

RESEARCH ARTICLE/ÉTUDE ORIGINALE

Extending Extractivism: Analysing Canadian Telecommunication Corporations' Reconciliation Rhetoric

Rob McMahon , Aidan Trembath  and Taofiki Okunola

Media & Technology Studies, Department of Political Science, University of Alberta, 10-16 Henry Marshall Tory Building, Edmonton, T6G 2H4, Canada

Corresponding author: Rob McMahon; Email: rob.mcmahon@ualberta.ca

(Received 25 June 2025; revised 24 November 2025; accepted 18 December 2025)

Abstract

Similar to pipelines used in oil and gas development, telecommunications networks of cable, satellite, fibre optic and wireless infrastructure extend deep into Indigenous territories as a form of “extractivism” (Greer, 2019). These developments raise barriers to substantive reconciliation between settler states, corporations and Indigenous peoples. Yet despite important analyses of corporate policy discourses regarding how natural resource extraction impacts reconciliation, there are few studies of such rhetoric in the context of telecommunications. In this article we analyse publicly available “reconciliation” policies of four commercial telecommunications providers. Drawing from theories of reconciliation and extractivism, we find these policies strategically constrain symbolic and material understandings of reconciliation in ways that support the status quo and prioritize profit accumulation and symbolic partnerships over substantive reconciliation. Existing corporate reconciliation frameworks fail to recognize the desires of Indigenous peoples for self-determination over digital infrastructures in ways that might improve—and ideally, transform—their relationships with telecommunications providers.

Résumé

À l'instar des pipelines utilisés dans l'exploitation pétrolière et gazière, les réseaux de télécommunications câblés, satellitaires, à fibre optique et sans fil s'étendent profondément dans les territoires des peuples autochtones, sous la forme de ce que Greer (2019) qualifie d'« extractivisme ». Ces développements constituent des obstacles à une réconciliation substantielle entre les États colonisateurs, les entreprises et les peuples autochtones. Pourtant, malgré d'importantes analyses des discours politiques des entreprises sur l'impact de l'extraction des ressources naturelles sur le processus de réconciliation, il existe

peu d'études sur ce type de rhétorique dans le contexte des télécommunications. Dans cet article, nous analysons les politiques de « réconciliation » accessibles au public de quatre fournisseurs de télécommunications commerciaux. En nous appuyant sur les théories de la « réconciliation » et de l'« extractivisme », nous constatons que ces politiques limitent stratégiquement la compréhension symbolique et matérielle de la réconciliation de manière à soutenir le statu quo et à privilégier l'accumulation de profits et les partenariats symboliques plutôt qu'une réconciliation substantielle. Les cadres de réconciliation existants des entreprises ne reconnaissent pas le désir des peuples autochtones d'exercer leur droit d'autodétermination sur les infrastructures et les services numériques de manière à améliorer – et idéalement à transformer – les relations entre les peuples autochtones et les fournisseurs de télécommunications.

Keywords: reconciliation; Indigenous peoples; telecommunications policy; telecommunications services; extractivism

Mots-clés: réconciliation; peuples autochtones; politique des télécommunications; services de télécommunications; extractivisme

Introduction

In our own time, the most prominent form of colonialism affecting Indigenous peoples and their lands is surely the intrusion of companies exploiting the environment in pursuit of natural resources such as timber, hydroelectric power, minerals and petroleum (Greer, 2019: 74).

As Indigenous peoples around the world continue to grapple with the “shape-shifting” structures of colonialism (Corntassel, 2012), new forms of corporate resource extraction raise barriers to achieving substantive reconciliation with settler states and societies. Scholars have given considerable attention to resource extraction in contexts of “natural” resources such as oil/gas, mining and forestry resources (for example, Lertzman and Vredenburg, 2005; Gibson and Bradshaw, 2018; Parson and Ray, 2018). Recently, critical media and communication scholars have extended this argument to suggest that digital infrastructures present a new form of capitalist resource extraction, as predatory practices enabled by data relations commodify human interactions and daily activities for the benefit of large corporations (Couldry and Mejias, 2018; Mejias and Couldry, 2024). These observations are grounded in earlier work in the critical political economy of telecommunications, which positioned corporate-owned and operated telecommunications infrastructures, from telegraphs to submarine cables, as tools of imperialist expansion and capitalist profit accumulation (Smythe, 1981; Winseck and Pike, 2007). The telecommunications industry, enabled by access to public funding and favourable regulatory and policy mechanisms, has focussed on the centralization and concentration of power and resources in ways that have resulted in service monopolization, including in rural/remote, Northern and Indigenous regions (Babe, 1990; Beaton and Campbell, 2014; Winseck, 1998). Altogether, this literature describes the material outcomes of these actions: similar to the pipelines used in oil and gas development, increasingly concentrated, corporate-controlled networks of

cable, satellite, fibre optic and wireless infrastructure extend deep into Indigenous territories and communities as a form of what Greer (2019) terms “extractivism.”

Despite detailed analysis of how these developments unfolded over time, the rhetorical strategies used by telecommunications corporations to secure consent for their activities are less studied. Scholars have examined corporate policy discourses in relation to natural forms of resource extraction (for example, Chen, 2023; Pasternak and King, 2019), but there are few studies focussed on how telecommunications companies employ such rhetoric to enable similar processes of extractivism. Exceptions include Philpot et al., who analyse “a discursive environment in which First Nations broadband issues are dealt with within a discourse of dependency benefitting only the telecom service industry and governments” (2014: 2; see also McMahon et al., 2014). Building on these earlier works, this article considers how large telecommunications corporations frame the planning and deployment of telecommunications (broadband) infrastructures and services in Indigenous territories, and in relation to Indigenous peoples, in their publicly available reconciliation policies. This analysis is timely given the Canadian state’s turn toward recognizing Indigenous rights-holders in recent telecommunications policy developments (for example, CRTC, 2024; ISED, 2024).

As federally regulated entities, telecommunications providers, similar to other resource corporations, have the responsibility to ensure that their activities meet legal and regulatory requirements in their interactions with Indigenous peoples. Along with inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights, this responsibility arises from the historical and ongoing injustice, discrimination and marginalization of Indigenous peoples whose resources such as lands, data, spectrum (Blackwater et al., 2023), water and knowledge have been exploited for profit without prior and informed consent. Furthermore, as networked infrastructures, companies operating in resource industries are governed by federal agencies, where operating in Indigenous territories not only requires the moral duty to respect the environmental stewardship, cultural values and self-determination of Indigenous communities, but also complies with regulatory requirements. For example, as a condition of funding, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has started to suggest (if not impose) requirements on telecommunications corporations to consult and engage with Indigenous peoples about development projects impacting their lands and communities (see CRTC, 2023). For these reasons, large commercial providers are called upon to prioritize engagement and consultation to mitigate harms and ensure benefits to the lands, people and communities in the territories where they operate.

In this context we critically interrogate how Canada’s telecommunications industry discursively frames its public commitments to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The three largest telecommunication corporations in Canada—TELUS, Bell Canada and Rogers, as well as Bell Canada’s Northern subsidiary Northwestel—have all publicly posted corporate policies on reconciliation. We conducted a critical discourse analysis of these policies to examine complexities and contradictions in how reconciliatory relationships are envisioned by these entities. Specifically, we conduct an immanent critique of symbolic and material aspects of reconciliation articulated in these documents, which we view as instances of strategic communications aimed at both the general public and state regulators. Drawing on theories of reconciliation and

extractivism, as well as the critical political economy of telecommunications in Canada (Babe, 1990; Winseck, 1998), our analysis disentangles how these documents rhetorically frame understandings of reconciliation to support the corporate status quo and prioritize profit accumulation and symbolic partnerships over substantive reconciliation. This serves to strategically obscure rather than clarify the meaning(s) of reconciliation so as to render interactions with Indigenous peoples as compatible with the corporations' ongoing industry monopolies in Indigenous territories (Winseck, 2024). Existing corporate narratives of relationships and recognition primarily serve the business interests of the telecommunications industry and threaten to undermine the self-determined efforts of Indigenous peoples to develop and manage these resources.

Resource extractivism in “natural” and “digital” contexts

Around the world, resource extraction activities involve conflicts and economic tensions that in extreme cases manifest in the direct violence of land occupation, forced eviction, displacement or relocation of Indigenous peoples (Greer, 2019). In an example from Canada, Barney argues that infrastructure development such as the Coastal GasLink pipeline is an integral part of settler-colonialism and capitalism, used as an instrument of “violent dispossession extraction, exploitation, and environmental injustice” (2021: 239). Resource extraction can negatively impact physical and biological ecosystems, cultural practices through the destruction of sacred sites and traditional lands, belief systems, religious practices and collective values of Indigenous peoples. Occupation of Indigenous lands has also led to destruction of sources of livelihood, while demonstrations can lead to the disruption of economic activities including transportation of people and goods, logistics and supply chains.

Regardless of the presence or absence of a treaty, Indigenous claims of self-determination and land rights during infrastructure development projects are often positioned by corporate-state actors as a source of existential insecurity. Pasternak and Dafnos (2018: 742) write that this insecurity stems not from “the status of Indigenous land rights . . . but [from] the economic implications of what these land rights might mean for industrial operations, related commercial industries, and the national economy.” As Cowen (2020) argues, while Indigenous-led resistance and blockades have proven effective in disrupting the capitalist supply chain in Canada, especially in infrastructure projects such as pipelines and railways, the swift response of state security agents has exposed how government policies privilege settler colonial corporations over Indigenous self-determination. Altogether, the deployment and operations of infrastructures, as one “face of colonial violence” (Pasternak *et al.*, 2023: 2), both rely on and sustain the settler colonial monopolization of Indigenous territories through the displacement of Indigenous jurisdiction over lands.

The planning and deployment of infrastructures similarly demonstrates how corporations and the state secure their shared economic interests. Historically, as outlined in Tobias's (1983: 521) study of Indigenous resistance in the prairies, the Canadian state conducted geological surveys for, and constructed telegraph lines across, Indigenous lands without consultation. When resistance to these early

telecommunication networks compelled the Canadian state to recognize Indigenous self-determination through treaties, settler colonial actors “interpreted [the treaties] . . . as fixed contracts that ceded land and authority in the desire to suppress Indigenous sovereignty” (Pasternak et al., 2023: 4). Today, while the planning and deployment of telecommunications infrastructures may not reflect the same level of direct violence and dismissal of Aboriginal and treaty rights, these practices continue to constrain the ability of Indigenous peoples to secure self-determination, jurisdiction and control over the networks that cross their territories.

Altogether, these practices are grounded in the telecommunications industry’s historic and ongoing drive toward expansion and monopolization for the purposes of profit accumulation. In his extensive history of telecommunications in Canada, Babe (1990) describes how in the late 1800s, corporate entities established a (regulated) monopoly over telecommunications infrastructure that began with the development of telegraph networks in the late nineteenth century and extended to the launch of satellites and deployment of fibre optic networks. The techniques employed by corporate entities to consolidate their control of these infrastructures followed similar patterns over time, and included the formation of coalitions of owners; refusal to interconnect with competitors; consolidation of ownership through mergers and acquisitions; predatory pricing and internal cross-subsidization to prevent the emergence of independent networks; political advocacy to shape regulatory environments in their favour; and vertical integration to exercise market power (Babe, 1990). Telephone and cable infrastructures owned and operated by profit-oriented corporations headquartered in urban centres neglected to extend their services to areas and populations that would not generate a suitable return on investment. In rural/remote, Northern and Indigenous regions of the country, this has resulted in increasingly concentrated spaces of digital exclusion and inequality (McMahon, 2014; McMahon & Akçayır, 2022b).

Despite their efforts to participate in policy and regulatory proceedings to address these issues, Indigenous peoples in Canada have historically been largely externalized from decisions made by state and corporate parties to “connect” their communities (Philpot, et al., 2014). As a result, the state’s funding and regulatory decisions tended to favour corporations that in turn monopolized ownership and control over telecommunications development in Indigenous territories (Hudson et al., 2023). Viewed as an expression of extractivism, this system resulted in low-quality, high-cost services and locked Indigenous peoples into a dependency on corporate telecommunications systems, preventing them from economically benefitting from the ownership and management of these infrastructural resources (Hudson and McMahon, 2022; Toso and Forward, 2023). It also limited their control over digital data generated by (and extracted from) their online activities and constrained their ability to refuse such services if they wish (Dalseg and Abele, 2015).

Extractivism in this context is further enabled by business practices and regulatory forbearance that constrain possibilities for Indigenous owned and operated infrastructures. Indigenous connectivity advocates have stated that telecommunications corporations have placed fixed wireless and fibre infrastructure on Indigenous lands without consent or shared/impact benefit agreements in place (Hudson et al., 2023). They have also noted that in some cases, rights-of-way and other agreements regarding the use of Indigenous territories were negotiated before

increased legal recognition of Indigenous rights (*ibid.*). Furthermore, when Indigenous groups form partnerships with telecommunications corporations, the results do not always reflect mutually beneficial arrangements. For example, while Northwestel sold its Yukon fibre-to-the-home assets to a group of 13 Yukon First Nation development corporations (Yukon First Nations Telco LP) in 2022 (Northwestel, *n.d.*), the company will continue to operate and manage the network for 20 years. The participating First Nations receive some financial compensation, but do not control the network or decisions about its management and operations (FMCC, 2023: para 42). Finally, while Indigenous peoples have worked to connect their own communities through non-profit and Indigenous service providers, these projects are sometimes prevented from interconnecting with infrastructure owned by large commercial providers (Fiser and Clement, 2012; Hudson *et al.*, 2023).

In light of these challenges, Indigenous peoples have become increasingly active in policy and regulatory proceedings, with the result that the state regulator has started to reform policies and regulations to better recognize Indigenous rights-holders and propose (if not require) that public funding programs and spectrum licensing processes include consultation and engagement. Corporate telecommunications providers have responded to these reforms in many ways, from filing regulatory interventions challenging the positions of Indigenous parties (see, for example, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2025-9) to publicly announcing high-profile initiatives seemingly designed to support reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. These include a commitment by Rogers to establish a \$1B (CAD) Rural and Indigenous Connectivity Fund to connect rural, remote and Indigenous communities across Western Canada as a condition of the government's approval of the Rogers–Shaw merger (Rogers, 2021) and a 2024 announcement by Bell Canada that Northwestel would be sold to a consortium of Indigenous entities from the three Northern territories (Bell Canada, 2024). At the time of writing (winter 2025), many of the outcomes of these promises have not yet materialized (Galea, 2025), with Indigenous and public interest groups asking for details on the ownership structure and operations of the Northwestel sale (Connors, 2024) and limited evidence of projects associated with Rogers's fund (Rogers, 2024).

These and other examples illustrate the urgent need for critical analysis of how Indigenous–corporate relationships are discursively represented and enacted in the context of telecommunications and broadband development in Canada. Drawing from academic literature on reconciliation and extractivism, our article contributes to efforts to make sense of these issues by parsing out how symbolic and material aspects of reconciliation are presented in publicly available corporate commitments to “reconciliation” issued by major telecommunications companies in Canada.

(Re)Framing “reconciliation” in corporate telecommunications policy discourse

Critical scholars demonstrate how resource extraction processes are accompanied with discursive strategies deployed by corporations to build consent for their practices. Schlosser presents an example drawn from the Canadian diamond extraction industry, which uses the “historically accumulated power of discourse” (2013: 175) to downplay the colonial, repressive and capitalist mode of resource extraction. By “othering” diamonds from other parts of the world (specifically

Africa) with a tag of “blood diamond,” the diamond extraction industry creates an “ethical consumption” market for Canadian diamonds. Corporations in other sectors, from the food industry (Lacy-Nichols & Williams, 2021) to fossil fuels (Brulle et al., 2020), have similarly committed themselves to social justice causes in an effort to promote their brand and draw attention from their role in exacerbating social harms. Corporations may also regard building relationships as a means to reconstruct themselves as legitimate actors of social justice in ways that can obscure or obfuscate the transparency of their intentions and co-opt their industry’s critics and regulators (Lacy-Nichols & Williams, 2021: 851).

Similar strategies are employed by the telecommunications industry. For example, Peters (2017) describes Bell Canada’s “Let’s Talk” initiative on mental health as a white- and middle-class-centric campaign premised on advertising its services. By promoting the use of its own telecommunications networks and services as a means to destigmatize mental health, Bell profits from the texts and calls that people use on “Let’s Talk” Day (Peters, 2017: 397). In such cases, advertising social justice commitments becomes a strategy for “controlling negative media attention, . . . overcoming resistance by antagonistic civil society groups, . . . [and] decreasing the likelihood of governmental regulation” (Brulle et al., 2020: 88). Positive publicity abounds while negative emotions, such as guilt, anger, shame and sadness, which may be required in honest discussions and education about ongoing injustices, are absent (Korteweg and Root, 2016: 185).

These critiques apply to understandings of how corporate entities strategically appropriate and deploy the concept of “reconciliation.” The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) formally defines reconciliation as “coming to terms with the events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people moving forward” (TRC, 2015: vol. 6, 3), but despite common framings of “healing” and “walking together,” corporate discourses invoking “reconciliation” do not always support Indigenous conceptualizations of relationality. For example, Gaudry and Lorenz point out that the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in corporate social responsibility campaigns requires Indigenous peoples to conform to corporate policies while limiting substantive organizational change (2018: 220). To address this shortcoming, Dorrell suggests that a conceptual shift from reconciliation to “reconciling” is required to better appreciate the iterative and incomplete processes involved in building and sustaining relationships (2009: 38).

Scholars have also criticized how parties have interpreted and appropriated the TRC’s definition of reconciliation as oriented toward historical wrongdoings; in this way, it can be used to symbolically relegate systemic and real violence to the past as an attempt to prioritize closure and “move on” toward future development initiatives (Wakeham, 2019: 2). Describing reconciliation as a recognition of past injustices artificially creates a start and end to the ongoing process of reconciling (Dorrell, 2009: 38). Fulfilling the recommendations of the Calls to Action thus becomes a “grocery list that can be bought at a supermarket and checked off as done” (Baskatawang, 2023: 114). The TRC has been critiqued for failing to assign concrete responsibilities to wrongdoers despite exposing colonial systemic violence, thereby shielding perpetrators and limiting the reach and effectiveness of accountability (James, 2021). In these ways, understandings of reconciliation become co-opted to settle past grievances and legitimize future access to Indigenous

lands and resources, thereby supporting material forms of extractivism (Wakeham, 2019: 2–3; Coulthard, 2014: 152).

Economic and technological forms of reconciliation through the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in corporate resource development projects have similarly received criticism for being superficially transformative. Participation in Canada's economic systems can further buttress rather than challenge the "capitalist and colonial relations [that] are undeniably entrenched in Canada" (Lier, 2021: 622). Hoicka *et al.* write that increasing the participation of Indigenous communities in corporate energy projects, for example, does not mean that the status quo is being dismantled or that structures of hierarchy are being addressed (2021: 2). Reflecting the role of federal, provincial and territorial governments in enabling corporate extractivism (Greer, 2019: 74) economic opportunities are also outweighed by the Government of Canada's ongoing reluctance to consult Indigenous peoples on these matters. Instead, Favel argues that the very policies and constitution of Canada "regarding the economy and natural resources have been designed to keep First Nations separate, poor, and out of sight" (2019: 2). Scholars have also noted that framing Indigenous communities as purely economic actors risks nation-to-nation relations becoming fundamentally transactional and reparations for past and ongoing harms becoming measurable in monetary terms. Defining Indigenous peoples as "stakeholders" (versus rights-holders) in negotiations over economic resources also grants lesser importance to nationhood and consultations on resource extraction and development projects. As Favel states, "how development occurs must be rooted in the Indigenous connection to the land and jurisdiction over our territories" (2019: 4). In short, critical scholars argue that pledges of financial and technological support on their own do not address continuing hierarchies and may in fact achieve the opposite: a reification of the structures of exploitation and industry monopoly at the expense of Indigenous self-determination.

In Canada, these tensions have intensified with the federal government's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Act in 2021 and the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action (2015), both of which bear significant implications for how private corporations conduct business on Indigenous lands and with Indigenous peoples. The TRC describes, in Section 92 of its 94 Calls to Action, how corporations are to revise their business practices to fulfil reconciliation. Specifically, Section 92 (Business and Reconciliation), stipulates the "corporate sector in Canada to adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* [UNDRIP] 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" (TRC, 2015: 10).

According to the TRC, revising corporate standards and practices involves committing to "meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects" (2015: 10). Section 92 also requires a commitment for education and equitable job opportunities. The TRC also notes that Indigenous peoples should "have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector" (2015: 10), while corporations should "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” (2015: 10). In this article, we draw on this literature to analyse the discursive strategies used by major commercial telecommunications corporations in their public-facing “reconciliation” documents.

Methodology

Our study reviews publicly available corporate “reconciliation” policies issued by the four largest commercial telecommunications companies in Canada: TELUS, Bell, Rogers and Northwestel. We focus on these four companies because of their dominant presence in the highly concentrated telecommunications industry (Winseck, 2024) and their extensive operations in Indigenous territories. These four corporations have all advanced formal commitments to reconciliation, which can be used to understand how the corporate telecom industry positions “reconciliation” in public-facing documents. Other telecommunications companies, including SSI Canada, Cogeco and Xplore, also commit to reconciliation but have been excluded from the study because of their limited size. This dataset consists of 19 publicly available corporate reconciliation policies sourced from each company’s website that vary in length from 291 words to 5,521 words (see Appendix 1).

To make sense of this material, we employed critical discourse analysis, a mode of content analysis that situates textual analysis in relation to broader theoretical contexts (Saldaña, 2021). Specifically, we followed Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis (2003), which involves examining a text, examining the discourse that the text contributes to and examining how the text relates to wider social issues. In our case, this analysis interrogates corporate policy documents (texts) in relation to telecommunications policy discourse and the contested understandings of “reconciliation” discussed earlier. Recommendations issued in Section 92 of the TRC, combined with normative understandings of “reconciliation” outlined in the extant literature, provide a starting point for analysis. Guided by this material, we carefully reviewed the corporate policy documents, examining and organizing a large amount of qualitative data into smaller subsets labelled by codes, categories and themes (Berelson, 1952; Labuschagne, 2003). The overall goal of this analysis was to develop and theorize a framework that may be used to operationalize themes that may be used in future research to more precisely assess the commitments made in the corporate policy documents.

We recognize that telecommunications corporations reflect differing approaches to presenting their reconciliation policies. For example, TELUS outlines its approach in two documents. “Our Reconciliation Commitment” briefly outlines the technological and economic approach TELUS envisions to achieve reconciliation, while the Indigenous Reconciliation and Connectivity Report more thoroughly explains TELUS’s Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan and progress toward achieving it. In contrast, Bell Canada combines its approach to reconciliation with broader commitments to mental health and social justice in *Supporting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Our Communities*. Northwestel (Bell Canada’s Northern subsidiary) features a diffusion of reconciliation policies across its website, presenting interviews with Indigenous leaders and artists, news releases and timelines for achieving

Table 1. Summary of Themes and Categories Present in Corporate Reconciliation Policies

Theme	Categories
Renormalizing the status quo	Swapping “consultation” for “engagement” Reiterating corporate and state control
Irresponsible reconciling	Narrowing reconciliation Narrowing education Narrowing professional development Singularizing Indigenous peoples
Reconciliation as inclusion	Expanding corporate opportunities Presence of consultations
Corporate reconciliation	Reclaiming space and place Reflections on corporate practice Economic reconciliation Technological reconciliation

economic and technological reconciliation across 10 documents. These include *Our Shared Pathways*, a webpage that outlines Northwestel’s partnering with First Nations in Yukon on Indigenous ownership of broadband infrastructure. Finally, Rogers’s reconciliation policies, which span a 3-year period (2019–2022), are similarly diffused throughout the company’s website, including media releases, blogs, interviews with Indigenous employees and its “Truth and Reconciliation Commitment Statement.” While we recognize distinctions in the ways that these corporations presented their “reconciliation” policies, we found that the content and narrative to be generally consistent. For this reason, and to discern commonalities of corporate policy across the telecommunications industry, we analyse this material as a singular discourse, while occasionally pointing out differences.

After this initial review, we applied a thematic content analysis method to undertake deeper inductive qualitative content analysis, using the open-source coding software, Taguette (www.taguette.org). This process involved reading each policy, highlighting key passages and gradually creating a codebook on the basis of the researcher’s observations (Saldana, 2021; Yin, 2015). To ensure coding reliability, the research team held regular meetings to review and discuss preliminary results and determine the categorization of emergent codes and categories. We then aggregated these codes into four overarching themes, each of which contained multiple categories. Finally, we positioned this analysis in relation to broader discourse and wider social issues (Fairclough, 2003), illustrating the definitions and normative positioning of themes and categories with reference to representative quotes drawn from the policy documents. This process was further informed with reference to literature on reconciliation, the TRC’s Calls to Action and UNDRIP.

In the next section, we describe our findings, which illustrate both commonalities and differences in how the four telecommunications corporations publicly present and frame their reconciliation policies. After introducing four general themes, we present a more nuanced discussion of the categories found in each theme. Table 1 summarizes the themes and categories that emerged in our analysis.

Findings and discussion

As an immanent critique, our findings present a descriptive and normative analysis of the themes and categories that emerged from our analysis of corporate policy documents. When describing each theme and category, we include quotes that illustrate the variety and nuance of discourse. We also draw from reconciliation theory and the TRC's recommendations to assess the normativity of each theme. This normativity can be expressed as a spectrum between maintaining the corporate- and state-led status quo and supporting increased self-determination of Indigenous peoples in the telecommunications industry. This includes a review of both symbolic and material forms of reconciliation, organized along a spectrum from tokenistic to substantive.

Theme 1: Renormalizing the status quo presents the weakest form of both symbolic and material reconciliation; falling short of upholding the TRC's Calls to Action (section 92, Business and Reconciliation) and UNDRIP. This theme illustrates elements of corporate policies that reify state control over Indigenous peoples and lands and corporate extractivism, presenting it as a "normal" and permanent state of affairs.

Theme 2: Irresponsible reconciling offers examples of symbolic reconciliation, but discursively constrains their interpretation. It includes statements that adopt some of the TRC's Calls to Action, but in a way that narrows the corporation's commitment to reconciliation, such as through a narrowed focus on education, a foregrounding of past injustices and a homogenizing/singularizing view of diverse Indigenous peoples (Spice, 2018: 44).

Theme 3: Reconciliation as inclusion introduces both symbolic and material forms of reconciliation, illustrating examples of improved relations and a commitment to culturally appropriate forms of corporate training and professional development. This includes a focus on hiring and training initiatives, as well as extending opportunities to consult with Indigenous peoples on activities impacting their lands and communities. While these actions hold merit, they limit Indigenous involvement to inclusion in already-existing corporate structures, thereby constraining actions that may threaten or disrupt organizational cultures and business practices (Youdelis, 2016: 1375).

Finally, **Theme 4: Corporate reconciliation** demonstrates more meaningful commitments to the TRC's Calls to Action by outlining concrete ways in which the corporations plan to fulfil their symbolic and material responsibilities to reconciliation. These include making space for Indigenous voices in corporate communications and providing support for economic and technological reconciliation. While these moves are commendable, they remain limited because they continue to centre the needs of the corporation and its strategic and operational goals, positioning Indigenous groups as spokespeople and economic or technological partners in ways that may limit the potential for sustainable, Indigenous-owned and Indigenous-operated telecommunications initiatives. In the next section, we describe these themes and categories in more detail.

Theme 1: Renormalizing the status quo

The theme of Renormalizing the status quo describes how telecommunications corporations employ the language of equity, change or reconciliation in ways that subtly reinforce existing power structures and extractive industries, rather than disrupt and challenge them. It refers to how performative gestures and limited reforms are used in reaffirming and legitimizing existing systemic conditions, and in some cases excluding Indigenous peoples from substantive decision-making regarding the impacts of telecommunications infrastructures and services on their lands and communities. In the aftermath of the TRC, this theme identifies examples of telecommunications corporations publicizing various initiatives, such as adopting reconciliation plans, creating diversity reports and issuing land acknowledgements—all while maintaining the status quo with respect to material impacts on Indigenous lands and communities. While these actions are rhetorically positioned as an important part of corporate responsibility and responsiveness, they often fail to sufficiently address the deeper economic, political and epistemic structures of injustice that produce and perpetuate inequalities. As Landwehr *et al.* argue, when corporations control the framing of reconciliation, its radical potential can become domesticated, turning it into a mere public relations asset (2022). Instead of transforming the system, such actions can reinforce and stabilize it.

We found evidence of these practices in several categories that emerged in our analysis. At the material level, we highlight the absence of any mention or discussion of “consultation” across most corporations’ reconciliation policies, which we describe as “swapping ‘consultation’ for ‘engagement.’” The term “consultation” is critical because of its legal bearing and normative connotations (Pasternak and King, 2019). Consultations are not only fundamental to the relationship that reconciliation scholars envision (Eisenberg, 2019), but also central to section 92 of the TRC’s Calls to Action. Section 92(i) calls for corporations to “Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects” (TRC, 2015: 10). It also has bearing on relationships with the state. At time of writing, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission was conducting extensive (but to date, inconclusive) proceedings that include questions regarding “consultation” and “engagement” in this context (see, for example, CRTC, 2022-147). We are not aware of any required formal “duty to consult” in the context of telecommunications development in Indigenous territories (FMCC, 2023: paras. 16–40), although as noted below, some corporations refer to consultation in their policy documents.

Our review found that only two corporate policies refer directly to a commitment to consultation, both from Northwestel (we discuss these references in more detail in theme 3). The other three companies are much less open or clear about their commitments to consultation in their publicly facing reconciliation policies. Bell refers to consultations only to the extent that they pertain to Northwestel: “Northwestel consults appropriate Indigenous communities on infrastructure builds or major service improvements” (B-01: 8). Neither TELUS’s Indigenous Reconciliation and Connectivity Report nor Rogers’s reconciliation policies outline any stated commitment to consultation. Instead, these three companies framed their relationship

with Indigenous communities through terms such as engagement, dialogue, inclusion, collaboration or partnership. For example, Rogers outlines, in their Truth and Reconciliation Commitment Statement, that they are “committed to supporting the collective journey towards truth and reconciliation in meaningful ways, and *in partnership* with Indigenous peoples” (R-06: para. 1). Bell explains that they “are taking steps to *improve the inclusion and engagement* of Indigenous peoples in economic development projects” (B-01: 6), and TELUS offers a similar approach through their “[understanding] that *engagement* and Reconciliation can only happen within the framework of inclusive *dialogue, collaboration and partnership* with Indigenous peoples” (T-02: 10). These examples demonstrate how these companies are avoiding the direct language of “consultation,” potentially to avoid any regulatory or legal requirements it may entail.

The second category we identified in the Renormalizing the status quo theme focusses on symbolic reconciliation; specifically, how corporate discourse reifies the hierarchical relationship between Indigenous peoples and state/corporate entities. We refer to this category as “reiterating corporate and state control.” It includes language suggesting the Canadian state’s and/or corporation’s ownership and control of space and infrastructure on Indigenous lands. This discourse often appears through the use of possessive language, such as repeated deployment of the word “our” to describe relations to land, infrastructure and/or people. Our analysis found that all four telecommunications corporations use this possessive language to claim customers, employees, workspaces and technologies as their own.

With respect to representations of infrastructure and business operations, we noted two of the clearest examples in statements issued by TELUS. First: “At TELUS, we are helping advance Indigenous economic strength and growth by providing more opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs to *participate in our projects and operations*” (T-02: 6). Second, the company states it will: “Identify opportunities to work directly with Indigenous suppliers *whose services align with our business needs*” (T-02: 83). These statements position the business relationships between Indigenous peoples and TELUS as driven and managed by the largesse of the company, rather than the outcome of collaboration between equal parties. Altogether, the corporations centre themselves as the primary actors in reconciliation efforts, which may be a strategy to position themselves in a positive light in relation to state regulators and funding agencies.

With respect to the symbolic positioning of relationships to land, we noted tensions between the general adoption of land acknowledgments alongside assertions of state/corporate possession of the lands and spaces that businesses occupy. This is seen most clearly in the ways that policies represent relationships in a binary between Indigenous peoples on one side, and a bounded conception of the Canadian state/corporation on the other. Land acknowledgments, according to Bell, are a “respectful way to recognize the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations *of Canada* and honour their presence” (B-01: 6). Similarly, promoting relationship building with Indigenous-owned businesses improves “the inclusion and engagement of Indigenous peoples *in the Canadian economy*” (ibid: 10). TELUS similarly positions Indigenous peoples as being “*of Canada*” (T-02: 10). These quotes illustrate how the companies are discursively positioning the inclusion of Indigenous peoples inside the existing corporate–state complex.

The most striking example of this binary between Indigenous peoples and the state–corporate complex is presented in Northwestel’s policy discourse, which repeatedly constructs Northern lands as belonging to Canada and the deployment of their privately owned infrastructure as serving a higher (Canadian) purpose of enabling economic development in the North. For example, they state: “Access to high-speed across *Canada’s north* is a key link to prosperity” (N-09: para. 10). This positioning places further barriers for land- and place-based Indigenous self-determination, as each corporation enshrines their respective service monopoly and the Indigenous lands upon which they conduct their business as in the best interest of reconciliation (and for Canada as a whole). In short, the possessive discourses advanced by the corporate policies appear antithetical to any regulatory or policy action that may oppose the operations of “business as usual.”

Finally, we observed possessive language in the ways that the corporations framed their relationships with people, and specifically with Indigenous employees. For example, Bell describes its leadership development program that supports “leaders in developing and advancing *our* diverse talent pipeline” (B-01: 12) and pledges to “engage in meaningful dialogue with Indigenous communities to mitigate local concerns about *our* network” (B-01: 8). TELUS similarly asserts that “we are helping advance Indigenous economic strength and growth by providing more opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs to participate in *our* projects and operations” (T-02: 6). Rogers claims ownership of their workforce: “Our Legacy Space is part of *our* journey, as we continue to support *our* people to bring their whole selves to work, every day” (R-01: para. 2). Collectively, these quotes serve to position the inclusion of Indigenous employees in relation to resources (network infrastructure; staffing) that are possessed or “owned” by the corporations, rather than owned and controlled by Indigenous peoples themselves.

Altogether, these examples of Renormalizing the status quo envision both material and symbolic reconciliation as constrained inside spaces privately owned and controlled by telecommunications companies and governed by the Canadian state. This renders Indigenous participation in the telecommunications industry as an extension of the status quo. Such claims put the onus for reconciliation onto Indigenous peoples, who must reconcile themselves to the current state of affairs, with telecommunications corporations and the Canadian state centred as the primary actors in efforts to achieve reconciliation in this context.

Theme 2: Irresponsible reconciling

This second theme critiques performative and superficial approaches to symbolic reconciliation. Without a commitment to meaningful or transformative action with respect to material (economic; technological) resources, symbolic or performative gestures can render reconciliation as a means to “[rescue] settler normalcy . . . [and] a settler future” (Tuck and Yang, 2012: 35) on Indigenous lands. The selective representation of reconciliation can become an image management strategy rather than a strategic framework for material transformation. For example, corporations may feature Indigenous artworks, land acknowledgements and other communications to project a positive image while avoiding the need to address the material practices of their corporate operations.

Specifically, this theme highlights acts of symbolic reconciliation that are decontextualized, lacking community engagement and historical grounding, or otherwise restricted in time and/or space. It also identifies communications that fail to recognize the diversity of Indigenous peoples. This narrow approach to reconciliation is inconsistent with the provisions of the TRC's Call to Action 92, which emphasizes the education on Indigenous rights and histories. Overall, Irresponsible reconciling can be interpreted as a strategy used to shield corporations from criticism or delay the pursuit of substantive and material reform.

The first category we observed in this theme is "narrowing reconciliation," which reflects discursive efforts to situate reconciliation in relation to a fixed understanding of time and space, thereby presenting it as an event rather than an ongoing process. This is seen in references to past injustices, as illustrated by corporate policies that refer to history and "the past" without noting the ongoing structural impacts of extractivism and colonialism. For example, Bell and Northwestel respectively recognize the "injustices of *the past*" (B-01: 6) and "impacts [that] colonialism and residential schools *have had*" (N-08: para. 19).

That said, some of this discourse recognizes the ongoing nature of these challenges. For example, TELUS states that "For Indigenous peoples, history is not a thing of the past. It's reflected in the present" (T-02: 49). (Although this statement focusses on Indigenous peoples rather than all people living in what is now Canada.) Rogers addresses this limitation in its acknowledgement that the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation "highlights *how everyone plays a role* in achieving reconciliation and mending the bonds broken between communities" (R-05: para. 2). These examples demonstrate tensions between corporate efforts to adopt reconciliation policies and practices alongside evidence of how they are achieving or falling short of the TRC's goals in different ways.

A second category associated with this theme is "singularizing Indigenous peoples," which presents examples where corporations collapse the diversity of Indigenous peoples and/or their cultures, experiences, histories and/or goals into a homogenous group. This includes references to a singular "Indigenous" perspective, culture, population or history. We found that all four corporate policies tended to reflect this category, to a greater or lesser degree. Bell's policy document describes how programming that is available on video streaming services, such as Crave, "celebrate[s] *Indigenous culture and history*" (B-01: 4). Similarly, Rogers's policy recognizes National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as an "opportunity to increase our knowledge and understanding of *Indigenous culture and history* to strengthen allyship for the *Indigenous population*" (R-05: para. 2). Northwestel singularizes Indigenous peoples through educating their workforce about the "*history of Indigenous people in Canada*" (N-04: para. 20). We note that TELUS's reconciliation report is more cognizant of the diversity of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and refers to a plurality of Indigenous peoples, communities, perspectives and cultures throughout their documents.

Another way that reconciliation is discursively narrowed is by restricting discussion to specific institutions, and in particular, by "narrowing education." All corporate policies focus reconciliation on the residential school system, which is a horrific structure of systemic oppression, but not the only one experienced by Indigenous peoples (Macdonald, 2019: 91). For example, Rogers describes the

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as “a day to commemorate those impacted by the tragic legacy left behind by Canada’s history with the residential school system” (R-05: para. 1). Furthermore, TELUS states that: “Indigenous authorities acknowledge that much of Indigenous history has been ignored or hidden through years of systemic elimination in the curricula of the residential school system, and this sadly continues in modern curricula” (T-02: 50). Missing from these statements is any recognition of the role of corporate or business actors in oppressing or marginalizing Indigenous peoples (for example, Mittal, 2021: 123; Gobby *et al.*, 2022: 9). Furthermore, these passages fail to recognize corporate responsibility in engaging with the current impacts of historical and ongoing injustices. The use of the passive voice in these statements also obscures who was and is responsible for failing to teach about residential schools.

A final indicator of how corporations symbolically limit their adherence to the TRC’s Calls to Action can be found in the ways they are “narrowing professional development” opportunities for their employees. Section 92(iii) of the TRC on corporate-provided learning calls for:

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. (2015: 10)

However, corporate policies omit many of the specific areas prescribed within 92(iii). For example, Bell frames their policy on educating team members (employees) around “Indigenous issues” with a focus on residential schools, Indigenous cultures and histories, land acknowledgements and contributions to Canada, but makes no mention of Indigenous–state relations with the Crown, UNDRIP, or any of the skills outlined in the final passage of 92(iii). Rogers and TELUS reflect similar limitations. Rogers’s approach to professional development is exemplified by its installation of land acknowledgement plaques (R-02) and Legacy Spaces “dedicated to raising awareness and understanding of Indigenous art, history, and culture” inside workplaces (R-01: para. 1).

Our analysis found that only Northwestel outlined an education curriculum for their workforce that includes not only the history and legacy of residential schools, but also “*UNDRIP*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations” (N-04: para. 20). We stress that the recommendations outlined in 92(iii) are not exhaustive, and that some corporations are engaged with bringing awareness to topics not explicitly outlined by the Business and Reconciliation recommendations.

Altogether, these categories illustrate examples of how symbolic reconciliation practices can be narrowed in time and space, and in relation to a singularized representation of Indigenous peoples. While we can see evidence of clear efforts by the corporations to adopt the TRC’s recommendations, the ways that they do so may limit their responsibilities and/or public commitments to foreground symbolic rather than material elements of reconciliation.

Theme 3: Reconciliation as inclusion

Our third theme, Reconciliation as inclusion, highlights tentative steps toward material forms of reconciliation undertaken by telecommunications companies. This theme identifies corporate efforts to recognize and redress the impact of both historical and ongoing discrimination, systemic exclusion and underrepresentation in spaces of employment and engagement. While commendable, our analysis found that these actions are still largely limited to a hierarchical relationship between Indigenous peoples and state/corporate entities. In short, this theme suggests a limiting of material reconciliation to Indigenous–corporate relations that support existing business practices, spaces and understandings of reconciliation.

The first category, “expanding corporate opportunities for Indigenous peoples,” aligns with subsection (ii) of section 92 of the TRC’s Calls to Action, which stipulates that corporations ensure Indigenous peoples “have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector” (2015: 10). Bell exemplifies their broadening of workplace inclusion through their partnership with Indigenous Works, which “supports greater representation of Indigenous peoples at Bell and expands training, skill development and job opportunities for team members” (B-01: 10). TELUS outlines several commitments that include reviewing policies and training protocol for “recruiting and retaining Indigenous talent, supporting career development and advancement, and promoting mobility of Indigenous team members” (T-02: 17). Rogers pledges to “double the representation of Indigenous team members by 2025 by creating an inclusive, safe place to self-identify and contribute their best self each day” (R-6: para. 8). Their strategy involves partnering with postsecondary institutions and recruitment agencies to hire and support new Indigenous team members (R-06: para. 8). Northwestel’s action plan similarly involves hiring targets, mentorship for new Indigenous employees and improving awareness of job listings at career fairs (N-02). TELUS and Northwestel share in promoting newly formed Indigenous advisory councils that “provide advice and guidance on the implementation of TELUS’s Reconciliation actions” (T-02: 18) and “[foster] positive relations with the communities we serve, especially Indigenous communities” (N-09: para. 1).

A second category that emerged in this theme is the “presence of consultations.” As stated above in our review of theme 1, except for Northwestel, all corporate policies we reviewed fell short of committing to consultations with Indigenous communities and governments on initiatives and infrastructure projects that affect them. However, Northwestel did indicate that it is committed to serving “96 northern communities . . . in true partnership and *consultation* with Indigenous governments and other Indigenous partners” (N-08: paras. 1–3). Furthermore, the company also announced that by 2022 it would create a “revamped *consultation* policy . . . [and] engage in *consultation* early and often, accommodating communities far in advance of any development” (N-03: para. 10).

It is important to note that in recent (2023c) regulatory filings, Northwestel presented a more circumscribed definition of “consultation” vis-a-vis “engagement.” Specifically, the company pointed out the difference between *consultation* (required when an entity wishes to engage in activity that might adversely impact potential or established Aboriginal or Treaty rights, and supported by a body of law)

and *engagement* (a less structured and more flexible process). While stating that they strive to meet and exceed the legal requirements for consultation when proposing construction (for example), the company suggests a more flexible and less onerous approach to engagement:

Given the many forms ‘engagement’ can take, we do not support the imposition of a new requirement for engagement on TSPs [telecommunications service providers]; however, we do recommend that each TSP be required to publish on their website their reconciliation plans as they exist as well as their engagement and consultation policies. (2023c: 2)

This treatment of “consultation” and “engagement” in regulatory filings illustrates the contested nature of these terms. It should also be highlighted that Northwestel’s pledge to further consultations was geographically limited to the communities it services and thin on details; parties have pointed to the company’s shortcomings in this area (see FMCC, 2023). Northwestel’s most recent progress report on reconciliation (from 2024) does not offer additional substance to its consultation framework, mentioning consultations only once: “We exist to help ignite the power of... First Nation, Inuit, and Metis communities through the very best communications technology and services. We are committed to doing so in *true partnership and consultation* with Indigenous government and other northern Indigenous partners” (2024: 2). We note this passage is virtually identical to the approach found in its original reconciliation policy.

In summary, instead of interrogating the foundational causes of exclusion and inequality, this theme highlights instances when telecommunication corporations engage in forms of material reconciliation that may seek to avoid conflict, silence dissent and uphold the control of corporations, as enabled by existing state regulatory and policy frameworks. Reconciliation as inclusion is expressed in diverse ways, and may include shallow consultation, tokenistic inclusion in the form of selective employment offerings, accountability resistance, the lack of deliberate structural change and corporate emphasis on branding by using reconciliation as a marketing and legitimizing strategy. Our analysis found that all four corporations highlight the inclusion of individual Indigenous people in their organizational workforce, and tend to avoid pledges that fall outside established areas of employment, such as through long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous communities and/or organizations.

Theme 4: Corporate reconciliation

Our final theme of Corporate reconciliation emphasizes that corporations hold responsibility to not only practice symbolic forms of reconciliation or build connections with individuals, but also to improve their material relations with Indigenous communities and organizations. It examines how telecommunication corporations provide space for Indigenous voices in their corporate communications, and offer economic and technological opportunities that extend beyond the institutional boundaries of organizations. These indicators assess whether telecommunications corporations have pledged to advance Section 92 of the TRC’s

Calls to Action, which calls for corporations to ensure that Indigenous communities “gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects” (2015: 10). This theme positions corporations as active participants in achieving more substantive symbolic and material forms of reconciliation, engaged in tentative steps toward reshaping power relations between government, corporations and Indigenous peoples.

Our analysis found evidence of both symbolic and material reconciliation in relation to this theme. Symbolically, the first category presents examples of Indigenous voices who are highlighted in corporate reconciliation policies as “reclaiming space and place.” For example, in TELUS’s reconciliation report, Chastity Davis-Alphonse from the Tla’amin and Tsilhqot’in Nations explains that Indigenous knowledges and presence continue as land-based and in spite of settler colonialism: “Indigenous peoples are still here. We are moving from surviving to thriving by reclaiming our lands, cultures, traditions, languages, ways of knowing, and worldview” (T-02: 64). Rogers quotes Regional Logistics Manager for Rogers Sports and Media Pamela Anderson, who offers her thoughts as a Métis person on the corporations’ installation of land acknowledgement plaques: “[The plaques symbolize] one way Rogers is committed to the process of truth and reconciliation” (R-02: para. 10). A third example focusses on the involvement of Indigenous peoples in the telecommunications industry. Darrell Beaulieu of Yellowknives Dene First Nation articulates, in relation to being a part of Northwestel’s Community Advisory Board, that “I am looking forward to being a part of a northern and Indigenous team of community members because it’s an opportunity for Northerners to participate in the further development of the communications industry, which has unlimited potential” (N-09: para. 7). While Bell does not quote Indigenous peoples in their document, it does feature images of Moose Deer Point First Nation artist Philip Cote’s mural “Sacred Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers” (B-01: 6).

Importantly, some of the voices featured in these policy documents include reflections on the limitations of existing corporate efforts, highlighting the openness of telecommunications companies to acknowledge the tentative and ongoing nature of reconciliation. These “reflections on corporate practice” examine whether and how Indigenous peoples’ voices include assessments of organizational practices and policies. For example, Crystal Stegner of Tsimshian and Kitselas First Nations and Ayanna Forcier of Cree and Xaayda Nations reflect on the imperfect quality of Indigenous–corporate relationships at TELUS: “The path to including our shared history and traditional Ways of Knowing into the corporate structure isn’t seamless, nor without its difficulties, but the learning and trust is growing in the right direction” (T-02: 94). Similarly, Asennaienton Frank Horn, the former Senior Manager of Community Engagement, Indigenous Collaboration at Rogers, whose family heritage is Kanien’kehá:ka, reflects that Rogers can provide opportunities for Indigenous peoples in spite of ongoing systemic barriers: “The colonial system that prohibited any advancement of the Indigenous community and the narrative needs to change. There is a definite chasm that needs to be bridged and Rogers offers the opportunity for equal footing” (R-03: para. 17). We note that examples of this category are sparse, since we only coded passages that quoted Indigenous peoples offering direct reflections on corporate practices or policies. Our analysis found that

only Rogers and TELUS incorporated these kinds of voices in their publicly available corporate reconciliation policies.

Ultimately, including the voices of Indigenous peoples in corporate reconciliation documents, even reflectively, does not directly challenge the ability of corporations such as TELUS, Rogers, Bell or Northwestel to set their terms of engagement with Indigenous peoples. At a symbolic level, Corporate reconciliation does not in itself produce policies that prioritize self-determination. Instead, it tends to frame Indigenous peoples' voices as supportive of the corporations that include them. For example, Carol Anne Hilton, a Nuu chah nulth descendent from the Hesquah Nation, states that: "TELUS is demonstrating tremendous leadership in the economic reconciliation space" (T-02: 21). While we stress that we are not criticizing these Indigenous speakers, we wish to draw attention to the potential for this kind of discourse to (re)produce a relationship where recognition of Indigenous voices in these spaces is contingent on terms set by the corporations. Our analysis found that most Indigenous voices frame Corporate reconciliation commitments as legitimate and well intended; critical observations are limited to the examples cited above. For example, Rogers does not include any Indigenous perspectives that are explicitly critical of corporate practice, while Stegnar and Forcier's general criticism of corporations' relations with Indigenous peoples (cited above) provide the only critical reflections included by TELUS. When read alongside existing literature about Indigenous–corporate relations, this finding suggests one way that telecommunications corporations limit the voices of Indigenous peoples.

With respect to material forms of Corporate reconciliation, we found two illustrative categories present in each of the corporate policies. "Economic reconciliation" is a stated commitment in all four corporate policies to use their business to promote reconciliation. The corporations share similar language that describes a relationship between improving Indigenous communities' economic position and the reconciliation process. For example, Rogers outlines that "Indigenous connectivity and partnerships will drive economic growth and reconciliation" (R-06: para. 6). Similarly, TELUS states that the corporation will "[demonstrate] respect and reciprocity authentically to Indigenous communities [to] ensure that our key operational areas including employment and business development continue to flourish in partnership with Indigenous peoples" (T-02: 83). Northwestel's policy explains that "It is a good day when we can say we are working together to remove barriers to Indigenous participation and success in our future economies – a day of reconciliation in action" (N-09: para. 5).

Along with these general statements, most of the policies outline specific funding projects that are presented as partnerships with Indigenous peoples. Bell outlines a \$51 million Territorial Internet Connectivity Project with Grand Council Treaty #3 (B-01: 8). Rogers details their Rogers and Downie Wenjack Fund for a Legacy Space in their Toronto-based head office to feature Indigenous art, history and culture (R-01). TELUS's reconciliation report outlines several economic supports, including investment in Indigenous-owned companies under their Pollinator Fund (T-02: 17). While these economic pledges vary widely in scale and monetary scope, they all evince each corporation's commitment to promoting reconciliation through an economic framework. However, it is essential to assess the outcomes of these

initiatives, and the degree to which Indigenous peoples substantively and sustainably benefit from them.

“Technological reconciliation” points to those instances in which a corporate policy outlines how access to infrastructure and digital connectivity advance reconciliation. For example, Bell outlines their work with “Indigenous communities, including over 30 in Ontario and Labrador, to bring high speed fibre Internet connections to homes and businesses as part of the federal government’s Universal Broadband Fund” (B-01: 8). Expanding digital connectivity is also central to TELUS’s technological commitments, and the company includes a target and timeline for advancing connectivity to Indigenous communities within their serving area (T-02: 13). Rogers describes their construction of wireless service towers along Highway 16 in B.C. as a measure to “enhance safety for Indigenous women and girls” (R-04: para. 4), a project that also recognizes missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Despite the potential benefits that these projects offer with respect to access to telecommunications services, we note that they tend to position Indigenous peoples as consumers rather than providers of such services, which inherently limits their degree of ownership and control over such initiatives. They are also oriented toward extending the infrastructures and service territories of these corporate networks, including through partnerships with government funders such as the Universal Broadband Fund and the CRTC’s Broadband Fund.

Overall, we stress that it is essential to assess the substantive outcomes of these commitments to Corporate reconciliation. The categories and commitments presented in this theme provide a set of indicators that should be evaluated to ensure that corporations are living up to their stated responsibilities. This entails a careful analysis of issues of ownership and control of economic and technological initiatives, as well as employment opportunities extended by corporations. It involves asking: Are Indigenous peoples owners of the infrastructure? Do they manage operations and services? Or is their engagement restricted to customers and end users of infrastructure and services that are ultimately owned and/or controlled by telecommunications corporations? How many Indigenous peoples are being hired through these initiatives, and what kinds of roles and responsibilities do they hold?

Conclusions—Toward a future supporting self-determination?

Overall, the reconciliation policies offered by the four commercial telecommunications providers reviewed in this study focus on increasing the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the corporate status quo or foregrounding symbolic and representational understandings of reconciliation. While our analysis found evidence of each corporation pledging financial, technological and career opportunities for Indigenous peoples, we think it is important to also ask whether these opportunities are constrained within a fundamentally unchanged resource-extractivist system. To what degree do such commitments equate to transformative relationships between corporations and Indigenous peoples?

We found that most companies did not directly mention plans for substantive consultations with Indigenous peoples, constraining material forms of reconciliation to terms best suited to maintaining a regulatory status quo that supports their

ongoing service monopolies. In every policy, corporations tend to present reconciliation and relation-building as sanitized, guiltless and positive processes with a linear, check-each-box trajectory. The focus remains on past injustices committed by other entities (primarily state- and church-run residential schools), and while the companies permit limited space for Indigenous speakers to reflect on ongoing settler-colonialism, statements are hardly, if ever, about the corporations themselves. The inclusion of Indigenous voices appears circumscribed by terms set by the corporations, while limited details are offered about the role that Indigenous communities and organizations play in economic or technological reconciliation, while companies benefit from public funding to extend their infrastructures further into Indigenous territories. Altogether, these actions threaten to render participation in reconciliation as contributing to a continual imposition of corporate narratives and occupation on Indigenous peoples' lands and lives.

By exposing the logics at play in discourses related to reconciliation, we draw attention to the structures and practices of extractivism embedded in Canada's telecommunication industries. Indigenous peoples have long advocated for and demonstrated how ownership and control over telecommunications infrastructures and services affect their resources, lands and communities. Their right to do so is also acknowledged in articles 4 and 5 of the UNDRIP that affirms "the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs" and "the right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State" (United Nations, 2007: 8-9). What would it entail to take seriously the TRC's recommendation to "adopt the [UNDRIP] as a reconciliation framework"? We suggest the answer to this question can only be found through meaningful consultation and engagement with Indigenous peoples as active agents and partners rather than objects of decisions made by state and corporate actors. Centring Indigenous peoples within this space is a necessary step in dismantling the policies and practices of extractivism currently entrenched in Canada's telecommunications industry.

Acknowledgements. The authors thank the reviewers for their constructive suggestions on an earlier draft of this article.

Financial support. This work was supported through the Indigenous Family Connections NWT project, which received funding through Indigenous Services Canada's Pathways to Safe Indigenous Communities Initiative [grant number: 2122-NR-000751-0003].

Competing interests. Author #1 (Rob McMahon) is involved in policy consultations, including CRTC proceedings discussed in this article, as a consultant for a participating Indigenous organization that he also contributes to as a volunteer Board member (First Mile Connectivity Consortium/FMCC). For more information visit: www.firstmile.ca. The authors have no other competing interests to declare.

References

- Babe, Robert E. 1990. *Telecommunications in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Barney, Darin. 2021. "Infrastructure and the Form of Politics." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 46 (2): 225–46.
- Baskatawang, Leo. 2023. *Reclaiming Anishinaabe Law: Kinamaadiwin Inaakonigewin and the Treaty Right to Education*. Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press.

- Beaton, Brian and Peter Campbell. 2014. "Settler Colonialism and First Nations e-Communities in Northwestern Ontario." *The Journal of Community Informatics* 10 (2).
- Bell Canada. 2022. Supporting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Our Communities. <https://www.bce.ca/responsibility/key-documents/2021-supporting-diversity-in-our-communities.pdf>.
- Berelson, Bernard. 1952. *Content Analysis in Communication Research*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Blackwater, D., I. Murtazashvili, and M. B. H. Weiss. 2023. "Spectrum Sovereignty on Tribal Lands: Assessing the Digital Reservations Act." *Journal of Information Policy* 13: 221–48. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jinfopoli.13.2023.0008>.
- Brulle, Robert J., Melissa Aronczyk and Jason Carmichael. 2020. "Corporate Promotion and Climate Change: An Analysis of Key Variables Affecting Advertising Spending by Major Oil Corporations, 1986–2015." *Climatic Change* 159: 87–101.
- Canada. "Government of Canada and the duty to consult." <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1331832510888/1609421255810>
- Canada. 2023. Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. "Broadband Fund: Community consultation process and Aboriginal and treaty rights." June 15. <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/internet/commu.htm>.
- Canada. 2024. Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. "Introducing the CRTC's Indigenous Relations Team." March 22. <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/acrtc/irt-era.htm>.
- Canada. 2024. Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED). "Spectrum and the Indigenous Priority Window." October 25. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/spectrum-management-telecommunications/en/spectrum-allocation/spectrum-and-indigenous-priority-window>.
- Canada. 2025. Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2025-9, January 16. <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2025/2025-9.htm>.
- Chen, Sibö. 2023. *Energy Politics and Discourse in Canada: Probing Progressive Extractivism*. New York: Routledge.
- Connors, Sara. 2024. "Advocacy group asks for details of \$1B sale to Indigenous consortium in the North," *APTN News*, August, 15, <https://www.ssicanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/AN-2024-08-15.pdf>.
- Corntassel, Jeff. 2012. "Re-envisioning Resurgence: Indigenous Pathways to Decolonization and Sustainable Self-Determination." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1 (1): 86–101.
- Couldry, Nick and Ulises A. Mejias. 2018. "Data Colonialism: Rethinking Big Data's Relation to the Contemporary Subject." *Television & New Media* 20 (4): 336–49.
- Coulthard, Glen Sean. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cowen, Deborah. 2020. "#SHUTCANADADOWN: Anti-Colonial Counterlogistics for Indigenous Sovereignty." *The Funambulist*. March 2. <https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/28-our-battles/shutcanadadown-anti-colonial-counterlogistics-for-indigenous-sovereignty-by-deborah-cowen> (Accessed November 7, 2025).
- Dalseg, Sheena Kennedy and Francis Abele. 2015. "Language, Distance, Democracy: Development Decision Making and Northern Communications." *Northern Review* 41: 207–40. <https://doi.org/10.22584/nr41.2015.009>.
- Dorrell, Matthew. 2009. "From Reconciliation to Reconciling: Reading What 'We Now Recognize' in the Government of Canada's 2008 Residential Schools Apology." *English Studies in Canada* 35 (1): 27–45.
- Eisenberg, Avigail. 2019. "Consent, Resistance and the Duty to Consult." *International Journal on Minority and Group* 27: 270–90.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2003. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Favel, Blaine. 2019. *Charting a Path to Economic Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*. Ottawa: Macdonald-Laurier Institute.
- First Mile Connectivity Consortium (FMCC). 2023. "Final Comments." Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2022-147.
- Fiser, Adam and Andrew Clement. 2012. "A Historical Account of the Kuh-Ke-Nah Network: Broadband Deployment in a Remote Canadian Aboriginal Telecommunications Context." In *Connecting Canadians: Investigations in Community Informatics*, ed. Andrew Clement, Michael Gurstein, Graham Longford, Marita Moll and Leslie Regan Shade, 255–82. Edmonton: Athabasca University Press.

- Galea, Irene. 2025. "BCE sale of Northwestel stalls as Indigenous coalition seeks financing." *The Globe and Mail*, June 15. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-bce-bell-northwestel-sixty-north-unity-indigenous-telecom/>.
- Gaudry, Adam and Danielle Lorenz. 2018. "Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian academy." *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 14 (3): 218–27.
- Gibson, Ginger and Ben Bradshaw. 2018. "Resource Extraction and Indigenous Community Consent." In *Encyclopedia of Business and Professional Ethics*, ed. Deborah C. Poff and Alex C. Michalos. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Gobby, Jen, Leah Temper, Matthew Burke and Nicola von Ellenrieder. 2022. "Resistance as Governance: Transformative Strategies Forged on the Frontlines of Extractivism in Canada." *The Extractive Industries and Society* 9: 1–11.
- Greer, Allan. 2019. "Settler Colonialism and Beyond," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 30 (1): 61–86.
- Hoicka, Christina E., Katarina Savic and Alicia Campney. 2021. "Reconciliation through Renewable Energy? A Survey of Indigenous Communities, Involvement, and Peoples in Canada." *Energy Research & Social Science* 74: 1–15.
- Hudson, Heather E. and Rob McMahon. 2022. "Remote and Indigenous Broadband: A Comparison of Canadian and U.S. Initiatives and Indigenous Engagement." *Journal of Information Policy* 12: 165–194.
- Hudson, Heather E., Rob McMahon and Bill Murdoch. 2023. "Beyond Funding: Barriers to Extending Broadband in the Indigenous North." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 48 (2): 285–306. doi:10.3138/cjc.2022-0045.
- James, M. 2021. "The Structural Injustice Turn, the Historical Justice Dilemma and Assigning Responsibility with the Canadian TRC Report." *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 54 (2): 374–96.
- Korteweg, Lisa and Emily Root. 2016. "Witnessing Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug's Strength and Struggle: The Affective Education of Reconciliation in Environmental Education." *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education* 21: 178–97.
- Labuschagne, Adri. 2003. "Qualitative Research - Airy Fairy or Fundamental?" *The Qualitative Report* 8 (1): 100–103.
- Lacy-Nichols, Jennifer, and Owain Williams. 2021. "'Part of the Solution': Food Corporation Strategies for Regulatory Capture and Legitimacy." *International Journal of Health Policy and Management* 1 (10): 845–856.
- Landwehr, C., T. Saalfeld and A. Schäfer, eds. 2022. "The Contested Idea of Political Representation." In *Contested Representation: Challenges, Shortcomings and Reforms*, 13–100. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lertzman, David and Harrie Vredenburg. 2005. "Indigenous Peoples, Resource Extraction and Sustainable Development: An Ethical Approach." *Journal of Business Ethics* 56 (3): 239–54.
- Macdonald, David B. 2019. *The Sleeping Giant Awakens: Genocide, Indian Residential Schools, and the Challenge of Conciliation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- McMahon, Rob. 2014. "From Digital Divides to the First Mile: Indigenous Peoples and the Network Society in Canada." *International Journal of Communication* 8: 25.
- McMahon, Rob, and Murat Akçayır. 2022a. "Investigating Concentrated Exclusion in Telecommunications Development: Engaging Rural Voices from Northern Canada." *Journal of Rural Studies* 95: 183–94.
- McMahon, Rob and Murat Akçayır. 2022b. "Voices from Northern Canada: Integrating stakeholder expectations in telecommunications policy for rural, remote and Northern regions." *Telecommunications Policy* 46 (9). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2022.102402>.
- McMahon, Rob, Michael Gurstein, Brian Beaton, Susan O'Donnell and Tim Whiteduck. 2014. "Making Information Technologies Work at the End of the Road." *Journal of Information Policy* 4: 250–69. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jinfopoli.4.2014.0250>.
- Mejias, Ulises and Nick Couldry. 2024. *Data Grab: The New Colonialism of Big Tech and How to Fight Back*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Mittal, Paarth. 2021. "Extraction, Indigenous Dispossession, and State Power: Lessons from Standing Rock and Wet'suwet'en Resistance." *The Arbutus Review* 12 (1): 121–41.

- Northwestel. 2020. "Meet our new Community Advisory Board." December 4. <https://www.nwtel.ca/community/meet-our-community-advisory-board> (November 19, 2023).
- Northwestel. 2022a. "'Reflections' on reconciliation in the North." September 28. <https://www.nwtel.ca/community/reflections-reconciliation-north> (November 19, 2023).
- Northwestel. 2022b. "What's First Nations-owned fibre a blueprint for NWT's future growth." June 16. <https://www.nwtel.ca/community/whatis-first-nations-owned-fibre-blueprint-nwts-future-growth> (November 19, 2023).
- Northwestel. 2023a. "Our Path Forward: Northwestel's reconciliation plan." <https://www.nwtel.ca/reconciliation#paragraph-5005> (November 19, 2023).
- Northwestel. 2023b. "Our Shared Pathways: Yukon's First Nations-owned community fibre." <https://www.nwtel.ca/oursharedpathways> (November 19, 2023).
- Northwestel. 2023c. "Response to Question 25 of Telecom Notice of Consultation 2022-147: Northwestel(CRTC)25Aug23-9 TNC 2022-147." Filed with CRTC on October 23. <https://applications.crtc.gc.ca/portail-portal/eng/listes-lists/public-proceedings/18#2022-147>
- Northwestel. 2023d. "The children are protected under the Northern Lights in Inuit artist's Orange Shirt design." September 25. <https://www.nwtel.ca/community/children-are-protected-under-northern-lights-inuit-artists-orange-shirt-design> (November 19, 2023).
- Northwestel. 2023e. "We will connect communities to each other and the world through world-leading technology." <https://www.nwtel.ca/we-will-connect-communities-each-other-and-world-through-world-leading-technology> (November 19, 2023).
- Northwestel. 2023f. "We will deepen our understanding of the North's unique Indigenous cultures." <https://www.nwtel.ca/we-will-deepen-our-understanding-norths-unique-indigenous-cultures> (November 19, 2023).
- Northwestel. 2023g. "We will seek a shared pathway to an even better north." <https://www.nwtel.ca/we-will-see-shared-pathway-even-better-north> (November 19, 2023).
- Northwestel. 2023h. "We will strive to have our operations reflect the communities we serve." <https://www.nwtel.ca/we-will-strive-have-our-operations-reflect-communities-we-serve> (November 19, 2023).
- Northwestel. 2025. "Yukon's fibre-to-the-home assets now Indigenous-owned as Northwestel and 13 First Nations companies form new partnership." <https://www.nwtel.ca/northwestel-and-13-first-nations-companies-form-new-partnership> (June 25, 2025).
- Northwestel. n.d. "Yukon's fibre-to-the-home assets now Indigenous-owned as Northwestel and 13 First Nations companies form new partnership." <https://www.nwtel.ca/northwestel-and-13-first-nations-companies-form-new-partnership> (November 19, 2025).
- Parson, Sean and Emily Ray. 2018. "Sustainable Colonization: Tar Sands as Resource Colonialism." *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 29 (3): 68–86.
- Pasternak, Shiri, Deborah Cowen, Robert Clifford, Tiffany Joseph, Dayna Nadine Scott, Anne Spice and Heidi Kiiwetinesik Stark. 2023. "Infrastructure, Jurisdiction, Extractivism: Keywords for Decolonizing Geographies." *Political Geography* 101: 1–9.
- Pasternak, Shiri and Tia Dafnos. 2018. "How Does a Settler State Secure the Circuitry of Capital." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36 (4): 739–57.
- Pasternak, Shiri and Hayden King. 2019. *Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper*. Toronto: Yellowhead Institute.
- Peters, Meg. 2017. "How Bell Canada Capitalises on the Millennial: Affective Labour, Intersectional Identity, and Mental Health." *Open Cultural Studies* 1: 395–405.
- Philpot, Duncan, Brian Beaton and Tim Whiteduck. 2014. "First Mile Challenges to Last Mile Rhetoric: Exploring the Discourse between Remote and Rural First Nations and the Telecom Industry." *Journal of Community Informatics* 10 (2): 1–19.
- Rogers. 2021. "Honouring National Day for Truth and Reconciliation." September 30. <https://about.rogers.com/news-ideas/honouring-national-day-for-truth-and-reconciliation/> (July 9, 2023).
- Rogers. 2022a. "Honouring the survivors, victims and families of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls across Canada." February 14. <https://about.rogers.com/news-ideas/honouring-the-survivors-victims-and-families-of-murdered-and-missing-indigenous-women-and-girls-across-canada/> (July 3, 2023).
- Rogers. 2022b. "National Indigenous History Month: Rogers Employee Asennaienton Frank Horn discusses the importance of storytelling." June 20. <https://about.rogers.com/news-ideas/national-indigenous-history-month>

- ry-month-rogers-employee-asennaienton-frank-horn-discusses-the-importance-of-storytelling/ (June 11, 2023).
- Rogers. 2022c. "National Indigenous History Month – Building an inclusive workplace for Indigenous Peoples and our team members." June 1. <https://about.rogers.com/news-ideas/national-indigenous-history-month-building-an-inclusive-workplace-for-indigenous-peoples-and-our-team-members/> (July 2, 2023).
- Rogers. 2019. "Rogers and Downie Wenjack Fund partner to open Legacy Space." February 15. <https://about.rogers.com/news-ideas/rogers-downie-wenjack-fund-partner-open-legacy-space/> (July 4, 2023).
- Rogers. 2023. "Truth and Reconciliation Commitment Statement." <https://about.rogers.com/stories/rogers-truth-and-reconciliation-commitment-statement/> (June 12, 2023).
- Rogers. 2024. "Rogers Celebrates National Indigenous Peoples Day with our Customers and Communities." <https://about.rogers.com/news-ideas/rogers-celebrates-national-indigenous-peoples-day-with-our-customers-and-communities/> (February 3, 2026).
- Saldaña, Johnny. 2021. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Limited.
- Schlosser, Kolson. 2013. "Regimes of Ethical Value? Landscape, Race and Representation in the Canadian Diamond Industry." *Antipode*, 45 (1): 161–179.
- Smythe, D. W. 1981. *Dependency Road: Communications, Capitalism, Consciousness, and Canada*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Spice, Anne. 2018. "Fighting Invasive Infrastructures: Indigenous Relations against Pipelines." *Environment and Society: Advances in Research* 9: 40–56.
- TELUS. 2022. Indigenous Reconciliation and Connectivity Report - 2022 Edition. https://downloads.ctfassets.net/ftupc9ltp8m/4zkEUgfoECrsOS6y9FiL0q/8a9c3d00478607a984d2b09615eff4fb/Indigenous_Reconciliation_Connectivity_Report_EN_0105023.pdf.
- TELUS. 2023. "Our Reconciliation Commitment." https://assets.ctfassets.net/ftupc9ltp8m/7eMH2jA1q0QasegxHx9SMM/a6c6037d3e8145564f0eed4b151bcd1a/EN_-_Accessible_-_TELUS_Reconciliation_Commitment.pdf (May 9, 2023).
- Tobias, John L. 1983. "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879–1885." *The Canadian Historical Review* 64 (4): 519–48.
- Toso, Tricia and Scott Foward. 2023. "Dispatches From Eeyou Istchee: Cree Networks, Digital, and Social Inclusion." *Social Inclusion* 11 (3): 298–308. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v11i3.6797>.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015. Calls to Action. Winnipeg, MB. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf.
- Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. 2012. "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1 (1): 1–40.
- United Nations. 2007. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf.
- Van Lier, Nicole. 2021. "Reconciliation 2.0: Resolving Contradictions in the Production of Settler Colonial and Capitalist Space in Canada." *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography* 53 (2): 607–26.
- Wakeham, Pauline. 2019. "Outsourcing Reconciliation: The Government of Canada's #IndigenousReads Campaign and the Appropriation of Indigenous Intellectual Labor." *Studies in American Literatures* 31 (1-2): 1–30.
- Winseck, Dwayne. 1998. *Reconvergence: A Political Economy of Telecommunications in Canada*. New York: Hampton Press.
- Winseck, Dwayne. 2024. Canada's Network Media Economy: Growth, Concentration and Upheaval, 1984–2023. *Global Media and Internet Concentration Project*, Carleton University. <https://doi.org/10.22215/gmicp/2024.12.124>.
- Winseck, Dwayne R. and Robert M. Pike. 2007. *Communication and Empire: Media, Markets and Globalization, 1860–1930*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Yin, Robert K. 2015. *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. New York: Guilford Publications.
- Youdelis, Megan. 2016. "“They Could Take You Out for Coffee and Call It Consultation!”: The Colonial Antipolitics of Indigenous Consultation in Jasper National Park." *Environment and Planning A* 48 (7): 1374–92.

Appendix 1 Reconciliation Policies of Major Telecommunications Corporations in Canada

Code	Company	Document name and URL (where available)	Document date	Length (words)	Access date
T-01	TELUS	“Our Reconciliation Commitment”	No date	489	May 9, 2023
T-02	TELUS	Indigenous Reconciliation and Connectivity Report – 2022 Edition	November 22, 2022	5072	May 9, 2023
B-01	Bell Canada	Supporting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Our Communities	March 2022	5521	May 9, 2023
N-01	Northwestel (Bell)	What’s First Nations-owned fibre a blueprint for NWT’s future growth	June 16, 2022	520	November 19, 2023
N-02	Northwestel (Bell)	We will strive to have our operations reflect the communities we serve	September 19, 2022	523	November 19, 2023
N-03	Northwestel (Bell)	We will seek a shared pathway to an even better north	September 19, 2022	625	November 19, 2023
N-04	Northwestel (Bell)	We will deepen our understanding of the North’s unique Indigenous cultures	September 19, 2022	481	November 19, 2023
N-05	Northwestel (Bell)	We will connect communities to each other and the world through world-leading technology	September 12, 2022	639	November 19, 2023
N-06	Northwestel (Bell)	The children are protected under the Northern Lights in Inuit artist’s Orange Shirt design	September 25, 2023	637	November 19, 2023
N-07	Northwestel (Bell)	“Reflections” on reconciliation in the North	September 28, 2022	400	November 19, 2023
N-08	Northwestel (Bell)	Our Path Forward: Northwestel’s reconciliation plan	September 29, 2022	583	November 19, 2023
N-09	Northwestel (Bell)	Meet our new Community Advisory Board	February 9, 2024	597	November 19, 2023
N-10	Northwestel (Bell)	Our Shared Pathways: Yukon’s First Nations-owned community fibre	April 26, 2022	436	November 19, 2023
R-01	Rogers	Rogers and Downie Wenjack Fund partner to open Legacy Space	February 15, 2019	291	July 4, 2023
R-02	Rogers	National Indigenous History Month - Building an inclusive workplace for Indigenous Peoples and our team members	June 1, 2022	1040	July 2, 2023
R-03	Rogers	National Indigenous History Month: Rogers Employee Asenaienton Frank Horn discusses the importance of storytelling	June 20, 2022	974	June 11, 2023
R-04	Rogers	Honouring the survivors, victims and families of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls across Canada	February 14, 2022	316	July 3, 2023
R-05	Rogers	Honouring National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	September 30, 2021	430	July 9, 2023
R-06	Rogers	“Truth and Reconciliation Commitment Statement.”	September 19, 2022	548	June 12, 2023

Cite this article: McMahon, Rob, Aidan Trembath and Taofiki Okunola. 2026. “Extending Extractivism: Analysing Canadian Telecommunication Corporations’ Reconciliation Rhetoric.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423926101048>.