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Article abstract

Canadian school jurisdictions have taken steps to accommodate objectives to advance cosmopolitan education reflecting principles such as global citizenship, compassion, tolerance, responsibility, and respect within school curricula and educational practice. At the same time, a parallel set of reconciliation-related educational reforms, aligned with the Calls to Action that accompanied the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report, have also gained urgency. Elements of reconciliation processes complement visions of cosmopolitanism, including objectives to foster dialogue and understanding between groups and advancements towards more holistic orientations to pedagogy and knowledge. However, conceptually and in practice, several tensions emerge, especially in a context in which educational priorities are contested. In this paper, we explore these connections and tensions with reference to findings from our research examining public perspectives on educational reforms to support reconciliation.

Cosmopolitanism and Decolonization: Contradictory Perspectives on School Reform to Advance Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

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Abstract

Canadian school jurisdictions have taken steps to accommodate objectives to advance cosmopolitan education reflecting principles such as global citizenship, compassion, tolerance, responsibility, and respect within school curricula and educational practice. At the same time, a parallel set of reconciliation-related educational reforms, aligned with the Calls to Action that accompanied the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report, have also gained urgency. Elements of reconciliation processes complement visions of cosmopolitanism, including objectives to foster dialogue and understanding between groups and advancements towards more holistic orientations to pedagogy and knowledge. However, conceptually and in practice, several tensions emerge, especially in a context in which educational priorities are contested. In this paper, we explore these connections and tensions with reference to findings from our research examining public perspectives on educational reforms to support reconciliation.

Keywords: Cosmopolitan education; global citizenship; reconciliation processes; reform.

Introduction

National education systems aim to ensure that children and youth have the kinds of values and skills necessary for success in their community and national contexts. Education systems also have a central role in the development and entrenchment of modern nation-states (Gellner, 2006). Further, the kinds of national identities and orientations fostered through school systems are not neutral or uncontested. Education systems and curricula in Canada and in other nations reflect narratives shaped through struggles over whose stories are told and what kinds of political, economic, and cultural forces have prevailed (Curtis, 1988; Green, 1994). Social, economic, and technological transformations have contributed to a climate of increasing risk, uncertainty, and inequality, along with forms of global interactions associated with what Beck (2006) identified as cosmpolitanization, giving rise to demands for new ways of thinking and acting to acknowledge responsibilities created through our common connections with one another. These developments have given rise to calls by a growing number of scholars and educators (e.g., Banks, 2008; Hansen, 2010; 2013; Pinar, 2009), echoed by high-profile international agencies such as UNESCO (2018) and OECD (2021), to incorporate measures to foster cosmopolitanism and global citizenship within school curricula and educational practice.

Cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan education are conceptualized in different and contesting ways, but refer generally to educational orientations and ways of thinking and acting that promote compassion, tolerance, responsibility, and respect (Vinokur, 2018). While cosmopolitanism has tended to reflect notions of the global community, world citizenship, and universal perspectives of human equality, rights, and justice, many scholars have advanced an orientation to cosmopolitanism that seeks to integrate global considerations with forms of solidarity that acknowledge the uniqueness of local contexts, inclusive of local culture, heritage, and language, as well as social and cultural diversity (Bromley, 2009; Delanty, 2009; Hansen, 2008; Harper & Dunkerly, 2009; Vinokur, 2018).

As Canadian school jurisdictions move, gradually and haphazardly, to accommodate objectives to advance cosmopolitan education (Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 2016;

Guardado, 2018; Silva, 2018), a parallel educational priority has gained increasing urgency, focused on initiatives to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students and educate all students about the perspectives and experiences of Indigenous[1] peoples in Canada. These actions, given focus with the release in 2015 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) final report and accompanying Calls to Action, impelled public recognition and discourse about the need to advance reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and other people in Canada. The report detailed findings from an inquiry into residential schools, the experiences of those who attended, and the impact of these experiences on survivors and their family and community members for successive generations of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Residential schools refer to a system of government-funded and church-administrated schools that operated in Canada for over one hundred years with the aim to remove children from their families and communities, and from their cultures, language, and traditions. Many children who attended experienced abuse and suffering (TRC, 2015). Work to advance reconciliation has continued to be a national priority, especially as feelings of renewed urgency spread across the country when the remains of several hundreds of children were located on former residential school sites throughout Canada (Gilmore, 2021). These events have prompted increasing numbers of Canadians to conclude that provincial governments should be teaching students more about the history of residential schools (Abacus Data, 2021). Among the numerous Calls for Action to acknowledge and address the damaging legacy of residential schooling and foster reconciliation, the TRC (2015) explicitly called for all schools to enact curricula that would educate all students about Indigenous histories and experiences and to ensure the provision of services and practices to enhance the educational outcomes of Indigenous students. All Kindergarten to Grade 12 school jurisdictions across Canada have endorsed these recommendations and are at various stages in the implementation of actions to comply with these commitments (KAIROS, 2018; Wotherspoon & Milne, 2020b).

These developments present an opportunity to explore some of the ways in which the dual focus on fostering cosmopolitanism and advancing reconciliation through schooling intersect with one another, whether through points of convergence, tensions based on differing aims and emphases, or in more mixed relationships. We begin this paper with a discussion of some of the most salient features of cosmopolitan education and reconciliation and its prospects for decolonization, focusing on elements that may be shared by these approaches as well as on unique features of each. We then explore these issues and related tensions in more detail by drawing on responses to a survey on public perspectives on schools' activities related to reconciliation and other curricular areas conducted in two Canadian provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Our analysis makes it possible to identify some of the spaces to advance meaningful dialogue and transform relationships among persons with highly divergent backgrounds and interests to engage in respectful dialogue, but also to locate barriers that stand in the way of these processes and outcomes.

Cosmopolitanism and Decolonization

In many respects there is a high degree of complementarity between educational reform pathways to advance cosmopolitanism and reconciliation. Both highlight the importance of cross-cultural dialogue, understanding, and empathy, and common horizons are shared in the emphasis on sustainability, transcendence beyond parochial standpoints, and mutual responsibilities (Beeman, 2013; Forte, 2010; Magro, 2020). However, despite these points of correspondence, some critics point to a fundamental tension between objectives associated with cosmopolitanism and decolonization and reconciliation. As Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) emphasizes, conventional understandings of cosmopolitanism, in common with more narrowly framed predecessors such as multiculturalism, are grounded in Western and Enlightenment world views that privilege the individual subject who acts in accordance with rationally chosen principles as opposed to holistic and relational orientations which are central to Indigenous epistemologies. The nation-state remains a reference point within most notions of cosmopolitanism, even if associated with a vision of a global citizenship which seeks to transcend national loyalties and identities. This poses a particular problem in Canada and other settler colonial nations in which the institutional and ideational foundations are established and sustained through the removal of Indigenous peoples from long-established territorial, social, and cultural relationships (Veracini, 2011). Decolonization is only possible in these instances through the

acknowledgement of some degrees of Indigenous sovereignty which is historically and territorially grounded in those relationships that have been subordinated and displaced (Sabzalian, 2019). There may be limits to the extent to which these tensions can be overcome.

More recent critical versions of cosmopolitanism, however, give precedence to the positioning of the agency and voices of subaltern and marginalized populations in practices to advance cosmopolitanism, as well as by the recognition that neither Indigeneity nor cosmopolitanism are static and monolithic in nature. The focus on process and transformation conveyed through approaches such as "grounded," "Indigenous," or "minoritarian" cosmopolitanism (Forte, 2010; Goodale, 2006; Kymlicka & Walker, 2012; Reid, 2022), have been influenced in part by Appiah (1996) and other postcolonial writers, thereby opening linkages with possibilities for decolonization. The local and the global, understood within these visions, are not posed in dichotomous terms but are viewed instead as essential parts of ongoing processes or a set of dynamics in which we develop a solid sense of self and identity grounded in our particular experiences and environments and remain open to growth and transformation as we engage with other people and milieux (Calhoun, 2008; Delanty, 2009; Hansen, 2010; 2013). Reconciliation may be seen as facilitating the kinds of transformation through personal grounding and the repositioning of selves and Others expressed in these versions of what Hansen (2010) terms "cosmopolitanism from the ground." It demands that all students learn about Indigenous perspectives and experiences as part of a constructive dialogue towards new relationships while at the same time ensuring that Indigenous students are supported by reclaiming and gaining validation for cultural connections and identities destroyed through colonization (TRC, 2015).

The celebration of respect for multiple voices and universal principles has become a defining feature of Canada's national identity, with "Canadian exceptionalism" a common reference point to demonstrate that it is possible to construct a contemporary nation-state around openness to newcomers and commitments to diversity and social cohesion (Fleras, 2018; Kazemipur, 2006). These stances are frequently understood and expressed in liberal democratic terms that frame notions such as "equality" in terms of "sameness," individual responsibility, and fairness of treatment. There is a paradox; for some commentators such stances represent an orientation to fundamental human values that are typically associated with multicultural and cosmopolitan positions while, for others, these become defining measures of whether a person is entitled to be a citizen and participant in the dominant society (Benhabib, 2007; Henry & Tator, 2008). The latter position can be associated with more narrowly framed forms of nationalism and exclusion that pose cosmopolitanism, reconciliation, and related expressions of support for minority rights as dangerous infringements on the integrity of nation-states (Sutherland, 2012).

There are efforts to shift school curricula and broader horizons in the direction of recognition of Indigenous rights and experiences and openness to diverse Others and global principles, on one side, and to perceived threats to salient values and national narratives, on another side. These complex interrelationships give rise to questions about how people make sense of and engage with commitments associated with cosmopolitanism and reconciliation in practice.

The Challenge for Schooling in a Settler Colonial Context

Indigenous social and cultural connections, including Indigenous epistemological and pedagogical orientations, are rooted in place. Connections with the land, and the physical environment and life forms sustained through these territories, are expressed in holistic terms in which all dimensions of life, including the sacred and the secular, are interrelated (Battiste, 2002; 2013; Cajete, 2016). These principles are incorporated into teaching and learning through an emphasis on nurturing respect and shared responsibility for all beings and things, conveyed especially through experience and role modelling rather than transmission (Battiste, 2002; Cajete, 2016; Madjidi & Restoule, 2017). According to Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001), Indigenous pedagogies can be characterized in terms of the '4Rs' of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility.

There is space for expression and validation of Indigenous epistemologies in an orientation to cosmopolitanism that focuses on the grounded nature of relations between persons and communities

and in which identities and relationships tied to specific places and experiences are open to transformation and growth through interaction with diverse Others (Hansen, 2013; Reid, 2022). Narrower versions of cosmopolitanism which, as Calhoun (2002) stresses, in focusing on the cultivation of 'citizens of the world,' prioritize the world views and opportunities of those with sufficient privilege and resources to engage in extensive global and cultural tourism. In contrast, conceptions of grounded and Indigenous cosmopolitanism situate the source of cosmopolitan possibilities from wherever people are located, asserting the agency of Indigenous communities and other marginalized voices (Hansen, 2010; Reid, 2022). Hansen (2013, p. 39) replaces the concept of citizenship with that of 'inhabitant' of some place or space, with possibilities to think and do things in different ways based on "a dynamic fusion of reflective openness to the new with reflective loyalty to the known."

These types of relationships are evident in how Indigenous communities remain connected with their cultural and social roots as Indigenous diasporas emerge or shift with movements across regions and nations (Delugan, 2010; Reid, 2015; Tomiak & Patrick, 2010). On a broader scale, two significant developments illustrate the powerful impact that global connections among disparate Indigenous communities can have in shaping political, legal, and social structures as concerns emerging from local contexts intersect with broader common interests. The first is the culmination of several years of efforts for recognition of Indigenous people's rights and capacities for self-determination in the achievement of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 (Anaya, 2000; Henderson, 2008). The second is the mobilization of the Idle No More movement. This movement grew from efforts to draw attention to provisions in a specific piece of legislation that represented more sustained assaults on Indigenous rights and territorial integrity, to an expression of solidarity with Indigenous peoples through a combination of innovative social media use and place-based events in communities around the world (Coates, 2015).

Understanding these kinds of developments is an essential part of what students and other Canadians should be learning if schools are serious in their commitments to advance reconciliation. The stories behind the UN Declaration and Idle No More developments speak to important lessons and contradictions at the heart of settler colonial societies. They provide stark reminders of the universal principals of human rights, the significance of formal state obligations, and the distinct status of Indigenous peoples as First peoples with longstanding histories and relationships to particular territories (Anaya, 2000), but they also evoke the uncomfortable reality that Canada's history and establishment is based on the displacement or erasure of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and identities. They further highlight how constant vigilance and mobilization is essential because of the ways in which governments and other interest groups commonly deal with or sweep aside these contradictions by ignoring or violating Indigenous rights and claims on a regular basis (see also Anaya, 2014; Gunn, 2019).

School curricula in many provinces and territories have begun to incorporate units or information about the significance of treaties, land claims, and Indigenous histories and experiences in conjunction with the development of related resources and teacher support (KAIROS, 2018; Wotherspoon & Milne, 2020b). However, the coverage of these issues has tended to be haphazard and superficial, and reform efforts have been met with indifference by some teachers and mixed support by members of the broader public (Wotherspoon & Milne, 2020b; 2021). These developments echo concerns about the focus on "dance, dress, and dining" that became predominant with the introduction of multicultural educational initiatives (Srivistava, 2007). They reinforce concerns that prevailing practices and discourses about diversity tend to be silent on the nature and realities of colonialism (St. Denis, 2011). Awareness of diverse cultural traditions and experiences is important as a complement to anti-racism work and the cultivation of empathy and responsibility towards others, and as part of a shift from mainstream orientations emphasizing the "common good" or individual rights and liberties (Orlowski & Sfeir, 2020). There is, however, a hazard when discourses or teaching about diversity, and especially particular versions of that diversity, are understood as violations of the supposed sameness or equality expected of members of a wider nation or society.

The insights advanced by sociologists like Bonilla-Silva (2019) and Collins (2015) highlight the lingering presence of overt racism even with the emergence of more recent forms of structural and

'colour-blind' racism in North America and liberal democracies elsewhere. Looser forms of racialized discourses, expressed in terms such as "model minorities," have accompanied the expansion of opportunities through immigration, globalization, and educational advancement, for non-White populations to enjoy some privileged status or be afforded recognition through meaningful inclusion within wider local national communities (Zhou & Bankston, 2019). Such labels continue to exclude, by reinforcing the irrevocable nature of status as "minorities," even as they establish new boundaries around which social acceptance may be possible as long as difference is not expressed through forms of Otherness that stray too far from dominant norms or expectations (Zhou & Bankston, 2019).

The challenge confronting initiatives to advance reconciliation and decolonization alongside cosmopolitanism and other educational visions and priorities, is the need to acknowledge and validate the particularity of Indigenous rights, status, and experiences in conjunction with authentic engagement with both diverse settler populations, including many newcomers and recent arrivals across Canada, and with the broader human world in which we all have places and responsibilities. In order to explore how the framework outlined in this section applies to an understanding of people's everyday perspectives about issues related to reconciliation and diversity we draw from the public responses to a survey conducted on schooling and reconciliation in two provincial settings.

Methods

The discussion in this paper is focused on findings from one phase of a broader study examining the developments and implications of education for reconciliation activities in Canadian school jurisdictions. We incorporate data from a telephone survey conducted by the Social Sciences Research Laboratories at the University of Saskatchewan between April 8 and May 31, 2019 with 400 residents from each of two provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The data presented in tabular form in this paper, including Table 1 which summarizes respondents' demographic data, are weighted in accordance with provincial population distributions to compensate for the over-representation of women and older participants.

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents by province - n (%)**.**

	Alberta	Saskatchewan	All respondents
Age:			
18-34	125 (31.3)	121 (30.3)	246 (30.8)
35-65	209 (52.3)	196 (49.0)	405 (50.6)
65+	65 (16.3)	79 (19.8)	144 (18.0)
Not specified	1 (0.3)	4 (1.0)	5 (0.6)
Gender identity:			
Male	197 (49.3)	199 (49.8)	396 (49.5)
Female	195 (48.8)	198 (49.5)	393 (49.1)
Other	3 (0.8)	3 (0.8)	6 (0.8)
Not specified	5 (1.3)	0	5 (0.6)
Racial/Ethnic identity:			
Canadian/Caucasian/			
European	282 (70.5)	271 (67.8)	553 (69.1)
Indigenous	15 (3.8)	46 (11.5)	61 (7.7)
Visible Minority	42 (10.5)	44 (11.0)	86 (10.8)
Other/Not specified	61 (15.3)	39 (9.8)	100 (12.5)
Place of Birth:			
Canada	348 (87.0)	347 (87.0)	695 (87.0)
Other country	52 (13.0)	53 (13.0)	105 (13.0)
Years in Canada			
<5	0	9	9
5-10	9	30	39
>10	43	14	57
n	400	400	800

Note: Data are weighted; some totals do not match due to rounding.

The survey included questions in which respondents were asked to identify, based on Likert-scale categories, their perspectives on education-related reconciliation processes and initiatives, as well as other education areas including efforts to address racism and welcome immigrants and refugees. They were also invited to elaborate on their positions in response to open-ended questions. Substantial numbers of survey participants (between n=332 and n=391) responded to all of the open-ended questions. Therefore, we had a rich body of qualitative data which made it possible to undertake a thematic analysis of the qualitative data using QSR NVivo 12 software. This analysis involved reading through the responses multiple times and using an inductive approach to identify themes and patterns.

The authors are both longstanding non-Indigenous allies of European ancestry and work and live in Treaty Six Territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Métis, Blackfoot, Dene, Nakota Sioux, and many others. Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers were involved in research activities, including survey design, to ensure that the study and processes were respectful, culturally responsive, and addressed areas of priority in education practice and policy. The study received clearance by the University of Saskatchewan research ethics board.

We begin the discussion that follows in the next sections with a summary of selected quantitative data, most of which shows high rates of agreement on key issues. We then focus on themes that emerged through the qualitative analysis which enabled more detailed and nuanced insights into the opinions and perspectives among Alberta and Saskatchewan residents with reference to schooling initiatives to advance reconciliation and cosmopolitanism.

The main findings of the paper reflect perspectives shared most strongly among participants, illustrated with reference to quotes that represented these main stances. We employ pseudonyms and arbitrarily assigned respondent numbers (e.g., R1, R2) to ensure that anonymity is maintained while attributing quotations to specific individual respondents. In the next sections, participants' perspectives concerning broad issues of reconciliation and diversity in schooling are summarized, followed by a focus on three major thematic areas that emerge in their discourses related to these orientations: points of potential correspondence between reconciliation and cosmopolitanism; points of potential tension between reconciliation and cosmopolitanism; and positions in which possibilities for both are rejected or dismissed.

General Perspectives on Reconciliation and Diversity in Schooling

Our survey, consistent with results from other surveys on public opinion in Canada, reveals broad support for reconciliation and for renewed relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Abacus Data, 2021; Environics Institute, 2021). While we have reported on these general patterns elsewhere (Wotherspoon & Milne, 2020b; 2021), in this paper we focus in more detail on these findings with specific attention to selected characteristics associated with race, ethnicity, and immigration. Due to the limited numbers of respondents in some categories, and since there are no significant differences between Alberta and Saskatchewan respondents in the patterns of responses for the themes covered in this paper, we aggregate the data rather than present separate findings for each province.

As shown in Table 2, reconciliation is seen as important for over 82 percent of respondents in each category and nearly ninety (89.4) percent of respondents overall. Patterns reported for respondents as a whole are strongly associated with those for respondents who identity as Canadian/Caucasian or European, who constitute about seventy percent of the total sample. Of note, 100 percent of respondents who immigrated to Canada ten years or less before the survey was conducted consider reconciliation to be important. There is an apparent anomaly in that Indigenous respondents tend to be slightly more ambivalent about or less supportive of the idea that reconciliation is important than others. The total numbers are relatively low, however, as fewer than sixteen percent of the sixty Indigenous respondents indicated that reconciliation is not important. It is possible that some of these views are an expression of cynicism about prospects of achieving reconciliation and more pressing concerns in their daily lives and experiences in particular community contexts. Below, some of these phenomena are explored in conjunction with the qualitative responses.

Table 2: Perceived importance of reconciliation (% of respondents) by self-identified racial/ethnic identity.

	All respondents	Indigenous	Visible minority	Canadian/ Caucasian/ European	Other	Recent immigrants[1]
Important	89.4	82.8	94.0	90.3	84.8	100.0
Not important	9.9	15.7	4.8	9.0	14.4	0
Don't know/ No response	0.8	1.5	1.2	0.7	0.9	0
n	800	61	86	553	100	48

[1] Recent immigrants are those respondents who indicated that they were born outside of Canada and had lived in Canada for ten years or less. While the term often refers to those who arrived within a shorter period, the time longer time frame is used here because of the very small numbers of respondents who reported being in Canada for five years or less.

Table 3: Perspectives on the need for particular forms of emphasis in school curricula (% of respondents).

Mandatory curriculum to teach about Indigenous histories and cultures						
	All respondents	**Indigenous**	**Visible minority**	**Canadian/Caucasian/European**	**Other**	**Recent immigrants**
Strongly agree	45.6	48.0	41.7	42.9	60.1	59.5
Agree	39.9	45.2	52.7	39.8	28.5	34.6
Disagree	9.5	3.1	5.0	10.8	9.6	5.9
Strongly agree	3.6	3.8	0.7	4.6	0.4	0
DK/NR	1.5	0	0	1.9	1.4	0
How much should schools be doing to address racism?						
Much more	40.3	45.1	48.6	35.2	57.7	60.6
Somewhat more	26.9	29.5	27.7	28.8	15.8	21.5
The same	20.6	6.9	13.0	24.5	13.7	8.6
Somewhat less	2.3	7.1	5.8	1.3	2.2	0
Much less	1.4	0	0	2.0	0	0
DK/NR	8.5	11.4	4.9	8.2	10.7	9.3
How much should schools be doing to support welcoming immigrants and refugees?						
Much more	26.3	29.6	42.6	21.1	39.1	45.1
Somewhat more	24.1	39.8	28.3	19.7	34.7	23.9
The same	32.3	8.6	20.9	39.6	16.6	27.5
Somewhat less	3.9	9.8	0	3.5	5.3	0
Much less	3.8	3.8	4.6	3.9	0	0
DK/NR	10.1	8.4	3.6	12.2	4.4	3.5
n	800	61	86	553	100	48

The findings reported in Table 3 focus more specifically on school curricula. Parallel with general perspectives on the importance of reconciliation, there is strong consensus, regardless of race, ethnicity, and immigration status, that schools should introduce mandatory curriculum measures to teach about Indigenous histories and cultures. Levels of support for these initiatives are especially high among Indigenous and visible minority respondents and recent immigrants (at about 93-94 percent, compared to a total of about 86 for all respondents).

These patterns are similar with respect to participants' views about whether schools are doing enough to address racism and support the welcoming of immigrants and refugees. However, the proportions who feel that schools should be more active in these areas (about two-thirds and one half, respectively, overall) are somewhat lower than those who support the need for mandatory curricula

related to Indigenous histories and cultures. Recent immigrants and visible minority respondents are more likely than other respondents to indicate that schools should be doing more, especially with respect to welcoming immigrants and refugees. It is also noteworthy that support for educational initiatives in these areas is very high among Indigenous respondents, at levels several percentage points above those reported for all respondents.

The perspectives reported in these tables suggest that there are several openings to advance and integrate the aims of reconciliation and cosmopolitan visions of the world and, perhaps, points of correspondence between reconciliation and cosmopolitanism. The majority of respondents indicate that reconciliation is important, and that schools should be advancing curricular initiatives to educate students about Indigenous histories and cultures while also doing more to address racism, more broadly, and to ensure that newcomers to Canada are supported and welcomed. These trends suggest an openness to diversity and a recognition that learning from and about the experiences of others is important for advancing shared understandings and forging new relationships. The strong support for the issues reported in the tables by members of racialized communities (visible minority and Indigenous respondents) and relatively recent immigrants to Canada suggests that, despite different cultural and social experiences and circumstances, there is sensitivity to some common aspects of being positioned in various ways as the "Other" in relation to the dominant society.

Table 4: Opportunities for Indigenous students to succeed in schooling compared to other students (% of total respondents).

	All respondents	Indigenous	Visible minority	Canadian/Caucasian/European	Other	Recent immigrants
More	34.2	37.2	27.9	34.7	34.0	37.9
The same	38.8	15.2	43.3	37.2	56.5	27.8
Less	19.1	44.7	21.7	18.5	6.4	25.3
DK/NR	7.8	2.9	7.1	9.6	3.1	9.1
n	800	61	86	553	100	48

In contrast to these findings, some fault lines emerge with respect to the kinds of opportunities that respondents consider Indigenous students to have to succeed in schooling in comparison with other students (see Table 4).

A plurality of respondents overall (38.8 percent) perceive that all students have the same opportunities whereas about one-third (34.2 percent) feel that Indigenous students have more opportunities than other students. High proportions of visible minority respondents indicate that Indigenous students have the same (43.3 percent) or more (27.9 percent) opportunities. This perspective is reversed for recent immigrants, who are most likely to consider Indigenous students to have more opportunities than other students to succeed (37.9 percent). Among Indigenous respondents, the proportion who consider Indigenous students to have greater than average opportunities to succeed (about 37 percent) is like that for recent immigrants.

However, even higher proportions of Indigenous respondents (about 45 percent) see Indigenous students as having fewer opportunities than other students to succeed, a view shared with about one-quarter (25.3 percent) of recent immigrants, in contrast to fewer than one-fifth (19.1 percent) of respondents overall. These responses suggest that, for many, initiatives to support Indigenous students and represent Indigenous perspectives within school processes may have either gone too far or may not be necessary given the needs and positions of other students and social groups.

The survey findings, in other words, reveal a tension between general openness to support reconciliation and more disparate positions regarding what that means and how it is implemented through actual classroom practices. These varied, and often conflicting, perspectives become more evident in the comments and narratives that many respondents offered in response to open-ended questions in the survey.

Diversity, Dialogue, and Inequality: What Does it Mean to be Different?

Many survey participants (between one-third and one half) commented in detail in response to open-ended questions about what they thought schools were doing well or needed to do more of regarding reconciliation. They frequently pointed to the importance of advancing reconciliation through reconciliation-related initiatives in schools: "Schools are an essential tool to solving this problem" said Luca (R740), while Savannah (R143) stated, "Schools are going to define how this is going to happen because the younger generation are the ones that can make a change." Schools' roles were most commonly observed with reference to specific activities related to cultural sharing, Orange Shirt Day, territorial acknowledgement, and guest talks and classroom visits by Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers. A few observed schools that were adopting more comprehensive orientations to Indigenous education, but a small number of others spoke of the need for more in-depth and integrated approaches and greater consistency across schools. As Janet (R748) observed, teaching about Indigenous perspectives and experiences "varies school to school so that knowledge isn't consistent…[there] just needs to be more and broader understanding and discussion about it."

Several respondents commented on the prospects that reconciliation-related school initiatives could have for bridge-building between peoples or cultures. Greg (R649) stressed the need to "create open-mindedness," reinforcing Susan's (R352) observation of the need for "more of culture, dignity, and respect." "There are prejudices present," Linda (R659) observed, which "may not have been overtly taught to you but a culture you grew up in and the only way to stop it is with the little kids learning Aboriginal peoples and learn to appreciate their culture and know they are the same [more] than they are different." Similarly, Cheyenne (R106) stated:

> A lot of change in society's attitudes needs to happen in the school age population. A shift in attitude, increase in understanding. If you begin with students, their attitudes will change as they become adults, versus the adults now who some do not have an understanding.

These quotations, which are aligned with the broad support for school-related reconciliation activities reported in the Tables in the previous section, suggest that reconciliation has some potential to advance the kinds of dialogue, mutual respect, and understanding associated with cosmopolitanism.

More frequently, however, respondents employed discourses that drew on flatter or superficial representations of cosmopolitanism. They suggested that emphasis on Indigenous experiences and issues was divisive, taking time and attention away from other more "important" matters. Many participants conveyed opinions that schools have done enough, or are "going too far" (Ezra/R2, Jayden/R247) to advance reconciliation and to incorporate Indigenous histories, cultures, and experiences into classrooms and schools and that, instead, schools should place the "focus on other places" (Andre/R483). "Reconciliation gets too much emphasis" said Elliot (R431), while Kayden (R519) stated, referring to the education system, "I don't think it's their role to work in reconciliation processes." Several other respondents expressed frustration about the emphasis being placed on difference and separation between students and not on bringing students together. "I feel like the more we focus on our difference it will be more hard to be united" said Sage (R102), while Remi (R158) stated, "I don't want to see people separated from each other and divided."

These allusions to separation and difference illustrate some of the ways in which particular kinds of public discourses frequently draw from cosmopolitan imagery as a means to place boundaries around or limit understandings associated with reconciliation and decolonization. Respondents frequently spoke about reconciliation with reference to notions of sameness, equality, and rights.

They expressed these, in several instances, in terms of liberal cosmopolitan principles of a fundamental humanity. Milo (R753), for instance, observed that, "All humans are equal so I think they should treat Aboriginals the same as they treat other people," echoed by others, including Evan (R552), who commented, "Native kids should be treated the same as everyone else", and two Métis respondents who stated, "everyone should be treated the same" (Jesse/R686) and "everyone should be treated equally" (Kyle/R746).

However, as in the case of those who felt that schools were focusing too much on reconciliation, many respondents referred to notions of equality and sameness of treatment as a means to criticize what they saw as an over-privileging the Indigenous experience relative to that of other groups. Rowen (R146), for example, stated with reference to schooling initiatives to advance reconciliation and to learn about Indigenous peoples and cultures that, "I think it should be lumped underneath the banner of all human respect and not pulled out as a priority." Many participants shared parallel views, that schools should "not just concentrate on one culture" (Aria/R511), that "schools are catering to one group of people" (Jenn/R443). Others emphasized that schools should focus the same amount of time and effort on teaching students about all nationalities, ethnicities, and cultures. Lenore (R435) stressed that, "All cultures are important… My kids have a different cultural background and that has never been brought up [at school]." Joselyn (R219), a teacher, stated that schools "must also focus on other cultures"; this view parallels the opinion of Ian (R189), who identified as African, who stated, "There are other people that everyone needs to learn about…should extend learning and training to other people." As further expressed by Riley (R206):

> The focus on trying to treat everyone equal, starts with not treating people specially based on their ethnic background. Do not need to dwell on a student's ethnic background…. Are we making the exact same allowances and focuses to learn about each ethnic diversity?

These comments suggest that many community members do not have a clear understanding about, or do not accept, the fundamental aims and significance of reconciliation. Instead of acknowledging the centrality and specificity of Indigenous rights and experiences of settler colonialism in the context of Canadian statehood, respondents commonly referred to principals of sameness and equality as a means to undermine initiatives to reposition Indigenous experiences and perspectives in the curriculum, framing Indigenous claims more broadly as a form of "special" treatment not enjoyed by other groups. "We should be Canadian and Canadian only" stated Hudson (R212), who continued:

> The knowledge and importance of Aboriginals and other cultures, they should be all the same. We should be Canadian first, our heritage is all the same we all came from Europe, we should have no special status for anybody.

These sentiments were echoed by many others, characterizing Indigenous peoples as the Other, or 'them,' relative to 'us' or 'We Canadians' - "nothing more special for them" (Rachel/R409); "we all should be equal and should not be different or get anything more than others" (Marie/R432); "nobody should have any more than anybody else" (Ira/R253); and "all of us who lived in Canada should be treated the same…We are all Canadians first" (Pete/R504). Respondents also gave specific examples in which they posed, and frequently misrepresented, Indigenous rights – such as reference to the need for "fair" access to education programs and the same costs for postsecondary education - as unfair forms of special treatment: "Aboriginal kids' programs, like getting into the army is easier for them and not as easy for other people therefore it should be fair" (Ezra/R2), while Indigenous peoples are "eligible for free education all the way through to university and that's not right" (John/R210).

Several participants expressed concerns that reconciliation-related content was being delivered in a manner that devalued or shamed non-Indigenous students. Some observed that, while learning about colonization and residential schools, non-Indigenous students were being "blamed" (Amara/R201) or "shamed" (Isla/R618) and that this learning "should not be pushed on the people" (Alex/R786). Expressing disapproval about an Indigenous presenter who came to speak at their child's school, Molly (R543) commented, "I think it's bad when the speaker runs down the white students…it left some negative impression on the students."

While this kind of commentary suggests that there may be instances in which schools are not addressing Indigenous-settler relations in a sensitive manner, it also reveals propensities among many community members to dismiss the claims and experiences of Indigenous peoples as well as any other minority peoples characterized as being irresponsible. Several participants spoke about the need to "move on" (Nathan/R78, Mia/R92), "move forward" (Jack/R387), or "let it be because the history is in the past" (Aurora/R593). Thea (R577) asserted that what took place has been "brought to our attention

and we are aware, and it has to come to an end because it was not the present-day people who did it." Participants frequently emphasized the need for Indigenous people to take greater responsibility for their own affairs, expressed by respondents in paternalistic and racist terms though a focus on social pathologies and a failure to "integrate into society" (Charlie/R328). Reece (R192), a Caucasian immigrant, spoke about what he perceives as high rates of drug addiction and homelessness among the Indigenous population, and corruption on reserves, questioning why more emphasis is not placed on "integrating everyone into society?" He went on to state, "It's critical, as modern culture that everyone is integrated and contributing to society in a productive way." Others suggested that reserve schools should be closed to ensure that all students attend public schools: "What I would like to see is all races go to one school, meaning Natives come off the reserve to come to public schools with all the other people" (Morgan/R339), or even to do away with reserves all together: "intermingle everyone and not let people live on reserves and let everybody pay taxes" (Rhea/R16); there is a "need to unite people by having something in common which means eliminating reservations and assimilating them into the common" (Mackenzie/R289). Themes of assimilation and integration were repeated frequently: "everyone should be integrated" (Myra/R496); "I hope they all blend together and become compatible" (Hailey/R440); and Indigenous peoples need to "start living as citizens…and live together" (Elaine/R485). This frequent rejection of orientations to embrace greater cultural understanding through embracing the perspectives and experiences of others highlights the need both for greater emphasis in schooling and public education on cosmopolitan and reconciliation approaches as well as the distance yet to be travelled to accomplish core aims associated with these approaches.

Conclusions

In this paper we have explored possibilities for cosmopolitan education and education to foster reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to reinforce one another with reference to the perspectives of residents of two Canadian provinces. We began with the observation that reconciliation and cosmopolitanism have different starting points and aims; the former as a means to foster new relationships and advance decolonization within the context of a specific settler colonial society and the latter oriented to global connections and cross-cultural understandings. Nevertheless, these can reinforce one another through the cultivation of a grounded form of cosmopolitanism that seeks to transform individuals and their relations with others through dialogue, respectful engagement, and empathy that begins with awareness of how positionality is shaped through unequal power relations. We then explored how these relationships are playing out in specific social contexts by examining perspectives and discourses related to school-related reconciliation activities in two provincial contexts.

We observed some points of intersection and overlap which suggest possibilities for schools to work towards the advancement of both reconciliation and cosmopolitanism, especially in the strong support expressed by participants for efforts by schools to educate students about Indigenous histories, cultures, and experiences while working more broadly on addressing racism and welcoming newcomers. These views were reinforced by acknowledgement among many respondents also that reconciliation-related schooling initiatives could support broader aims to teach students about acceptance, tolerance, understanding, empathy, social justice, and diversity.

Despite these points of convergence, potential fault lines were exposed as many participants drew on discourses related to narrower cosmopolitan perspectives as a means to undermine efforts to advance educational reconciliation and, in some cases, any initiatives to support cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. These tensions reflect contradictions embedded within settler colonialism that are concealed in historical narratives that highlight the construction of a sovereign nation-state, first by predominantly white European settlers and, later, by waves of newcomers from more diverse places. Accordingly, notions of reconciliation, cosmopolitanism, and cultural diversity are viewed as acceptable for most settlers if they do not threaten the stability of communities and the nation, which are formally committed to liberal democratic principles of equality, fairness, and universal human rights. Viewed from this perspective, there is a propensity to dismiss Indigenous claims associated with their distinct rights and status as First peoples, along with those of other minorities characterized as straying beyond the limits of formal equality, as demands for special or unwarranted treatment.

We have argued in this paper for a vision of cosmopolitanism that supports and engages with initiatives to advance decolonization by exposing and challenging these dominant narratives. The findings from our survey suggest there are some openings with which to begin the questioning and dialogue that are necessary to move in this direction in classrooms and other public spaces. Educators need to be encouraged and supported to carry this engagement further, supported with the knowledge and resources that will enable them to proceed with confidence and sensitivity in guiding deeper discussion and understanding of issues that, while often unsettling and controversial, are also essential for the kinds of transformation that are fundamental to authentic learning processes. For educators and non-educators alike, it is crucial to interrogate our own positioning within settler colonial society and the practices that sustain the structures of power and domination that it represents, as a starting point in taking seriously our responsibilities and commitments as members of local communities and global orders.

Note:

[1] "Indigenous" is used to refer to descendants of the original inhabitants of North America.

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