Some stories are way worse than others. I never went to residential school as an example, but I was a product of the foster care system… I think anyone I have talked to who has emerged healthy and productive and healthy has found it in their heart to forgive… I’ve worked with First Nations, and Métis and Inuit all across this country and the communities that are moving forward, who are thriving, are looking to the future, they are not forgetting the past… The past is not maybe informing who they are, but it is not defining who they are. And, I think that’s critical. I think it’s absolutely critical if we’re going to move forward, we have to forgive and we have to say, and now what?

4.2.2 Common Reconciliation Themes - Education, Relationship building and Respect, and Entrepreneurial Success

One of the main findings in this research is the importance of education for creating awareness for Indigenous cultures and history in Canada. This finding is relevant as education was seen by the Indigenous entrepreneurs in this study as contributing to reconciliation through improving relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada through building
respect and understanding, based on a grounding in the history of colonialism and residential school systems in Canada. This ties in with the TRC Calls to Action, which are directly connected to the education of public servants and the corporate sector.

In terms of education, one of the findings of this research is that the business activities of several Indigenous entrepreneurs interviewed contributed to the TRC Calls to Action No. 57 and No. 92, which relate to education for public servants and roles for business in reconciliation (which also includes education. The TRC recommendations in question are directly quoted below and include the original subheadings which appear within the TRC Calls to Action (TRC, 2015a):

Professional Development and Training for Public Servants

57) We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism (TRC, 2015a, p. 7).

Business and Reconciliation

92) We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities
involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.

ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.

iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism (TRC, 2015a, p. 92)

Several entrepreneurs in this research study have businesses that involve consulting or and/or education and workshop services, including Bob Joseph, Karen MacKenzie, Ryan Barberstock, Shannon Monk Payne, Marie Delorme, Jaime Koebel, and Pytor Hodgson. All the entrepreneurs listed have indicated that through their consulting and/or educational services, they have worked to educate the mainstream public, or large corporations, or public service employees on Indigenous relations and/or Indigenous history in Canada. These business services and activities fit within the TRC Calls to Action No. 57 and No. 92, which outline how public
service employees and businesses should integrate training on Indigenous peoples into their work.

For TRC recommendation No. 57, Bob Joseph commented, “If you look at the [TRC] recommendations, there’s actually recommendations for what I do; for what this whole business is about…. We know that there’s a big impact on people that come into our classes and then from the time they come in to the time they leave, they can be quite different people.” Bob then shared a story about a man that had attended one of his classes; the story demonstrated a great transformation of this individual, who started with prejudices towards Indigenous people, to showing acceptance and support after becoming educated on Indigenous-based history and culture in one of Bob Joseph’s Indigenous relations workshops.

Another Indigenous entrepreneur, Shannon Monk Payne used her Indigenous cultural knowledge and her educational background to create a special framework for reconciliation and education for non-Indigenous workshop participants. Named the Circle Approach to Cultural Confidence™ (CIRCLE). Shannon suggests that her framework is “a model for reconciliation that I’ve developed based on who I am as a person, as an educator, as an Indigenous person, as a parent, and as community member.” In her framework, CIRCLE represents:

1) C = Creating a Safe Space;
2) I = Indigenous History and Context;
3) R = Building Relations, Connections and Community;
4) C = Culture, Ceremony and Protocol;
5) L = Learning as a Lifelong Journey; and
6) E = Educating Yourself to Educate Others.
Through all the stories shared by the Indigenous entrepreneurs that are consultants and workshop facilitators, the role as ‘educator’ was seen to be very effective when working with the non-Indigenous public as they are able to provide their own cultural knowledge as the foundation for educational Indigenous relations workshops and seminars.

In terms of success, a common theme that emerged in reconciliation research during this research project is that being successful as an Indigenous entrepreneur contributes to reconciliation. Several of the Indigenous entrepreneurs interviewed expressed that they felt that their success in business made them a good role model for other Indigenous peoples and communities and hoped it would inspire others to pursue business and be successful. This sentiment was expressed by Nathan B.,

I think the best thing you can do as Indigenous entrepreneurs is just trying to be as successful as possible, regardless of what anyone else says. That’s always been a motivator for me. I’ve tried to be as successful that I can become, not compared to anyone else out there. I try not to see my limitations or disadvantages as an Indigenous entrepreneur in the mainstream society as a disadvantage; I try to see it as an advantage… so I can use what’s holding me back to fuel me forward… you know, a force tied to how I was raised and my belief systems.

The concept of success and being a good role model also related to the concept of giving back to one’s community. Victoria LaBillois shared a story about how she enjoys giving workshops in her Mi’gmaq community on financial literacy to give back:

I teach financial literacy in the community as well. That’s very near and dear to my heart, that our people get out of that poverty and scarcity. And, I teach it and I interface a lot with the youth. And, when I walk in, I can see them staring at me from head to toe. My
fingernails, my purses, me and my famous pursues [laughs]. Um, in what… where did she come from? … And, the training centre is right next to my father’s house. I point out the window… I grew up right here… I played in these fields when I was a kid. So, they see me, they identify with me. I’m from here, I am you. You are me. You can do this. Lift yourself up.

The concept of success was also tied to concept of equity for several of the Indigenous entrepreneurs in this research study:

I think that social innovation and entrepreneurship for First Nation businesses is critical because economics is at the end of the day, reconciliation is about evening the playing field, right? It is about equity. In fact, equity versus equality, even right? So, it is about equity and it’s about having the opportunities to provide for our families, for our communities, for ourselves… (Pytor Hodgson, Three Things Consulting).

And, so, we talk about equality, but we need to look at equality more as equity. If that makes sense? So, there are different barriers and different history and different everything for Indigenous people in Canada. So, equality doesn’t mean – ‘here you get the same thing.’ Well, we’re starting from a different place, we’re starting from different damages. We’re starting from so many different things and those have to be considered. (Sunshine Tenasco).

Although the Indigenous entrepreneurs in this research were diverse in terms of geographical locations, cultural backgrounds and cultural teachings, it is significant to mention that many of them shared the same values of wanting to be successful to be a good role model to other Indigenous peoples, and the belief that being successful also meant that they had a
responsibility to give back to their communities, whether through spending time assisting community members (e.g., through teaching or giving workshops), or giving back financially (e.g., through donations to Indigenous organizations such as Indspire).

For example, Janelle Pewapsconias refers to social models and the importance of taking care of community:

Okay, yes, social models, it’s a way of taking care of your community and no matter what community you’re from, it’s being able to give back in a way… that your community gives to you and supports you in your business. So, whether that means charity work, or community work with your staff, or… funding projects, or providing… a way to help society better itself… and then using some of the funds that you make from the business that you have and giving it back to the community as well.

4.2.4 Indigenous Entrepreneurs are Actively Playing a Role in Reconciliation

When asked whether they felt their business contributed to reconciliation, all Indigenous entrepreneurs that participated in this research answered in the affirmative. In terms of how they felt they are contributing to reconciliation, all participants grounded their answers in examples of products and/or services that they were providing as businesses, which contribute to decolonization, and/or education regarding Indigenous cultures and history in Canada, and/or debunking negative Indigenous stereotypes through being good role models through their success and social impact.

For example, Janelle Pewapsconias is a game designer that created a board game to teach people about Cree culture and values. Victoria LaBillois has helped to transform the wind park industry in Quebec to one that embraces and champions highly qualified Mi’gmaq workers.
Pytor Hodgson is a highly respected business leader in his industry, helping to train Indigenous youth as future leaders in their communities so that they can contribute to grassroots movements and change. In general, all the Indigenous entrepreneurs that were interviewed for this research are contributing to positive impact for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through social innovation, which they acknowledge, contributes to reconciliation in Canada.

4.3 Social Innovation Findings

In terms of the business and social innovation terminology used within this research, Indigenous entrepreneurs were asked whether they identified with any of the following terms: Indigenous entrepreneur, social entrepreneur, social enterprise, and/or social innovation. These terms were chosen as they are commonly used in research surrounding social innovation (except for ‘Indigenous Entrepreneur’). The results show that 86 percent (n = 12) of the entrepreneurs interviewed identified with being an Indigenous entrepreneur. Of the two entrepreneurs that rejected this term, one of the entrepreneurs preferred to refer to himself by his cultural term, not Indigenous:

I identify as Kanienkehaka Mohawk entrepreneur in business… I kind of shy away from First Nations, Aboriginal, or Indigenous entrepreneur. I like to take ownership of my identity and I’m Kanienkehaka, a person of the flint… a member of the people of the flint, I think is more accurate” (Ryan Barberstock, Okwaho Equal Source).

The second entrepreneur that rejected the term Indigenous entrepreneur also rejected all other terms, including social entrepreneur, social enterprise and social innovation as being colonial and not originating from Indigenous peoples and worldviews. He suggested that as Indigenous peoples, we should come up with our own terminology in business that relates to our
Indigenous culture(s) and worldview. For example, it was suggested by two Indigenous entrepreneurs in this study that we could look at our Indigenous languages to see how our ancestors spoke about trade and commerce in our languages, which could contribute to the creation of our own frameworks and terminology in business.

Eleven (79%) of the research participants identified with being a social entrepreneur. Nine (64%) of the research participants identified as having a social enterprise. One of the most common reasons for not identifying with the term social enterprise came from not feeling like their business was large enough or successful enough to be considered a social enterprise. In terms of social innovation, 11 (79%) of the research participants identified with social innovation, while three (21%) did not (see Figure 4.1 for comparison of Identification with Business Labels).

![Identification with Business Labels](image)

**Figure 4.1 - Identification with Business Labels**
A common issue that came up in the research was that many of the terms were not known to the research participants. In some cases, the terms were rejected due to not understanding what they meant (and in one case, a ‘no’ answer was changed to ‘yes’ after I explained what the term meant).

As a consultant that works often with youth, Pytor Hodgson, challenged the terminology as ‘academic jargon’ and offered this challenge:

What does all that language mean for the fifteen-year-old? Whether they are living in Winnipeg, or Thunder Bay… or if they’re at the Inuit Children’s Centre? What does this language even mean? Because I think we often forget, again, that privilege that we have as people who have had opportunities and experiences…. Folks like you and I, and others… how do we ensure that these conversations get to young people, today. Like, how do they get to people who don’t have the same experiences, privileges and opportunities we’ve had?”

Pytor then followed up his comment with:

“Because… like the concept of social innovation… You’ve got people who have faced great obstacles and overcome so many things, but at the end of the day, it’s like they’ve seem to have forgotten all of that [referring to organizations that run social innovation programs]. And, they talk in a language they use these conceptual models that are not accessible at all, to that 15 year old, or in often cases, the 15 year old’s parent. And, so it’s about helping people figure out what this looks like, right? And, I think from an Indigenous concept, it’s about, so okay, so, how does a group of people, say a group of women coming together once a week beading, how can you turn that into some money in your pocket? Like, we want to teach you a skill, and we want you to get money in your
pocket… social innovation… But again, do you ever hear about it talked about in that way?”

I argue that Pytor Hodgson’s points are very relevant and important as statistically, Indigenous peoples have lower educational levels than the mainstream Canadian public (Boyd and Trosper, 2010). I would also like to acknowledge that most of the participants in this research study were well educated, with most having at a minimum a college or university degree; and, many of the research participants were not fully aware of the terminology social entrepreneur, social enterprise, and/or social innovation.

The results of this research indicate that social innovation definitely plays a strong role in reconciliation processes being led by Indigenous peoples, but as Pytor Hodgson mentions in his comments, it is important to evaluate whether more education needs to be accessible to Indigenous peoples on the meaning(s) behind social innovation or whether more accessible terminology should be used. I argue that social innovation is a useful term because it is complementary to Indigenous business due to the concept of creating business to solve social and environmental issues. However, in the future, education and accessibility will need to be examined so that concepts of Social Innovation can be more readily shared with aspiring Indigenous entrepreneurs (especially youth).

4.3.1 Social Innovation – What has Contributed to Indigenous Entrepreneur Success

In this research study, there were certain aspects that were shared, which the research participants felt contributed to their success in social innovation and as an entrepreneur. One of the biggest contributors to success was support – from family, friends, and/or community:
Like, my other businesses, there was a lot of family support and my husband, my champion… who worked in politics for 20 years and he knew the landscape, and he knew my brain, my work ethic… and he says, ‘if you can’t do this, nobody can…’ and just championing me and pushing… not pushing, but just being there and saying ‘you can do this, you can do this.’ And, you know what, I did it (Victoria LaBillois).

Another theme that emerged was the importance of supporting other Indigenous entrepreneurs and that when one person succeeds, we all succeed (as Indigenous people). For example, Victoria LaBillois describes one of her favourite sayings and the importance of supporting other Indigenous entrepreneurs:

Here’s one of my favorite sayings that I’ve been using. Remember what I told you about competition? I don’t think there’s competition out there, I don’t look at anybody as competition. “A rising tide lifts all boats.” I don’t know who said it. I would have read it or heard it somewhere. And, I really loved it. And I really think about that. So, we all get ahead, and that’s why I want to see you succeed. We all advance, with your success, with my success, when we support Indigenous women, when we support our own workers, our nations, our different communities. We all benefit. It’s that rising tide, lifts all boats.

Other entrepreneurs such as Janelle Pewapsconias refer to a reciprocal relationship where she supports her Indigenous community as they have supported her: “I feel like I have a community of people behind me that I need to share ideas with. So, there’s this responsibility almost to my people, to share this and constantly be supported.”
Another contributor to success for entrepreneurship was rooted in Indigenous cultures and/or traditional teachings. For example, Karen MacKenzie shared that she spent a significant amount of time with Indigenous Elders and that their traditional teachings had contributed positively to her life; and, that these teachings also contributed to the development of a consulting framework, which allowed to her to draw from her culture and traditional teachings when working with mainstream clients in business. Shannon Monk Payne also shared a similar sentiment that she was able to draw upon her cultural teachings to create her CIRCLE Approach to Cultural Confidence™.

4.3.2 Social Innovation – Challenges to Indigenous Entrepreneurship

During this research study, challenges to social Innovation and Indigenous entrepreneurship were shared. This is significant to the research study as there were no questions posed to research participants regarding challenges to social innovation or reconciliation; this information was often shared when asked “is there anything else you would like to add?”

Although there were many positive factors that contributed to Indigenous social innovation and success in business, some of the Indigenous entrepreneurs referred to barriers or challenges that they had experienced. As several of the research participants are actively involved in consulting work, this section will provide a summary of the challenges, but will not attribute the information to any particular name(s), nor will the number of entrepreneurs that shared this information be revealed. This is to protect the integrity of the research participants and their businesses. However, the challenges that were brought forward will be briefly mentioned in this section.
The common obstacles that were shared in this research include: 1) Lack of support from Indigenous community or lateral violence with the community; 2) Community members’ perceptions of victimization, ‘learned helplessness,’ dependency and/or entitlement holding the community back from moving forward and progressing (e.g. “the government owes me because of colonialism, I don’t need to work”); 3) Negative community politics and/or family rivalries within the community); and, 4) ‘Crabs in a bucket’ or jealousy of others’ success.

Overall, I gained the impression that these other stories were shared out of frustration; that the research participants were aware of these obstacles, either because they had personally experienced it or because they were aware of it happening in their communities. It was expressed that these challenges needed to be ‘put out there’ and that something needs to be done about it so that we can move our communities towards developing a more holistic and supportive community atmosphere, so that we can become more prosperous and self-sufficient as Indigenous communities (rural or urban).

4.4 Methodological Findings: Role of Storytelling (“My Reconciliation Story”)

One of the methodological findings of this research is the role of storytelling in sharing stories of Indigenous entrepreneurship, social innovation and reconciliation. In many of the interviews conducted with research participants, they chose to share a story with me to describe what they were thinking, instead of answering the question(s) directly. Although all Indigenous cultures in Canada are unique in cultural teachings, histories and geographies, they all share storytelling as a cultural characteristic, especially with oral culture and traditions. As an

7 ‘Crabs in a bucket’ is a common analogy used amongst Indigenous peoples in Canada. I have heard several different versions of the story through oral culture. According to the story, when one crab makes it to the top of the bucket and is almost ready to escape, the other crabs pull it back down into the bucket. In general this story refers to the phenomena when one [Indigenous] person is on their way to success, other [Indigenous] people will try to pull them down (like crabs in a bucket).
Indigenous person, I recognize the importance and honour or ‘receiving’ a story or a teaching. According to Archibald (2003), stories in Indigenous cultures are significant. There are traditional protocols around stories and just as living beings, stories need to be taken care of (Archibald, 2003). Although the stories shared with me were not traditional stories passed down through oral culture, I acknowledge the importance of them.

Unfortunately, in a Master’s thesis, I am unable to share all the stories that were shared with me through this research project. However, I will share two reconciliation stories in full as I feel they demonstrate the power and importance of Indigenous storytelling, especially in the context of reconciliation. I argue that storytelling is an ‘Indigenous methodology’ as it is used to convey information, through the lens of Indigenous cultural teachings and worldview.

In terms of this research, it is significant to note that several of the Indigenous entrepreneurs chose to share stories when asked about what reconciliation meant to them. In my future research, the role of storytelling will be taken into consideration as an Indigenous methodology and other methods of presentation for research results will also be taken into consideration (e.g. multimedia methods of capturing stories to later be shared).

4.4.1 Reconciliation Story 1 – Wind Park and the Mi’gmaq and French

The first story is from Victoria LaBillois. When talking about reconciliation, she wanted to share a story about how the perceptions of French Canadians and Mi’gmaq workers changed after having the chance to work with each other on a Wind park in Quebec. Initially, Victoria suggested, “In terms of reconciliation, it’s putting us out there in non-traditional industries, where we shouldn’t have been excluded in the first place. And, addressing some of these issues that exist. And, they’re getting to know us…” She followed this up with a story:
My husband shared a good story with me about the wind park. [The] location, obviously has to be in the mountains where it’s windy. So, it’s difficult to access. So, the workers would park at the bottom of the mountain and buses bring them up in the morning, 29 kilometers… 29 kilometers on a dirt road is a long drive! I’ve taken it many times… It’s an hour. It’s a good hour.

So, what happened at first is, all the Mi’gmaq get on one bus; they all know each other. You’re gonna hang out with who you wanna hang out with right? And then all the non-natives, the francophone, would get on another bus, because they just simply didn’t know each other.

So, when the buses would arrive, generally at the same time, the Mi’gmaq get off the bus. They’re laughing, they’re joking, they’re teasing, it’s a ruckus. It’s alive… You know what I mean? It’s just our people, being our people. Just laughing.

And, the non-natives get off the bus, single file, quiet, ‘good morning, good morning, good morning’… And they noticed… Both of them noticed that.

So, my husband who took a French language course in order to be working here, would start talking and introduce himself to people and they asked him that… ‘What’s so funny? How come they’re all laughin’ when they get off the bus?’
He said, it’s just the way it is, the *joie de vivre*. That… The love of life, you know? What are we going to do, cry? [laughs]. Are they going to complain? Nobody’s listenin’, so they all just laugh and joke and enjoy life.

So, it got to show a different side to these workers and then they started to work together and get to know each other, and learn Mi’gmaq words, and French words, and it worked really… the whole project itself… it did a lot to improve race relations for us.

This story effectively shows how the views and relationships between the Mi’gmaq and French Canadians evolved over the course of the wind project. Through the use of storytelling, the listener can imagine what it may have been like when the Mi’gmaq and the French Canadians first met each other and how their relationship developed over time. I argue that this story captures the ‘spirit’ behind reconciliation more effectively than an academic or logical response to “what does reconciliation mean to you.”

4.4.2 Reconciliation Story 2 – The Gift Shop and the Bear

In this story, Pytor Hodgson shares his experience of visiting a gift shop and seeing Indigenous headdresses in the shop window. Initially, he shared that he was quite upset to see the headdresses there as they are sacred in First Nations culture; only Chiefs and greatly respected leaders are given headdresses, so to see a headdress as a ‘costume’ was quite upsetting. Through this story, Pytor shares how he dealt with the situation and how the relationship that he developed with the non-Indigenous shop keeper contributed to reconciliation.
Well… So, the lovely little bear here… He’s a very cute bear [shows the researcher a stone bear]… So, this little fella came into my life on Sunday… So, in November, I was in Montreal. And, while in Montreal that day, I was with a friend or two friends. And, we walked by a store front. And, in that store front, there was the most horrifying child’s headdress in the window of this little tourist shop in old Montreal. Like, those…. Like neon feathers…. And, it was brutal. So, I walk into the store and we were going in all the stores visiting, right? It was old Montreal, we were just looking for souvenirs, Christmas presents, it was the end of November.

So, we go in and I [saw] the child’s headdress thing and I go to the back - the native section, and they have the signs that… like, certified… like, because Quebec has a really good process, right, of certifying stores to sell native goods, that identify that in fact these goods have been brought to the store honestly and in a good way.

And, anyways, I go in and there is a basket of all the fake headdresses. And, so, there was a clerk there and I said to her ‘you know, as a… Anishinaabe man, I have a real struggle, with watching… seeing the headdress and I sort of just… This in our culture, [is] our medicine. So, if someone in my culture has something like this, or across the country… doesn’t matter if it’s mine, or it’s Blackfoot, or Cree. Any of the communities that use headdresses of this nature, they are medicine…

And, I just had a good conversation. It wasn’t… I wasn’t mean. It wasn’t rude. It wasn’t… condescending. I wasn’t [saying] ‘you dirty racist’. I [was] just… this is where
it’s at. And, she said, ‘oh I don’t know why,’ she said, ‘the kids love them though, so we carry them because the kids love them, they put them on.’

And I said, ‘are all the kids white?’ And, she said ‘well, yeah,’ and I said, ‘that’s the problem’ [laughs].

And then she said, ‘ohhhhh…’ And, she was Indian… Indian from India. And, she said, ‘oh…’

And I said, ‘your grandparents, where are your grandparents?’

And she said, ‘oh, they’re still in India.’

I said ‘oh, okay. Is there something in your culture, in your faith, that if your grandparents knew people were selling, they would shake their head and think what’s happening in the world?’

[She said] ‘Well goodness, yeah, the Om symbol.’ She said, ‘people are getting tattoos of it, you can buy it on placemats. My grandparents are just horrified. I am horrified.’

And, I said ‘exactly! This is our Om symbol.’

And she was like, ‘I never thought of it that way.’
That was the end of that. We left the store. Um, the next day my friends… I flew to Calgary the next morning. I get off the plane. There is a picture of that storefront window. And, the headdress is gone.

So, on Sunday, we’re walking in old Montreal. The store is there, headdress is gone. I go in, and, I meet the woman. And, so this is the woman who owns the store. Right here. And, uh, so we start to chat. I thank her. I think I had already given her… I gave her my four directions pin. And, I give her the teaching of the four directions and talk about the races coming together and how…

And, so she started… She was very very weepy, and I just said, ‘you know, it’s just so wonderful that you have done this. That you have taken this.’

And, she said, ‘well, I need to know what other things in the store shouldn’t I have. Like, I don’t want to sell stuff that is offensive and hurtful.’ She said, ‘because that’s what it is right?’

And I said ‘yes.’

She said, ‘hurtful right?’

And I said, ‘yeah.’
And, so, that said, as we started to talk… Now I had given her this pin. So, she said, well ‘I need to give you something. It’s…I think it’s both of our cultures to gift. So I need to give you something.’ And it was very funny.

She said, ‘pick anything in the store that you like.’

And, I’m like, ‘oh I’m good, it’s not necessary.’ She said ‘oh no, no no, in our culture too, we gift and want to say thank you.’

She said, ‘a coffee mug?’

And I said, ‘certainly’

‘Or this coaster?’ [she suggested].

So, I’m looking at these coasters and I’m about to reach these coasters that are maybe ten bucks or twelve bucks. [Pytor’s friend] says, ‘that’s a nice bear.’ [laughs hard]. ‘That’s a nice hand carved Inuit art bear’ [laughs].

And the woman said, ‘well, that was probably the most expensive piece we have in the store, but I think it makes perfect sense.’ And, handed me the bear. [laughing hard].
So, you know, when I think of business, right? I think about us as Indigenous businesses and I think about just our role in the world is to share with other business owners, right? And other entrepreneurs, these concepts and these conversations. And, I think that we have that role as an entrepreneurial business.

But, I think we also have, like when we talk about reconciliation, like your research, right? Like, the…. Like social innovation and entrepreneurship, to reach reconciliation, I think there’s these spaces where these businesses and stores, non-Indigenous, can be also playing a part, right? In creating these spaces and creating the conversations and the opportunities to help support…. Indigenous innovation.

Like, so, that woman right now, if we went in there with a plan around, let’s take all of your stuff that you’ve got here… you see all her goods here, all her… all the native goods, right? Like, let’s go through and do an inventory and get rid of everything that is not legit and make sure that the artists are… like… She’d be open to that now, right? Like, she really would.

Through his story, Pytor shared his experience of reconciliation by educating a shopkeeper on the appropriation of Indigenous cultures through relating the story in a way to her that made sense (by having her think of sacred items in her own culture).

As with the first story with Victoria LaBillois, this story demonstrates the power of storytelling to convey a message on societal transformation. I argue that through storytelling, the listener is also changed as they experience the lesson being demonstrated, through their own
imagination and experience of listening to the story. Thus, I further argue that the action of storytelling contributes to reconciliation because the listener can learn through the experiences of others through oral culture; as a result, the listener may experience inner transformation through being guided on methods of reconciliation through demonstrative Indigenous storytelling.

In Chapter 5, discussions and conclusions for the research will be examined, including an examination of whether Canada is ready for reconciliation (5.1), the limitations of the research (5.2) and future considerations for research and policy (5.3).
CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When this research project first began in 2016, the aim was to explore whether Indigenous social innovation can play a role in reconciliation processes in Canada. Three research questions were asked: 1) Can Indigenous social innovation be a vehicle for reconciliation in Canada? 2) What are the perspectives of Indigenous social entrepreneurs on reconciliation in Canada in a business context? 3) Are Indigenous social entrepreneurs actively contributing to reconciliation processes in Canada? If so, how? In addition, my research hypothesis, as indicated in Chapter 4 was that Indigenous entrepreneurs that use social innovation to create unique business models that incorporate decolonizing processes would or could contribute to societal transformation in the form of reconciliation (i.e., through education, relationship building and mutual respect).

This research has provided opportunities for deeper insight and reflection for the Indigenous entrepreneurs that participated in this research and for myself personally as an Indigenous person, entrepreneur and scholar. By turning the reflections on social innovation and reconciliation inward, insights were shared on how we as Indigenous peoples can (and do) contribute to reconciliation in Canada. This research has proven that Indigenous social entrepreneurs are actively using social innovation and business as a tool to educate mainstream Canada on the resilience, unique histories and perspectives of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The results of this research suggest that not only can Indigenous social innovation be a vehicle for reconciliation in Canada, but it has provided a platform for Indigenous thought leadership and progressive models of business to help transform society.

On a personal note, my thoughts on reconciliation have transformed and changed a lot since first starting this research project in 2016. Over the past two years, I have taken every opportunity to go to reconciliation-themed events and conferences to gain perspective on
reconciliation in Canada. I have participated in six reconciliation circles in Kingston, Ontario and I have also attended conferences in Ottawa, Ontario on reconciliation. Through this experiential learning, I have observed that meanings of reconciliation are deeply personal for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples; I have also observed that every definition shared of reconciliation has been different, depending on who is sharing their thoughts on reconciliation and how they situate themselves as a ‘Canadian’ or the knowledge that they carry as Indigenous or non-Indigenous peoples. I have even recognized that I have given a different definition of reconciliation for every reconciliation circle that I participated in; my own definition of reconciliation has shifted from week to week, from month to month, depending on how news articles have affected me, what I have learned from research, and what stories had been shared with me that week by my Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues and friends.

Research shows that differing views and definitions surrounding the terminology ‘reconciliation’ is not uncommon. According to Gibson (2004), South Africa faced similar challenges in defining reconciliation. One of the themes that emerged in Gibson’s research was that “no one seems to know what ‘reconciliation’ means” (2004, p. 202). Interestingly, another theme in Gibson’s research was that “People may not be able to define and measure the concept [of reconciliation], but they seem to think they ‘know it when they see it’” (2004, p. 202). In addition, Gibson’s research seems ‘correlated’ to what was discovered in this research on social innovation and reconciliation, which is that a large part of reconciliation has to do with race relations and building respect between different cultural groups. This is relevant to a main theme of reconciliation which has to do with building respectful relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.
5.1 Is Canada Ready for Reconciliation?

With the celebrations of Canada 150 this year (July 1, 2017), several news articles have surfaced that many Indigenous peoples do not want to participate in Canada 150 celebrations because a lot of harm has been done over the past 150 years to Indigenous peoples in Canada. The last residential school was not closed until 1996 (only 21 years ago), which means that 129 out of the 150 years (or 86% of the past 150 years) have been dedicated to the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into Canadian society. As of this year, there are still First Nations communities without clean drinking water, Indigenous children being removed from their homes and being put into foster care, and there are still unresolved land claims and treaties that are being brushed off by the Canadian public as being ‘out of date’ and not relevant.

In addition, an Environics Institute for Survey Research (Environics) report released in 2016 on the Canadian Public Opinion on Aboriginal Peoples reveals that just over one in ten people in Canada hold negative views on Indigenous peoples in Canada pertaining to “special treatment or negative attributes” (p. 11). These negative views include perceptions that Indigenous peoples are receiving ‘special treatment,’ tax breaks and/or special rights and privileges, reliance on welfare or ‘government handouts,’ or stereotypes that “Aboriginal peoples are lazy and don’t work to contribute to society” (Environics, 2016, p. 11). As reconciliation is a two-way process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, these statistics are concerning as it shows that a high proportion of non-Indigenous Canadians are not in favour of Indigenous peoples and hold negative stereotypes or perceptions.

It is evident that there is still much work to be done before reconciliation can take place in Canada. I agree with my fellow Indigenous entrepreneurs that reconciliation may be possible, but only when all Canadians (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) come together to plan for
solutions that will benefit not just Indigenous or non-Indigenous peoples, but all people who live in Canada. As Marie Delorme suggests, “There’s no person, no government, no entity, no agency, no organization that is single-handily going to fix the problem. There’s no amount of money that’s going to fix it. But, it’s a combination of all those things.” We all have a role to play in reconciliation in Canada.

I argue that for non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, that role is to become educated about the history and legacy of Indigenous peoples in Canada so stereotypes can give way to compassion and the understanding that Indigenous cultures are rich and resilient and there are many Indigenous people contributing in a positive way to Canadian society. For Indigenous peoples, one significant role can be to help lead the reconciliation process by asserting what needs to be done to reconcile, and by also having an openness to educate the Canadian public on Indigenous cultures and history, so that they can learn about Indigenous peoples through the stories and worldview of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

5.2 Limitations of Research

One of the limitations of this research is the ongoing debate on reconciliation in Canada, as it is a very contentious issue due to many differing viewpoints. For example, many of the Indigenous entrepreneurs in this research study felt that they were actively contributing to reconciliation through educating non-Indigenous peoples about Indigenous cultures through the products and services provided through their businesses. However, it is evident in media articles such as “It’s Not My Job to Teach You about Indigenous People” (Lefebvre, 2017) that not all Indigenous peoples feel that they should take on the role of the ‘educator’ for non-Indigenous peoples.
Another limitation and challenge of this research is having a relatively small sample of Indigenous entrepreneurs. Although this research provides insights into what is possible for Indigenous involvement with reconciliation through social innovation, it does not represent how all Indigenous entrepreneurs feel about reconciliation and how they may be contributing, or not contributing, through their businesses.

Finally, as the research sample focused on the viewpoints of Indigenous entrepreneurs (with a high proportion of consultants), it could be hypothesized that as business people, the research participants would be more protective of sharing negative thoughts and viewpoints of reconciliation in Canada as it would ‘not be good for business’ to share negative attitudes, as many of the entrepreneurs may have non-Indigenous clients and customers from the private and public sectors.

5.3 Future Opportunities for Research and Policy

As this research has demonstrated, social innovation and Indigenous entrepreneurs can play a powerful role in leading reconciliation processes in Canada. Indigenous entrepreneurs have the flexibility, creativity, innovation and ambition to drive change in Canadian society. According to TD Economics (2017), Indigenous businesses are increasingly embracing innovation. In fact, the 2017 TD Economics report found that Indigenous businesses “are more than twice as likely [than non-Indigenous Canadian businesses] to have introduced a new product or service over the prior three years, and nearly three times more likely to have brought in a new way of doing things” (p. 3). Thus, there is ample opportunity for the Government of Canada and investors to further support social innovation for Indigenous businesses and communities in Canada.
As it has been demonstrated in this research, social innovation is a complementary concept to Indigenous business because social innovation is focused on solving social and/or environmental problems in an innovative way (Anderson, 2002). Thus, there is an opportunity for further research on Indigenous social innovation in Canada and on a global scale. This research project has focused specifically on social innovation and reconciliation; however, further research could explore ways in which social innovation might play a role in empowering Indigenous communities to become more self-sustainable and to empower communities to solve local and regional social and/or environmental issues in a way that honours their traditional belief systems (e.g., having sustainable environmental practices).

As this research has demonstrated, Indigenous social innovation can contribute to reconciliation processes in Canada. To deepen this research, future research can draw upon a larger group of Indigenous entrepreneurs across Canada and integrate a diversity of viewpoints through the inclusion of diverse industries. For example, Indigenous entrepreneurs in future research projects might come from other sectors and industries, such as the arts, the green energy sector, health fields, and technical backgrounds.

Overall, this research has shown that Indigenous social innovation can play an important role in reconciliation processes in Canada. Thus, there are several opportunities to further explore how Indigenous social innovation is being utilized in Canada, along with opportunities to further develop Indigenous methodologies and frameworks to explore this emerging field of research. I look forward to exploring this further in my future research.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A – RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

August 25, 2016

Ms. Shyla Barberstock
Master’s Student
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Queen’s University
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

CREB Ref #: CCEOP206-16; Romeo # 6018574
Title: "CCEOP206-16 A New Way Forward: Reconciliation through First Nations Social Innovation"

Dear Ms. Barberstock:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "CCEOP206-16 A New Way Forward: Reconciliation through First Nations Social Innovation" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS 2 (2014)) and Queen’s ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 5.14) and Standard Operating Procedures (403.001), your project has been cleared for one year. You are reminded of your obligation to submit an annual renewal form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at http://www.queenston.ca/traq/signon.html; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies"). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form in Romeo/traq indicating that the project is 'completed' so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion, there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at http://www.queenston.ca/traq/signon.html; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form"). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s) You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To submit an amendment form, access the application by at http://www.queenston.ca/traq/signon.html; click on "Events", under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies". Once submitted, these changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Ms. Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Freeman, Ph.D.
Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c:  Dr. Mark Rosenberg, Supervisor
    Dr. George Lovell, Chair, Unit REB
    Ms. Joan Knox, Dept. Admin.