

The Paradox of Boundaries in Coast Salish Territories

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Paper submitted to *Critical Geographies* 31 March 2007
Accepted (subject to revisions) 12 Nov 2007

Abstract

This paper grapples with the seeming paradox in the notion of representing cartographic boundaries for an indigenous community whose core social relationships are embedded in a moral ethos of borderless kin networks. While ethnographic maps of the Coast Salish people (southwest British Columbia and northwest Washington) have traditionally represented territories as discretely bounded, continuous regions, contemporary land claims maps submitted by Coast Salish political leaders reveal a nest of overlapping and interlocking lines. The paper argues that delineating territories based strictly on land use and occupancy is inadequate to take into account broader relationships between people and place. Property, language, residence and identity are categories also appropriate to Coast Salish understandings of territorial boundaries, while ideas and practices of kin, travel, descent and sharing make boundaries permeable. The paper considers strategies involved in the boundary lines created by Coast Salish leaders in the context of putting forward to the state their claims to the land, and the cautious treatment of these maps by community members who are concerned that relationships between kin and to place are threatened by the power that such expressions have to transform Coast Salish social and political relations.

Introduction

The cartographic practice of representing indigenous territories as discrete, bounded watershed units held by local, residence-based groups appears in stark contrast to indigenous narrative practices relating to territories which underscore a pervasive ideology of sharing with kin within the bounds of a system of mores of inclusion and exclusion. Can boundaries which are so seemingly permeable be thought of boundaries at all? How can there be territorial boundaries in a world of highly interlocking kin ties, where knowledge and use of land may not be restricted to economic, resource harvesting activities in owned areas, but includes the recognition of relationships with ancestors and spirit that reinforce kin-group identities which go to the heart of indigenous experiences of dwelling in place? How can such territorial ideas be reconciled in the political milieu of land claims, where western preconceptions of territories and group membership create a dominant expectation that the territorial overlap produced be resolved in settling claims?

To grapple with the seeming paradox of indigenous territoriality within an ethos of seemingly borderless kin networks, I turn to Barth's suggestion that concepts of borders and boundaries can be more fully understood in the context of local cultural and linguistic constructs, and Ingold's notion that hunter-gatherer ways of knowing and being can better be appreciated through envisioning people and places constituting themselves within a field of relations.¹ Based on an investigation of Coast Salish² territoriality, I argue that simple polygonal representations on territories based strictly on land use and occupancy of members of historic village or contemporary Indian Reserve groups inadequately accounts for indigenous understandings of territory. I argue that as a political act, delineating the territories of contemporary residence-based polities in the land claims process – demarcating segments of a region as being the exclusive or shared exclusive territory of one Indian Band/Tribal Group or another has the potential of exacerbating tensions amongst kin and ultimately transform their long-standing socio-political relations. In the maps and indigenous language terms Coast Salish people have used to describe their territories and boundaries, local leaders have attempted to balance their own understandings of territory in discursive terms that are familiar to the state. Such efforts are treated cautiously by Coast Salish commentators on political and cultural affairs who are concerned that by making claims in these terms, relationships between kin and ongoing cultural practices that embody local connections to place are threatened by the power that such expressions have to transform their social and political relations.

To account for Coast Salish understandings of territory, a cartography that recognizes the importance of complexly networked social groups which are enmeshed in locally rich property

relations must be utilized, reflecting how a relational epistemology of kin, travel, descent and sharing. Territorial boundaries in this view are then less attributed to state-endorsed political structures (such as Indian bands, tribal groups, or treaty offices), but rather are understood through idioms of kin, ancestor, sharing and residence affiliation. To date, attempts at dealing with these relationships through ever-expanding territorial boundary claims have been ineffective in resolving disputes. A more subtle cartography is needed to bridge worldviews in these powerful land claim arenas. Such a cartography might utilize the power of computer mapping to indicate the highly complex nature of territorial relations in a highly networked social environment. Territories located through this cartography may better reflect the more fluid nature of territorial practise amongst networks of kin, while at the same time accounting for more site-specific property relations within and between kin and residence groups. Refocusing territories to these less familiar (at least to a western Cartesian cartography) must not be read as undermining territorial claims to the land. Rather, they may be envisioned to sustain and produce more harmonious political relations between related communities in a contemporary world of treaty settlements and self-determination.

Theorizing Indigenous Boundaries

Boundaries between social groups, whether porous or permanent, physical or imagined, are frequently mapped onto place. Boundaries like fences and gates, patrolled borders and checkpoints, walls and portals are constructed in place to shape social divisions. Boundaries may also influence social and cultural practice through their mere physicality. Over time, this physical presence shapes the ways in which relationships are ordered to these places and to the people

who live among and within them. Boundaries are also experienced through less physical, more abstract forms. Survey plans delimiting parcels of private property or state maps marking territorial and jurisdictional boundaries are examples of boundaries whose familiar forms and conventions are very real to physical experience. All these different forms of boundaries shape and are shaped by social relations.

However, a boundary is not always just a boundary, to paraphrase Geertz paraphrasing Ryle.³ Boundaries are deeply embedded cultural experiences, and can have any number of intentionalities and meanings. A particular form of boundary in one cultural setting may have a very different context or meaning in another. Property, territory, cultural groups, linguistic groups, kin groups, polities, all may be bounded by different concepts and configurations of boundaries. Conversely boundaries identifying the same kind of division (say property) can have many different forms. One does not need a surveyor's plan in hand to know where family or community property boundaries are in local indigenous cultures: one needs a good understanding of genealogy, toponymy, mythic history and the 'signs posts' of continued use to understand the property relations of any given resource site. Notions of boundaries are clearly rooted in a diversity of cultural concepts.

Theorizing ideas of boundary, Barth has argued that normative English-language views of the concept divide territories on the ground, set limits marking distinct social groups, and provide a mental template for division of categories of things.⁴ Such visions, he argues, cannot be universally applied in other cultural and linguistic constructs of boundary. Barth's analysis leads

to relativizing the concept, suggesting that the culture and language of local understandings must be explored to resolve the seeming paradox suggested by indigenous perspectives which are, on the face, highly located discourses of kin, sharing and travel.

There are many examples of these differently configured cultural imageries that demarcate boundaries. Anderson discusses the different ways of what he calls cultural 'knowing' or 'intelligence' that have been employed by Evenki reindeer herders, Soviet bureaucrats and Russian land managers to construct social, political and economic boundaries of the herders' territories.⁵ The different views of boundaries become points of intersection and negotiation for the ways that people manage and relate to the land itself. Evenkis at times take on Soviet and Russian ideas in order to defend their means of production from powerful state interests which respond more definitively to familiar concepts. Barthes provides examples of highly different ways of imagining territory without reference to absolute physical boundary markers.⁶ The Baktaman are New Guinea rainforest gardeners for whom place is immensely important for social identity, but by whom little cultural attention is given to physical boundaries between villages or gardens of the various Baktaman families and social groups. Likewise Basseri Persian nomads, who are deeply connected to place through their use and experience of the land, recognize grazing rights not through bounded territories, but through migration schedules. In contrast to these examples, Australian Aboriginal concepts of territories are defined by permeable boundaries of paths and itineraries, structured not to physically impede movement or exclude others, but to provide for the social interaction of different social groups within common places.⁷ Such boundaries, Ingold argues, are "more like sign posts than fences, comprising part

of a system of practical communication rather than social control”,⁸ and stand in contrast to the more rigid formulations of property structured by western states.

Anthropologists have sometimes described hunter-gatherer communities as lacking boundaries to mark clear estates or parcels, mistaking different modes of understanding social configurations of property and identity for there being no boundaries at all.⁹ Since identity is often constructed in multiple ways, such as when individuals claim belonging in more than one land owning group, boundaries between territories may become difficult or seemingly imprecise for the external observer to apprehend.¹⁰ Ellen Semple, an influential American geographer in the early to mid twentieth century, misconstrued boundaries among Native American tribes as vague, undefined and often overlapping, reflecting a “superficial and unsystematic utilization of their soil” and being a part of “uneconomic and extravagant use of the land”.¹¹ Such thinking has also persisted in state characterizations of indigenous territories that have used ethnocentric ideology to undermine claims of indigenous ways of relating to, dwelling in and owning the land.¹² Aboriginal people have also adopted western methods of territorial representation, using maps of polygonal boundaries and borders, to assert their claims in a language that is familiar to the nation states with which they are hoping to redefine relationships.¹³ Such techniques belie the authority of the neat grids of cadastral boundaries and reflect interlinking social systems and multiple attachments to place through their often confusing and overlapping lines. Conventional ethnographic mapping of territorial boundaries as cadastral matrices of boundary lines and polygons delineating limits on travel and resource harvesting, must be re-imagined if we are to less mis-represent indigenous understandings.

Indeed, Myers has provided a critique of Radcliffe-Brown on just this point of assuming one-dimensional relationships between social organization and territory in hunter-gatherer societies.¹⁴ An understanding of how boundaries are conceived must consider the political, ideological and spatial relationships to the land and the people who dwell within it, what Myers called a view of place as “the totality of relations among people”.¹⁵ Poirier has followed such a view of the boundaries of Atikamekw territory in Québec, suggesting that “if there are any borders at all between these areas of responsibility, they are essentially flexible and permeable, and they are reevaluated according to needs and events; here, the principle and logic at stake centres on networks of shared responsibility towards a living land”.¹⁶ Western notions of boundaries for indigenous people are dissolved simultaneously by travel, kin, and descent, particularly when thought of in relation to communities within and neighbouring local social groups.

Coast Salish Territories

Scholarly, legal and political discourses have long projected Coast Salish territorial boundaries as straightforward delineations of territory based entirely on the regions used and occupied by residence-based social groups such as villages, or clusters of residence-based groups which share common language or dialect. These maps have largely failed to take into account the central significance of the groups of bilaterally reckoned kindred that cross cut these residence-group boundaries in lives that are pervaded by a moral ethic of sharing of the resources of ones properties. Indeed, this ethic of sharing is a central feature of Coast Salish economic life. The famous wealth and prestige associated with Northwest Coast potlatch economies is achieved in the Coast Salish instance through hosting visiting relatives who wish to harvest locally owned

and controlled resources, through sharing local abundance at feasts of ones affinal or consanguineal kin, and through the validation of various property claims by mass redistribution of the wealth obtained as a product of resource abundance at large potlatch events.¹⁷ These economic and social networks are sometimes even further expanded through trade, barter or sale of owned resources to far-flung non-kin, transactions which can also take on the flavour of sharing amongst kin through the gifting of local names to visiting individuals.¹⁸ Territories, from this point of view, are less about the impermeable boundaries of residence group ownership and jurisdiction and more about the networks of kin through which property relations may be navigated by individuals engaged in a feasting economy of sharing and exchange.

In the normative mode of ethnographic descriptions of land tenure systems, Coast Salish territories may be conceived of as being an area of jurisdiction or physical control by local village, watershed or language groups by and on behalf of the members of the residence-based group. Key jurisdictions include the exercise of symbolic control of territories through naming places and reifying legitimacy of storied landscapes; the exercise of physical control of territories through excluding ‘outsiders’, and tight individual control of highly local ecological and ritual knowledge related to the land and resources. Cartographically these territories strongly tend to map onto areas within the watersheds of places where residence groups have common property or alternately where multiple residence groups share a language, dialect or micro-dialect. In such a community of kin where language or dialect is shared and the region of control is discrete, such as a watershed or an island area, I have heard these areas referred to as ‘core’ territories. Shared or jointly held territories are declared in places amicably used, occupied or related to by

members of neighbouring residence groups who share tightly bound kin networks, and where these networks crosscut language or dialect communities.

The map in Figure 1 represents many of the typical elements used in ethnographic mappings of Coast Salish territories. It brings together an understanding of how larger linguistic divisions map onto smaller territories based on approximations of the watershed and island-shed areas used and occupied by single or aggregated resident group communities. The watershed-based boundary lines for each territory represented on this map are intended to provide a schematic of the territories of Coast Salish residence groups. It does not represent with precision, the complexity and nuance of temporal changes to the boundaries of the territories of these residence groups, which have moved, split, merged and otherwise changed over time.¹⁹ It also is a poor representation of the location and extent of areas of territories which are shared exclusively amongst or between residence group communities, such as the productive island areas in the Strait of Georgia. Thus even as a relatively detailed schematic of residence group territories, this kind of cartography has significant limitations.

[Figure 1. Coast Salish Territories]

These residence-based territories – based today on villages, Indian bands, or larger ‘tribal’²⁰ affiliations – mask another important property-owning group. For Coast Salish people, productive and predictable resource locations are also owned by groups of extended families, related through descent from common ancestors who were connected to particular important

places.²¹ People claiming membership these groups may draw authority with respect to the properties associated with these groups from their knowledge of and publically recognized use of historical and mythical privileges handed down from the ancestors. The ancestral quality of hereditary personal names and named places provide a degree of order, grounding social relationships of property in named and owned places.

Coast Salish “First Ancestors” and other powerful beings are inscribed in the landscape through the legends of the creation of many features of the landscape by the mythic acts of a powerful Transformer (sometimes glossed in English by fluent speakers as the Little Christ), and through the powers of these ancestors and other beings of the spirit world that continue to be recalled and experienced in these places.²² People may encounter these ancestral figures through the spiritual and ritual practices that take them into the land for spirit encounters that are expressed in as a power or potency in work achievements and ritual life. Relations with these ancestral figures require reciprocity, sharing and respect with other persons, including both human and non-human people who are located and associated with place. They create and reinforce property relations where the land at once belongs to the ancestors who dwell there, and belongs to those living today who encounter the ancestors in it. This outline sketch of the land tenure system simplifies the complexity of the system, where not every owned place is associated with an ancestral name, and not every named place is owned by kin groups. Ancestors may be associated with lands in numerous locations and individuals associating with these ancestors may enjoy property rights at any number of places.

People with no direct claims to property in these areas may be granted through the pervasive practice of playing host and guest²³ in a system of sharing and reciprocity of the kind discussed by Ingold.²⁴ Such normalized sharing relations result in a dominant idiom of inclusion influencing territorial relations with neighbours. I have heard elderly Coast Salish people reflecting on their lives that where family is concerned, there seem to be no territorial borders, only fence posts and boundary markers experienced along the way. Territory, from this view, is not a commodity relationship with land, but rather a way of ordering kin and sharing relations.

Though the social world of Coast Salish people is extensive, people do not play host to everyone all the time. Community members have the right, in theory and in practice, to restrict outsiders from trespass or use of land and resources that are owned by family or residence groups. Indeed, the tension between in-laws is one of the famous unresolved social distinctions in Coast Salish society.²⁵ Enforcement against trespass is largely dependent on outsiders over-harvesting or overstaying their welcome or failing to respect local protocols – social, ritual and technical – about resource harvesting. Historically, appropriate reprisals for trespass ranged from reparations through potlatching to death. Today, public and family pressure pay important continuing mechanisms in maintaining these respectful property relations. In this scheme, sharing territorial access within a scheme of property relations need to be understood in the context of a society for whom the dominant social order realized through a regional network of inter-related kin.

Returning to the notion of territory, when the Coast Salish land tenure system is understood through the axis of residence *and* kin group affiliation, individuals experience their territories as

‘itineraries’ of places, engaging in reciprocal practices relating to their use and respect of the land²⁶ within an ecosystem that they continually appropriate throughout their lives.²⁷ From the perspective of the individual, territories are actually experienced as an element of individual life choice with respect to (in part) the appropriate use of one’s residence and descent group properties. In the Coast Salish social order, simultaneous affiliations and identity with these groups can to a certain degree provide opportunities over time for people to make the best of their own individual situation, drawing on the potential wealth of both community and ancestor strategically and flexibly as may be needed in ones’ life.

Larger regional territories of trade, defence, kin, ritual, potlatch and sport are also salient in ones identity with regional social orders. Ideologies of kinship and sharing, and engagements through travel underwrite these senses of territory throughout the Coast Salish world. As in other hunter-gatherer societies,²⁸ it is in these territorial ideas that smaller-scale local or family group affiliations are transcended by larger Coast Salish regional group identities for which it is the ongoing operation of the regional network itself, rather than large-scale formal political structures, which define and empower territories.²⁹ However, as I will discuss later, emergent formal political structures like tribal councils or treaty organizations – which have to date been mandated through residence-based political processes – have made territorial claims. These claims have added a new dynamic to these territorial experiences.

Ontological Dilemmas in Contemporary Tribal Territories

Property relations in the kinds of indigenous cultural settings described above have different

forms than in the dominant western discourse.³⁰ Indigenous property relations are firmly wrapped in mythological and other social and historical relationships to land that are not easily separated as they are in mainstream western thought. Property from this perspective of dwelling is not so much a *commodity* (though aspects can be), as it is a way of ordering kin relations, and relationships of sharing. Bird-David has argued that a ‘relational epistemology’ of this kind has authority in hunter-gatherer societies where sharing is normalized, people are intimate with their environment, animistic performances are celebrated and supernatural forces are encountered as friendly helpers or kin.³¹ Ingold has suggested that this is an essential element in rethinking the problematic nature/culture divide in western thought.³²

The territorial boundaries map shown in Figure 1 is indeed exactly the kind of instrument that reflects a western view of the Coast Salish world, bounding residence-based social units in a familiar cartography of contiguous boundary lines. However, such a map is ultimately unfamiliar to the lived experiences of Coast Salish people. It can pose problems of translation for fluent speakers who try to describe it in native-language terms. It may cause grievous social and political division amongst kin who are attempting to recognize their relationships of sharing across the political, legal and jurisdictional divides that its boundaries purport to create. Such neat cartographic boundaries do even represent the territorial boundaries that the leaders of Coast Salish community groups have themselves generated in the process of resolving their outstanding land claims with the state. Indeed, these maps produce feelings of anxiety and stress amongst Coast Salish people who have seriously considered how they are used in these political and legal contexts.

This cartographic exercise of neatly representing watershed and island-shed is deceptively simple in comparison with contemporary territorial boundary expressions of Coast Salish people themselves. An examination of local meanings of ‘boundary’, the recent history of self-mapping territories for treaty negotiations, and the community discourse around such cartographic acts all highlight the lack of power standard cartographic practices have to grapple with indigenous ontologies and worldviews.

Salishan terms for ‘boundary’

When I asked Cowichan elder Arvid Charlie how the word ‘boundary’ might be translated into *Hul’q’umi’num’*, he responded that the appropriate word would be *xutsten’* meaning marker, index or indicator, and said that “it’s kind of hard to define”. Chemainus First Nations cultural leaders Peter Seymour, Willie Seymour and Roy Edwards all gave the word *q’uluxutstun*, meaning ‘fence’ or ‘enclosure’,³³ putting my enquiries in check with the caution that such *q’uluxutstun* or fences did not exist between communities other than the hard lines drawn around Indian Reserves which separate those who now live on- and off-Reserve. Chemainus elder Irene Harris went further in highlighting a general distaste for the exercise of eliciting *Hul’q’umi’num’* terms for boundaries, explaining that to her, boundaries were like what her grandfathers had told her about fences; that they were strictly for animals, not for First Nations people. *Hwuhwilmuhw* [First Nations people] with kin ties in multiple communities are not so ‘domesticated’ and do not have such fences. Many of the other conversations I had about boundaries emphasized such sentiments.

Coast Salish people have expressed the view that non-Native concepts of boundaries are powerfully reinforced through the administration of the *Indian Act* provisions which create formal membership divisions between the communities, creating differences between on-reserve and off-reserve members where ties through travel, kin, and descent suggest there should be none. A brief excerpt of a speech by long-time Cowichan leader Abraham C. Joe in one of the meetings of an elders mapping committee, established to define the boundary of the claim to be submitted for negotiations with governments, exemplifies the point:

The way the white man wants us to have boundaries, we never had boundaries before. We went from one end of the island to the other. And I think we gotta come up with something that would erase those boundaries.

Abraham went on to stress that in the old social order of his and prior generations, territorial relations were centred around kin connections. If you had family, there was no boundary preventing one from travel, as the Canada-US border now provides.³⁴

Those days the old people used to make canoes and travel all over. All the way past Seattle up into Tacoma to a big house up there. They travelled on canoes. [...] Like Rose [James] says ‘There was no such thing of our ancestors [that they drew boundaries]. They visit one another, they were related.’ No matter how far you go you’ve got relations. Down the United States you got relations. And they all got along good. [...] There’s no such thing as borders, no I don’t believe it.

For Abraham and many others, these arbitrary boundaries – treaty lines, international boundaries, or the metes and bounds of an Indian Reserve – all create a dilemma in a kin-oriented social world. Coast Salish people make careful reference to their potential extensive bilateral kin networks to navigate these boundaries, the passports of family trees.

A person did not need permission from their relatives to go somewhere, stressed another

Cowichan elder in a follow-up meeting, “they [your relatives] never questioned who you are, they knew who you were and you just go and you would just go do whatever you can”. The ethic of sharing and giving away wealth, not hoarding it, provides a moral basis for this assumed permission. In a system where village exogamy, combined with bilateral kin reckoning, creates a very wide kin network, it indeed appears that there are no territorial boundaries.

The apparent norm of territorial openness must, however, be understood in context. At the level of descent and residence group properties and of territories, the presumptions of permission *are* sometimes withdrawn, such as when in 2001 the chief and council of the Penelakut Tribe closed their community-commons beaches to their Cowichan Tribes neighbours and relatives who wanted to exercise their commercial communal licence there. The land tenure system is thus an essential mechanism in guarding against over-exploitation and the limiting of movement of wealth from one community to another at times of scarcity. At the same time, Coast Salish values and morals keep resources from being hoarded. Sharing amongst kin in good times is normal, as is elaborated on in Coast Salish mythology Cowichan elder Ruby Peters recalled the Seagull story, which teaches about the drastic consequences of gluttony and not sharing with your relatives.³⁵ These principles are constantly in tension in Coast Salish views of people-land relations.

The tension of these ideas is further highlighted when people grapple with the boundaries of Indian Reserves and band membership imposed by the Canadian state. Fisherman and tribal historian Robert Guerin expressed his concerns with such boundaries, emphasizing the

interconnectedness of people from different and sometimes distant villages through kinship.

I have a hard time talking about how we are different because I don't believe that we are. I don't think there is a line that separated the Cowichan people from the so-called Chemainus people, from the Musqueam. I don't think that exists.

Robert himself recalled his own close kin ties to several communities in the Coast Salish world, including Musqueam, Penelakut, Chemainus and Cowichan. For him, an expression of the recognition of bilateral kin challenges visions of boundaries expressed in the context of the administrative units of Indian Bands or the territory maps produced for treaty talks.

Irene Harris similarly discussed her concerns about a proposal to draw territorial boundaries amongst Island Hul'qumi'num communities to advance separate land claims. She felt that such an action could further divide the Lyackson and Chemainus communities, both to which she has intimate connections – to Valdes and Gabriola Island through her Lyackson grandfather and the burial places of her ancestors, to Kulleet Bay through her life-long residence in the Chemainus community. She felt the processes engaged in producing these overlapping land claims would create unnecessary divisions between these communities, where boundaries should not exist:

My grandfather is originally from Lyackson but, in those days it's like that, the people from the Northern came down and massacred, you know. And they started from there and Lyackson was the first. When *Shts'um'inus* [Chemainus] heard it, they went over there, and they got all the children that were left orphans and they brought them down to *Shts'um'inus*. And that's how my grandfather came to Chemainus Bay.

And then when my grandfather was telling us that when the younger generation grew up and start having their families, they came out with that typhoid. That was a big epidemic they had and they all got scared, and they all moved down to Gabriola, you know, that [False] Narrows. And that's where that cemetery is. And when people went there some of them were already deceased on the canoes, and they tried to bury them, because they couldn't do it in that [canoes], I think it was

those cliffs [at False Narrows] where they had the burial. So that's where there's lots of Lyackson people buried there too, not only them there's lots. See that, and that's how a lot of our stories are getting mixed up because of that, you know we have different, my grandfather used to always talk about that Lyackson. We used to go over there and he used to tell us you know this is where your *sxwayxwuy* [ritual mask] comes from. This is where your *st'ulmeylh* [song for the mask dancer] comes from you know.

But that was the thing, we always mixed, you know, we never, I don't think we had a different nations; we were all in one.

Drawing hard boundary lines between these communities as part of individual land claims settlements of Coast Salish communities on Vancouver Island would be, for Irene, “a mistake like what Indian Affairs done long time ago” in creating the Indian bands and Indian Reserves which have the power today to separate families and divide communities. Such boundaries might become implicated in restricting freedom of travel or resource harvesting for people in these communities, supplanting the porous relations of the territory and property of kin with the impersonal divisions of state-backed harvest areas or treaty settlement lands.

The famous carver Simon Charlie emphasized this last point most succinctly. Boundaries for him are colonial tactics used to divide Coast Salish people and disperse their political and economic power. Kin ties and sharing, he emphasizes, undercut these colonial forces.

Our big problem, I think, is that we're so intertwined that there was no border. Saanich would come here and, you know, they were part of the family. Same with Nanaimo. And it bothers me now that, you know, when somebody wants to come and fish, our young people say, 'oh you don't belong here.' No, our way of life was if we belonged to, like, related to the Musqueam. We can go over there any time and live there if we want to. The same with the Lummi. My grandfather met his uncles in Lummi and they told me the house is still there any time you come, you come you live here. The same with Musqueam. The Points were very close to us and old people told him any time he wants to go to the house, I go there. But now the Indian Affairs brainwashed our young people that we only belong to one band.

That wasn't the way it was before.

It is helpful to carefully interpret the intent of Simon's words. There were no restrictions on community membership and belonging in a pre-Indian band sense. An individual was able to activate their family network and harvest in or even take up residence in another community. These communities, however, retained their own sense of identity and property, reflected in part by the labels of identity and affiliation with residence groups. Within the realm of kin, sharing is expected, although as we know from other stories and experiences,³⁶ rules and limits on sharing are clear and people who disrespect them within these territorial boundaries are treated with outsider status.

Property, language, residence, and identity with the actions of the mythic community-forming ancestors appear to be useful categories for understanding the territorial boundaries envisioned by Coast Salish people. Kin, travel, descent and a pervasive ethic of sharing indicate the social contexts in which these boundaries become permeable, and indeed put the concept of boundaries in tension, if not paradox, in contemporary political expressions. Many Coast Salish people categorically reject the totalizing, bounding and limiting visions of territorial boundaries call for by the state, though they often have to adjust their lives to them because of the administrative and bureaucratic power of the state which creates and maintains them. Where Coast Salish people are expected to produce for the state their own territorial boundaries, as I discuss below, they are cautious about engaging them and the paradoxes and conflicts they produce.

Territorial Maps for Treaty Negotiations

In drawing territorial boundaries for submission as statements of intent in the British Columbia Treaty process (see Figure 2), Coast Salish people have attempted to balance their everyday, community-based interest in ideals of sharing amongst kin with the power of their proprietary and jurisdictional interests in territory. I would not go so far to say that, as Ingold has argued, Coast Salish people “systematically invert their own understandings”³⁷ in articulating their collective connections to place in this way. It has been rather, as Scott has argued, an employment of dual strategies to persuade outsiders of the distinct Aboriginal cultural meanings in the land, while negotiating the legal position of their territories in terms familiar to Euro-Canadian concepts of property and jurisdiction.³⁸

[**Figure 2.** Overlapping claims of Coast Salish First Nations in BC treaty process]

Their ‘Statement of Intent’ maps indicating self-defined traditional territory boundaries have now formed a complex set of overlapping claims. This is in part because the First Nations filing the claims are ‘nations’ on different, self-defined socio-political scales. Some of the groups submitting a claim are individual Indian Act defined bands (i.e.: Tsawwassen or Snuneymuxw First Nation), some are groups of bands forming all or (more often) part of a cultural or linguistic group (i.e.: Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group), and others are political alliances that crossed cultural or linguistic boundaries (i.e.: Te’mexw Treaty Association). Such a varied configuration of Aboriginal communities was never expected by governments in the early days of establishing a government-to-government negotiation process in British Columbia. Indeed, the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal People argued that the right to self-determination be vested in

“Aboriginal nations”, rather than “small local communities”, the former being “a sizeable body of Aboriginal people with a shared sense of national identity that constitutes the predominant population in a certain territory or group of territories”.³⁹ The Royal Commission concluded that such self-determining Aboriginal nations would produce more efficient and effective Aboriginal governments.

While the process established by the British Columbia Treaty Commission recognizes each community’s ability to be self-determining, it created a situation where contemporary political differences between self-defined First Nations – which vary from single family units to massive multi-village, multi-language polities – are not congruent with a kin and residence based social order that the older generation of Coast Salish people I have spoken to. However, in spite of the immediately obvious problems of overlapping claims for settling ownership, jurisdictional and group membership issues, Coast Salish leaders and negotiators have, since entering the British Columbia Treaty Process, expressed their communities’ assertions of Aboriginal title, jurisdiction and rights over their territories through the use of these Statement of Intent maps and by identifying indigenous language terms for the notion of traditional territory.

During my work in Coast Salish communities, I have been privileged to be directly involved in the drawing of two First Nations’ Statement of Intent maps for submission to the British Columbia Treaty Commission (BCTC). In those mapping processes, the strategies used by Coast Salish leaders have attempted to achieve the dual goal of expressing territoriality in terms familiar to western bureaucratic institutions while portraying the multifaceted complexity of their

peoples' relationships to land.

My first experience with this process was with the Stó:lō Nation in the fall of 1994. The Stó:lō leadership were preparing to enter the treaty process, and were required to submit a Statement of Intent map in order to begin the process. Having cartography skills, I was asked to hold the pen in order to draw a line around a boundary that had been determined by senior staff and political leaders. In general, the map followed the watershed areas around places that were named in Upriver *Halq'eméylem* (see Figure 3). Over the next ten years, a time when the Stó:lō Nation developed as a political institution representing most of the Fraser Valley Coast Salish First Nations communities, this map became a reified representation of Stó:lō Traditional Territory.

[Figure 3. S'ólh Témexw, Stó:lō Traditional Territory]

The image of the Stó:lō traditional territory as depicted on this map has been given the Upriver *Halq'eméylem* name *S'ólh Témexw, Our Land*. This name originated in a phrase documented while linguist Brent Galloway was working with the Coqualeetza Elders Group. The phrase *s'olh tumuhw tu ikw'ula, halhmut tu mukw'stem it kwulet*⁴⁰ was elicited by Galloway in the context of a long place names mapping project, and has been glossed as 'this is our land, we need to take care of it'. To an Upriver *Halq'eméylem*-speaking audience, the phrase is evocative of Stó:lō ownership and jurisdiction over their asserted territory, and the patrimony felt towards their lands. The phrase also carries the political weight of the unsettled, unresolved land claims, in being directed in part at an audience of the settler society. Though the area defined in the Stó:lō

traditional territory map is quietly critiqued by some First Nations leaders as being a massive expansion of territorial claims by the upper Fraser Valley based Indian Bands' political leadership (particularly in the areas near the mouth of the Fraser River and at the head of Harrison Lake), the term *S'ólh Témexw* and the distinctive image of the territory line has become a familiar feature of the current political landscape in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

In 2001, I became involved in redrafting the Statement of Intent line of the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group. In our consultations with the community elders, it was very clear that the old Statement of Intent map, on file at the BCTC, did not adequately express Hul'qumi'num people's connection to the territory. Several important areas of use and occupancy were completely excluded from the old Statement of Intent line, which caused great concern and debate among the elders and other members of the Hul'qumi'num community who felt that the line their leaders were promoting may 'short-change' future generations needing a settlement covering their entire traditional territory. I embarked on a series of focus groups, individual interviews, Chiefs' and elders' meetings to discuss crafting a new line. The end result was a submission of a 'core' and 'marine' territory line to the BCTC, to reflect the Aboriginal title territory of the Hul'qumi'num people, as well as the marine area within which Aboriginal rights are exercised (see Figure 4). During these meetings, the focus of the conversation often turned to the boundaries and borderlines of Hul'qumi'num communities' territories. While community members readily identified boundary markers, it was only through intense community discussion that firm borderlines were agreed upon. This idea was more problematic for Hul'qumi'num people who talk about such matters via idioms of kin and sharing.

[Figure 4. Hul'qumi'num Traditional Territory Statement of Intent, 2004]

Just as the delineation of boundary lines of Hul'qumi'num traditional territory was challenging, so was the choice of a *Hul'q'umi'num* language term for the claimed area. Though the phrase *s'olh tumuhw* is commonly heard in the political discourse in Island Hul'qumi'num communities, it was not seriously considered as a moniker for the map, possibly in part because of its high profile use in the Stó:lō context, a group with whom the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group has overlapping claims. When I asked fluent speakers independently about the term, some agreed that it might be useful to express the idea of 'territory'; however, many felt that it inadequately conveyed the Hul'qumi'num idea of territory. Ruby Peters countered with a different term, *stl'ulnup*, which she felt was a more subtle expression of the idea of territory. Ruby referred to the Statement of Intent map as illustrative of the scope of this term in reference to an idea of territory. The key meanings of this term are that the land referred to is ancient, that it evokes an association with other kinds of inherited properties, like the big-house 'secrets' described above by Roy Edwards, and importantly that it refers not only to land/earth/ground, but all the things on and under the ground. Most of the elders in the group emphasized that it was important to come to a consensus on the term, but only a few were comfortable with using the term *stl'ulnup* because it carried such a breadth of meaning. Interestingly, not everyone felt that it was useful to translate English concepts like 'Aboriginal title' or 'territory' into *Hul'q'umi'num* and that by doing so we were 'pushing' some of the *Hul'q'umi'num* ideas or using them in ways that potentially push them to, as one fluent speaker said "start thinking like a white man".

These maps submitted for treaty negotiations are the products of the efforts of contemporary Coast Salish leadership to represent the complexities of Coast Salish territorial assertions in the political milieu of negotiating their vision of place within the constitutional and institutional framework of the Canadian state. The Halkomelem language terms mentioned above that were offered to describe these illustrations of territory signify something of the balance that some in the Coast Salish leadership have tried to achieve between expressing in their own terms some of the core notions of property, authority, ancestry, identity and permanence that give rise to the territorial claims and in giving the agents of the state concepts that are familiar to western cadastral figurings of boundaries and territories. Cruikshank has characterized processes such as this as “the difficult task of reconciling the state’s narratives about land as bounded units to be owned and operated for profit with their own spatial understanding that stories crosscut maps”.⁴¹

However, these maps and terms have not left everyone fully satisfied that an ontological balance has been reached. Some Hul’qumi’num community members have expressed deep concern over the construction of borders and boundary lines for treaty negotiations with state government. These people see boundaries and borders as arbitrary and artificial at best, and at worst a part of a recurring colonial mechanism of government to create division between communities and kin and weaken the potential strength of a future where all Coast Salish people are a politically unified, self-determining indigenous Nation. These people are concerned that the power of territorial terminology and cartography will have the effect of severing their connections to place and to each other. The ultimate outcome of such fears being realized would be the dismantling on the bilateral kin group as a significant and powerful social order, replaced with familiar

municipal-like governments with limited jurisdictions over their lands and territories.

Chief Rick Thomas has best articulated the core problem created in trying to resolve borders and boundaries and territories with the drawing of a simple line. He said

I extend my appreciation for the elders taking the time to come out and voice their concerns on the issues that are before us in the treaty process [the drawing of the boundary line for the Statement of Intent]. It is not only the treaty process, but the whole situation we are in. The governments put these division lines between us. But we always seem to come to the conclusion that we are all related and that these boundaries shouldn't be there.

The borders imaged as simple boundary lines on this traditional territory map offends kin- and ancestor-centred senses of place, and have the potential, if empowered with the institutions of the state, of significantly impacting social and territorial relations among Coast Salish people. In the context of land claims agreements, these issues play out in issues as diverse as wildlife harvesting and management, fish allocations, decision-making over ancestral heritage sites, the extent of governance powers, and even the criteria of eligibility for becoming beneficiaries of these agreements. Such impacts would be, as Abraham C. Joe has stated "a mistake like what Indian Affairs done a long time ago", separating families and dividing communities.

Such a critique was well articulated by George Seymour who made a speech during an elders' meeting on the creation of a new Statement of Intent submission for the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group:

The treaty process that has been going in this area for I think about eight years, since the treaty started. Now we're at this point. I remember and I'm beginning when they first started, half way through they started meeting with other Nations, West coast *Muthelumuhw* [west coast] people, north coast people and all the

different people from the different Nations.

And my hope was there would be no borders, because we feel there's no borders within our lands. We travel far and wide. Our old people travelled a long ways.

And I'm hoping to look at that Salish territory, Salish waters, right from Campbell River across Powell River, Sechelt and all across the mainland there right down to the States. I was hoping we'd all get together and talk about that Salish territory, because that's a big resource, in our area Pacific Rim, resources. That is ours.

As I mentioned before that the government is forcing us into things, drawing these little borders. When they first come and made a reserve they drew us the little borders. 'Divide and conquer' they call that, I think. And we could see it again, just getting a little bit bigger that's all. And it's creating bad feelings amongst us. But we're still one people.

I would just like to mention that it was my hope to see all the Salish people on the coast get together. And then lets talk about this big Salish territory.

But my concern is, you know, looking at the borders that we're forced to draw and you know the government's dictating, "Oh we're not going to negotiate this, we're not going to negotiate that." They're not giving us much.

And we talk about the taxation, I have a hard time with that too because, you know, when you look at the whole Salish territory, I think they should be paying the whole Salish territory peoples that taxation. I am really concerned just like everybody else, really concerned about this, and I hope we can get together to discuss this Salish territory with all the people that understand the Hul'qumi'num language. *Huy tseep q'u* [Thank you all].

George articulates a vision of the 'Coast Salish world' as being an area within which Hul'qumi'num people have travelled, traded, intermarried and moved. He is concerned that the treaty process moves Coast Salish communities further from their customary laws and traditions, and into the colonial compartments created by the Indian Act reserve system and the proposed post-treaty system of freehold grants of treaty settlement land.

These sentiments have been echoed by many other community members. Each time I introduced

the Hul'qumi'num traditional territory map in the context of other First Nations' overlapping land claims maps submitted to the British Columbia Treaty Commission (depicted in Figure 2), the elders I worked with became deeply concerned. Talking about these issues in 'government words' troubled them as the terms used ('overlaps', 'boundaries', 'final treaty settlement land') diminish the ease with which people can fluidly activate their community and kin connections to a broad land-base within the Coast Salish world. They consistently suggested that the solution to the overlap problem would be to work out co-management agreements with all their neighbours so that there is accord vis-à-vis the 'outside' governments, but to build into these agreements the flexibility to develop inter-community relations as wholly internal matters without government interference. Their solution was, essentially, to work out modern-day arrangements to implement a vision of a system of more formalized governance between inter-related communities of the Coast Salish world (Figure 5).

[Figure 5. Coast Salish world draft map, Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group, 2002]

The Coast Salish World map depicts a line around all of the territories for which the elders involved in the treaty process had told stories recalling travel, trade, alliances, kin ties, regional ritual practices, harvesting areas, graveyards, and owned resource areas. The area is more expansive than shared language (Island, Downriver and Upriver Halkomelem) or language family (Coast Salish), including links to hunting and trading areas in Rivers Inlet, Kamloops, Yakima, and Warm Springs Oregon. Though this map is still considered under development, it has been frequently used by the negotiators of the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group as a reference

point for a possible entitlement area for wildlife harvesting.

Such a broad cartographic casting of territory has been received in largely critical light in all quarters. Certain leaders of First Nations have seen this line as a cynical expansionist move by the regionally powerful group of Cowichan, while Government officials, if they take it seriously at all (and some have clearly expressed to me that they do not), dismiss it as an impossible conundrum of competing aboriginal jurisdictions, unimaginable in the context of bureaucratically managed and regulated practice of aboriginal and treaty rights such as harvesting wildlife or fishing salmon.

A proposal for a ‘radical’ cartography of Coast Salish boundaries

Coast Salish territorial relations, as I have described, are underwritten by a relational epistemology – of a way of continually coming to know the world through ones relationships with the beings and things encountered in the world. Drawing on Ingold’s metaphor of a *meshwork* of relations of people whose lives are trails through the world,⁴² rather than across or divided by boundaries, I suggest a potentially more radical cartography of territory may be possible. In this vision, the genealogies of individual members of groups of bilaterally descended kin interweave with the itineraries of their lifetime of travels and affiliations with property-owning residence groups. Such a cartography would be reminiscent of a route map of a major airline, showing the hubs and destinations of its scheduled flights, the total area of which reflecting the ‘territory’ of that airline.

Another student of Coast Salish culture offered a similar cartographic view of territorial relations over 50 years ago. Homer Barnett, a student of Alfred Kroeber, created a visual image of Coast Salish territory where boundaries are erased and territory is depicted as a network of resource harvesting sites (redrawn in Figure 6).⁴³ Barnett felt, from the information he collected for his project of developing a general Coast Salish ethnography, that territorial boundaries were difficult to define. He viewed tribal territories as being

...centered upon beach sites conveniently located with respect to gathering and hunting grounds. Certain productive localities were claimed and resorted to during the seasonal round, but most of the land was unclaimed. Hence it is difficult or impossible to draw boundaries. A more satisfactory conception pictures the village groups of a certain region occupying simultaneously or in turn several traditionally assigned spots for their hunting, gathering, and wintering activities.⁴⁴

[**Figure 6.** Barnett's Gulf of Georgia group exploitation areas]

This view is reflected in his published map of the Coast Salish region, which rather than depicting regions as bounded by borderlines, shows the winter villages he had visited, with lines radiating out to a few of the summer camps to which people from these communities travelled each year.

Barnett's map and the accompanying description is both useful and deceiving. The map challenges conventional ethnographic mapping by indicating no boundaries, making instead the nodes of travel, land use and sharing the primary analytical unit to show relationships to territory. These activities are usually largely silent in traditional ethnographic maps represented by solid polygons bounding discrete territorial areas. However, the representation of Coast Salish

non-territories, as it were, leaves one with the false impression that the white spaces in between the nodes of activity are empty, culture-less places. Indeed, Barnett's text claiming that "most of the land was unclaimed"⁴⁵ lies counter to the clear notions of territory that have been expressed in the ethnographic literature before and since Barnett's work. Such an interpretation may have been made in response to the current scholarship of the day which, as reviewed earlier, theorized that Aboriginal territoriality emerged only in response to European culture. Indeed Barnett's own work, published only a few years earlier, observed that "on the mainland at least boundary lines were rather well defined".⁴⁶ Again, in this cartographic exercise we see the struggle with the seeming paradox of boundaries.

I propose pushing the representation further, to radically re-imagine the cartography of territoriality in order to re-configure our maps to a view that recognized the intersection of kin-based territorial relations with those produced from Coast Salish village-group associations.⁴⁷ While Barnett's map does give a cartographic picture of what Poirier has described as itineraries of movement through the land,⁴⁸ here reflecting Coast Salish seasonal travels to village-owned resource locations, it fails to take into account movements along non-village-based lines to the properties of ones bilateral kindred. In my proposed radical cartography of territory, the Coast Salish world would be represented as lines radiating out from the chosen residence location of each individual, connecting to the owned areas (areas of use and occupancy) of all of the ancestors (bilaterally reckoned), with as much temporal depth as can be legitimately demonstrated, with additional lines radiating to all of the fixed properties owned by the residence group of that individual. This creates a field of many-pointed 'stars' radiating out to a multitude

of locations throughout a broad landscape of corporate groups of bilaterally related kin. Such a cartography of territory could profitably be animated to indicate mutability over time, as the residence affiliations of individuals changes in the context of their life decisions, and as people are born and die.

There are, of course, serious methodological difficulties for this kind of radical cartography. One would need to have amassed a massive genealogical knowledge base, and to have tracked very closely the residence and kin affiliations of individuals over time. One would also need to have a much more thorough picture of the various village and kin-group properties owned, used and occupied over time. In practice, the codification of this information can be highly contested and contextual. It would take a massive, sustained community-based research effort – likely only able to be instituted through a program implemented by Coast Salish political or cultural institutions.

This radical cartography of Coast Salish territories would dissolve the language group boundaries that have often been used by anthropologists to suggest Coast Salish territories. They also give much more weight to the bilateral descent group as a primary constituent of Coast Salish territoriality, rather than the 'tribal' or village groups that have been the focus the territorial imaginings of colonial and contemporary governments. This re-configuring of territories by corporate descent group is consistent with Suttles' critique of Federal government policy which, he said, overemphasized Indian Bands and Indian Reserves as focus of social policy development, rather than the unit of most significance to Coast Salish people themselves,

which are these groups of bilaterally descended kin.⁴⁹

Conclusions

A number of years ago Willie Seymour, a respected Coast Salish orator and cultural leader, made a speech to a group of senior First Nation Chiefs and politicians about the problems of creating borderlines in land claims. He reminded these leaders of the difficulties in striking a balance between making claims that will be accepted and understood by the state, and the strength and unity of kin connections throughout the Coast Salish world. Willie recalled his speech to me one day in a conversation about the potential problems of overlapping land claims.

I had the same argument at the [First Nations] Summit level. It was about 10 years ago, I went to a Summit meeting they had at the Hotel Vancouver. I went over there to get some documents signed. Joe Mathias had spent a day and a half talking about exactly what we're doing today. Talking about overlaps. How they're going to deal with it, and there was a really heated argument on the floor, especially outside the Coast Salish area, you know. And the Kwakiutl are saying there is no way they are going to be flexible. That they are going to hold strong in their position. The interior, the north of Squamish and Chehalis, those First Nations were saying that, that their boundary is firm. You know, it's this mountain and there is no flexibility whatsoever. And then, Stó:lō was defending their area as well, very strongly, that Cowichan's were intruding.

And anyway I sat there. I got interested and I sat there and listened, and listened to the arguments.

Finally, Joe Mathias come over to me and he says, "what do you think of all this?"

I said, "That's not an argument. There shouldn't even be a concern at this political table."

He said "I want you to say that. I want you to get up and say that." So, he went back and, I think he was chairing the meeting, I think. Because he called on me, that was one of the first meetings, the first few meetings I was involved in, so he called me to a microphone.

So, I got up and I spoke. I say, "I'm having a real difficult time defining the term

boundary, or territory, or fence, because I never heard that terminology before. You know, I never heard that.

Except to say that our grandfathers shared. They'll invite each other to come to their hunting area, or to their fishing area, or harvest area. They invite their relatives to go share with them.

The reason I have a problem is that my family name, I'm registered Chemainus First Nation, but if we go by, by these rules, I'm displaced, because my family name don't even come from *Shts'um'inus* [Chemainus]. My name *Xwulqwutstun* [Willy's traditional name] comes from *T'eet'qe'* [Lyackson village at Shingle Point]. My father's name comes from a place called *Qwul'sthut* [Bazan Bay] Bazan Bay near Sidney, that's where *S'xwulten* [Willy Seymour's father's name] comes from. My grandmother is Penelakut and my grandfather is Lyackson, my great grandfather is Lyackson. My grandmother is *Meluxulh* [Malahat] but her name comes from Lummi and her grandfather's name came from Lummi, *Tthut'suwenuhw* [another persons traditional name]. I says, "I'm totally confused with the arguments going here. Am I going to be divorced from all my family ties with this new rule that is going to be brought down?"

And it just hushed, you know.

So the ones that were arguing the hardest just shut right up. You know, that's all I said. All I did was talk about my family tree and it showed how diverse my family is. How great an area that we shared. And I said I have a connection to each of those areas. And my grandmother is a descent of Douglas Treaty, *Meluxulh* [Malahat] and her grandfather was *P'oqwutsun* [Paquachin]. One of my uncles actually occupied that land. My brother owns the land now. Yeah, he's from *P'oqwutsun* [Paquachin]. It was handed down to him from our uncle. So, when we begin talking internal boundaries, it's going to be quite the interesting topic.

Willie Seymour silenced this group of Chiefs and First Nations politicians in their discussion of creating boundaries. He reminded them of the moral code of sharing amongst kin and the flexibility of membership to property-owning groups that are cross-cut by these webs of kin-ties. Willie's vision has not yet turned to firm political action, as the Coast Salish and neighbouring communities have stood behind their territory maps submitted as Statement of Intent maps to the BCTC, drawing lines between families, communities and nations. A political solidarity of all the

Coast Salish communities within Canada to pursue land claims jointly may be required to reduce these challenges, (though even then, lines between Coast Salish and neighbouring non-Salish First Nations would be cross-cut by kin relations and claims to common lands and resources). Present indications of the Coast Salish political leadership and community sentiment, however, suggest that the problem of these overlapping claims will continue to bedevil their collective aspirations.

I have argued above that the system of territorial boundaries currently in use in land claims arenas can be transformative of social and political relations. Such problems may be briefly illustrated in the final land claims and self-government agreement proposed for ratification in summer 2007 by the Tsawwassen First Nation.⁵⁰ The Tsawwassen First Nation is a small group of 350 Coast Salish people who are registered members of the Indian Act reserve community at the historical village site of the same name. The Tsawwassen First Nation leadership have agreed to extinguish their collective aboriginal title in land and to modify all their constitutionally protected rights related to the practices of their distinctive pre-existing cultures into freehold title to a small area (717 hectares) of valuable urban real estate in and around their historic village, and to a handful of cultural rights whose exercise is set out within a framework of concurrently applying Federal, Provincial and to a limited degree Tsawwassen laws. Of significance to the issue of boundaries for residence and kin-groups is the criteria for membership in this new group, the Tsawwassen First Nation, which will collectively hold the freehold titles to these lands and in which their members may exercise their new cultural and governance rights. This transformation of the legal status of aboriginal land and resource rights to ones firmly entrenched in village-

based communities is a re-imagining of Coast Salish social and political order, where once vast territories are enclosed in small a ‘treaty settlement land’ base to which the underlying radical title is held by the Crown. Eligibility for membership in this group is based primarily on being able to trace ancestry to a family from Tsawwassen, and enrolment of eligible members in the group is administered through a Tsawwassen-run registry system. An individual enrolling in the group must demonstrate that they have de-enrolled from any other Canadian First Nations group, meeting Federal government fiscal interests in minimizing ‘double-dipping’ for program and service dollars. If the current processes around Indian Band membership are any indication, the bureaucracy surrounding membership, will effectively limit flexibility and will promote village-based associations at the expense of kin-based ones.

Indigenous leaders are faced with an ontological challenge in expressing their property and territorial claims to the state, while rooting these claims in the varied expressions and experiences of place. The challenge of expressing boundaries in western property terms is clearly perceived by elders and leaders who feel that standard boundary maps and experiences of imposed social and political units are inadequate to re-frame inter-community and community-state relations in land claims. Returning again to Barth’s idea that boundaries must be conceived of in relativistic terms, taking into account local senses of place and relational epistemologies, I argue that the melange of territorial boundaries that form these overlapping claims can be re-conceived as circles of inclusion, recognition and mutuality. Such a perspective is consistent with that described by Scott and Mulrennan for Torres Strait Islanders, whose overlapping claims “appear to be the ordinary and indeed primary condition of property, if we overcome common

senses of property as precise, discrete and unproblematic objects and delineated spaces”.⁵¹ From this perspective, overlapping claims become essential to Coast Salish social, political and economic life, reflecting and reinforcing an integral part of Coast Salish phenomenal experiences of dwelling in the world.

Acknowledgements

This paper was first presented as a chapter of my doctoral dissertation entitled *Coast Salish Senses of Place* (2005) and was refined and presented at the Indigenous Cartographies and Representational Politics workshop (2006) hosted by Cornell University. It has benefited from discussions with my colleagues at the Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group Robert Morales, Joey Caro, Renee Racette, and Eric McLay, as well as the helpful critical feedback of Colin Scott, Toby Morantz and Carmen Lambert at McGill University and the two anonymous reviewers for *Cultural Geographies*.

Figure 1.

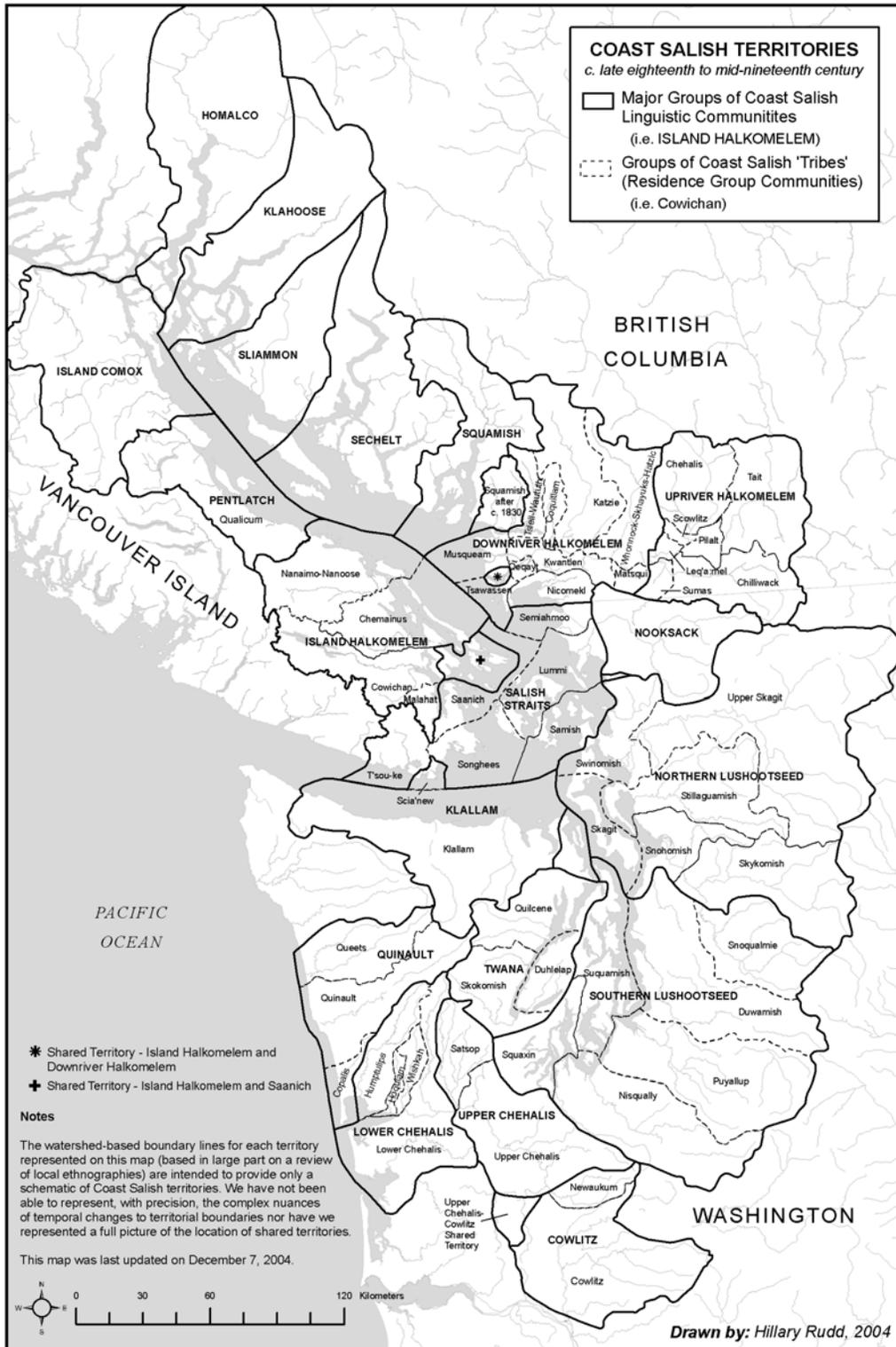


Figure 2.

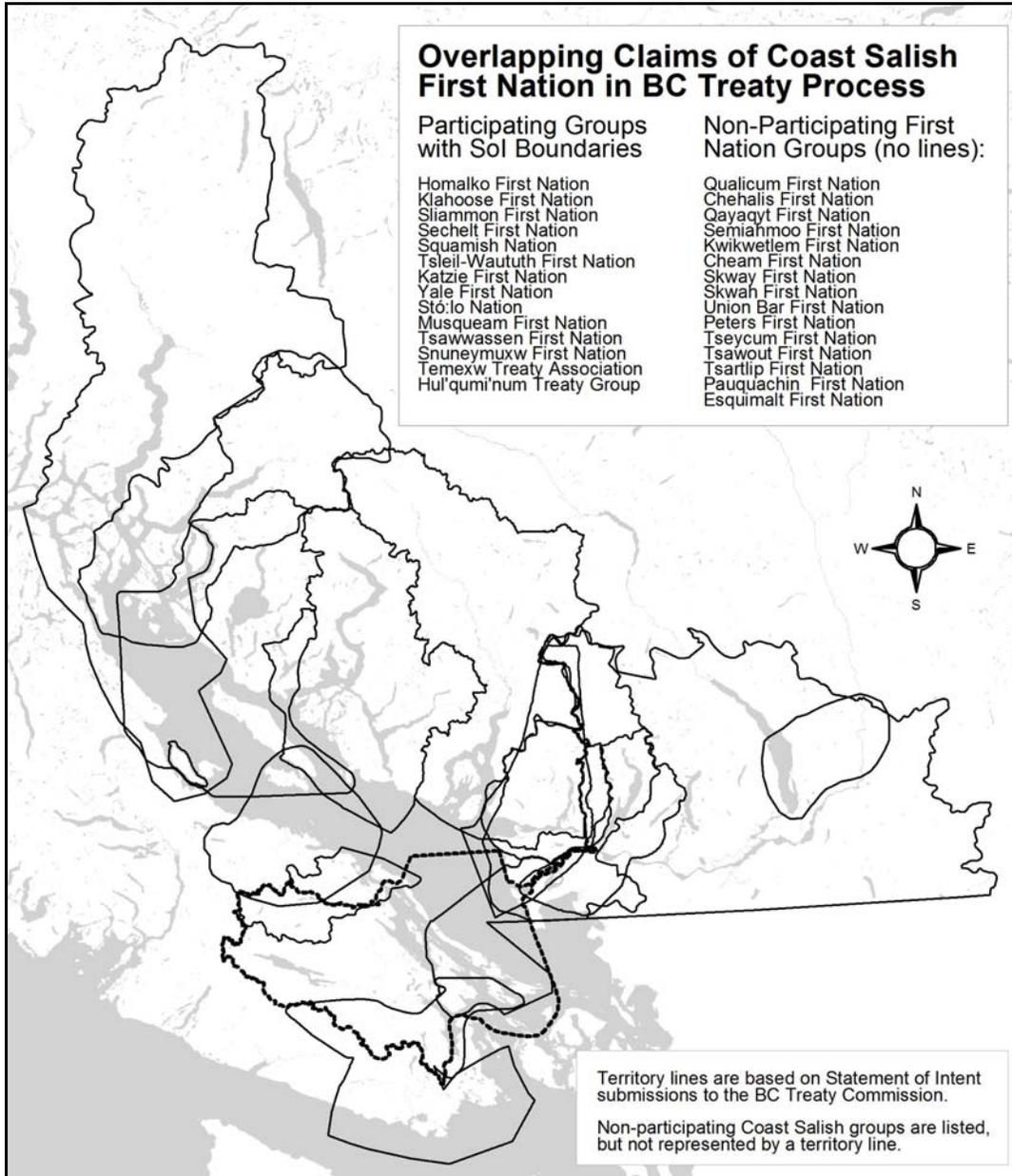


Figure 3

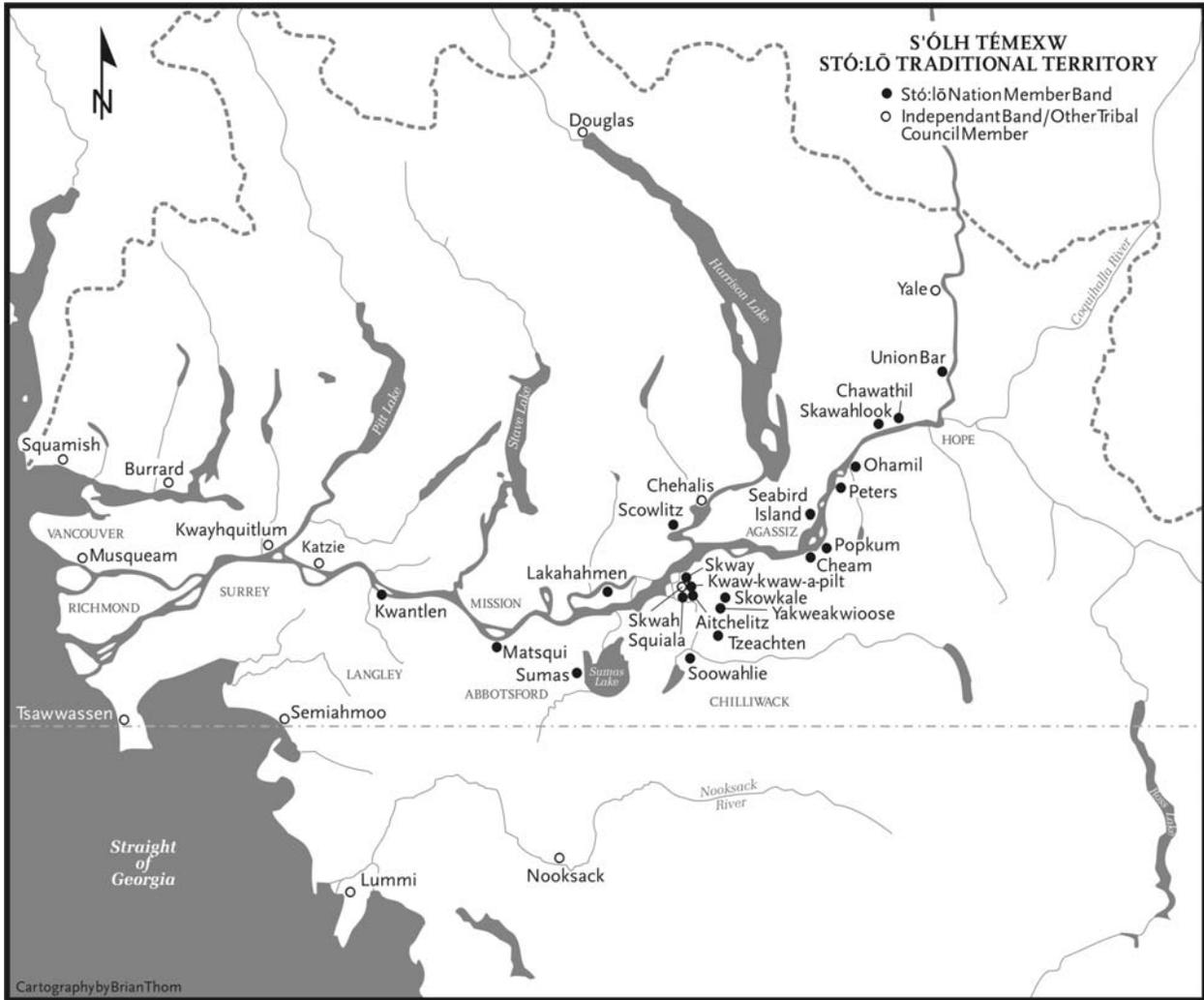


Figure 4.

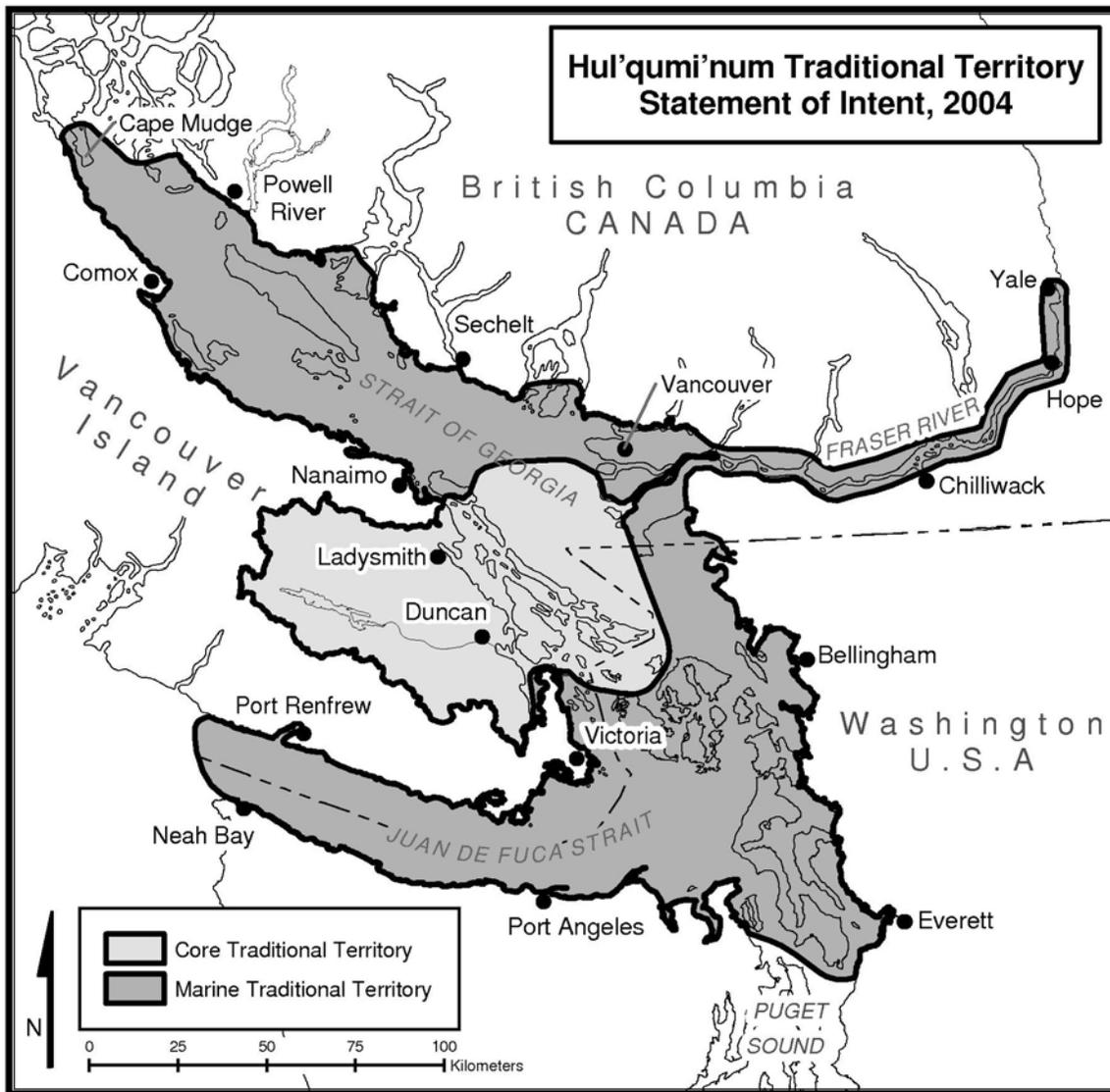


Figure 5.

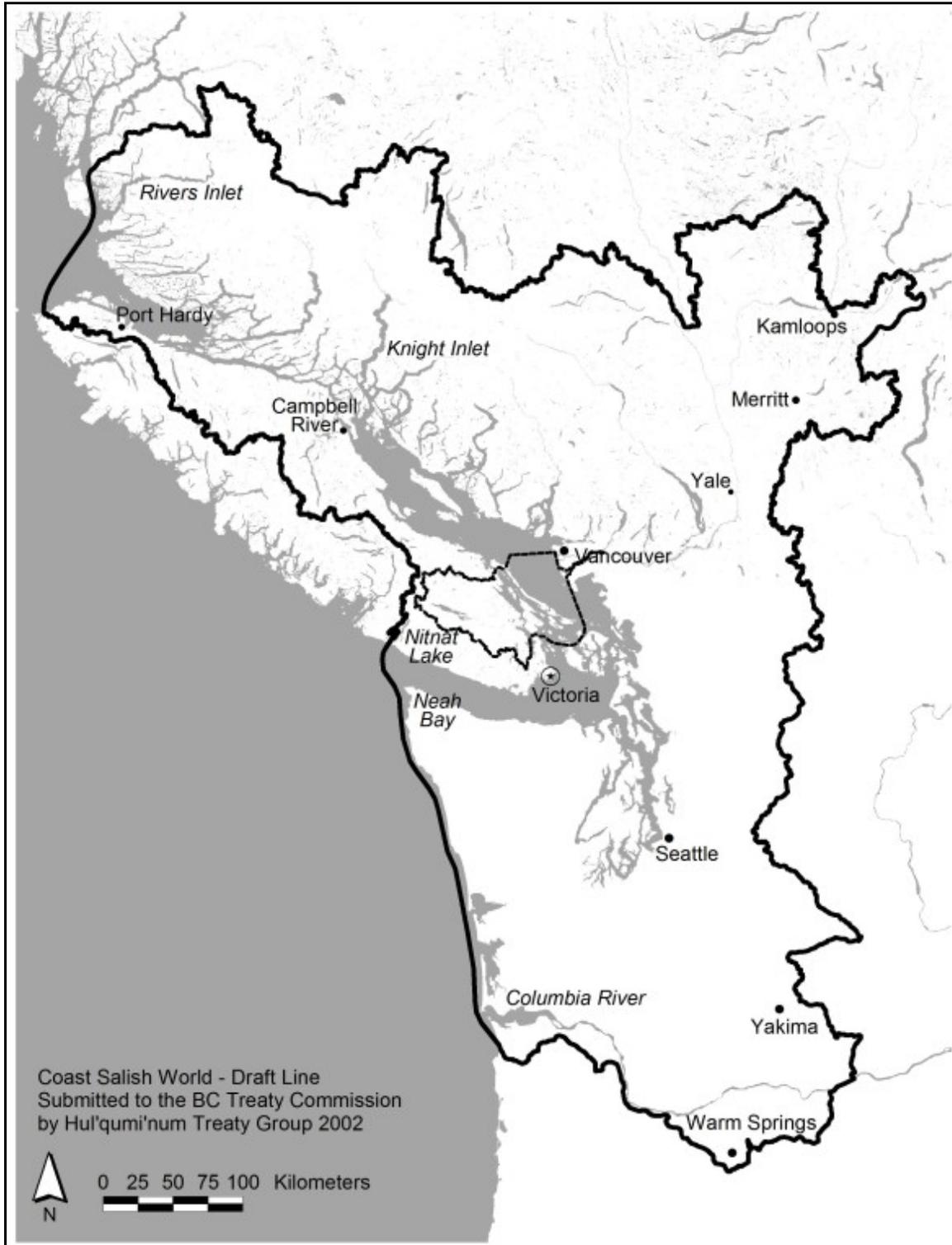
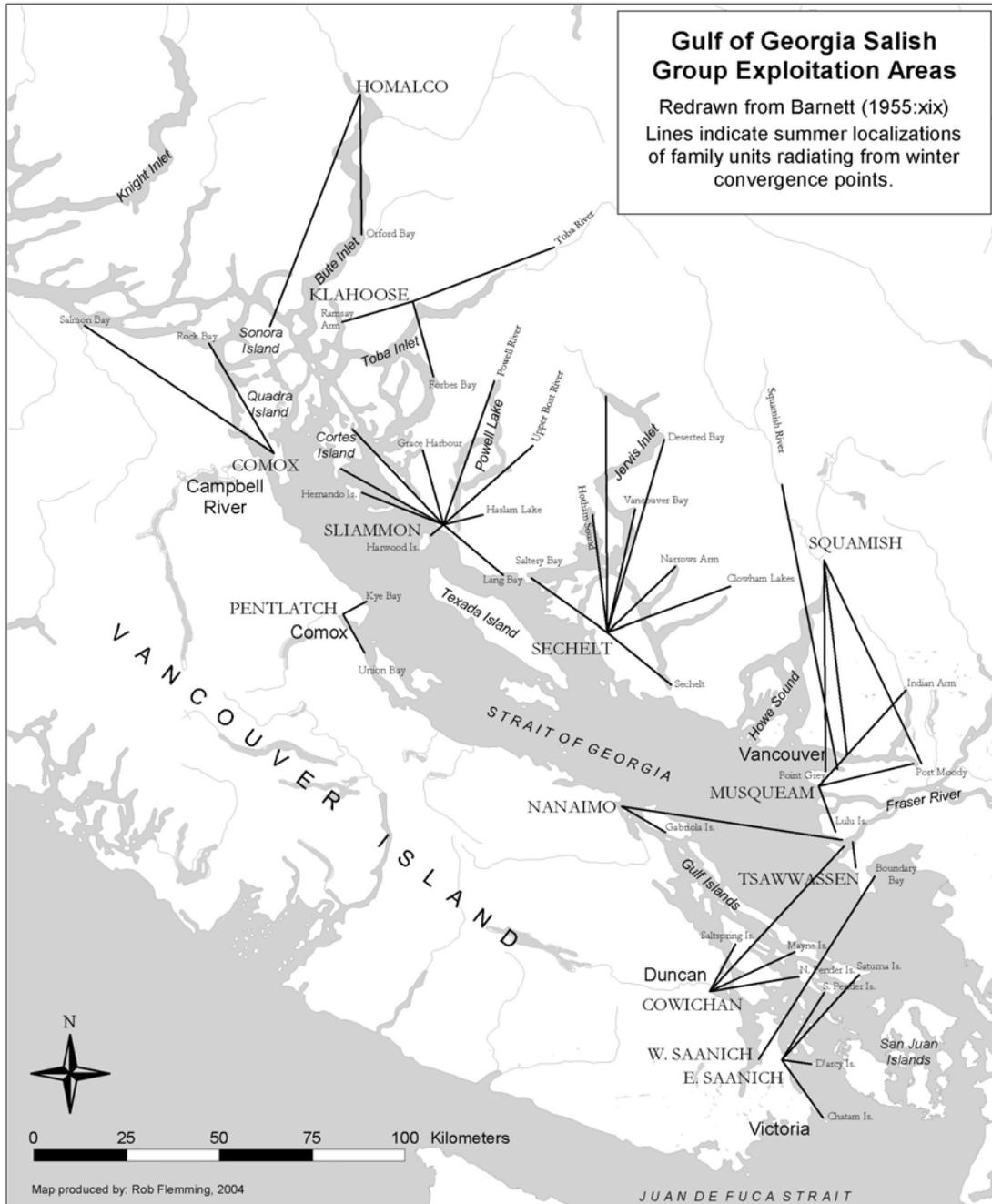


Figure 6.



Endnotes

1. F. Barth, 'Boundaries and Connections', in: Cohen A, editor, *Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values*, (London, Routledge, 2000), p 17-36; T. Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, (London, Routledge, 2000); T. Ingold, 'Rethinking the Animate, Re-Animating Thought', *Ethnos* 71,1 (2006), pp. 9-20.
2. The term Coast Salish is a generic term used to refer to speakers of several related languages who share strong social, economic, and cultural ties. My own research has been entirely with Halkomelem-speaking communities along the Fraser River and southeast Vancouver Island. Though there is significant regional variation, I do believe that the conclusions of this paper are broadly applicable within the Coast Salish region. In writing native-language terms, I have adopted here the orthography used by Island Halkomelem speakers, which I have described more fully in pages 426-8 of B. Thom, *Coast Salish Senses of Place: Dwelling, Meaning, Power, Property and Territory in the Coast Salish World* [dissertation], (Montreal, McGill Department of Anthropology, McGill University, 2005).
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4. Barth, 'Boundaries', p. 17.
5. Pages 148-170 in DG Anderson, *Identity and Ecology in Arctic Siberia: The Number One Reindeer Brigade* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000.
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9. *Ibid.*, p150.
10. Page 176 in F. Myers, 'Always Ask: Resource Use and Land Ownership Among the Pintupi Aborigines of the Australian Western Desert', in: Williams N, Hunn E, editors, *Resource Managers: North American and Australian Hunter-Gatherers*, (Boulder, Westview Press, 1982), pp. 173-95.
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14. Page 19 in F. Myers, *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place, and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines*, (Washington and Canberra: Smithsonian Institution Press and Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1991).
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
 16. Page 107 in S. Poirier, 'Territory, Identity and Modernity Among the Atikamekw (Haut St-Maurice, Quebec)', in C. Scott, editor, *Aboriginal Autonomy and Development in Northern Quebec and Labrador*, (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2001), pp. 98-116.
 17. W. Suttles, 'Affinal Ties, Subsistence, and Prestige Among the Coast Salish', *American Anthropologist* 62,2 (1960), pp. 296-305.
 18. I have heard of prominent travelling people who held several names concurrently, some having been granted to the individual by distant communities which they had visited or lived in.
 19. Changes in the occupants of territories, and their shapes and boundaries, are well recorded in the ethnographic literature. The lower Fraser River area had significant changes throughout the fur trade and early colonial period with, for example, the Kwantlen, who were very successful in controlling access to Fort Langley, expanding their territory (Hill-Tout 1902:406; Suttles 1955:8, 12). The Squamish (Ryan 1973:40-42), Semiahmoo (Suttles 1951:29; Suttles 1998:174) and perhaps the Sooke and Klallam (Suttles 1951:9-13) have also seen changes in the shape and size of their territories. See, C. Hill-Tout, 'Ethnological Studies of the Mainland Halkome'ilem, a division of the Salish of British Columbia', Report of the 72nd Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (1902) pp. 353-445; W. Suttles, *Katzie Ethnographic Notes*, (Victoria, British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1955); J Ryan, *Squamish Socialization* [dissertation], (Vancouver, University of British Columbia, 1973); W. Suttles, *The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of Haro and Rosario Straits* [dissertation], (Seattle, University of Washington, 1951); W. Suttles, 'The Ethnographic Significance of the Fort Langley Journals', in: Maclachlan M, editor, *The Fort Langley Journals 1827-30*, (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1998).
 20. D. Kennedy, *Looking for Tribes in all the Wrong Places: An Examination of the Central Coast Salish Social Network* [dissertation], (Victoria, University of Victoria, 1995).
 21. For a full discussion of Coast Salish property systems see Thom 'Coast Salish', chapter 7; for a discussion of the importance of bilateral descent groups in other areas of Coast Salish economic, social and ceremonial life, see W. Suttles, 'The Persistence of Intervillage Ties among the Coast Salish', *Ethnology* 2 (1963), pp. 512-25.
 22. P. Amoss, *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing: The Survival of an Ancestral Religion*, (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1978).
 23. Suttles 'Affinal Ties'.
 24. Pages 229-234 in T. Ingold, 'The Principle of Individual Autonomy and the Collective Appropriation of Nature.' in T Ingold, ed, *The Appropriation of Nature: Essays on Human Ecology and Social Relations*, (Iowa City, University of Iowa, 1987), pp. 222-42.
 25. S. Snyder, *Skagit Society and its Existential Basis: An Ethnofolkloristic Reconstruction*

[dissertation], (Seattle, University of Washington, 1964).

26. C. Scott, 'Hunting Territories, Hunting Bosses and Communal Production Among Coastal James Bay Cree', *Anthropologica* 28,1-2 (1986), pp. 163-73.; C. Scott, 'Property, Practice and Aboriginal Rights among Quebec Cree Hunters', in: Ingold T, Riches D, Woodburn J, editors, *Hunters and Gatherers 2: Property, Power and Ideology*, (Oxford, Berg, 1998), pp. 35-51; Poirier, 'Territory', p. 107).
27. Page 71 in A. Escobar, 'Whose Knowledge, Whose Nature? Biodiversity Conservation and the Political Ecology of Social Movements', *Journal of Political Ecology* 5 (1998), pp. 53-82.
28. Page 65 in F. Myers, 'Burning the truck and holding the country: property, time, and the negotiation identity among Pintupi Aboriginies', in: Ingold T, Riches D, Woodburn J, editors, *Hunters and Gatherers: Property, Power, and Ideology*, (New York, Berg, 1988), pp. 52-74; Page 272 in F. Myers, 'Critical Trends in the Study of Hunter-Gatherers' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 17 (1988), pp. 261-82.
29. Suttles 'Persistence'; W. Elmendorf, 'Coast Salish Status Ranking and Intergroup Ties', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 27 (1971), pp. 353-80.
30. Ingold 'Principle', pp.226-7.
31. Page s.76 in N Bird-David, 'Animism' Revisited: Personhood, Environment, and Relational Epistemology', *Current Anthropology* 40 (1999), pp. s67-s91.
32. Ingold, 'Rethinking'.
33. The word *xutsten* 'marker' is clearly cognate with *q'uluxutstun* 'fence'. /q'ul-/ is the root meaning 'to go around/over something'.
34. B. Miller, 'The 'Really Real' Border and the Divided Salish Community', *BC Studies* 112 (1997), pp. 63-79.
35. T. Hukari, R. Peter, and E. White, 'Halkomelem (Seagull Steals the Sun)', *International Journal of American Linguistics, Native Texts Series* 2,3 (1977), pp. 33-68.
36. Thom, 'Coast Salish', chapter 8.
37. Page 133 in T. Ingold, 'Ancestry, Generation, Substance, Memory, Land.' in T Ingold, ed, *The Perception of The Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, (London, Routledge, 2000), pp. 132-51.
38. Page 7 in C. Scott, 'On Autonomy and Development', in: Scott C, editor, *Aboriginal Autonomy and Development in Northern Quebec and Labrador*, (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2001), pp. 3-20.
39. Page 10 in Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Volume 5, Renewal: A Twenty-Year Commitment*, (Ottawa, Canada Communication Group Publishing, 1996).
40. This phrase is written here in the Cowichan practical orthography for consistency with the

terms in other Salishan languages throughout this book.

41. Page 16 in J. Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

42. Ingold, 'Rethinking', p. 13.

43. Page xix in H. Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia*, (Eugene, University of Oregon Press, 1955).

44. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

45. *Ibid.*

46. Page 119 in H. Barnett, 'The Coast Salish of Canada', *American Anthropologist* 40 (1938), pp. 118-41.

47. A cartography of this kind was recently suggested by indigenous scholar Sonny McHalsie, who mapped his own genealogy over the Stó:lō landscape. See pages 32-33 in K. Carlson, ed, *A Stó:lo-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, (Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre, 2001).

48. Poirier 'Ontology', pp. 62-3; Poirier 'Territory' p. 107.

49. W. Suttles, 'Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish', *American Anthropologist* 60,3 (1958), pp. 497-507.

50. The text of the Tsawwassen Final Agreement is available at <http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/firstnation/tsawwassen/default.htm>.

51. Page 148 in C. Scott and M. Mulrennan, 'Land and Sea Tenure at Erub, Torres Strait: Property, Sovereignty and the Adjudication of Cultural Continuity', *Oceania* 70 (1999), pp. 146-76.