

## CHAPTER 5

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# Exporting Aotearoa New Zealand's Biculturalism: Lessons for Indigenous-Settler Relations in Canada

1 *David B. MacDonald*

8 In essence our exports need to reduce in weight and become heavier in knowledge  
4 and value. To achieve this we need a vibrant and well integrated innovation system  
5 which is capable of creating wealth from ideas. (Clarke, 2002, p. 32)

### 6 **Introduction**

7 Canada is currently undergoing a process of reconciliation between indigenous  
8 peoples (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) and settler populations. Aotearoa New  
9 Zealand is arguably ahead of Canada in terms of its bicultural relationships  
10 between Pākehā and Māori (or even the more inclusive tangata tiriti and tan-  
11 gata whenua). Since its creation in 1840, New Zealand has exported many  
12 things aside from wool, dairy products and world-class rugby. One salient  
13 export has been ideational — a unique idea of biculturalism between Indige-  
14 nous peoples and European settlers. Ideas, as the Clark Labour government  
15 noted a decade ago, are very important to how New Zealand is seen in the  
16 world, and the idea of exporting “knowledge and value” was attractive then, as  
17 it is now (Office of the Prime Minister, 2002, p. 32). While biculturalism was at  
18 first far more myth than reality, providing an “illusion of superiority” amongst  
19 British settler states, there are many aspects of NZ biculturalism that can act as

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1 benchmarks for helping settler Canadians articulate how reconciliation might  
2 work in practice (Murphy, 2009, p. 64).

3 Canada has traditionally excluded Indigenous peoples from both how the  
4 country is governed and represented to its own people and the outside world.  
5 This chapter explores some of the positive aspects of the New Zealand bicultural  
6 model and contrasts this with Canada's English–French biculturalism  
7 and its multiculturalism of diverse ethnic communities, both of which suppress  
8 the Indigenous origins of what is now Canada. This country has recently  
9 undergone some interesting changes, which make this chapter timely. In October  
10 2015, the long-serving Conservative government of Stephen Harper was  
11 defeated by the Liberal Party of Justin Trudeau, the young and charismatic  
12 son of one of Canada's best-known former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.  
13 By December of that year, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission  
14 (TRC) wrapped up its six-year mandate. Earlier that year, they issued 94 recommendations  
15 for fundamentally changing the relationship between the settler  
16 population and Indigenous peoples.

17 The purpose of the TRC has been to come to terms with the intergenerational  
18 legacies of Indian Residential Schools. This system was operated by  
19 the federal government and the four main Christian churches; some 150,000  
20 Indigenous children were forced over a period of 150 years to attend a network  
21 of 125 schools located across the country. They were stripped of their  
22 cultures, languages and traditions, in what the TRC has called "cultural genocide".  
23 Verbal, physical and sexual abuse ran rampant through the schools. The  
24 schools created high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder and other serious  
25 problems that have passed and continue to pass inter-generationally. At least  
26 6000 children died there. An estimated 80,000 residential school survivors are  
27 alive today (MacDonald, 2015, pp. 413–414).

28 As Canada goes through a process of reconciliation, many aspects of New  
29 Zealand biculturalism appear attractive. However, there are obvious differences  
30 between the two countries which make lessons difficult to apply. First, New  
31 Zealand was colonised much later than North America, New Zealand has only  
32 one Treaty, and one fairly culturally and linguistically cohesive Indigenous  
33 population, concentrated within a geographic area the size of the British Isles.  
34 From 1902, Māori had forms of political representation in settler institutions  
35 (although their population warranted far higher representation). Christian  
36 conversion for Māori was widespread and seemed to synthesise better with

1 Māori value systems than it did for many First Nations, in part perhaps because  
2 Māori leaders managed to create syncretic forms of religion, such as the Ratana  
3 Church and political movement. Māori were not forced to attend residential  
4 schools, although the integrated schooling system was designed to assimilate  
5 and indoctrinate just as day schools were in Canada. Māori were similarly not  
6 as geographically isolated and maintained a larger population base relative to  
7 settlers relative to Indigenous peoples in Canada. This made a difference in  
8 terms of visibility and political power, which while relatively weak in a Pākehā-  
9 dominated society was nevertheless stronger than any comparable situation in  
10 Canada. Ranginui Walker notes his people's "success in maintaining cultural  
11 continuity in the face of tremendous assimilative pressures" (Walker, 1987, p.  
12 96).

13 Despite these positive developments, many point (quite rightly) to the  
14 low economic status of Māori relative to Pākehā populations, in part a result  
15 of successive neoliberal policies from the 1980s onwards. While symbolically  
16 Māori are in a relatively stronger position than they were historically, their  
17 social and economic indicators have fallen considerably since the free market  
18 reforms, Māori unemployment has risen significantly, as well as the percentage  
19 of Māori living below the poverty line. Similarly, access to housing has plum-  
20 meted. An exception is the iwi-based Māori elites who have profited somewhat  
21 by the Treaty settlement process. However, these people make up only a small  
22 fraction of the Māori population (Rashbrooke, 2013, p. 27). The percentage  
23 of prisoners who are Māori has also increased since the 1980s; currently, 52 per  
24 cent of male prisoners are Māori, alongside a staggering 63 per cent of women.  
25 This marks a shocking change from the 1988 report on Māori and the criminal  
26 justice system (Jackson, 2014).

27 New Zealand thus offers a model but also a cautionary warning. First,  
28 symbolic recognition of Māori, official bilingualism, the spread of *Tē Reo* in  
29 schools and the rapid pace of treaty settlements would indicate that Māori are  
30 doing better than before. However, the pace of economic reforms has created  
31 much higher levels of economic inequality for Māori than before the "Māori  
32 renaissance" of the 1980s.

33 What then can Canada learn from the New Zealand experience? This  
34 chapter explores several themes: Indigenous-settler biculturalism, the relational  
35 concept of Pākehā, electoral change through mixed member proportional  
36 (MMP) representation and Indigenous conceptions of interdependence with  
37 the natural world.

## 1 Biculturalism

2 One of the most striking aspects of New Zealand society for outsiders is  
 3 Indigenous settler biculturalism. Many social scientists suggest that until the  
 4 1970s, biculturalism was primarily rhetorical, used to disguise Pākehā mono-  
 5 cultural hegemony (see Maaka and Fleras, 2005, p. 98). *De facto* forms of  
 6 bi-nationalism grew out of Māori protest during the 1960s and 1970s, and the  
 7 idea of a Māori–Pākehā partnership developed through such signposts as the  
 8 1975 *Waitangi Tribunal*; Te Reo Māori as an official language (by 1987); the  
 9 creation of Māori educational systems and the widespread introduction of  
 10 Māori names for institutions, Māori culture and Māori rituals. Overall, the  
 11 relationship was reframed during this period as one between *tangata whenua*  
 12 (people of the land) and the *tangata tiriti* (settlers represented by the *Treaty of*  
 13 *Waitangi*) (Poata-Smith, 2013).

14 Biculturalism as it has evolved has consisted of various policies designed  
 15 to implement an ethos of sharing power, at least symbolically between the two  
 16 founding peoples of the state. Mason Durie outlined two broad themes — one  
 17 giving recognition to the cultural traditions of Māori and Pākehā, the other  
 18 favouring a redistribution of resources to Māori (Durie, 1998, p. 101). Rang-  
 19 inui Walker promoted the idea of transforming all monocultural institutions  
 20 into bicultural ones. As such:

21 biculturalism is the coexistence of two distinct cultures, Māori and Pākehā, within  
 22 New Zealand society with the values and traditions of both cultures reflected in soci-  
 23 ety's customs, laws, practices and institutional arrangements, and with both cultures  
 24 sharing control over resources and decision making. (Durie, 1998, p. 101)

25 Biculturalism can also lead to calls for institutionalised bi-nationalism, which,  
 26 as Fleras and Maaka observe, implies a reworking of dominant institutions and  
 27 narratives, privileging both narratives and practical realities of a “majority-to-  
 28 majority partnership”, shared sovereignty and “complementary co-existence”,  
 29 where respect for difference is embedded into the way the state is structured  
 30 (Maaka and Fleras, 2005, pp. 275–76). Related aspects could include a Māori  
 31 justice system, something Moana Jackson and others have been promoting in  
 32 their work, given the deplorable prison statistics that echo similar problems  
 33 in Canada. Others such as Whatarangi Winiata have sought parallel political  
 34 institutions for Māori at the national level, with legislative branches for Pākehā  
 35 and Māori based on separate governance traditions (Hayward, 2015).

1 Canada has little experience of biculturalism or bi-nationalism with  
2 Indigenous peoples in the sense that both our biculturalism and multicultural-  
3 ism exclude Indigenous peoples. Although Canada is consistently rated as one  
4 of the top countries in the UN Human Development Index, Indigenous peo-  
5 ples rank alongside citizens of Panama, Belarus and Malaysia in terms of *their*  
6 social and economic prospects, and these gaps are not narrowing (Daschuk,  
7 2013, p. 9). Bilingualism/biculturalism between the descendants of British  
8 and French settlers is ostensibly a consociational arrangement between two  
9 colonizing powers — a battle over who shall play the host and where. Com-  
10 missioner Wilson of the TRC has put it that “both English and French have  
11 been used as weapons to destroy indigenous languages and cultures” (Wilson,  
12 2012).

13 Multiculturalism, perceived as tolerance for ethnic communities who are  
14 neither British nor French, likewise excludes Indigenous peoples. The largesse  
15 of Euro-Canadian society as host to non-white newcomers is a prominent  
16 part of this process. Efforts to include Indigenous peoples as ethnic minorities  
17 within a multicultural paradigm are sometimes undertaken as a means of  
18 deliberately downplaying their *sui generis* rights and the treaty relationships  
19 they maintain with the crown (MacDonald, 2014).

20 The tendency to lump Indigenous peoples together as one or possibly  
21 three groups out of a multitude of ethnic minorities has worked to dilute  
22 and suppress Indigenous rights and occlude the reality of their distinctiveness,  
23 which is culturally diverse as Europe. Voyageur and Cailliou have noted the  
24 wide range of geographical, legal, social, cultural and linguistic differences  
25 between Indigenous peoples, with 633 Indian bands, some 20,000 reserves,  
26 11 language families, and 53 languages (Voyageur and Calliou, 2000/2001,  
27 p. 103).

28 We see the marginalization of Indigenous people demonstrated in a variety  
29 of ways, what we might call examples of a sort of Foucauldian micropolitics  
30 of settler colonialism. For example, in Citizenship and Immigration Canada's  
31 publication *Discover Canada*, we see a settler state largely devoid of Indigenous  
32 presence, a country composed of immigrants with some groups more impor-  
33 tant than others. Indeed, Indigenous peoples are presented as the nation's first  
34 immigrants (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012, p. 10). However,  
35 “Canadian society today stems largely from the English-speaking and French-  
36 speaking Christian civilizations that were brought here from Europe by settlers.

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1 English and French define the reality of day-to-day life for most people and are  
2 the country's official languages" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012,  
3 p. 12).

4 What elements and symbols comprise the nation? First we have the British  
5 monarch and English law, "an 800-year old tradition of ordered liberty, which  
6 dates back to the signing of Magna Carta in 1215 ..." (Citizenship and Immi-  
7 gration Canada, 2012, p. 8). Followed by this are the "Canadian Crown", then  
8 the Canadian flag which in part comes from the "the flag of the Royal Military  
9 College, Kingston", and its colours coming from the "colours of France and  
10 England since the Middle Ages". The maple leaf was "adopted as a symbol by  
11 French Canadians in the 1700s". The fleur-de-lys "was adopted by the French  
12 king in the year 496". The Canadian coat of arms, "contain symbols of Eng-  
13 land, France, Scotland and Ireland as well as red maple leaves". Finally, the two  
14 official languages are "important symbols of identity". The guide concludes:  
15 "English speakers (Anglophones) and French speakers (Francophones) have  
16 lived together in partnership and creative tension for more than 300 years"  
17 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012, pp. 38–39).

18 The guide demonstrates rather well the sort of studied exclusion we as a  
19 state promote when welcoming newcomers to Canada, and also epitomises  
20 the larger problems of strategic forgetting at the centre of the settler colonial  
21 project. The professed symbols of Canada are all tied to either one or both  
22 of Canada's founding European peoples, or to choices made by European  
23 settlers (such as the maple leaf). This guide illustrates well how successful the  
24 settler colonial project has been in Canada. We do not need to acknowledge  
25 Indigenous peoples as part of the integration process, and the guide confirms  
26 that a relationship with Indigenous peoples is not necessary as part of being  
27 Canadian.

28 Another illustration of the same type of alienation is Rudyard Griffith's  
29 2008 book *101 Things Canadians Should Know About Canada*. Sponsored by  
30 the federal government and the Dominion Institute (also known for their  
31 glorification of John A. MacDonald), not one of the 101 "things" pertain to  
32 Indigenous peoples or their contributions. This project, initiated by a right-  
33 wing institute tied with a conservative government, was based on an online  
34 survey of over 3000 adult respondents throughout the country as to the seminal  
35 events and people in Canadian history. Respondents included "522 educators  
36 who deal with subject areas related to social sciences, history, geography, civics,

1 music, art or culture, as well as 274 members of the Order of Canada”. Of  
2 interest is that Indigenous leaders, events, places and symbols are notably  
3 absent (Dominion Institute and Angus Reid Polling, 2008). Ultimately, this  
4 glaring omission was identified and Indigenous peoples were tacked on as the  
5 102nd spot on the list (Canadian Press, 2008). Again this particular issue says  
6 a great deal about the importance accorded to Indigenous peoples when even  
7 the educated public has a chance to voice their opinions.

8 These examples illustrate well what Marie Battiste has called “cognitive  
9 imperialism”, to describe how Indigenous peoples have been obliged to inter-  
10 nalise the worldviews of the “dominant society” (Rice and Snyder, 2008, p. 55).  
11 In a recent reflection on what it means to be a white settler, Fitzmaurice  
12 observes that

13 to be white in Canada is to be, at a macro/structural level, free of colonial/racial  
14 encumbrances; it is also to be the source of the downward push on all other non-  
15 whites. It is to be perceived as “normal” and unmarked, always transforming oneself  
16 within a sea of others’ conspicuous, fixed differences. (Fitzmaurice, 2010, p. 354)

17 In the New Zealand context, the New Zealand Federation of Multicultural  
18 Councils embraces what they call a “Treaty-based multicultural society in  
19 which Māori have particular status as Tangata Whenua” (New Zealand Fed-  
20 eration of Multicultural Councils, 2015). The Treaty and its obligations are  
21 central to this vision of what New Zealand should look like in the future. The  
22 annual meeting I attended in Gisborne in 2013 was on a Marae and featured  
23 Māori Party president Naida Glavish as the keynote, speaking on Manaaki-  
24 tanga or Māori hospitality. The idea of promoting a strong biculturalism first,  
25 followed by multiculturalism is indeed the reverse of what we have done in  
26 Canada, with highly negative effects for Indigenous peoples. This squares well  
27 with Ranginui Walker’s view that the Treaty was the first immigration agree-  
28 ment between Māori and representatives of the settlers, and heralds an actual  
29 period of legal and political relationships, with negotiated forms of governance  
30 for each group (Spoonley and Bedford, 2012, p. 230).

31 One way in which the idea of indigenous settler biculturalism is being  
32 mooted is through the idea of all Canadians being treaty people, a sort of echo  
33 of the tangata whenua — tangata tiriti division. The TRC stresses that “We  
34 are all Treaty people who share responsibility for taking action on reconcili-  
35 ation” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a, p. 12). In  
36 Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the idea of everyone being a treaty person has

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1 become more popular as educational kits are prepared for use in school class-  
 2 rooms. Currently, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have Indigenous demographics  
 3 of about 15 to 17 per cent of the population, which is roughly comparable  
 4 to New Zealand; which is perhaps why things are possibly changing at the  
 5 provincial levels (Friesen, 2016).

## 6 **Pākehā Identity**

7 An aspect of identifying as a treaty person is reflected in another innova-  
 8 tion unique to New Zealand — the concept of Pākehā, about which I have  
 9 undertaken a detailed study (MacDonald, 2016). These terms go back to the  
 10 19th century at least in common usage as Salmond recalls (Salmond, 1997,  
 11 p. 279). As with Māori, Pākehā was a culturally heterogeneous category, as  
 12 Belich (2002) and others have observed. It began largely as a description of  
 13 non-Māori Europeans, but has evolved since the 1970s to refer to an aspi-  
 14 rational identity based on a relationship with Indigenous peoples. Liu and  
 15 Ward observe “Perhaps as many as a quarter of New Zealanders of European  
 16 descent self-identify as *Pākehā*, which is a self-designation that acknowledges  
 17 a relationship with Māori as a part of one’s own group identity” (Ward and  
 18 Liu, 2012, p. 21). Here the process of reconciliation between settlers and  
 19 indigenous peoples has involved political, economic, cultural and ideational  
 20 power-sharing, which have come about through a Māori renaissance and the  
 21 development of economically powerful iwi (tribal entities) through the treaty  
 22 settlement process.

23 David Pearson has viewed the Pākehā self-description as “an explicitly  
 24 nationalist endeavour to create a postcolonial identity that fully acknowledges  
 25 the bicultural, possibly binational, foundations of the settler state” (Pearson,  
 26 2009, p. 49). Avril Bell’s definition takes things a step further, in that Pākehā  
 27 can embody a form of self-criticism, the ability to highlight white privilege.  
 28 Thus Pākehā is the majority culture, the “White, ‘political descendants’ of the  
 29 group who colonized Aotearoa [and who] inherit the political (and material  
 30 and symbolic) privileges ‘secured’ by the practices of colonization . . . . In this  
 31 sense, all White New Zealanders inherit a colonial relationality to Māori” (Bell,  
 32 2004, p. 17).

33 There is an emancipatory potential embodied in Pākehā in that as Bell  
 34 argues, “displaces white New Zealanders from their position of discursive  
 35 exnomination as *the* (normal, ordinary) New Zealanders”. In other words



1 “Pākehā identity *recognises* and *names* white New Zealanders as one group  
2 among many who co-exist in the New Zealander nation-state. Discursively,  
3 this goes some way towards undermining white hegemony” (Bell, 1996,  
4 pp. 153–154).

5 In Canada, there is no shorthand term to denote a European settler Cana-  
6 dian in a relationship with Indigenous peoples, except perhaps “settler ally”,  
7 which is primarily an aspirational category that remains marginal and con-  
8 tested. The idea of having a settler identity contingent on honouring treaty  
9 and other commitments to Indigenous peoples is compelling, which can and  
10 should form an important part of the reconciliation process going forward.  
11 Ironically, terms for white people such as the Anishnaabe term *shahganash* is,  
12 as Fitzmaurice explains, “someone who does not understand the Aboriginal  
13 perspective of the world and fully believes him/herself to be superior to, and  
14 to know what is best for, Aboriginal people” (Fitzmaurice, 2010, p. 355). This  
15 type of a Pākehā-like relational identity could help Canadian settlers better  
16 reflect on the centrality of their relationship to Indigenous peoples.

### 17 **Mixed Member Proportional**

18 MMP representation, which has been in New Zealand since 1993 and is based  
19 on the German electoral system, has allowed for a stronger representation of  
20 Māori in the centralised institutions of government (Grey and Fitzsimons,  
21 2012). The New Zealand experience shows that MMP and coalition govern-  
22 ments can produce better descriptive representation for Māori, with possibly  
23 better substantive representation as well at the national level, although not at  
24 the local council levels of course, where there are serious problems of under-  
25 representation. On the positive side, the Māori Party was able to get New  
26 Zealand to sign on to the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous People  
27 (UNDRIP), which had a strong influence on Canada’s participation (Watkins,  
28 2010). Ministers of Māori Affairs have been Māori, unlike Canada where no  
29 minister of Indian affairs or Indigenous affairs has been Indigenous.

30 New Zealand’s bi-national model is not perfect, and academics and  
31 activists have criticised its application in practice, especially when Māori  
32 are treated as a “junior partner” in the relationship. Some point to the legal  
33 challenges between Māori and the Crown (Durie, 1998), while others note  
34 how traditional Māori governance structures have been altered to accom-  
35 modate European political practices, privileging iwi over hapū and whanau

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1 (Fleras and Maaka, 2005). Some present settler colonialism as an “ongoing  
2 project” (Smith, 2012).

3 On the positive side, Māori have achieved parliamentary representation  
4 higher than their percentage of the overall population, alongside prominent  
5 Māori in cabinet and in other positions of leadership. Further, recent studies  
6 demonstrate that Māori and Pākehā under a bi-national system are equally  
7 committed to common New Zealand symbols and national culture, a unique  
8 situation relative to other western settler societies (Sibley and Liu, 2007).  
9 Additionally, there are Māori-based parties in parliament: the Māori Party in  
10 alliance with the National government, which also has several Māori cabi-  
11 net ministers. The co-leader of the Green Party is Māori, as is the leader of  
12 New Zealand First. In the latest elections in late 2014, 21 per cent of the  
13 composition of parliament is Māori (Parliament of New Zealand, 2014). In  
14 the 2017 elections, Māori representation dipped somewhat. The Māori Party  
15 disappeared from Parliament, and Mana did not gain any seats, either as a  
16 party or in Hone Harawira’s former constituency. Prominent Māori politician  
17 Metiria Turei resigned as co-leader of the Green Party during the election cycle.  
18 Other changes included Labour gaining control of the seven Māori seats, and  
19 Winston Peters, the leader of New Zealand First holding a decisive block  
20 of seats which could hypothetically have allowed either National or Labour  
21 to govern with his party’s support. A number of its MPs, including Winston  
22 Peters, Shane Jones, Fletcher Tabuteau, and Ron Mark, are Māori.

23 In Canada, the electoral systems both provincially and federally are first  
24 past the post, which means that Indigenous interests are rarely represented. In  
25 the previous Parliament, there were only 7 Indigenous MPs, which increased  
26 to 10 in the October elections last year. Of the eight Liberal Indigenous MPs  
27 election, two became cabinet ministers, including our new Attorney General  
28 (Fontaine, 2015). This marks a change, albeit a minor one. In the entire history  
29 of Parliament prior to 2015, we have had 33 Indigenous MPs. The majority  
30 have been Metis (16). The first First Nations MP (that is an MP with Indian  
31 status) was elected in 1968, making him the first of 11 First Nations MPs  
32 in the history of Parliament. There have also been five Inuit MPs since 1867  
33 (“Inuit, Métis or First Nation Origin”, 2015).

34 Things are changing in the sense that Indigenous voters are now being  
35 encouraged to vote tactically. The Assembly of First Nations in 2015 identified  
36 51 key swing ridings where Indigenous voters could tip the balance in favour of

1 parties promoting treaty implementation and federal investment in education,  
2 training and better housing. This sort of tactical voting signals the beginning  
3 of what could be a major change in how Indigenous peoples in Canada are  
4 understanding and articulating their interests (Kirkup, 2015).

5 The larger question is whether Indigenous peoples want to engage with  
6 settler state institutions. Low voter turnout stems in part from a sense that  
7 the treaties confer the right to have self-government, not dilution and sub-  
8 mergence within the institutions of the colonisers. There is thus the sense that  
9 to participate in the settler voting process is to legitimate a system, which has  
10 no capacity to actually bring meaningful and positive change. There has been  
11 extensive discussion about reforming the electoral system — both the Liberals  
12 and the New Democratic Party (NDP) pledged to do so. However, after a  
13 rather half-hearted and poorly executed consultation process, Prime Minister  
14 Trudeau reneged on his promise in 2017, stating that the first past the post  
15 system would remain.

## 16 **Interdependence**

17 Recent treaty settlements in New Zealand have also embedded Māori views  
18 of the environment in some dimensions of national life. The ideal of recon-  
19 ciliation is one of binational co-governance structures, where various insti-  
20 tutions share power, both political and ideational. Power-sharing consists of  
21 dividing up tasks where each group has some level of expertise. For exam-  
22 ple, the Whanganui iwi act as guardians of the Whanganui River and speak  
23 in its interests, as this is something Pākehā are less able to do. This would  
24 be an example of restoring hostness, of returning mana to an iwi that was  
25 stolen during colonization. The deep interdependence of the Whanganui iwi  
26 with the river is recognised in the 2014 Treaty settlement, which restores the  
27 Māori role as guardian of the river. As the settlement outlines: “The iwi and  
28 hapū of the Whanganui River have an inalienable interconnection with, and  
29 responsibility to, Te Awa Tupua and its health and wellbeing” (Te Awa Tupua,  
30 2014).

31 The result is a form of co-management where the river is seen to “own  
32 itself” in the words of the Minister of Treaty Settlements. Whanganui iwi and  
33 the national and regional governments would then work towards administering  
34 the river in the best interests of the river, which is perceived to have its own  
35 interests and to also be the ancestor of the Whanganui (Stowell, 2014).

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1 Nothing of the kind exists in Canada officially, although Indigenous  
2 leaders have been promoting forms of interdependence and respect of the  
3 earth for many centuries. For example, in *The Sacred Tree*, a team of authors  
4 including Elders outline a holistic vision of humanity and the natural world.  
5 A key aspect of Indigenous thought is the centrality of “wholeness”, the recog-  
6 nition that “All things are interrelated. Everything in the universe is part of a  
7 single whole. Everything is connected in some way to everything else” (Lane  
8 *et al.* 2004, p. 26). This connectedness obliges us to take responsibility for  
9 our actions, and to realise that nothing we do happens in isolation. McGaa  
10 (Oglala Sioux) puts it that “The hard part of what it means to be interrelated  
11 to all things is that our neglect comes back full circle to affect us as nega-  
12 tively as it affects other species. Our existence is being threatened too. We are  
13 held accountable for our actions (or lack thereof) towards the Earth, even to  
14 generations unborn” (McGaa, 2004, p. 243).

15 For the TRC, respect for the environment has been a key aspect of over-  
16 coming some of the legacies of colonization. As the Commissioners have  
17 stressed:

18 Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, from an Aborig-  
19 inal perspective, also requires reconciliation with the natural world. If human beings  
20 resolve problems between themselves but continue to destroy the natural world, then  
21 reconciliation remains incomplete. ...Reconciliation will never occur unless we are  
22 also reconciled with the earth. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,  
23 2015a, p. 18)

24 If this aspect of reconciliation squares with indigenous laws, another aspect of  
25 the recommendations, we may see changes similar to those here. Of course I am  
26 aware that the river settlement is but one aspect of a much larger settlement  
27 process.

## 28 **Conclusion**

29 For many outside observers, New Zealand demonstrates that increased control  
30 by Māori over Māori education, law, health care and governance makes an  
31 important difference in generating positive outcomes. A mixture of recognition  
32 and control over things Māori has been very important.

33 In Canada, the 94 recommendations of the TRC released last year provide  
a solid road map on the way to a respectful and mutually beneficial partnership

1 ethos. Biculturalism in New Zealand has helped set a precedent for what many  
2 Indigenous leaders envisage arising from the reconciliation process. A few of  
3 their recommendations are the following:

- 4 ● Increased Indigenous language recognition and rights, but even this falls  
5 short of asking for official language status as in New Zealand.
- 6 ● Recommendations for the “recognition and implementation of Aboriginal  
7 justice systems” and a systematised effort to reduce structure racism and  
8 overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in prisons and other aspects of  
9 the justice system.
- 10 ● Recommendation for a “Royal Proclamation of Reconciliation”, which  
11 would “reaffirm the nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal peo-  
12 ples and the Crown”, repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery, as well as  
13 “Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual  
14 recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining  
15 those relationships into the future. Reconcile Aboriginal and Crown consti-  
16 tutional and legal orders to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are full partners  
17 in Confederation, including the recognition and integration of Indige-  
18 nous laws and legal traditions in negotiation and implementation pro-  
19 cesses involving Treaties, land claims, and other constructive agreements”.  
20 (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015b, pp. 4–5.)

21 Both Canada and New Zealand have many challenges regarding issues of race  
22 relations and Indigenous-settler relations. New Zealand has a growing gap  
23 between rich and poor which continues to impose severe impediments for  
24 Māori, leading to economic, political, and social marginalization; structural  
25 racism, particularly in the judicial system, remains of serious concern. How-  
26 ever, the situation in Canada is far more serious in many respects, not only  
27 in terms of social indicators, but also as I have discussed here, in terms of  
28 ideational power, in terms of how the state is presented and understood. Mod-  
29 els of English-French biculturalism and multiculturalism both elide the *sui*  
30 *generis* legal rights of Indigenous peoples and their unique and central role in  
31 the history of what is now Canada. There is certainly hope for the future, and  
32 Indigenous peoples and settler Canadians have worked to change the federal  
33 government, replacing it with something more progressive and more likely to  
34 promote the sort of reforms that will put Canada on a road to reconciliation.

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