

**The SWELSWÁLET of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation:  
Narratives of a “Nation (Re)Building Process”**

by

Justin Fritz

Bachelor of Arts (Honours), University of Victoria, 2012

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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## Abstract

In this Master's thesis, I document my experience working with members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation in their efforts to revitalize the reef net fishery. As part of this research project, I interviewed W̱SÁNEĆ community members, and I created a digital map of reef net fishing locations (SWELSWÁLET). In each of these interviews, different W̱SÁNEĆ community members chose to frame reef net fishing differently, and they highlighted specific and unique “alternative political approaches” toward W̱SÁNEĆ cultural resurgence (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59). Despite these differences, each W̱SÁNEĆ community member that I interviewed believed that reef net fishing is something that “needs to be shared” (XA'LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016). In Chapter 1, I explore the variations in what specific W̱SÁNEĆ community members want *shared*. In Chapters 2 and 3, however, I examine the delicate cultural, political, and legal contexts that have made *sharing* a complicated process. In Chapter 2, I analyze how the BC Treaty Process (BCTP) has exacerbated conflicts among First Nations in British Columbia. Further, I discuss the impact that these conflicts have had on how the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation shares information with their intranational and international neighbours. In Chapter 3, I explore how my misaligned expectations of knowledge sharing in collaborative community-based research—as a white settler man—clashed with “the values and beliefs, practices and customs of [the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation]” (L. Smith 2012:15-16; Lassiter 2005). I also make recommendations for how settler researchers in the future should proceed with research projects in these contexts.

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I would also like to thank Brian Thom, Lisa Mitchell, Amy Becker, Jindra Belanger, Peter Evans, and Beth Keats for their academic support. Finally, thank you to my friends and family for not abandoning me during this time. I can’t imagine how frustrating it must have been listening to me talk about this as much as I have. You are all very kind. Specifically, I would like to thank my grandparents, Mike and Frankie Adey, for their financial and moral support, and Jordon Lowe for her thoughtful edits and constant encouragement.

## Introduction

In 1852, the Douglas Treaties were signed between James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company (representing the Crown) and the "Saanich Tribe" (whose territory stretches between south-eastern Vancouver Island, Point Roberts, and the Southern Gulf and San Juan Islands) (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2013). This treaty reserved the right for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation<sup>1</sup> and their descendants to "carry on [their] fisheries as formerly" (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2013). However, in approximately 1916, the reef net fishery—"the most important economic activity of the Straits branch of the Coast Salish" (Boxberger 1985:211)—was outlawed in Canada (N. Claxton 2003:35-36; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:11; D. Elliott 1990:60; Lutz 2008:260; Easton 1985:220-222). In the present-day, the revitalization of the reef net fishing has become an important symbol in the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's move toward cultural resurgence. Several W̱SÁNEĆ community members—namely, XEMFOLTW̱ (Nick Claxton), STOLÇEEL (John Elliott), Dave Elliott Sr., Earl Claxton Sr., and others<sup>2</sup>—have been developing momentum in this direction for nearly three decades: writing books and articles, making a miniature model of the fishing gear, holding public ceremonies, sharing reef net fishing place names with neighbouring Indigenous communities, and building a full-sized reef net on the ŁÁU, WELṈEW Tribal School's soccer field. On August 9, 2014, XEMFOLTW̱ and a crew of W̱SÁNEĆ community members—assisted by Parks Canada employees and videographers

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<sup>1</sup> W̱SÁNEĆ is the SENĆOŦEN spelling for the anglicized term ("Saanich") used by settlers to denote this particular group of Indigenous peoples. SENĆOŦEN is the both the language and orthography used by the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. For a pronunciation guide please see Appendix B. Although I have provided translations throughout the text, for a SENĆOŦEN dictionary please see Montler (n.d.).

<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, I have referred to members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation according to the names that they wished to be called (See Appendix A). Some individuals wanted their SENĆOŦEN names to be used throughout this text. XEMFOLTW̱ (Nick Claxton) and STOLÇEEL (John Elliott) are two of them. However, both of these individuals are published authors that I refer to often (N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2014; 2015a; 2015b; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994). At times, this makes in-text citations appear confusing: e.g. "'XEMFOLTW̱ wrote in his PhD dissertation . . . ' (N. Claxton 2015a)," or "Earl Claxton Sr. and STOLÇEEL write in *Reef Net Technology of the Saltwater People* . . . ' (E. Claxton & J. Elliott)." Just know that N. Claxton and XEMFOLTW̱ are the same individual, as are J. Elliott and STOLÇEEL.

(UVic Community Mapping Collaboratory 2014)—set a reef net in Canadian waters for the first time in nearly 100 years (Tsawout First Nation 2014:5). These efforts, as XEMFOLTW notes, are part of a “nation (re)building process” (N. Claxton 2015a:193-194).

This is in response to the countless efforts, enacted by both the state and independent settlers since the onset of the colonial era (Raibmon 2008), aimed at dispossessing the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation of their land/water, and dividing families, villages, communities, and nations from one another (Suttles 1963; Coulthard 2014; C. Harris 2002:30-34; Foster & Grove 2008). These efforts include: the intrusion of missionaries into Indigenous communities, the active exclusion of Indigenous peoples from the Canadian legal and political system, the aggressive promotion of on-reserve agriculture, the use of military force on Indigenous villages along coastal BC, the creation of the Indian Residential School System, the systematic and ongoing destruction of the environment, the spread of epidemic-causing infectious diseases in Indigenous communities, the criminalization of cultural practices (including those related to spirituality, governance, subsistence, education, economics, *etc.*), the dismantling of multi-family housing, the implementation of the band council system, the creation of “postage-stamp”-sized reserves, and other such acts (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2013; British Columbia Archives 1916:300; D. Elliott 1990:69-73; Foster 1989:640; C. Harris 2002; Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada 1992:96; Joint Indian Reserve Commission 1877; Mitchell & Franklin 1984:17; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1991a; Suttles 1963:515-516).

A specific and pertinent example of this divisive behaviour can be found, again, in the signature of the Douglas Treaties. Under these treaties, the “Saanich Tribe” was said to have “surrender[ed], entirely and for ever” a significant portion of their territory (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2013). W̱SÁNEĆ community members, however, disagree. A



common perspective held by W̱SÁNEĆ community members is that the Douglas Treaties were agreements of peace offered by Douglas after two near-violent confrontations between W̱SÁNEĆ peoples and settlers (D. Elliott 1990:69-72; Latasse 1932) As David Latasse, a historic chief of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, stated: “It was not to sell land or surrender any Territory rights” (1932). Legal historian Hamar Foster agrees:

Douglas secured the approximately fifty square miles of the Saanich peninsula for a little over £100, which he paid to the Indians in Hudson's Bay Company blankets at the 300% Company mark-up for non-employees. As the trial judge acknowledged [during *Saanichton Marina Ltd. v. Claxton* (1989)], the Indians 'could not have thought of [such a transaction] as a purchase,' and would not have regarded the woollen goods they received as payment for land. What seems much more likely is that they believed that they were agreeing to peaceful relations, to share the right to harvest certain resources, and to allow a limited number of colonists to occupy some of the lands they were not themselves occupying. (1989:632)

Regardless, in 1858, the “fifty square miles” of the Saanich Peninsula were replaced with approximately two and a half square miles—geographically separated to encompass four W̱SÁNEĆ village sites on the Saanich Peninsula—of Colonial Reserve land (C. Harris 2002: Appendix; British Columbia Archives 1916:300). In 1877, these four reserves, along with an additional nine reserves “granted” at that time, were confirmed to the “Saanich Indians” (Joint Indian Reserve Commission 1877; British Columbia Archives 1916:300). Today, however, each reserve belongs instead to one (or more) of four politically distinct First Nations (Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada 1992:96): the Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum, and Pauquachin Nations. XEMFOLTW states that these four First Nations—representative of the historical W̱SÁNEĆ villages mentioned above—“shared one same language, culture, law, spiritual beliefs, societal structure, education system, and importantly, we all reef net fished” (N. Claxton 2015a:33). Through a revitalization of the reef net fishery, then, it is imagined that many of the

negative effects discussed above can be reversed, divisions within the W̱SÁNEĆ community can be nullified, and the “nation (re)building process” can begin (N. Claxton 2015a:193-194).

In 2014, the same year that members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation reef net fished in Canadian waters for the first time in 100 years, I asked if I could help. In line with the “nation (re)building process” outlined by XEMFOLTW (N. Claxton 2015a:193-194), I wanted to work on a project that was collaborative, community-based, and connected to the needs of members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation (L. Smith 2012; Lassiter 2005). I was inspired by the following quotations from Linda Tuhiwai Smith: “It is often graduate students who are doing substantial original research, and they represent a potential pool of researchers who could work in collaboration with activism,” and “in a world where indigenous peoples wielded some political and economic power, activists would be able to call up their ‘think tank,’ with its head office near the other institutions of power, and ask for research on any given topic” (2012:224, 226). Generally, this was the role I saw for myself. Before I was an MA student at UVic, I was a contractor who had worked with ÇOLOŁEMKEN (Gord Elliott, a councillor for the Tsartlip Nation) to fulfill specific, on-demand, research needs. Often these small projects would result in a significant amount of co-research: *i.e.* ÇOLOŁEMKEN and I would share documents, findings, and ideas as they emerged. So, when I began my MA, I asked him if the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation had any need for a research project that aligned with my interests and skills. We exchanged many emails and spoke on the phone many times. Eventually, I met with the four W̱SÁNEĆ band councils, individual W̱SÁNEĆ community members, and a newly organized entity called the W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee. During these meetings, it was established that I should work to document—using the published documentary

record, interviews with W̱SÁNEĆ community members, and digital mapping technology—the SWELSWÁLET<sup>3</sup> (reef net fishing places) of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation.

This idea was informed, partly, by my engagement with the “counter-mapping” and “participatory mapping” literatures. I was interested in how mapping is used by those in power to assert claims to territories and control over people (Peluso 1995:383). As Roth notes, maps can be quite effective at rendering the tangible abstract and enabling the separation of real people from their geographies (2010:210). This process has often worked to actively exclude Indigenous peoples. According to many authors, however, “counter-mapping”—or, “alternative boundary making”—can effectively “re-[insert] . . . people” into these abstract spaces by speaking a language that the state understands (Peluso 1995:387; Chapin *et al.* 2005:623; Thom 2009:181). In discussing the publication of territorial maps, ÇOLOŁEMKEN argued that this sort of work “changes the language that government uses when talking about you” (pers. comm., February 23, 2017). Considering this, I was interested in how this project could be helpful in the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s engagements with the state.

However, I was also inspired by the literature surrounding “participatory mapping.” Corbett described one of his research project like this:

The research investigates to what extent online mapping tools and processes can be used by the Tlowitsis to understand and reconnect with their land-related knowledge and examine the ways in which these technologies serve to re-present place-based memories and facilitate dialogue among community members located in dispersed geographic settings. (2013:224)

I found this educational endeavour equally compelling. Many members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation that I spoke with did as well. A councillor for the Tsawout Nation argued that to move in this direction any map that was made would need to do more than just document SWELSWÁLET:

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<sup>3</sup> SWÁLET is the SENĆOFEN term for a reef net fishing location. SWELSWÁLET is the plural form of this word (STOLČEL, pers. comm., August 17, 2016).

they needed to explain “why we have sites and why they need to be protected” (field notes, February 13, 2015). I attempted to follow this advice, and I worked to add depth, context, and history to the map. While looking at an early version, a former Tseycum councillor said, “this fills in a lot for me,” and they recognized that it could do the same for others (field notes, March 22, 2016). XEMFOLTW agreed:

Obviously we’re trying to rebuild our knowledge and practice so that we can all once again be a reef net fishing people with knowledge of our own history and connections to all of the reef net sites in our territory. We’re not there yet. We’re moving that way. So, I guess that’s where your project comes in, I think. It’s building on the knowledge, filling in the gaps of those reef net locations. (pers. comm., June 16, 2016)

Considering the above, I wanted to make a map that could both “fill in the gaps” for W̱SÁNEĆ community members and be useful in the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s “cartographic-legal strategy” (Wainwright & Bryan 2009).

However, I did not want my interest in the counter-mapping and participatory mapping literatures to take the lead. As mentioned above, my academic interest/skills were important, but, for me, a research project that could be “of practical use in tribal communities today” was paramount (Thom 2012:578). Thus, I further developed my relationships with members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation—specifically, those involved in the formal governance of the four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations—and I spoke with others who I had not met before. Together, in meetings, phone calls, emails, and private discussions, we identified several broad and entangled goals for this research project that went well beyond both the above-noted bodies of literature and the original foundational plan to map the SWELSWÁLET of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. These goals included: educating the community, sharing place-based knowledge, reactivating international kin networks (specifically, with members of the Lummi Nation, a Straits Salish Native American nation located

near Bellingham, Washington), asserting Douglas Treaty rights and Aboriginal rights and title, and revitalizing reef net fishing.

To work toward these distinct goals, however, I recognized that several maps would need to be produced. These maps would need to contain information from different types of sources using a variety of methodologies. Further, they would need to be presented in multiple forms, and be shared with (but also made inaccessible to) multiple parties. The original plan for this research project—following conversations I had with W̱SÁNEĆ community members—entailed the following. First, I was to complete a review of the historical literature related to the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. References to W̱SÁNEĆ peoples' use, knowledge, and interest in land/water would be extracted from this body of literature, converted into spatial data, and displayed on a map. Next, I was to conduct interview and mapping sessions with W̱SÁNEĆ community members related, more specifically, to reef net fishing. Several of these interviews were to involve field trips to places that were deemed important. These field trips were intended to produce both more accurate location data and richer descriptive data. The places discussed in these interviews would be added to the map, thus enriching the previously collected historical data using the living knowledge of W̱SÁNEĆ community members. During these interviews, I also intended to ask questions about territoriality, traditional land tenure systems, inter-community knowledge sharing, the International Boundary, and the BC Treaty Process—topics that aligned with my academic interests and had been identified as pertinent in the meetings noted above. Next, I was to facilitate a participatory mapping workshop with members of the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi Nations. Here, members of both nations would create and share a digital map that documented SWELSWÁLET, jointly developing, editing, and adding information (Corbett 2009; Corbett 2013). And, finally, a public component of the project was discussed. Select data from the above maps would be released

online with the intention of “making a strong statement to Government and [W̱SÁNEĆ] neighbors regarding [W̱SÁNEĆ] Douglas Treaty and aboriginal rights and title” (Tsartlip Nation Chief and Council, Meeting Minutes, February 23, 2015). There was some talk that these public maps could also be added as curriculum material at the LÁU, WELNEW Tribal School. Before all of this, however, I was to bring the information that I had gathered back to the W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee for possible data additions, edits, and deletions. In the end, I would prepare the maps to match the community’s needs, and I would help publish them. Ownership of all data would then be turned over to the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation to use as they saw fit.

The design of this research project, then, was intended to align with the rough methodological models—*e.g.* collaborative and Indigenous methodologies—developed to help researchers engage ethically with Indigenous peoples (Lassiter 2005; Kovach 2009; L. Smith 2012). Lassiter, for example, calls for research projects that “deliberately and explicitly [emphasize] collaboration at every point in the ethnographic process, without veiling it—from project conceptualization, to fieldwork, and, especially, through the writing process” (2005:16). This is what I attempted to accomplish. As mentioned earlier, I followed certain steps to include W̱SÁNEĆ community members in the design of this research project and to ensure that its outcomes would be helpful for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation (L. Smith 2012; Lassiter 2005). I wanted to both collaborate deeply with individuals and engage directly with the broader W̱SÁNEĆ community. However, as explored in Chapter 3, this did not occur exactly as I had hoped. It should be noted that “collaborative” and “community-based” research methodologies—although largely reconcilable with Indigenous ontologies—are not derived from Indigenous methodologies themselves (Kovach 2009:13). Within this methodological gap there lies a profound potential for misunderstanding and harmful outcomes. As a result, I would argue that the values embedded in

collaborative community-based research can, at times, clash with “the values and beliefs, practices and customs of communities” (L. Smith 2012:15-16). This, to some extent, is what occurred in this research project.

For instance, embedded in the many distinct and disparate goals discussed above is a tension between what should be “shared”—*e.g.* with W̱SÁNEĆ community members themselves, other Indigenous communities, the public, the state, *etc.*—and what should be “kept close to us” (Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016). Educating the community, sharing place-based knowledge, and reactivating international kin networks—goals discussed for this research project—all require that data, knowledge, and territory, to some extent, be “shared.” The W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I worked with recognized this. Shared territories between neighbouring First Nations, cultural protocol regarding the sharing of traditional knowledge between W̱SÁNEĆ community members, and the need to share specific information with government officials, settlers, and the public became regular and important topics of conversation. However, when discussing the assertion of Douglas Treaty rights and Aboriginal rights and title, a few W̱SÁNEĆ community members expressed hesitation about widely “sharing” data, knowledge, and territory with others. These W̱SÁNEĆ community members articulated the need to emphasize privacy, data security, and specific cultural protocol, all of which influenced how (and to whom) knowledge related to the reef net fishery should be shared. As a technical example, I used Google Earth to map SWELSWÁLET throughout this research project. Google Earth is a program that stores data on your computer’s hard drive. Regardless, hesitation remained among specific W̱SÁNEĆ community members surrounding the perception that Google could intercept this data, store it on their international servers, and use it for their own purposes. These W̱SÁNEĆ community members were nervous that their data could be co-opted—by, for instance, the state,

the public, other Indigenous communities, and even other W̱SÁNEĆ community members—and used against them in the future (Kennedy *et al.* 1993:28). Given the experiences of members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, this is a reasonable concern.

These tensions, however, impacted how this research project proceeded. As privacy concerns became more pronounced, the focus of this research project was gradually shifted away from what I saw as the community itself and toward both the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's legalistic/bureaucratic concerns and the cultural protocol concerns of individual W̱SÁNEĆ community members. Here, the values embedded in collaborative community-based research—for instance, “sharing,” as discussed above—did, in fact, clash with “the values and beliefs, practices and customs of communities” (L. Smith 2012:15-16). Further, the diverse requirements of the maps—as they interacted with these tensions—clashed with one another, and the research project itself became messy (as explored in Chapter 3). W̱SÁNEĆ community members and I made logistical arrangements that either fell through, were changed, or (beyond the scope of my academic work) are still in the process of completion. I developed theoretical framings for this research project that became irrelevant with ever shifting and emerging contexts. Further, I developed methodologies in line with these theoretical framings. Over time, however, these methodologies became crude and inappropriate. For instance, I was seen by some as a settler researcher who was asking questions of a sensitive nature, thus “putting people in a tricky situation” (field notes, March 22, 2016). For others, however, my questions were met with statements like this: “Our way of life means a lot. We don't want it to be a memory. And, what you're doing here is sharing. It's important to share. And, we need to share with our youth” (XA'LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016). This tension, then, because it became so central to the research project, has also become a focal point of this written thesis. While Chapter 1 explores the



diversity of what particular W̱SÁNEĆ community members wanted to “share,” Chapters 2 and 3 examine the complications embedded in this endeavour. In Chapter 3, for instance, I explore how many, if not all, of this research project’s failings emerged out of my own misaligned expectations and misunderstandings of how this delicate cultural, political, and legal context—including the “the values and beliefs, practices and customs of [the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation]” (L. Smith 2012:15-16)—would interact with collaborative community-based research (Lassiter 2005). A brief overview of the chapters will help to explain this tension, how I have attempted to document it, and how I recommend moving forward.

In the end, I interviewed seven W̱SÁNEĆ community members and asked each of them about the reef net fishery, how they hope it will be revitalized, and what impediments there are to this revitalization<sup>4</sup>. In Chapter 1, I explore the different perspectives that these W̱SÁNEĆ community members gave in response to my questions. Despite these differences, however, each W̱SÁNEĆ community member that I interviewed framed reef net fishing as something that “needs to be shared” (XA’LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016). This is in line with the intent of the published work of other W̱SÁNEĆ community members (D. Elliott 1990; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994; N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a). The idea, here, is that, through the publication of select information, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation will be better positioned to control and strengthen their culture, their relationships with settlers, and their community’s narratives. For instance, when asked what information he wanted to share with the public, XA’LATE (Vern Jack) stated: “Whatever you need to smarten them up . . . It’s a need . . . That’s part of reconciliation, of understanding our

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<sup>4</sup> These interviews are detailed in Appendix A. The majority of the personal communication (pers. comm.) quotations used throughout this thesis are derived from the transcripts of these interviews.

values, and being respected . . . We'll just cross our fingers. It's up to them to accept it" (pers. comm., June 14, 2016).

This motivation to educate the public aligns with several authors' theories of Indigenous relational ontology (Feit 2004; 2005; Feit & Beaulieu 2001; Thom 2017:155). As Feit notes, the James Bay Cree have often sought to "cure," through relationship building, those who may be destructive: "Whitemen can be like Atuush . . . the cannibal monster . . . [who] treat humans as objects, and use them solely for their own interests, without acknowledging their value as persons" (2004:118). Similarly, some W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with expressed hope that, through "sharing," individuals who have wronged—and continue to wrong—the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation will come to "understand W̱SÁNEĆ values" (XA'LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016) and be "return[ed] . . . to the social fold" (Feit 2004:123). Several W̱SÁNEĆ community members have worked to do just that (SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2016):

. . . showing pictures and history . . . It's so important. We don't want to be tokens of this country. That's how they treat us, like we're dumb people, but we're not. Fifteen years ago, I invited all the ministers from the province to come stay with me for a week, and we'll see who's stupid . . . In my house, or stay in the longhouse. In the winter time, we would go up the mountain and take a bath up there in cool water. Rain or shine. You know, and even the snow on the ground, we still go up there . . . They never showed up. (XA'LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016)

While the above example concerns elected public officials, others acknowledged the deep causal relationship that exists between the dissemination of "truth" to the general public and the achievement of "justice" (STOLČEĽ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). Thom recalls a similar perspective being expressed in 2009 by a W̱SÁNEĆ community leader (2017:155). Regarding the continued desecration of ancestral grave sites in the Gulf Islands, this leader stated: "We have to *correct* the Xwulunitum [non-native people]" (Thom 2017:155, emphasis added). Thus, it is thought that by providing the public with additional more *accurate* information, necessary steps

will have been taken toward “return[ing them] . . . to the social fold” (Feit 2004:123; Thom 2017:155). The findings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples—issued over 20 years ago—continue to validate this point, noting that the public’s “ignorance,” “misconceptions,” “misrepresentations,” and “misinterpretations” have contributed to the continued marginalization and discrimination that Indigenous peoples experience:

We have been reminded repeatedly of the limited understanding of Aboriginal issues among non-Aboriginal Canadians and of the obstacles this presents to achieving reconciliation and a new relationship. As one intervener described it, there is a “vacuum of consciousness” among non-Aboriginal people. We would go further to suggest a pervasive lack of knowledge and perhaps even of interest. Most Canadians still give low priority to the issues of importance to Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal people in Canada continue to suffer the damaging effects of bias and racism at the hands of other Canadians. (1991c:82-83)

It is important to acknowledge here that I, like many researchers working with/for Indigenous communities, am a “non-Aboriginal Canadian” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1991c:82-83). I am a white settler man. In this research project, then, the members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation that participated recognized that they would not be handing information over to the public themselves. Instead, I oversaw the direction of this research project, conducted the interviews, and arranged the data according to my own desires and perspectives. This, though, did not occur in isolation. Much like Feit’s experience (2004:121), my reciprocal *social responsibility* to the community was strongly encouraged by W̱SÁNEĆ community members’ treatment of me “as a sociable and responsible [person].” Thus, my desires and perspectives, themselves, were informed by my relationships with members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. I would argue that other settler researchers—excluding those involved in obviously extractive colonial endeavours<sup>5</sup>—have

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Harlan I. Smith, Charles Newcombe, J. Newbigging, and Louis Herber all “found”/“discovered” skeletons on the Saanich Peninsula in 1899 (H. Smith 1907:330-355). These skeletons were removed from their graves either for these individuals’ own private “collections” or to be sold to museums (*e.g.* the Field Museum in Chicago and the Museum of Natural History in New York) (H. Smith 1907:330-355; Cole 1985). Further, in the 1880s, Cole explicitly describes

also been, and will continue to be, entrusted with sensitive information by specific W̱SÁNEĆ community members for similar reciprocal purposes: *e.g.* to “cure”/“smarten up” settlers and researchers alike, thus “return[ing them] . . . to the social fold” (XA’LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016; Feit 2004:123). Many of these researchers, however, have failed in the eyes of W̱SÁNEĆ community members. During this research project, W̱SÁNEĆ community members expressed continual frustration with the behaviour and output of specific settler researchers, claiming that they had not returned information to the community, had “gotten it wrong,” and/or, through these fixed misrepresentations, had constrained the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation to “no flexibility in the future” (field notes, October 21, 2015). One researcher, who a W̱SÁNEĆ community member told me had significantly and continually misrepresented the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, was banned from the community. Eventually, as they suggested, “things started to go crazy” with them and they passed away (field notes, February 17, 2017).<sup>6</sup> It should be clear, then, that members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation—and Indigenous peoples more generally (Bierwert 1999:116-120; Clifford 1983; Deloria 1969:78-100; Feit 2004; Holden 1976; Johnson 2008; Kovach 2009; Lassiter 2005; Minh-ha 1989; Paul 1995; Simpson 2008; Sluka 2007; L. Smith 2012; Starn 2011; Tuck 2009; Tuck & Yang 2012)—have a fraught relationship with settlers who conduct non-reciprocal research and with the research these settlers end up producing.

However, there are other researchers who have apparently not failed. They have produced books and articles that W̱SÁNEĆ community members regularly draw from, and their relationships are characterized as being both respectful and collaborative. It is not yet clear to me

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the work of Franz Boas on the Saanich Peninsula (and other locations on the Northwest Coast) as “stealing bones from . . . [graves]” (Cole 1985:119-120). As Cole notes: “[Boas] dug in a burial ground near Victoria, on an island near Port Essington (while a photographer distracted the Indians), in Saanich, and, on his way home, at Lytton” (1985:119-120).

<sup>6</sup> See Bierwert’s *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power* for a discussion of anthropologists—and writers more generally—who have worked in Coast Salish territories and died similarly “strange deaths” (1999:116-120).

what camp this research project will fall into. A few W̱SÁNEĆ community members expressed that they were unwilling to trust me: they were “sick of being studied,” hesitant of the fixed nature of writing, and/or simply not interested (field notes, October 21, 2015). It is possible that many of these individuals—including W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I did not meet—limited their participation (a strategy discussed by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* [2010:108]). However, others chose to devote significant amounts of time and energy to this research project. I believe that these individuals perceived my skills as a researcher and cartographer as potential assets in the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s efforts toward cultural resurgence and the revitalization of the reef net fishery. Further, they seemed to think that I could be “return[ed],” or, rather, brought into, “the social fold” (Feit 2004:123): I was invited to join a drum group that gathered weekly, private hereditary knowledge was shared with me, and I was asked to attend and present at meetings where confidential W̱SÁNEĆ political/legal strategies were discussed. Those who participated, then, entrusted me with private and personal data, and, in doing so, they expressed hope that I would both respect our reciprocal relationship and use my abilities to help “smarten them [the public] up” (XA’LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016).

In Chapter 1, then, I have attempted to fulfill the many personal and academic responsibilities/obligations that I have to particular members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation and the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation in general. Here, I explore the different narratives of reef net fishing, history, and cultural resurgence that W̱SÁNEĆ community members wanted to share. In this chapter, I examine how W̱SÁNEĆ community members see reef net fishing as a spiritual practice for managing the relationship between the W̱SÁNEĆ and salmon peoples, as a tool of conservation, as the property of specific families, as a historical commercial enterprise, as a path toward resurgence, or as any possible combination of the above. Further, I argue that how each individual

chooses to frame reef net fishing affects how they discuss its eventual revitalization. Reef net fishing, then, means different things to different people, is discussed differently by different people, and is imbued with different imagined futures by different people (Gammeltoft 2014). By moving away from representations of Indigenous peoples' societies as those that "cannot change, cannot recreate themselves," and cannot "be complicated, internally diverse or contradictory" (L. Smith 2012:76-77), I have attempted to document the complexity of this "nation (re)building process" (N. Claxton 2015a:193-194).

In Chapter 2, I explore the political context in which the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's efforts to revitalize the reef net fishery are situated. Through the BC Treaty Process, the state has fostered (and continues to foster) an environment where Indigenous peoples in Canada are pressured to see their relationships with their neighbours and kin as defined by the language of 'overlapping claims,' 'exclusive territories,' and the 'resolution' of these 'issues.' Thom states that this is radically opposed to "indigenous discourse, which frames the notion of territory within a pervasive ideology of sharing" (2009:179). SWELSWÁLET, for instance, are often located in places where individuals from multiple Indigenous communities gathered annually to fish. The W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with repeatedly stressed that this research project ought to handle these "inter-village ties" with respect and consideration for Coast Salish cultural protocol (Suttles 1963). However, because of certain state-based pressures, Indigenous peoples—including the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation—are also encouraged to disrupt the very relationships they find valuable. Sharing information, land/water, and territory, then, is often met with hesitation. As Adam Olsen—a W̱SÁNEĆ community member and BC Green Party MLA—notes:

I think that your thesis, or that statement that you just made, that the treaty process discourages working together, it very much does. Look at me. Look at the animosity that I have towards our relatives in Tsawwassen because they went into a process that negotiated . . . It wasn't their fault that they negotiated in secret. It wasn't their

fault that the government created no mechanism for shared territories. I don't know that the members felt that good. I understand that we probably both used that [referring to the Southern Gulf Islands], but we've now created a system that doesn't recognize that we both used that. We definitely both shared Saanich Inlet with the Malahat. The whole place was a shared territory. And, those villages are there peacefully. All these village wouldn't be here if there wasn't peace between them. There are villages that don't exist anymore because there wasn't peace. So, there was relationships and a shared space. There's nothing shared about this space right now. It's very uncomfortable in the Saanich Inlet. And, it is specifically on the shoulders of the federal and the provincial government for creating a system that pits one brother against its sister. One cousin against another. One grandparent against another. It is pitting family members against each other. That is a disgusting process. And, again, the people that created that process should be shamed at the process that they created and allowed to stand . . . And, so, the animosity that's created by this process . . . is not on those First Nations, it's on a government process which is very colonial in nature. They created systems in the past to have us divided, so we could be conquered. They created a process in the 1990s to divide and to conquer. It's just colonial games. That's all it is. (pers. comm., June 7, 2016)

In this context, several of the W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders that I spoke with were concerned that any data shared between First Nations could be harmful to their state-based self-determinative goals.

While documenting this tension, however, I also attempted to elucidate the inverse. Thus, in Chapter 2, I explore how the current efforts of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation to revitalize reef net fishing in concert with the Lummi Nation (a Straits Salish Native American nation located near Bellingham, Washington) resist these state-based pressures. First, a substantial number of W̱SÁNEĆ community members share familial ties with members of the Lummi Nation. Second, as a result of specific historical and legal circumstances in the United States, the Lummi Nation has been able to develop a highly-commercialized reef net fishing enterprise. Thus, particular members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation (supported by the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's governance) have chosen to focus their energy across the border on a project that aligns with Coast Salish cultural protocol (Coulthard 2014:60-64)—*i.e.* the international revitalization of the reef net fishery in collaboration with their kin and neighbours—rather than pursuing the long, arduous, and fraught recognition

embedded within the BC Treaty Process. Thus, by centring cultural resurgence, members of the Lummi and W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's have actively worked to maintain their international kin networks and "inter-village ties" in opposition to the state's current methods of division and dispossession (represented throughout Chapter 2 by the politics of recognition [Coulthard 2014]) (Suttles 1963). For example, members of the Lummi Nation assisted members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation in the construction of their reef net, members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation gifted a C̱ENÁLYEN pole carved by Charles Elliott (the brother of STOLC̱EEL) to the Lummi Nation, and members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation discussed place name information with members of the Lummi Nation. This relationship is in stark contrast to both the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi Nations' relationships with their *intranational* neighbours. I argue, in Chapter 2, that because of the border's *symbolic impermeability* (Scott 2009), these two nations are not in the same sort of conflict as neighbouring Indigenous communities within the same country. Thus, I argue that there is an increased potential for Indigenous peoples to share knowledge and land/water—and to reactivate ties amongst each other—if they can avoid the pressures of the state.

While Chapter 2 outlines several large-scale political pressures that affected this project, Chapter 3 documents the numerous logistical/methodological failures that occurred. In my efforts to engage in a collaborative community-based research project, I was unaware of how the content and context of this research project would impact the methodologies I had chosen to employ. The different perspectives explored in Chapter 1—how each W̱SÁNEĆ community member interviewed conceptualizes the reef net fishery, how they hope it will be revitalized, and what impediments they believe there are to this revitalization—also affected how each W̱SÁNEĆ community member believed the project should be designed and executed. Knowledge of the reef net fishery, for many of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with, is thought of as a



hereditary right. Thus, sharing private familial information with those who do not hold these hereditary rights is often met with hesitancy and skepticism. Others, however, referred to reef net fishing knowledge and SWESWÁLET as the *property* of “W̱SÁNEĆ people” more generally (XA’LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016). These different interpretations of W̱SÁNEĆ cultural protocol—specifically regarding the management of reef net fishing knowledge—affected how different W̱SÁNEĆ community members thought the project should proceed: *e.g.* who should be included, what should be documented, how the maps should be shared, and other methodological/logistical questions. In this chapter, I explore how my own expectations of “community-based” “collaborative” research, at times, clashed with W̱SÁNEĆ cultural protocol, and I make recommendations for how settler researchers in the future should proceed with research projects in these contexts.

In documenting these tensions, I want to make it clear that I do not intend to aid the opponents of Indigenous sovereignty who choose to highlight “infighting”—a trope that Linda Tuhiwai Smith has identified as a favourite of settlers who write about Indigenous peoples (2012:132)—over the radical acts of Indigenous resurgence and resilience emphasized by others (Kew & Miller 1999; Kulchyski & Tester 2007; Tuck 2009; N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a; Monture 2004; Tuck & Yang 2012; Alfred 2005; Simpson 2008, 2011; Mack 2011; Coulthard 2014:154-179; L. Smith 2012). Instead, I have attempted to document the complexity of W̱SÁNEĆ cultural resurgence, the “key individuals . . . [who have] their own strong personal agenda[s] motivated by concerns for forthcoming generations” (Allen & Hamby 2011:222), and the contextual pressures that specific W̱SÁNEĆ community members are inundated with. While this complexity may appear to “divide” the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation in some ways, it should be noted that there is little debate among members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation regarding the general desire for

resurgence to occur. As STOLČEŁ notes: “Our people need to walk in dignity again within their own homeland. That’s what I always say. I pray for our people to have some dignity in their own homelands once again. We can raise our children with that dignity” (pers. comm., June 28, 2016). I have written the following thesis in hope that the prayers of STOLČEŁ will come true.

As a final note, I do not believe that I should be taken as an authority on either the “WŚÁNEĆ peoples” or their move toward cultural resurgence (Clifford 1983). As noted earlier, it is likely that a substantial number of WŚÁNEĆ community members chose to not participate in this research project. The participation of other WŚÁNEĆ community members was limited due to privacy, data security, time, resources, and concerns surrounding WŚÁNEĆ cultural protocol. Thus, what I have written is the result of a small number of conversations I had with a relatively small number of WŚÁNEĆ community members over a short period of time. Further, I do not speak SENĆOTEN. Several times throughout this research project, WŚÁNEĆ community members reminded me that what I thought I had just learned was not quite correct. In describing the capacity of settler lawyers to represent the WŚÁNEĆ Nation, XA’LATE stated: “They go as far as they can go, because they don’t understand our language” (pers. comm., June 14, 2016). Thus, if there are mistakes or inconsistencies in this thesis, they are mine. Further, if I have misrepresented anything, it is only my own fault.

## 1. NELET<sup>7</sup>: WSÁNEĆ Community Members' Narratives of History, Reef Net Fishing, and Cultural Resurgence

In 1990, Dave Elliott Sr., with the editorial help of Janet Poth, produced the book *Saltwater People*, devoting a chapter to the reef net fishery (1990:55-60). His son, STOLÇEŁ, and Earl Claxton Sr. then published *Reef Net Technology of the Salt Water People* in 1994, expanding upon his work (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994). In 2015, XEMFOLTW—nephew of Earl Claxton Sr.—defended his PhD dissertation, entitled *To Fish as Formerly: A Resurgent Journey Back to the Saanich Reef Net Fishery*, in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Victoria (N. Claxton 2015a). This dissertation, and the community-based participatory action it describes, is the culmination of decades of WSÁNEĆ peoples' work to, as STOLÇEŁ states, “do something about the reef net” (pers. comm., June 28, 2016). XEMFOLTW outlined his dissertation like this:

This resurgent path described herein tells the story of how the “researcher” pulled together the disappearing knowledge of the SXOLE [reef net], reinvigorated cross border cooperation between the WSÁNEĆ and their Xwelemi [Lummi] relatives, and how after being named ÇWENÁLYEN [ÇENÁLYEN<sup>8</sup>], or the Reef Net Captain through ceremony was able to coordinate the community based creation and fishing of the first SXOLE on Canadian waters in 100 years. (N. Claxton 2015a:iii-iv)

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<sup>7</sup> NELET is a SENĆOFEN phrase related to reef net fishing that means “bring the canoes together” (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:23). As Earl Claxton Sr. and STOLÇEŁ note, “when it was time to make a haul, the captain would call NELET . . . at which time the pin was pulled [to release the lines holding the canoes to the anchor]. Team work was essential for the reef net activities” (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:23). This phrase, I believe, is an appropriate metaphor for the WSÁNEĆ Nation's project to revitalize the reef net fishery. Different individuals—often belonging to different families with different interests—have worked together to both set nets and revitalize reef net fishing as a “living practice” (N. Claxton 2015a:142).

<sup>8</sup> WSÁNEĆ community members and community-produced texts spell this term in three different ways: ‘QENÁLYEN,’ ‘ÇENÁLYEN,’ and ‘ÇWENÁLYEN.’ However, in the ‘Glossary of Terms’ found in *Reef Net Technology of the Saltwater People*, QENÁLYEN means “The Front Watchman, the person standing in front watching for the salmon, hauls net up,” and ÇENÁLYEN means “Captain, the one who holds the inherent name of a specific reef net location” (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:54-55). ÇWENÁLYEN is not accounted for in *Reef Net Technology of the Saltwater People* (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:54-55), however this spelling for reef net fishing captain appears often in the work of XEMFOLTW (N. Claxton 2015a). I have chosen to follow the spelling provided in the ‘Glossary of Terms’ found in *Reef Net Technology of the Saltwater People* (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:54-55): ÇENÁLYEN.

While tied to this broader history, my project was much more limited in scope. Between 2014 and 2016, I produced a digital map entitled “Places of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation” using publicly available anthropological, historical, and community-produced materials. As a result, I envisioned that it would need to be edited, added to, and shared by W̱SÁNEĆ community members in the future to suit their emergent needs. I imagined, then, that it might become a *living* document, useful as a tool in both the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s “cartographic-legal strategy” and educational endeavours (Wainwright & Bryan 2009; Corbett 2013; Swallow 2005). At the time that I returned the data to the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, the map contained 433 unique sites that were organized into a breadth of categories beyond that of a standard Traditional Land-Use and Occupancy Study (Tobias 2009). Following the momentum that XEMFOLTW and others had developed within the community, a fishing category entitled SWELSWÁLET (reef net fishing places) was envisioned as this map’s centrepiece. Thirteen of these 433 sites were SWELSWÁLET. In his PhD dissertation, XEMFOLTW—as both a W̱SÁNEĆ community member and a ØENÁLYEN (reef net fishing captain)—was able to identify 16 additional sites: 29 SWELSWÁLET in total (N. Claxton 2015a:166-167). However, as he stated in our interview: “From the dissertation that I shared with you, I just identified what’s been identified in the oral history. You know how many sites there were? Like 29 general sites, but there might have been 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 reef net sites at each place” (XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016). XEMFOLTW recognized that the multiple reef net fishing places at each location—“gears,” as he called them—needed to be given additional attention.

It was this desire to build upon previously collected knowledge that encouraged me to seek permission to interview W̱SÁNEĆ community members about the reef net fishery. In June 2016, I interviewed seven W̱SÁNEĆ community members (XEMFOLTW being one of them). I hoped

that by doing so, I could provide an avenue for W̱SÁNEĆ community members to enrich, correct, and fill in the gaps that XEMFOLTW̱ had exposed in both the published documentary record (compare the 29 SWELSWÁLET he documented to my 13) and the current collected knowledge of W̱SÁNEĆ community members. I hoped, then, to assist in the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s “resurgent journey” toward the revitalization of the reef net fishery and the active assertion of their Douglas Treaty right “to carry on [their] fisheries as formerly” (N. Claxton 2015a; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2013). Although specific W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders and myself identified many goals for this research project—including sharing place-based knowledge, reactivating international kin networks (specifically, with members of the Lummi Nation), asserting Douglas Treaty rights and Aboriginal rights and title, and revitalizing reef net fishing—one of the overarching goals was to distribute reef net fishing information back to the community for internal educational purposes. Dave Elliott Sr. strongly emphasized the importance of education for members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation: “Many of the young people don’t know where they’re coming from and where they are going. It’s their future. We need to give them their past by telling them our history and we need to give them a future” (1990:82). So, these interviews were to be embedded in the above digital map, shared with the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School, and made accessible to W̱SÁNEĆ community members more generally by publishing a certain portion online. In doing so, it was hoped that the archive of educational material for/by W̱SÁNEĆ peoples would be strengthened. I hoped that by gathering certain W̱SÁNEĆ community members’ knowledge of the reef net fishery and providing a platform for it to be shared with others, some of the adverse effects of the “‘Mainstream Education System’”—which XEMFOLTW̱ has compared to “another ‘great flood’”—could be diminished (N. Claxton 2015a:52). W̱SÁNEĆ community members could learn about reef net fishing and explore, on their own or in the classroom, reef net

fishing knowledge and information about specific SWELSWÁLET. These interviews, then, were intended to build, in some small way, upon the decades long work of W̱SÁNEĆ peoples to reinvigorate traditional knowledge about the reef net fishery within their community.

Following the advice of XEMFOLTW̱, I sought to prioritize the exploration of specific “gears” in these interviews. Suttles, in his 1951 PhD dissertation, drew a map that depicts the “ownership” of SWELSWÁLET at SMOKEĆ (Point Roberts) by Straits Salish peoples from both sides of the International Boundary in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century (1974:209; see Figure 1). In this map seventeen individual SWELSWÁLET, each with a named owner, are lined up, side by side, along what Rathbun called the “Indian Reef Net Ledge” (Suttles 1974:209; Rathbun 1900: Plate 9; see Figure 6).

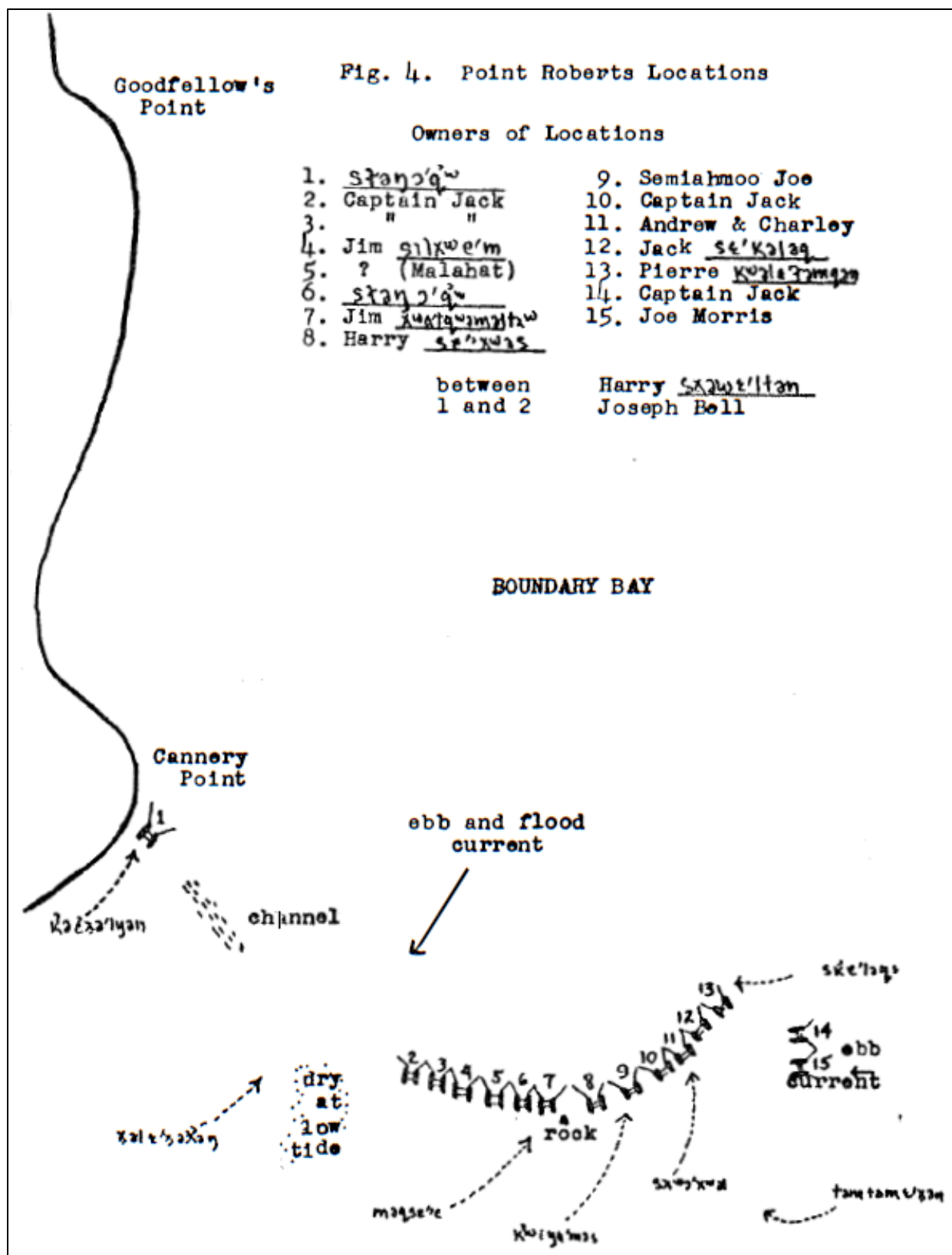


Figure 1: Late-19<sup>th</sup> Century Reef Net Fishing Locations at SMOKEĆ (Point Roberts) (Suttles 1974:209)

I imagined that in my interviews with W̱SÁNEĆ community members, similar maps could be produced. A number of factors, however, converged in this research project to ensure that this did not occur. These included: 1) a lack of specific knowledge regarding reef net gears by the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with due to the effects of colonialism and/or the absence of hereditary rights to that specific knowledge, 2) many SWELSWÁLET did not contain gears as only the most productive SWELSWÁLET (*e.g.* those at SMOKEĆ) could consistently support multiple reef net fishing locations, and 3) the discussion of “gears” was not a priority for most of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I interviewed. In fact, only a few W̱SÁNEĆ interviewees were able—or thought it pertinent—to identify the location and “ownership” of specific gears. During these interviews, then, it became clear that each W̱SÁNEĆ person wanted something different from an exploration of the reef net fishery: some wanted to document individual reef net gears; some wanted to reinvigorate familial ties; some wanted to “talk about names;” some wanted to centre the “care-taker” responsibility that exists between W̱SÁNEĆ and salmon peoples; some wanted to emphasize the intelligence and “business acumen” of their ancestors; some wanted to maintain the privacy of hereditary knowledge; some wanted to engage in public and community-based education; some wanted to assert Douglas Treaty rights and Aboriginal rights and title; some wanted to talk about W̱SÁNEĆ peoples’ involvement in the commercial reef net fishery; and some wanted to ensure that their stories were heard by subsequent generations<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> SELEMTEN shared a paper document with me during our interview (see Appendix C). This document contained “The History of James Island,” or the story of ÇELOWENTET and how he came to found—with his mother, TAH—the village at Tsartlip (ÇELOWENTET is spelled KWUL LAH XUN THUT in the text). Near the bottom of this document, it says “if it wasn’t for KWAH LAW XUN THUT [ÇELOWENTET], we would not be here.” SELEMTEN has added an additional note to this document. It reads: “This needs to get out to the general public, how the millionaires have treated us on our own territory of James Island. This is a very special story.” Without context, this note is difficult to understand. W̱SÁNEĆ peoples have been completely excluded from James Island since the early-20<sup>th</sup> century when a munitions plant was built there (Horne 2012:14-15). Since then, the current owner—a billionaire named Craig McCaw—has built a yacht



However, like XEMFOLTW and STOLÇEL, each WSÁNEĆ community member that I interviewed remained committed to “do[ing] something about the reef net.” This is due, in part, to reef net fishing’s uniqueness and importance to WSÁNEĆ peoples: *e.g.* “the known geographical distribution of reef netting corresponds to the limits of the Straits language territories” (Easton 1990:164), and “by far the most important economic activity of the Straits branch of the Coast Salish of the North-west Coast Culture area prior to white contact was reef netting” (Boxberger 1985:211).<sup>10</sup> XEMFOLTW emphasized this uniqueness and importance when he stated that in order “to once again be WSÁNEĆ,” the WSÁNEĆ Nation needs to “preserve and revive these ancient fisheries and systems of governance” (N. Claxton 2008:56-57). Thus, for many of the WSÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with, the reef net fishery has become the main vehicle through which WSÁNEĆ resurgence is discussed. STOLÇEL told me that since their 2014 reef net fishing excursion (Tsawout First Nation 2014:5), local media coverage and academic interest in the WSÁNEĆ Nation has increased substantially (Burgmann 2015; Petrescu 2014; 2017; N. Claxton 2014; 2015b). In these settings, the revitalization of the reef net fishery has been used as a framework to discuss many broad WSÁNEĆ concerns, including: the state’s unwillingness to honour the Douglas Treaties, the encroachment of industrial oil and gas development projects into

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moorage, a golf course, and a fake western village on the island (Hopper 2012). For SELEMTEN these actions are completely unacceptable and have the potential to disturb the profound meaning of the above story, unmarked grave sites, places where willow was gathered to make reef nets, and fragile eel grass where crabs and other marine-life live (Hopper 2012).

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that reef net fishing is not considered by all to be the primary mechanism for either WSÁNEĆ identity creation or food harvesting. As XA’LATE notes: “They used to go out, three canoes, dug outs, one would go straight across. That’d be deer. The other one would go left. They get bottom fish. And, the other one would go around and would come back with big springs . . . And, they all come in just before dark. And, families used to go down . . . and just pick what you want” (pers. comm., June 14, 2016). Here, XA’LATE recognizes that other methods of acquiring food were potentially as important to WSÁNEĆ peoples as reef net fishing. It should be noted, here, that XA’LATE may be referring to the harvest of spring salmon from Goldstream during a period when reef net fishing was either in significant decline or was no longer practiced (D. Elliott 1990:24, 52; Jenness 1935:9; Bouchard & Kennedy 1996:37; Hudson 1971:1-2; Simonsen *et al.* 1995: Appendix B, #42; Barnett 1955:20). This may account for why other harvesting practices, as described by XA’LATE above, were considered on par with the salmon harvest. Regardless, other WSÁNEĆ community members that I interviewed spoke similarly about the loss of their ability to crab, gather and cultivate clams, and beach seine as they did about the loss of their ability to reef net fish.

W̱SÁNEĆ territory, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's role as stewards of the environment, and the need to strengthen cultural education within the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. In the interviews that I conducted with W̱SÁNEĆ community members, reef net fishing was generally treated in the same manner. Each framed the practice, cultural protocol, meaning, and importance of reef net fishing in the past, present, and future differently, using unique, interactive, and sometimes conflicting narratives. Further, these framings varied from individual to individual, and, often, they shifted, moment to moment, within a single interview.

I am not saying that individuals sometimes chose to express “the truth” and at other times chose to stray from it. I am also not saying that some individuals were correct and others were not. I do not want to stereotypically depict Indigenous peoples’ societies as those that “cannot change, cannot recreate themselves,” and cannot “be complicated, internally diverse or contradictory” (L. Smith 2012:76-77). As Linda Tuhiwai Smith ironically notes, for many settler scholars “only the West has that privilege” (2012:76-77). Instead, I want to recognize “the toleration for some differences in practices and viewpoint” that Miller has called a “hallmark” of Coast Salish societies (2001:59). Internal variation, then, should not be seen necessarily as proof of infighting<sup>11</sup>, or lying, or a lack of knowledge, but as the “routine political action” of individuals actively seeking “alternative political approaches” to, in this case, “do something about the reef net” (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59). Each W̱SÁNEĆ community member came to the interview with specific, often unspoken, motivations for capturing their unique framings of reef net fishing on film in my presence. They emerged, as Allen and Hamby note, as individuals “with their own strong personal agenda[s] motivated by concerns for forthcoming generations” (2011:222).

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<sup>11</sup> This is a trope that Linda Tuhiwai Smith has identified as a favourite of settlers who write about Indigenous peoples (2012:132).

For instance, Adam Olsen, a W̱SÁNEĆ community member and BC Green Party MLA, stated that reef net fishing ought to be revitalized as the foundation of a sustainable W̱SÁNEĆ business enterprise. This imagined future (Gammeltoft 2014), however, is currently hampered by W̱SÁNEĆ peoples' inability to legally sell fish caught using their Douglas Treaty rights (Boxberger 1994:5-6). Adam Olsen, then, has presented "the complexity, the sophistication, the understanding" of reef net fishing in various venues to emphasize how an oil company's "interests pale in comparison to [his] constitutionally protected, treaty protected, rights to these fish" (Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016). Although this perspective is generally accepted within the community, it is not the priority of all. Reef net fishing means different things to different people, is discussed differently by different people, and is imbued with different imagined futures by different people (Gammeltoft 2014).

Considering this, I have opted to *not* make the narratives presented in the following pages *tidy*. I did not want to force these narratives into a cohesive unit that could claim to be wholly representative of the "W̱SÁNEĆ reef net fishery." Instead, it is important to recognize several things that have contributed to this inherent *messiness*: 1) that many members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation chose to not participate in this research project, 2) that I spent a short amount of time with the W̱SÁNEĆ community members I did interact with, 3) that many of these W̱SÁNEĆ community members purposefully limited the information they shared with me, 4) that I do not speak SENĆOŦEN, and 5) that my abilities as a cartographer, writer, researcher, and "arranging ethnographer"—*i.e.* the organizer of quotations provided by "informants" (Clifford 1983:139-140)—are still developing. Additionally, part of this *messiness* is the result of the effects of colonialism on both intergenerational knowledge transfer and the practice of reef net fishing itself (N. Turner & K. Turner 2008). Thus, just as there are gaps in the published documentary record,

so too are there gaps in the knowledge of W̱SÁNEĆ community members. In response, XEMFOLTW has taken a three-pronged approach to the revitalization of the reef net fishery, by 1) filling in these gaps, 2) bringing people together as a nation, and 3) reef net fishing again (N. Claxton 2015a). He states:

This project was about learning to become a Reef netter again, through gathering as much information about it. The project then became about honouring the Reef Net through the appropriate traditional and spiritual protocols, then most importantly, by going out and fishing it again. One of the most important lessons of this Reef net project has been that it is a very communal and collaborative activity . . . The Reef net has the power to bring together children, adults, elders, families, communities and nations. When everyone is working together with a like mind and heart, it creates a strong sense of identity and connection to the common history and future. This process that brought everyone together is really a nation (re)building process. (N. Claxton 2015a:193-194)

Tuck's concept of "survivance" is useful here. She states that it is important that Indigenous peoples "[move] beyond our basic survival in the face of overwhelming cultural genocide to create *spaces of synthesis and renewal*" (Vizenor as cited in Tuck 2009:422, emphasis added). So, while the efforts of XEMFOLTW to "[work] together with a like mind and heart" epitomize this vision (N. Claxton 2015a:193-194), "synthesis and renewal" are also visible in the unique, interactive, and sometimes conflicting reef net fishing narratives expressed to me by W̱SÁNEĆ community members (Vizenor as cited in Tuck 2009:422). Thus, in this chapter, I will explore how individual narratives of reef net fishing both clash and align with each other and the published documentary record. I will explore the symbolic malleability of the reef net fishery as expressed by different W̱SÁNEĆ community members. And, I will elucidate the "alternative political approaches" toward W̱SÁNEĆ cultural resurgence that different members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation envision taking shape through the revitalization of the reef net fishery (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59). I hope, then, to follow the work of Starn, when he states: "Anything short of appreciating that native

experience is ‘an ocean of terrifying complexity’ is to treat Indians as less than ‘fully human’ all over again” (2011:194).

### **“Families Have Their Own Ways”**

XEMFOLTW states that reef net fishing is “a unique sustainable fishing technology [that] distinguished the Straits Salish” and “created the W̱SÁNEĆ identity” (N. Claxton 2015a:213). These ideas have cemented reef net fishing’s place as a central topic in the works of settler researchers who write about W̱SÁNEĆ peoples (Barnett 1939:121; Barnett 1955:86-87; Boas 1890:568; Boxberger 1985:211; Clark 1980:79-81; Cobb 1917:86-87; Easton 1985:25; Jenness 1935:25-29<sup>12</sup>; Lowman 1939:46; Lutz 2008:64-66; Rathbun 1900:313-314; Rounsefell & Kelez 1938:713-714; Stern 1934:43-46; Suttles 1974:155-161). Members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation have written their own accounts in response (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994; N. Claxton 2003:25-26; 2008; 2015a; D. Elliott 1990), clarifying and correcting many of the descriptions written by the non-Indigenous scholars noted above. Further, W̱SÁNEĆ community members interviewed for this research project described reef net fishing in ways that both interact and conflict with the above written materials. Before I begin this discussion, however, I will briefly outline the *general practice* of reef net fishing (see Figure 2 below).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The unpublished works of Jenness—including a near-finished manuscript called “The Saanich Indians of Vancouver Island” and various other Coast Salish field notes—were recently compiled and edited into a single collection (Richling, ed. 2016). Although this document is more accessible than the source material (held by the Canadian Museum of History), I have found several discrepancies between the two. For this reason, I have referenced Jenness’s original texts throughout this thesis (1934-1936; 1935).

<sup>13</sup> A detailed description of the functionality, construction, and operation of the reef net is given in the book *Reef Net Technology of the Saltwater People* (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:13-23).

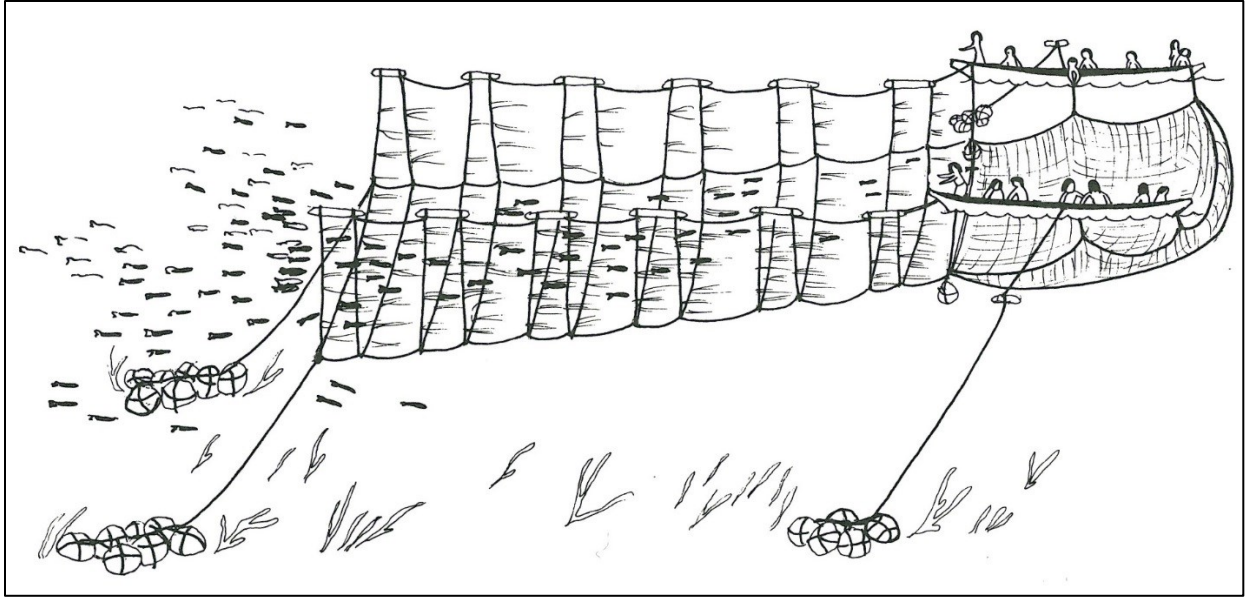


Figure 2: Fren Ertle's illustration of the "Reef-Net Set-up" (D. Elliott 1990:57)

In July and August, reef nets are set during the flood tide in south-facing bays or along the coasts of islands and other landforms (XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016).<sup>14</sup> In these bays, the current usually enters from the east, moves into the bay, and exits to the west in what is called a back eddy (XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016; Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016). Travelling with these currents toward their spawning rivers, salmon pass by specific locations with annual consistency. Many of these places are optimal for reef net fishing and are called SWELSWÁLET (reef net fishing places). At a SWÁLET, the reef net is set on the west side of the bay and faces its head. With this placement, the reef net is in position to catch the salmon as they exit the bay with the current. Along the coasts of islands and other landforms, however, reef nets

<sup>14</sup> In the book *Reef Net Technology of the Saltwater People*, Earl Claxton Sr. and STOLŌEL state: "The following description of SXOLE [the reef net itself] and other related information is written in past tense, as reef net fishing was outlawed by the authorities in the late 1920s and the early 1930s" (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:11). In this paragraph, I have chosen, instead, to use the present tense. I have done so in order to recognize the revitalization efforts of XEMFOLTW and other WSÁNEĆ community members (Tsawout First Nation 2014:5). The use of present tense, however, can be anachronistic at times. Many of the practices outlined in this paragraph are no longer in use or have been replaced with modern technology. In 2014, for instance, WSÁNEĆ community members fished with the assistance of power winches, motorboats, sunglasses, and the resources of Parks Canada (N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a; Tsawout First Nation 2014:5).

are set facing south to intercept the salmon as they travel toward rivers on Vancouver Island and the mainland, north of Straits Salish territory. To set the reef net, two large anchor stones (KENOLES<sup>15</sup>) are set apart from one another on a kelp bed or reef within a bay to make the front of the reef net's "lead" (ĆXOLETEN). This lead—constructed using cedar-bark rope, stones, and cedar floats—is dyed a dark colour, twined with grasses to appear as part of the kelp bed, and submerged underwater (Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016). From above, the lead resembles a rough 'V' shape, with the open end of the 'V' facing the head of the bay and the current. In effect, the lead acts as a funnel that gently slopes upward toward the surface of the water (XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016), causing the salmon to splash and jump as they swim over it (Skip Sam, June 23, 2016). At the end of this lead, two canoes (SXELÁÇEL)—separated by a distance narrower than that between the lead's anchor stones—are fixed in place with additional anchor stones. Between the canoes, six to twelve reef net fishers hold a bagged net (SXOLE) made of willow bark. When the salmon come to the end of the lead, they immediately swim down and into the net. The QENÁLYEN (or ÇENÁLYEN; see footnote 8 on page 21) then directs the other reef net fishers to lift the net and release their anchor lines. The canoes are brought together—NELET is a SENÇOTEN phrase that means "bring the canoes together" (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:23)—and the reef net fishers roll the caught salmon into one canoe and then the other. There are multiple accounts stating that, in the past, these canoes—40–52 feet long, 5–6 feet deep, and 6–8 feet wide—would have been "filled . . . right up" with "5000 fish per net" (D. Elliott 1990:59; SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2016; Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016; Adam

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<sup>15</sup> Adam Olsen states that these anchor stones can also be referred to using the term NEHIYMET: "The NEHIYMET, which is that anchor stone or that inheritance, right? And, it's signified in that anchor stone from my understanding" (pers. comm., June 7, 2016). STOLÇEL defines NEHIYMET as "the oldest traceable name that you can go back to within your family That NEHIYMET gives you rights to certain SWÁLET or certain reef net locations. That's how you make your connection back to which particular reef net you belong to, or reef net location" (pers. comm., June 28, 2016).

Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016). Thus, the reef net is clearly an extremely productive technique. At the bunt (TESTENAYEC) of the net, however, there is an escapement hole (S,HELIS). This feature allows some of the salmon caught in the net to swim through and continue to their spawning river. This is the *general practice* of reef net fishing as described by WSÁNEĆ community members (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994).<sup>16</sup>

This account, though, is not universal.<sup>17</sup> WSÁNEĆ community members and authors within the published documentary record describe many significant variations. This can be partly accounted for by incorrect or incomplete information collected and written by anthropologists, historians, and government officials. However, there are other factors that contribute to this variation: *e.g.* different familial reef net fishing practices, historical changes in the operation/construction of the reef net, and, as Easton notes, the fact that “it is apparent that there was some local variability” (1985:25). In fact, variability is considered by XA’LATE to be essential to the practice of reef net fishing: “A lot of families have different ways of doing it. Their families have their own ways of fishing. So, that’s what my ears heard from my grandmother” (pers. comm., June 14, 2016). For instance, at SMOKEĆ, vertical lines were only placed on half of the lead (Suttles 1974:161). This variation is due to the productivity of this SWÁLET. At

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<sup>16</sup> This entire paragraph, except where otherwise noted, was drawn from the book *Reef Net Technology of the Saltwater People* (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994).

<sup>17</sup> In contrast to the above *general practice*, some reef net fishers fished on both the ebb and flood tide (Rounsefell & Kelez 1938:714; Suttles 1974:203), while others fished only on the ebb tide (Old Polen as cited in Clark 1980:80); some fished “near the mouths of favorable rivers” instead of in bays and along the coast (Barnett 1939:121); Instead of suspending the anchor stone from house-boards planked across two canoes, some loaded the anchors onto the house boards themselves (Suttles 1974:167), while others used a pole (Stern 1934:44); some used anchors made from “everything from cement blocks and boat hooks to old car frames loaded with boulders” (Lowman 1939:46); some constructed both the reef net and the lead lines from cedar bark or nettle (Barnett 1939:121), eventually transitioning to cotton twine (Rathbun 1900:313); some either reinforced the vertical lines of lead using split cedar rails (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:19), used vertical lines on only half of the lead (Suttles 1974:161), didn’t use a lead at all (Barnett 1939:121; Boas 1890:568), or found that cutting a path through the kelp was more essential than constructing a lead (Cobb 1917:86-87); some used inflated seal stomachs for floats (Barnett 1955:87); and, some didn’t include an escapement in their design of the reef net at all (Boas 1890:568; Boxberger 1985:211; Clark 1980:79-81; Cobb 1917:86-87; Easton 1985:25; Jenness 1935:25-29; Lowman 1939:46; Rathbun 1900:313-314; Rounsefell & Kelez 1938:713-714; Stern 1934:43-46).



SMOKEĆ, multiple gears could be set-up side by side with consistency, thus enabling adjacent reef net fishers to share materials (Suttles 1974:161). Further, some writers within the published documentary record identify the use of cotton twine in the construction of the lead (Rathbun 1900:313). This variation—in contrast to the use of either cedar bark, nettle, or willow (Barnett 1939:121; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994)—was clearly only made possible through contact with settlers and historical change. In this vein, Skip Sam and SELEMTEN—two W̱SÁNEĆ community members that participated in the commercial reef net fishery as young men—referred often to specific historical technologies ever-present during the late-19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century commercial reef net fishing period: power winches, rubber waders, polarized sunglasses, step-ladders, *etc.* For a few W̱SÁNEĆ community members—*e.g.* Skip Sam, SELEMTEN, and others—these technological variations are as fundamental to the practice of reef net fishing as those used in the *general practice* discussed above.

Other W̱SÁNEĆ community members, however—often those without historical reef net fishing experience—spoke less about specific reef net fishing techniques or technologies. Instead, these individuals emphasized the *meaning* of reef net fishing as a W̱SÁNEĆ practice. As Adam Olsen notes: “It really, I think, typifies the worldview of the W̱SÁNEĆ people: the relationship between humans and other species” (pers. comm., June 7, 2016). When discussing the reef net, these W̱SÁNEĆ community members often focused on the use of prayer words to refer to the salmon, the obligation to feed the salmon by burning KEXMIN<sup>18</sup>, the importance of bathing properly so as not to HO,EK (“smell”) (Montler N.d), and the various ceremonies performed to “give thanks” to the salmon (STOLØEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016; XEMFOLTW, pers. comm.,

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<sup>18</sup> KEXMIN refers to wild celery (*Lomatium nudicaule*) and is commonly referred to as either “Indian celery” or “Indian consumption plant” (N. Turner & Hebda 2008:130-132). As Nancy Turner and Richard Hebda note: “KEXMIN is one of the most powerful medicines of the W̱SÁNEĆ people” (2008:131). When authors make reference to the use of this plant as a medicine, they are usually referring to its seeds (N. Turner & Hebda 2008:131).

June 16, 2016; XA'LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016). Although technical details were less central in these discussions, the meaning and importance of reef net fishing was sometimes discussed with reference to specific physical features of the reef net. For instance, many of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members interviewed for this research project talked about the use of the willow in the construction of the reef net.<sup>19</sup> By doing so, they tied the practice of reef net fishing to the land and emphasized W̱SÁNEĆ peoples' obligation to "look after" and manage the wetlands where willow grows. Further, the relationship between the W̱SÁNEĆ and salmon peoples was often metaphorically represented through a discussion of the S,HELIS (*i.e.* the escapement hole) (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994; N. Claxton 2003:25-26; 2008; 2015a; D. Elliott 1990; STOLÇEŁ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016; XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016). I would argue, then, that the way that reef net fishing is framed—with its many technological, spiritual, historical, familial, and local variations—shapes how different W̱SÁNEĆ community members imagine and discuss its importance and its eventual revitalization (Gammeltoft 2014).

### **“In-Laws to One Another”**

While talking about the importance of the willow ring placed in the bunt end of the reef net, STOLÇEŁ described the meaning of the term S,HELIS. He stated that, translated into English, it means “he, she, or its life” (STOLÇEŁ, pers. comm., August 4, 2017). Using the language of conservation—a language that Simpson argues is potentially irreconcilable with Indigenous ontologies (2011:141)—he first referred to the S,HELIS as an “escapement hole” (STOLÇEŁ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). However, as XEMFOLTW notes, the inclusion of the S,HELIS

is more than just a simple act of conservation (the main priority and narrow vision of DFO [the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada]), but it represents a profound respect for salmon. It was believed that the runs of salmon were lineages,

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<sup>19</sup> As Dave Elliott Sr. notes, the willow and the reef net are also etymologically bound together in SENĆOTEN: “Our name for it [the reef net] is SXOLE. That word comes from the word for willow tree” (1990:56).

and if some were allowed to return to their home rivers, then those lineages would always continue. (N. Claxton 2008:26)

STOLÇEEL also recognized this. He described the way in which the salmon pass through the S,HELIS: “it’s like they’re [the salmon] being reborn into their continued journey, returning to their place of origin—whether it’s part of the main river or maybe a side stream—so that they can replenish that river bed with their eggs again” (pers. comm., June 16, 2016). This brief description of the S,HELIS was embedded in a fulsome exploration of the many meanings that reef net fishing holds for WŚÁNEĆ peoples (STOLÇEEL, pers. comm., June 16, 2016).<sup>20</sup>

Here, STOLÇEEL made it clear that the reef net was not just a unique technique for capturing salmon. Instead, he connected it to the responsibility that WŚÁNEĆ peoples have to both the salmon and the islands around which they swim. He spoke of how XÁ,EL,S, the Creator, threw WŚÁNEĆ peoples into the Salish Sea to form the islands, telling the islands to “QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE” (“Look after your relatives”) and the remaining WŚÁNEĆ peoples, “I, TÁU, ÇENS QENT E TFE SCÁLEĆE LÁ,E TOL” (“You will also look after your relatives of the deep”) (STOLÇEEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). To further emphasize this relational worldview, STOLÇEEL told a story—well established in the published documentary record (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:6-8; Jenness 1935:112-113; Lutz 2008:65; Suttles 1974:172)—about the “human spirit of the salmon.” The human spirit of the salmon meets a young WŚÁNEĆ girl (or “princess”) at ÇELTENEM (near present-day Blaine, Washington) and asks her to marry him. Together, with the girl’s parents, they travel back to the Saanich Peninsula. Once there, the human spirit of the salmon asks for a plant called SXOLE. The WŚÁNEĆ peoples do not know what this term means, and they bring him many different plants. They eventually bring him willow, which he accepts.

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<sup>20</sup> To recognize the depth of the knowledge of STOLÇEEL, as compared to my own, I have included his words as Appendix D.

Using the inner-bark, the human spirit of the salmon makes a reef net and gifts this knowledge to the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples. He and his wife then leave the village by canoe, and, on their way out toward the open ocean, they vanish before they reach the horizon (STOLČEŁ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). As XEMFOLTW summarizes, “the reef net technology, in our oral history, was a gift to us by the Salmon people in exchange for a young W̱SÁNEĆ princess” (pers. comm., June 16, 2016).

Jenness, in his field notes, however, provides a different story. In “Origin of Salmon,” “Johnny Claxton 70, E. Reserve, Saanich” recounts the journey of “two brave youth” who leave their W̱SÁNEĆ village to find a new source of food (Jenness 1934-1936:45, 263). At this time, the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples lived on “elk and whatever other game they could kill” (Jenness 1934-1936:45). The two young men, after travelling for three and a half months, find a “strange country” where a man, the leader of the salmon, greets them (Jenness 1934-1936:45). They are taken in and fed at the various houses found here, each belonging to a different salmon: “steelhead, sockeye, spring and other varieties” (Jenness 1934-1936:45). After one month, they are instructed to leave by following the path of the salmon back to their home. They are told to burn KEXMIN (spelled “qathmin” in the text) (N. Turner & Hebda 2012:130-132; see footnote 18 on page 35)—so that “the salmon might feed on its smoke and sustain themselves”—and to catch the salmon in “sxwala” (a reef net) (Jenness 1934-1936:45).<sup>21</sup> After being instructed in the proper ways, the two young men are told that “if you treat the salmon well, you will always have them in abundance” (Jenness 1934-1936:45).

In each of the stories above, the relationship that W̱SÁNEĆ and salmon peoples have to one another is emphasized. In the story that STOLČEŁ tells this relationship is familial and in

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<sup>21</sup> Although Jenness refers to the “sxwala” as a purse net, it is more likely that he is referring to a reef net (1934-1936:45). Jenness, in another document, describes the reef net clearly, again, however, using the term “purse net” (1935:26).

Jenness' it is reciprocal. Suttles explores a Coast Salish affinal kinship term that is useful in understanding this relational reciprocity between W̱SÁNEĆ and salmon peoples (1960:297-298). Suttles uses the term “*sk’wəlwəs*”—meaning “co-parent-in-law”—to describe each party to the relationship (1960:298), whereas STOLÇEŁ uses the term QELWOSTEL—translated as “in-laws to one another”—to describe the relationship itself (pers. comm., July 27, 2017). The term that STOLÇEŁ uses, I would argue, emphasizes the reciprocal nature of this relationship more clearly, and, because it is a SENĆOTEN word written in the SENĆOTEN orthography, it is more applicable to W̱SÁNEĆ peoples. Regardless, Suttles describes how this reciprocal relationship is fostered by Coast Salish peoples more generally. He states:

After the wedding the couple usually went to live with the groom's family. The two families could continue to exchange property as long as the marriage endured. And the marriage might be made to endure longer than the life of one party to it, for if one or the other died the family of the deceased might provide another spouse for the survivor. (Suttles 1960:297)

Through the marriage of the human spirit of the salmon and the W̱SÁNEĆ girl, then, the W̱SÁNEĆ and salmon peoples have become QELWOSTEL (“in-laws to one another”) (Suttles 1960:298; STOLÇEŁ, pers. comm., July 27, 2017). They are responsible to one another: W̱SÁNEĆ peoples burn KEXMIN to sustain the salmon (Jenness 1934-1936:45), and salmon sacrifice themselves as food for W̱SÁNEĆ peoples (Lutz 2008:65). Some salmon, however, choose to not sacrifice themselves. They exit through the S,HELIS and are “reborn into their continued journey” (STOLÇEŁ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). XEMFOLTW expands upon this point:

Many things are metaphorical, and this is also coming from my uncle [Earl Claxton Sr.] . . . he said that even the net was a metaphorical representation of that princess. Like, there's four main anchors. It's like she's on all fours. Like there's hands and feet and the net was kind of like the womb and there's even a hole that's intentionally put into the bunt end of the net, which allows salmon to escape. But that was almost like the birth canal giving life. So, it's all metaphorical. It's a really beautiful way of seeing the world. (pers. comm., June 16, 2016)

By reef net fishing, then, W̱SÁNEĆ peoples are ensuring that some salmon are continually “reborn” through the womb of the metaphorical W̱SÁNEĆ girl, ensuring that “the marriage [between the W̱SÁNEĆ girl and the human spirit of the salmon] might be made to endure longer than the life of one party to it” (Suttles 1960:297). By doing so, the W̱SÁNEĆ and salmon peoples’ reciprocal responsibilities to one another are continually reaffirmed and perpetuated.

### **“The Care-Takers”**

These reciprocal responsibilities are often expressed using the phrase “to look after.” In the Coast Salish context, this is generally understood to mean the active management and preservation of a resource or thing for future generations. Philip Kevin Paul, citing his father (Philip Christopher Paul), writes that “our people [W̱SÁNEĆ peoples] are the ‘care-takers’ of the Earth” (Paul 1995:ii). He continues:

It is easy to mistake this as describing an authoritarian position, but nothing could be further from the truth. The idea of being a care-taker is a reminder to the human being of our position on Earth, that we are a part of the natural world, not a controlling element. The idea depicts not only moral, but also practical obligations. Just as the smallest insect plays an important role in its own eco-system and is an important element in the balance between eco-systems, so do human beings have their role. As care-takers, my people helped to maintain this balance. (Paul 1995:ii)

The ÇENÁLYEN—or, reef net fishing captain—is represented by specific W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with as the “care-taker” of the relationship between W̱SÁNEĆ and salmon peoples (STOLÇEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). Each ÇENÁLYEN is tied—through their NEHIYMET (“the oldest ancestral name held within each particular family”)—to specific SWELSWÁLET that they are responsible for “looking after” (STOLÇEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). At each of these SWELSWÁLET, the ÇENÁLYEN must ensure that those who fish at that location do so “in a good way” (Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016), which means treating the salmon according to cultural protocol and familial respect:

The captain of that particular location [SWÁLET], the captain is a ØENÁLYEN, he's the one that knows the location. He knows the—the captain knows the landmarks where to drop those [KENOLES] down. He knows the prayer words that go down with those first anchor stones, and the setting out of the reef net for the season. This all begins with the blossoming out of KÁTEŁĆ. Nowadays they call it oceanspray. Different people call it ironwood, *spiraea*. But, it blooms in the moon of PENAWEN, or June . . . it's a signal or a sign in nature for our people to begin to move out into the straits and look after those family relatives, ancestor relative islands, by fishing there, using the SXOLE. (STOLØEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016)

Further, the ØENÁLYEN is responsible for organizing and participating in several annual ceremonies including the First Salmon Ceremony, the Calling of the Salmon Ceremony, and others (Barnett 1939:124, 136-137; Barnett 1955:91-92; Boas 1890: 568-569; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:27-35; N. Claxton 2015a:164-165; Jenness 1935:24 n. 1, 28-29; Stern 1934:43-46; Suttles 1974:170, 173-179; Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016; STOLØEL, June 23, 2016; Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016; XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016). To do so, the ØENÁLYEN—with the wealth accrued from their management of SWELSWÁLET—may hire a TIFE (a ritualist priest) to assist in these rituals (STOLØEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016), a captain and crew to operate the reef net (Suttles 1974:161-163, 486-488; Barsh 2008:220-221; Lutz 2008:65-66; STOLØEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016), women to process the thousands of fish potentially caught at each SWÁLET (Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016), and young men to collect food and water for the camp (Stern 1934:43-46; N. Claxton 2008:56-57). This important role is passed from generation to generation within WSÁNEĆ families thus ensuring that the relationship between WSÁNEĆ and salmon peoples will be managed in the future: “Not only was it this person's responsibility that all fishing operations were carried out, but it was also their responsibility to ensure the transmission of all these teachings to the family” (N. Claxton 2008:56).

Even though XEMFOLTW described “conservation” in dismissive terms as “the main priority and narrow vision of DFO [Fisheries and Oceans Canada]” (N. Claxton 2008:26), some

of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I interviewed chose to discuss the management of the relationship between the W̱SÁNEĆ and salmon peoples using this terminology. For instance, the First Salmon Ceremony—where W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, after catching the first salmon of the year in a reef net, return to the shore to honour the salmon for four days (Boas 1890:568-569; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:30-34; STOLČEĽ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016; XEMFOLTW̱, pers. comm., June 16, 2016)—was described many times as a ceremony that had conservation as its central outcome. During those four days that W̱SÁNEĆ peoples did not fish, less salmon were caught and more salmon were able to spawn up river, creating larger runs in subsequent years. Guy Tom, by way of his father, further highlights this conservation-based framing by discussing moderation as a method that W̱SÁNEĆ peoples use to manage their relationship with the salmon:

They would only fish for the fish that they would save. . . we usually use our fish for winter supply or if we have to do any ceremonial gatherings. We'd get enough fish for the ceremony and stuff. They would only hunt and fish just for enough for what they had to get. They wouldn't go overboard on getting all that supplies . . . They say if you're gonna be stingy with everything that you do, that your whole life you're going to be like that. But, if you only take a certain amount and save the rest of it for another time then it's going to be there for you to go back and get it after. (pers. comm., June 8, 2016)

It should be noted that the framing of reef net fishing as a conservation-based fishing method is tied to both historical circumstances and the contexts in which I spoke with W̱SÁNEĆ community members. Many individuals in the published documentary record state that reef net fishing was outlawed in Canada in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century due to it being considered a “trap” (N. Claxton 2003:35-36; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:11; D. Elliott 1990:60; Lutz 2008:260). In the United States, however, reef net fishing has remained legal for the opposite reason: while fish traps were banned, reef net fishing was considered a “real conservation gear” (Lowman 1939:47). It should be clear that settlers in both countries have consistently done the work of (mis)interpreting reef net fishing (N. Claxton 2003:35-36; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:11; D. Elliott 1990:60; Lutz



2008:260)—or have actively set-out to disrupt the practice (N. Claxton 2003:21; Bierwert 1999:244-245; Fediuk & Thom 2003:12; D. Harris 2008:14; Raibmon 2008; Wadewitz 2012:74-75; Old Polen as cited in Clark 1980:80)—and these (mis)interpretations and disruptions have created significant legal consequences for the reef net fishery in both countries. Because of these unique histories, it remains important for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s self-determinative goals that reef net fishing is highlighted as a conservation-based practice. At times, this takes precedent over the spiritual and ceremonial components of reef net fishing discussed in the previous section.

These two framings, however, are not necessarily at odds with one another (XEMFOLTW̱, pers. comm., June 16, 2016; STOLÇEĒ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). In fact, for Adam Olsen, a relational worldview—like that discussed in the previous section—informs respectful, sustainable, and conservation-based practices:

If you look at that tree as being a relative of yours, if you look at that Garry oak out there as being a former human, you’re less likely to kill it. You know, we’re very, as a species, inclined to kill everything except, there’s this big *faux pas* and taboo about killing . . . like I can’t kill you like I could kill a tree. I’d feel different about it, right? And, there’s laws that say that that . . . So, for me if we can in modern times start to go back to the way that we thought about things, perhaps we’d have a better relationship with our environment. And, if we started to see those trees as being humans with a different function, that’s the centre of this difference today, you know, just use everything, crap all over everything, die and leave nothing for the next generation. (pers. comm., June 7, 2016)

So, although the ÇENÁLYEN is seen as an individual responsible for ensuring that the salmon are treated with the respect deserving of a relative, they are also seen as being responsible—using the language of conservation—for certain “practical obligations” (Paul 1995:ii): namely, ensuring that the salmon return year after year. Thus, for many of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with, the S,HELIS serves two compatible purposes: it is both an “escapement hole” and a “birth canal” (STOLÇEĒ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016; XEMFOLTW̱, pers. comm., June 16, 2016).

## “Business People”

Tied up in the concept of *ÇENÇENÁLYEN*<sup>22</sup> as “care-takers” (Paul 1995) is the perspective that these individuals manage the salmon resource for their own benefit. As noted by Barsh:

Much status was earned through the sustainable stewardship and generous sharing of productive property. A wealthy individual could acquire a fishing site, keep it ‘clean’ (*kwiát*), and invite his relatives and friends to fish there each summer. He could also hire a crew to fish the site for him and distribute the dried salmon at feasts. In either case the foundation of the owner’s wealth was the continued productivity of the fishing site. If the fishery failed, its ‘owner’ had nothing to give away at feasts. In this sense, individual ‘ownership’ of productive living resources was intrinsic to the traditional Coast Salish status system, which in turn motivated the ‘owners’ to take an active role in conserving biological productivity. (2008:220-221)

Here, Barsh argues that *SWELSWÁLET* were not just “looked after,” they were also “owned” (2009:220-221). By “looking after” a *SWÁLET*, the *ÇENÁLYEN* was able to ensure that they would benefit from returning salmon in subsequent years. Adam Olsen, similarly, considers *ÇENÇENÁLYEN* to be “business people”:

I firmly believe that those people that own those *SWELSWÁLET* they were business people. They caught more fish, way more fish, than what they needed to eat. They traded those fish aggressively. They had extravagant teams, large teams of people, that were there to process the fish for them. They then took those fish and it was a commodity to them. This was one of the main points that I made to the National Energy Board: “Do not underestimate the quality business acumen of our fisherman.” . . . We are sophisticated business people and that’s how we’ve always been. And, if you got into our face, it was a disaster. Like it was a bad deal for you to end up on one of our islands that we inherited. If you ended up there and you weren’t supposed to be there, that didn’t end well for you. I’m not advocating violence in any way, but I’m just highlighting the fact that these were things that were taken extremely seriously because of the economics around it . . . There’d be five or six reef nets set out at a location side by side by side . . . At the change of the tide, 5000 fish per net. My arms hurt after processing 60 fish when the fish come in. Try processing that. Now you’re starting to look at a scale of an operation which is very sophisticated. To me, if you’re going to write anything about us in a thesis,

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<sup>22</sup> ‘*ÇENÇENÁLYEN*’ is the plural form of the word ‘*ÇENÁLYEN*’ (STOLÇEL, pers. comm., June 22, 2017).

please write about how awesome we were at that. (Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016)

Correspondingly, Suttles argues that reef net fishing (at least as it existed in the late-19<sup>th</sup>/early-20<sup>th</sup> century) was “capitalistic,” stating that this term “implies the private ownership of the means of production and their operation by hired labor” (Suttles 1974:486). A ÇENÁLYEN hired a crew consisting mainly of “kinsmen who might be co-heirs,” restricted the access of others to the SWÁLET, and redistributed the catch to those involved, keeping the largest share for themselves (Barsh 2008:220-221; Boas 1890:568-569; Bouchard & Kennedy 1996:2, 31; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:24; Easton 1990:164; Kennedy & Bouchard 1991:60-61; Lutz 2008:55, 65-66; Stein 2000:31; Stern 1934:43-46, 126-127; Suttles 1960:299-300; 1974:161, 221-222, 321, 486-488; STOLÇEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016; Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016). The productivity of these SWELSWÁLET, then, determined the *surplus* that a ÇENÁLYEN could acquire. With this *surplus*, the ÇENÁLYEN was able to I’YOKTEL (barter) with other Coast Salish peoples for goat’s wool, slaves, and other food/wealth to be received at a future date (Clark 1980:84; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:24; Jenness 1935:48; Stein 2000:31; Suttles 1960; 1998:173-174; Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016; XA’LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016).<sup>23</sup>

However, the “ownership” and productivity of SWELSWÁLET was not the sole factor in the potential ability of a ÇENÁLYEN to accumulate wealth. As Suttles notes: “Wealth came from the possession of hereditary rights, as in the case of a Songish or Lummi reef-net owner; but even then, the man not only owned the right to use a net at a certain place but also usually possessed the special practical and ritual knowledge necessary for its successful operation” (1958:500-501). In order to operate the reef net successfully, each ÇENÁLYEN inherited specific familial knowledge

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<sup>23</sup> WSÁNEĆ peoples also traded with early settlers, as documented in the Fort Langley Journals between 1827 and 1829 (Barnston [1827] as cited in Maclachlan, ed. 1998:40, 42; McMillan and McDonald [1828-1829] as cited in Maclachlan, ed. 1998:69-71, 73, 81, 93; McDonald [1829] as cited in Maclachlan, ed. 1998:111, 115, 119, 134).

regarding practical matters (including reef net fishing techniques), how to obtain spirit powers, and genealogical information supportive of their claims to specific SWELSWÁLET (Barsh 2008:223; Elmendorf 1971; Lutz 2008:55; Suttles 1958). This knowledge, and the *ownership* of SWELSWÁLET, is considered by many authors within the published documentary record to be the property of “high-class” families who, generation after generation, passed their status onto their descendants (Suttles 1958). Under this rubric, ÇENÇENÁLYEN controlled SWELSWÁLET, traded with other Coast Salish peoples, acquired wealth, received intercommunity recognition, married high-status individuals in other communities, ensured a “good birth” for their children, passed on their inheritance (in terms of wealth, SWELSWÁLET, and knowledge), and perpetuated their family’s high-status position (Elmendorf 1971:396).

Specific WSÁNEĆ community members also emphasized this fact. They highlighted the hereditary nature of the ÇENÁLYEN and how this role—and its associated status—continues to be passed from generation to generation within families. As STOLÇEEL notes:

It’s good you’re talking about the names because what we call a NEHIYMET. NEHIYMET is the oldest ancestral name held within each particular family . . . That NEHIYMET gives you rights to certain SWÁLET or certain reef net locations. That’s how you make your connection back to which particular reef net you belong to, or reef net location. (pers. comm., June 28, 2016)

Throughout the course of this research project, then, a few of the WSÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with connected themselves directly to notable historical ÇENÇENÁLYEN<sup>24</sup>,

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<sup>24</sup> STOLÇEEL states that he inherited two SWELSWÁLET via ÇOLOŁEMKEN (his great-great-grandfather) and Cecilia Elliott (his grandmother): one named ŁELIN,ÇEEL (at Open Bay, Henry Island) and one named TEMTEMÁXEN (at SMOKEĆ). Both of these sites are detailed within the published documentary record (Suttles 1974:195, 209-211; Stern 1934:126-127). Regarding ŁELIN,ÇEEL, STOLÇEEL states: “My dad [Dave Elliott Sr.] said that that was the most prosperous location. And, that’s why it was belonged to ÇOLOŁEMKEN because he was a head man and he had the best place . . . So, the people that fished with that location were well off. They needed nothing” (pers. comm., June 28, 2016). ÇOLOŁEMKEN (Gord Elliott), the son of STOLÇEEL, now holds the name ÇOLOŁEMKEN and is the ÇENÁLYEN for these SWELSWÁLET. Adam Olsen also has ties to this family. His family, however, inherited a place named PÁÁ EL,WEL (Mitchell Bay, San Juan Island) through a different line: Cecilia Elliott’s sister Mary Anne Olsen. Mary-Anne Olsen had a son named Herman Olsen, and Herman Olsen is the

SWELSWÁLET, and NELHIIMET<sup>25</sup>. As Adam Olsen notes: “There’s a tremendous honour being from families that are reef net fisherman or fisher people” (pers. comm., June 7, 2016).

Other WSÁNEĆ community members, however, see the role of the ÇENÁLYEN differently. For these individuals, the ÇENÁLYEN does not have a status that elevates them above other individuals. Instead, as Guy Tom notes: “By my feelings, we all have equal rights. Each individual family, every family, we’re all at one level. Not higher or lower from each other” (pers. comm., June 8, 2016). Thus, these individuals feel that the ÇENÁLYEN and their family should not be able to claim ownership over specific SWELSWÁLET or the salmon that annually migrate through these places. XA’LATE, for instance, took issue with the term “ownership,” choosing, instead, to emphasize the “pervasive ideology of sharing” that exists in the Coast Salish world surrounding notions of territory (Thom 2009:179):

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grandfather of both Adam and Troy Olsen. Troy Olsen, with his wife Shirley Williams, have been pivotal in the Lummi Nation’s current efforts to revitalize the traditional reef net fishery (Northwest Treaty Tribes 2014). XEMFOLTW (Nick Claxton), of course, has been closely involved in these efforts on the Canadian side of the International Boundary. Further, Louie Pelkey, the great-grandfather of XEMFOLTW and the grandfather of SELEMTEN, fished alongside the Elliott and Olsen families as a hired hand at LELIN,ÇEĒ (Suttles 1974:195). Louie Pelkey, however, was also a ÇENÁLYEN for a place called SXIXTE in Bedwell Harbour (Pender Island) (Suttles 1974:196). Louie Pelkey inherited this place through his ancestor SXEDQELÁNEW. This name is now held by Allan Claxton, a cousin of XEMFOLTW (N. Claxton 2015a:168-169), who has since transferred the role of ÇENÁLYEN to XEMFOLTW given his ongoing work to revitalize the reef net fishery. Lastly, XA’LATE traces his lineage back to JIXINEÇ (his grandmother’s brother), a ÇENÁLYEN at SMOKEĆ in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century (Suttles 1974:168, 211; Stern 1934:126-127). Stern notes, “when last used by the Indians in 1898, the fishing rights at locations on the reef off Tceltenem [also called SMOKEĆ] were owned by the following individuals who had obtained these rights through inheritance: Tcexenoq [JIXINEÇ] and his father at Tsetlsngtonele [“the one nearest the shore”] and at Sqileqs [“outer end of reef”] . . . ” (1934:126-127). Although “Edward Jim éixe’nəq’w” [JIXINEÇ] fished with his father “Jim x’w’a’tqwəməłtx’w” at “Tsetlsngtonele” and “Sqileqs,” JIXINEÇ inherited his role as ÇENÁLYEN from his grandfather lca’i (Suttles 1974:168, 211; Stern 1934:126-127). JIXINEÇ did not have any children of his own, but his sister Cecilia Jim had one child name Marguerite with a man named Peter Jack (a descendent of SAKELEK, the brother of the elder ÇOLOLEMKEN). Marguerite then had a son named XA’LATE (Vern Jack). Despite the connection between XA’LATE and ÇOLOLEMKEN through SAKELEK, JIXINEÇ remains the primary route through which XA’LATE traces his connection to the role of ÇENÁLYEN and to a reef net fishing NEHIYMET. In fact, XA’LATE’s son now holds the name JIXINEÇ. Many of the relationships and names detailed here can be found within the published documentary record. A particularly important document for this information is Suttles’s 1951 PhD dissertation where he describes each of the “owners of locations” at SMOKEĆ (1974:208-212): e.g. ÇOLOLEMKEN, SAKELEK, JIXINEÇ, Jim x’w’a’tqwəməłtx’w and others. A corresponding map, excerpted in Figure 1, can be found on page 209 (Suttles 1974:209). Photos of Cecilia Elliott and JIXINEÇ can be found in Dave Elliott Sr.’s book *Salt Water People* (1990:10-11).

<sup>25</sup> ‘NELHIIMET’ is the plural form of the word ‘NEHIYMET’ (STOLÇEĒ, pers. comm., June 13, 2017).

Your Indian name tells you who you are and where you're from . . . you know what area you belong to: "Oh I remember your grandfather used to go a certain place to go fishing or clamming," or whatever . . . A lot of the people had their own places of fishing. It's respected: "Oh, we can't go there, belongs to so-and-so family." That's just how it was. "Oh, we can't go there." But, our people shared. Our family here, they got what they needed and then they say, "oh you can come here, go here, you can get some." It's shared all the time. We shared all the time . . . Ownership is not really ownership. (pers. comm., June 14, 2016)

This phrase, "ownership is not really ownership," is particularly interesting (XA'LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016). Here, I believe that XA'LATE is articulating two interrelated ideas. First, he appears to recognize that the use of the term "ownership"—an English word deeply enmeshed in specific historical circumstances, cultural understandings, and bureaucratic consequences (Nadasdy 2002; Egan 2013)—is a convenient term used by some WSÁNEĆ community members to convey a complex bundle of rights, obligations, and expectations represented better by the SENĆOTEN language. As many authors note, the language of the state is often appropriated by Indigenous peoples—in response to the state's dismissal of their claims to territory, sovereignty, intellectual property, *etc.* (Nadasdy 2002; Egan 2013; Thom 2009; Blackburn 2009; Noble 2007)—to establish that they have always had, among other such things, "functioning property system[s]" (Thom 2009:188). For instance, the depiction of CENĆENALYEN as "owners" works to disrupt settler narratives of *terra nullius* and, as Mack notes, the "conceptualization of indigenous people as less advanced in the scale of historical development . . . [and as] wards who lack the social maturity and rational discernment of settler society and thus could not be viewed as possessing equivalent territorial and political rights" (2011:288). However, the second idea that XA'LATE explores above relates to how the term "ownership" does not properly represent Indigenous relational ontologies. As Egan claims, rather than seeing "property" as "fungible" (*i.e.* "a thing that can be possessed, separated from the owner and traded in the market"), Indigenous ontologies "[emphasize] connections and relations between humans, ancestors, spirit beings,

animals, plants, and what most Westerners would consider inanimate nature” (2013:35-36). Thus, rather than saying that individuals “own” places, several W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with—including XA’LATE above (pers. comm., June 14, 2016)—preferred to say that W̱SÁNEĆ peoples either “belong[ed] to” or “look[ed] after” places (STOLČEĹ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016; XEMTOLTW̱, pers. comm., June 16, 2016; field notes, June 4, 2015; E. Claxton & D. Elliott 1994:13; N. Claxton 2003:26; Lutz 2008:65): “In the W̱SÁNEĆ worldview, we do not own the land, rather we *belong to* it, and we have a responsibility to relate to it, care for it, and to pass it on to the future generations” (N. Claxton 2015a:8, emphasis added). Further, when I asked XA’LATE about families or individuals that either “belonged to,” “have places [meaning “gears”] on,” or “used” certain SWELSWÁLET, he disagreed with the framing of the question. It is possible that XA’LATE believed that I was simply using the term “belonged to” to mean “ownership” as it is defined in the “Western model of property” (Egan 2013:34): the above linguistic appropriation process in reverse. Regardless, he responded to these questions simply by emphasizing that all W̱SÁNEĆ peoples shared SWELSWÁLET and that “no one family owns it” (XA’LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016).

These conceptual differences regarding both “ownership” and “status” are also found within the published documentary record (Elmendorf 1971; Suttles 1958). In the Coast Salish world, each family is tasked with “looking after” a specific *sphere* (e.g. reef net fishing, ancestral remains, clam digging, *etc.*). STOLČEĹ notes the many different *spheres* that W̱SÁNEĆ peoples may be directed toward:

It [an individual’s NEHIYMET] gives you rights to other societies that we have in the W̱SÁNEĆ area. Because we had a society that is in respect to the life of the sea. And, that’s called SYELMEWĆES Society. And, it’s in honour of the whale spirit and all the living things in the sea . . . We have a SXÍXI society, which is all the different masks, depict different animals of the animal kingdom. And, that’s a society that some families belong to. And, that’s like their connection to nature. We

have ŠKELEĆEN Society which is a cedar and basket society which is a society which connects us to the land and the spirits of the land. And, those societies were the original government of this homeland and responsibly taking care of the land, the sea, and the mountain places, and the sacred places where we have to live . . . That's the responsibility that they were given through their societies. Whether it's to do with plants and medicines or does it have to do with the fishery. (pers. comm., June 28, 2016)

For the most part, these *spheres*—as long as the families involved were composed of “free people”—were considered to be equal in relation to one another: “A skilled deer hunter ranked neither higher nor lower than a skilled waterfowl hunter” (Elmendorf 1971:367). However, individuals within each *sphere*—dependent on luck, inheritance, spirit power, and skill—had the potential to become a “swEl'wálas”<sup>26</sup> (a “high class person”), thus elevating the status of that *sphere* itself (Elmendorf 1971:355-356, 368; Suttles 1958:502; Barsh 2008:223). On this ever-shifting ground, formal hierarchies among *spheres* were not easily maintained. However, some *spheres* involved inter-community interaction whereas others did not. Reef net fishing was one of those *spheres*. At several SWELSWÁLET, Straits Salish peoples from different geographically dispersed villages fished annually at adjacent gears. These families, then, had access to the economies of other communities, and they were able to increase their wealth and establish their status as “high class people” outside of their community (Elmendorf 1971:361). The status that certain individuals and families gained through inter-community interactions, as Elmendorf argues, could then be formalized within individual Coast Salish communities: “There appears to be objective evidence that specific activities associated with intervillage ties did in fact function as means for asserting, maintaining, and enhancing the status of individuals and of families, both within the village as a social unit and within a larger multi-village society” (1971:361).

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<sup>26</sup> This terminology is derived from Elmendorf's ethnographic work with Twana peoples (1971:368). The WŚÁNEĆ equivalent is likely SI,ÁM, meaning “person of high class” (Montler n.d.).



This status, however, did not always translate back to the inter-community setting. Instead, Elmendorf notes that within Coast Salish communities this high-class/low-class dichotomy was often not clearly delineated: “these [intra-community status differentiations] include verbally a sharp high/low dichotomy, behaviorally a graded status continuum, and formally a limited number of rank-designating criteria applied to small numbers of persons” (Elmendorf 1971:353). Elmendorf argues, then, that the dichotomy between “high class” and “low class” people—and, thus, also between the “owners” and non-“owners” of SWELSWÁLET—likely represents “social ideal[s]” rather than “objective description[s] of aboriginal behaviour” (1971:361). Referring to the “Point Roberts fishermen,” Suttles notes that there was a significant “difference between their theory and their practice”: “People ‘built’ new locations between old ones, ‘begged’ locations from others, or just ‘picked up’ locations” (1974:214). Thus, although Suttles recognizes that “ownership can best be treated as if it were individual,” he also recognizes the complexity, inconsistency, and ambiguity of this “ownership” (1974:214, 221-222). For instance, under Coast Salish land tenure systems, the rights that one receives through “ownership” are constrained by a number of factors: the rights of others (Suttles 1963:513), expectations regarding how and to what extent this place will be shared (Thom 2009), and obligations to “keep [the place] ‘clean’” so that it may continue to exist for itself (Barsh 2008:220-221). STOLÇEŁ adds to these constraints by discussing what he calls the “WSÁNEĆ law of kindness” (pers. comm., June 28, 2016): “Kindness is one of the biggest laws that was given to our people by Creator when he made this world. It is a natural law for us to be kind. To be kind to one another, not just one another as humans but all living things, that they should be treated like human beings” (pers. comm., June 28, 2016). With this in mind, it seems that both of the contrasting perspectives can be seen as true: 1) ÇENÇENALYEN are obligated to “look after” SWELSWÁLET for the benefit of “all living

things,” including, perhaps most importantly, their WSÁNEĆ equals (STOLČEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016), and 2) ČENČENÁLYEN have some measure of control—possibly resembling that obtained through “ownership”—over SWELSWÁLET and, as a result, are able to acquire additional wealth and status.

Either way, several of the WSÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with chose to focus on the latter in order to highlight the “business acumen” of their ancestors and to dispute Canada’s position that Indigenous peoples do not have the Aboriginal right to fish commercially (Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016). Despite a guarantee in the Douglas Treaties that the WSÁNEĆ Nation would be able “to carry on [their] fisheries as formerly” (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2013), their rights to a food, social, ceremonial, and commercial fishery continue to be in tension with Canadian law and enforcement officers (D. Harris 2008; Bierwert 1999:224, 244-245; Boxberger 1994:5-6). Since their exclusion from the commercial reef net fishery in Canada in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century, members of the WSÁNEĆ Nation have lost their ability to benefit economically from the barter, trade, and sale of the resource. By emphasizing the “business acumen of [WSÁNEĆ] fishermen,” Adam Olsen and other WSÁNEĆ community members are working to resist this history:

There’s stories that I read in preparation for my oral testimony where fishermen would take a boatload, literally a boatload, of fish, 5000 sockeye, to a cannery and they’d offer them x dollars, and he’d say, ‘See you later, I’m out of here. I’m not selling you my fish.’ And the person running the cannery would say ‘Oh, hold on.’ ‘No. No. No. I’m gone. Don’t disrespect me like that.’ And, they’d go. And, there were lots of canneries here, and they’d take them to another cannery to get a better price for it. (pers. comm., June 7, 2016)

Adam Olsen feels that this sort of evidence is incontrovertible proof that WSÁNEĆ peoples commercially fished in the past and have a right to commercially fish in the present:

It makes me emotional because I’m tired of being told I can’t sell my fish . . . Why does this oil company get to bring in their economic development and all of a

sudden it is the most important thing around, right? And, then they get to write about our subsistence fishery. And, then that's what the NEB accepts. I put in my application [to the NEB]. I said, 'I'm here on Aboriginal. I'm here on shipping. And, I'm here on commercial.' . . . the whole point of my application was to say, 'your interests pale in comparison to my constitutionally protected, treaty protected, rights to these fish.' (pers. comm., June 7, 2016)

Both XEMFOLTW and Adam Olsen envision the eventual revitalization of the reef net fishery as a commercial enterprise for the WSÁNEĆ Nation (Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016; XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016). This commercial enterprise, however, is not seen as mutually exclusive with the role that CENĆENALYEN have to—as discussed above—“look after” the relationship between WSÁNEĆ and salmon peoples. Instead, it is seen by Adam Olsen as a move away from the extractive and destructive modes of thinking usually associated with “capitalistic” perspectives, and toward the responsibility and obligation that comes with a “highly developed *management* system . . . based on spiritual belief and principles” (N. Claxton 2015a:73-74, emphasis added). Thus, by “recall[ing], relearn[ing] and revitaliz[ing]” the practice of reef net fishing—as *managed* by CENĆENALYEN prior to the commercial reef net fishery—these WSÁNEĆ community members believe that the WSÁNEĆ Nation is taking a necessary first step toward a family-based, economically-viable, “sustainable-model fishery,” “which will benefit both the Salmon and WSÁNEĆ peoples” (N. Claxton 2015a:73-74; XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016).

However, it is difficult to ignore the fact that the reef net has been used in contexts that, at first glance, appear at odds with this perspective. As noted above, WSÁNEĆ peoples were deeply enmeshed in the commercial reef net fishery in Canada until the early-20<sup>th</sup> century (Lutz 2008:260; D. Elliott 1990:60; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:11) and in the United States until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Boxberger 1985:213; N. Claxton 2003:35-36; Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016; SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2016). In fact, three WSÁNEĆ community members who

were involved in the commercial reef net fishery—Skip Sam, May Sam, and SELEMTEN—participated in interviews for this research project. For these individuals, the technique, history, and importance of reef net fishing is largely understood through their experience in the commercial reef net fishery. In the following section, then, I will discuss the reef net fishery’s role in the commercial salmon fishery, the importance of the commercial reef net fishery to the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, and the gradual erosion of W̱SÁNEĆ peoples’ ties to the reef net fishery—as caused by criminalization, pollution, overfishing, disruptive settler practice, the imposition of the International Boundary, and restrictive regulations—that has made the current talk of revitalization necessary.

### **“Hired Hands”**

During our interview, Skip and May Sam scattered laminated photos of family members and friends from W̱SÁNEĆ, La Conner, and Mitchell Bay on the fold-out table that they had set up in their living room. These photos documented Skip and May’s time commercial reef net fishing at Reid Harbour, Stuart Island (ḴENNES) in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Elliott 1990:37). One photo, taken from the shore, shows three reef net gears situated along the rocky outcrops of Stuart Island, one in front and two behind. I did not make copies of this photo, but in 1951 the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife documented this same reef net fishing place. In one of their images, Figure 3 below, a reef net gear is visible in the front (right) and, behind that (left), two (possibly three) gears are visible.



*Figure 3: Aerial Photo of Reef Net Boats, Reid Harbor, Stuart Island (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 1951).*

Skip Sam talked in detail about his time at this SWÁLET, highlighting his relatives' direct role in the commercial reef net fishery:

My mom, my dad, my auntie and uncle, cousins filled this thing [the boat] right up to the top [with sockeye salmon]. And, that much for the water [gesturing about 1 foot]. And, that's a 31-footer . . . Sockeye, yeah. Nets would get filled up, then break it in half [into one canoe], then pour it out again [into the other]. Then spread it [the net] out again. Then my family would get altogether. My mom smoked lots . . . Humpy. Dad said, 'what is mom going to do with all those smoked salmon.' The winter comes and they sure enough came in handy. Yeah . . . One of our elders would go along the beach, the kelps, you know, the ribbons. They use that to cover [up the caught salmon], to keep it cool. Then they cover all that up, then splash it every once in a while to keep it cool . . . Like, two sections here. Three. And, when a fish buyer comes at night then they anchor right there. We weighed them. My cousin John. That's right. Cousin John, Cousin Edward Thomas. And, you can see there, big barge. Fill that up. Then, wait for the fish buyer to come at night time.

Then, they'd be loading it all night. Of course, we're happy when they bring our groceries over to us. (pers. comm., June 23, 2016)

These memories were supplemented by Skip and May Sam's photographs that depict the everyday lives of their family members and friends as they reef net fished commercially.<sup>27</sup>



*Figure 4: John (Butch) Cayou Jr. (left) and Hubert Henry (right), both cousins of Skip Sam, in August, 1955.*

In the above photo, Hubert Henry is wearing polarized sunglasses and rubber waders. Behind him are the “stairs” where “the front watchmen”—the QENÁLYEN (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:54-55)—would stand and look down into the water for salmon travelling over the reef

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<sup>27</sup> The names on the backs of these photos are George Horne, Johnny Sam, Mary Anne Sam, Angeline (Tootsie) Sam, John Cayou Sr., John (Butch) Cayou Jr., Edward Thomas, and Hubert Henry. Skip Sam mentions many others: Sarah Cayou, Mary Chevalier, Billy Chevalier, Charlie Chevalier, Chester Cayou, Susie Cayou, Helen Jack, Earl Claxton, Ron Silvester, Charlie George, and Harlan Little. Photographs of many of these people are published in a book entitled “Images of America: Roche Harbor” (Walker 2009).

net's lead. As noted earlier, once the salmon were spotted, the QENÁLYEN would direct the crew to haul in the net. In the past, this was done by hand. During the commercial reef net period, however, this was often accomplished using mechanical or power winches. It is unclear if the winch in this photo (behind Hubert Henry, to the right) is powered or if it is activated by a non-powered mechanical switch: "My dad, way up high, he just stepped on the button, then the front [of the net] comes up and the guy in the middle steps on the button and this one comes up" (Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016). Either way, W̱SÁNEĆ peoples' reef net fishing techniques and equipment changed significantly with the onset of the commercial fishery. Other photos provided by Skip and May Sam further illustrate this point. Outboard motors, standardized netting, and clothing fashionable in the late-1950s/early-1960s all work to paint a vivid picture of W̱SÁNEĆ peoples' involvement in the commercial reef net fishery on Stuart Island in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Although W̱SÁNEĆ peoples involved in the commercial reef net fishery displayed "overt signs of modernity," there was not necessarily any discontinuity between pre-contact reef net fishing practices and those of the "historic period" (Brody 1981; Sepez 2008:119-120; Liebmann 2012:28, 32-33).<sup>28</sup> In fact, it is clear that many elements of the reef net fishery as it existed before colonization informed the commercial reef net fishery of this era. First, the general practice of reef net fishing remained largely the same across these two periods (Lowman 1939; Suttles 1974): reef nets continued to be set in consistent locations year after year to intercept salmon migrating back to their natal rivers. Beyond this, Skip Sam remembers small practices and details of the commercial reef net fishery that document this continuity: he collected dune grass with his father at Waldron Island to twine into the lead, he learned how to set a reef net according to SENĆOTEN

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<sup>28</sup> This "continuity" is an important criterion used by the Supreme Court of Canada to determine an Aboriginal right. Under *R. v. Van der Peet* [1996], a test—named the "Integral to a Distinctive Culture Test"—was established that stated that "The practices, customs and traditions which constitute Aboriginal rights are those which have continuity with the practices, customs and traditions that existed prior to contact."

tidal terminology, young men hunted for the camp, women processed and prepared salmon along the beach on Stuart Island, and the practice was decidedly familial and friendly (pers. comm., June 23, 2016). Skip Sam remembers his parents travelling across the harbour to Gossip Island (also called Happy Island, see Figure 5) where they would visit with SELEMTEN (Lou Claxton) and his parents (Johnny and Elsie Claxton) at their SWÁLET: “A nice beach there. My dad and mom [Johnny and May Sam] used to go and visit them [Johnny and Elsie Claxton] at evening time, them talking their language all evening and laughing” (pers. comm., June 23, 2016).



*Figure 5: Aerial Photo of Reef Net Boats, Gossip (Happy) Island (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 1951).*

This is reminiscent of Dave Elliott Sr.’s description of the reef net fishery as it existed before colonization:



They [WSÁNEĆ peoples] were working and enjoying themselves at the same time. The Lummi people would be out there as well. They speak the same language as us. They originate from Shoal Harbour. We would meet our friends and our relatives out there and we would visit them, have a good time with them and work with them. This is what was going on at that time of the year. Our people had a wonderful, beautiful way of life. (1990:50)

Likewise, SELEMTEN talked about Skip Sam's family fishing across the bay (on the west side of Reid Harbour, Stuart Island) during the commercial reef net fishing period. However, rather than the cooperation described above (Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016; D. Elliott 1990:50), he emphasized the territoriality that comes with especially productive SWELSWÁLET: "See, these guys had all the good spots here taken. You're not supposed to even get near them . . . I think there was probably 5 different gears, different sets of reef netters there and they all done good too. Johnny Sam [Skip Sam's father] was on the best one" (pers. comm., June 21, 2016).

SELEMTEN went on to explain that being "on the best one" meant that Johnny Sam was a "hired hand" at a specific SWÁLET owned by a Straits Salish man named Charlie Chevalier from the "Mitchell Bay Band" (Walker 2015; Suttles 1974:204-205; pers. comm., June 21, 2016). Charlie Chevalier was recognized by the WSÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with as the ØENÁLYEN of that SWÁLET. In keeping with his role, he prioritized his family (e.g. Johnny Sam and others) when considering who should fish alongside him: "Well, Hubert Henry is from Tsartlip, but I'm sure he's related to Johnny Sam. So, he'd automatically get on the crew [at Charlie Chevalier's SWÁLET], because you're a relative you see?" (SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2016). Further, he excluded non-relatives from fishing at his location without his express permission: "you're not supposed to even get near them" (SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2016). Charlie Chevalier also engaged with the state in order to reinforce his position as ØENÁLYEN. For instance, he registered this SWÁLET with the State of Washington (Carter 1935; Unknown 1949), and members of the Chevalier family joined a reef net fishing union

(Unknown 1950; Mordhorst 1941; Puget Sound Reef Netters Union Local #4 n.d.). Thus, during the commercial reef net period, W̱SÁNEĆ peoples—and Straits Salish peoples more generally—incorporated elements of the “capitalist economy” into the practice of reef net fishing to maintain ties between reef net fishing, specific families, and traditional cultural protocol.<sup>29</sup>

This is in line with Lutz’s claim that “until at least the 1880s, the main reason that so many Aboriginal People participated in the capitalist economy was to enable them to participate more fully in their own” (2008:82). In fact, regarding the commercial reef net fishery that existed in the San Juan Islands, it is possible to extend Lutz’s timeline well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (2008:82). However, during this same period of time, several disruptive factors—including the encroachment of a capitalist economy, nascent government regulations, the selective enforcement of these regulations, and the actions of entrepreneurial/disruptive settlers—worked to undermine the ability of W̱SÁNEĆ peoples to reef net fish on their own terms (N. Claxton 2003:21; Bierwert 1999:244-245; Fediuk & Thom 2003:12; D. Harris 2008:14; Raibmon 2008; Wadewitz 2012:74-75; Old Polen as cited in Clark 1980:80). For instance, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, many of the SWELSWÁLET discussed by Skip Sam and SELEMTEN were owned and operated by settlers: the SWÁLET at Gossip (Happy) Island was owned by a man named Barney Mordhorst<sup>30</sup> (SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2016), and one of the SWELSWÁLET on Stuart Island was owned by Harlan Little (Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016). Using W̱SÁNEĆ peoples’ knowledge and practices, settlers gradually worked to remove Straits Salish people from the reef

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<sup>29</sup> Clearly, the hereditary nature of the reef net fishery continued into the commercial reef net fishery. SELEMTEN, during our interview, presented me with a list of “people involved in the reef net fishery,” including: “Johnny Sam Family,” “Edward Thomas Family,” “Pete Henry Family,” “George Horne Family,” “Claxton Family,” and “Baptist Jimmy” (pers. comm., June 21, 2016).

<sup>30</sup> Barney Mordhorst is also identified as Barney Mordquist in a list of Washington State “Reef Net Locations . . . on file with the Department of Fisheries” (Unknown 1950). Lists of additional settlers in control of reef net fishing places, including Barney Mordhorst, can be found Lowman’s article “Reef Nets Come Back in Puget Sound Salmon Industry” (1939:47).

net fishery. These same settlers, then took control of Straits Salish peoples' productive SWELSWÁLET (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 1955-1960; Unknown 1950), profited from them (Lowman 1939), and overfished the salmon population, eventually making the practice unviable (Wadewitz 2012:74-75; D. Harris 2008:14).

Despite the signature of the Douglas Treaties between W̱SÁNEĆ peoples and James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company (representing the Crown), this same process began in Canada in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century. Signed in 1852, the Douglas Treaties guaranteed the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples the right "to carry on [their] fisheries as formerly" (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2013). However, at the same time, the state—motivated by a "desire to encourage white settlement or capital investment" (D. Harris 2008:190)—granted settlers unfettered access to the fishery through what has been termed the "right not to be excluded" (D. Harris 2008:189; Barsh 1982:172). This policy worked to "deny the prior rights of Native peoples to the fisheries" through active out-competition, disruptive settler practices, "'getting out in front' of one another," and overfishing (D. Harris 2008:189; Barsh 1982:172). Further, over time, this "right not to be excluded" was applied unevenly to settlers and Indigenous peoples (D. Harris 2008:190; Gourdeau as cited in D. Harris 2008:149). Many authors have explained this process in detail (*e.g.* D. Harris 2008:103, 111-113, 192; Wadewitz 2012:85-86), but Lutz has summarized it most succinctly:

While barriers were being placed in front of Indians engaged in the commercial fishery, between 1894 and 1911 their rights to fish for their own food purposes were also increasingly circumscribed. First, the federal government made it illegal for Aboriginal People to catch fish in the traps, weirs, and reef nets they had used long before Europeans arrived . . . Then, the regulations stipulated that Aboriginal People had to obtain a permit from fisheries officers before they could catch fish for food by any means whatsoever. In theory, any (registered) Indian could get one of these; in practice, the fisheries officials limited the number of licenses issued and the times and places they could be used . . . Referring to the proliferation of fisheries laws, Nuuchah-nulth Peter Webster thought: "All of these things made it easy to

get into trouble with the law. I think a lot of us became ‘criminals’ without really knowing the reason.” (2008:242)

Additionally, when Indigenous peoples managed to obtain the elusive licenses described above, settlers often refused to purchase their fish (D. Harris 2008:139). Apart from Indigenous “outlaw fishing” (Bierwert 1999; Wadewitz 2012:122), this constellation of regulations and formal/informal enforcement—including, most significantly, the banning of the reef net itself in 1916 due to it being considered a “trap” (N. Claxton 2003:35-36; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:11; D. Elliott 1990:60; Lutz 2008:260; Easton 1985:220-222)—essentially ended the W̱SÁNEĆ reef net fishery that existed in Canada in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1872, the westernmost portion of the International Boundary between Canada and the United States was established in the Salish Sea, arbitrarily separating the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation from their extensive kin networks and large portions of their territories across the border (Thom 2009:187-188). Until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, however, W̱SÁNEĆ peoples regularly crossed the International Boundary to fish, hunt, and gather with their relatives in Washington State (N. Claxton 2003:35; Boxberger 1979:112). Members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation participated in the commercial reef net fishery in the United States during two distinct periods: from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century until about 1915 (Boxberger 1989; Rathbun 1900), and from 1934 until the early 1960s (Boxberger 1989, Lowman 1939, Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016; Suttles 1974:152; SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2016). The Boldt decisions—drafted in 1974 and 1979—reaffirmed the rights of Straits Salish peoples in the United States to harvest salmon commercially (Boxberger 1988b). These decisions, however, did not extend to W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, and they have not permitted W̱SÁNEĆ peoples’ re-entry into the United States as commercial reef net fishers. Instead, specific histories of settler disruption, commercial activity, and legislation in the United

States have enabled and outlawed W̱SÁNEĆ peoples' involvement in the commercial reef net fishery at different historical moments.

During the first few years of the commercial fishing era, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Straits Salish people and reef net fishing were imperative to the industry's development (Rathbun 1900:293, 314). This was due to reef net fishing's status as an especially productive technique and the expertise of those who practiced it:

When the fish are running well a large reef-net crew will consist of 10 to 15 Indians, as at Point Roberts, but in some places the nets are smaller and the crew may not contain more than 6 to 8 men. On Cannery Point Reef it is said that under exceptionally favorable conditions a haul can be made every 2 or 3 minutes, and a single large catch may fill the two canoes. With fishing at its best a single net may secure as many as 2,000 salmon in a day, but to do this the fishing canoes must continue at their posts, the catch being transferred to shore by other boats. (Rathbun 1900:314)

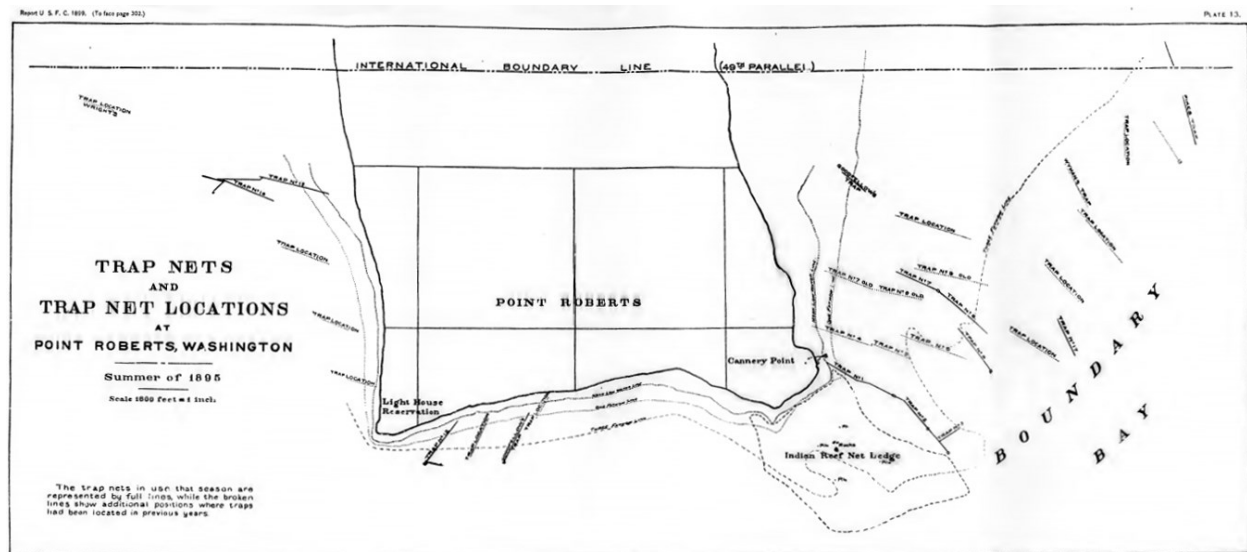
Many authors make regular note of W̱SÁNEĆ peoples crossing the International Boundary and reef net fishing at these SWELSWÁLET (Rathbun 1900:314; Herman Olsen as cited in Stein 2000:58; Barsh 2008:222; Boxberger 1989:48; Tobe as cited in Clark 1980:19; Old Polen as cited in Clark 1980:81; Elwood as cited in Clark 1980:86; Walker 2015; N. Claxton 2003:35-36; Shukovsky 2012). In fact, James Bertrand, a settler at Point Roberts noted that “on the land now owned by Mrs. Kate Waller [at Cannery Point, Point Roberts (SMOKEĆ)] there was located over fifty buildings, all of which was occupied by Saanich Indians, and the village was known at that time as the ‘Saanich Camp’” (Bertrand as cited in Clark 1980:83).<sup>31</sup>

However, the productivity of the reef net fishery—and, thus, the possibility of W̱SÁNEĆ peoples' involvement—eroded during the late-19<sup>th</sup>/early-20<sup>th</sup> century when settlers and canneries placed large-scale fish traps immediately in front of these SWELSWÁLET (Rathbun 1900:293).

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<sup>31</sup> Others refer to the village at SMOKEĆ as “Sanch Village” and Boundary Bay (ĆELLETENEM) as “Sanch Bay” (Barnston 1827 as cited in MacLachlan, ed. 1998:27, 34).

The “Trap Location[s],” seen in Figure 6 below, were positioned to intercept the salmon—travelling from east to west—before they reached the “Indian Reef Net Ledge” (Rathbun 1900: Plate 9, Plate 13).



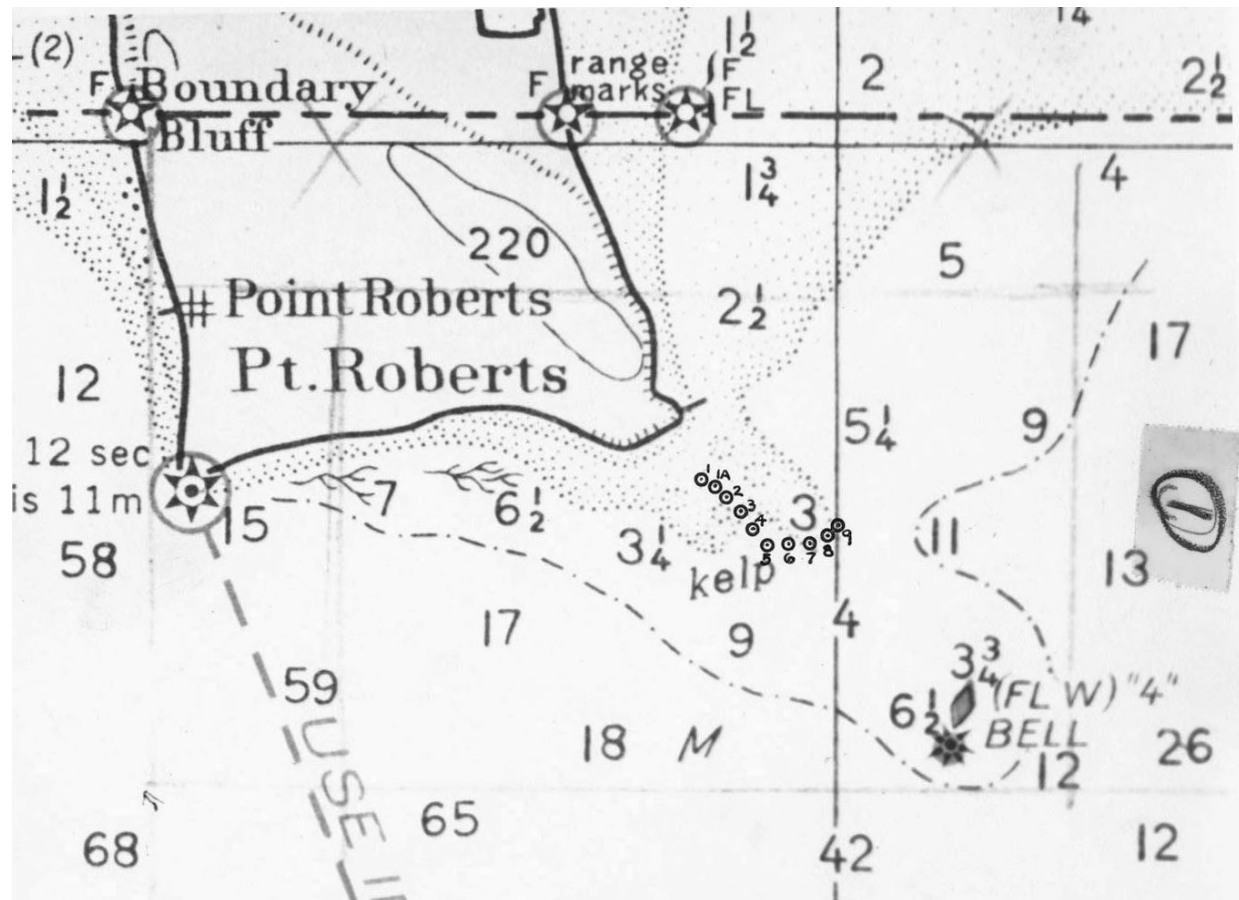
*Figure 6: Trap Nets and Trap Net Locations at Point Roberts, Washington, Summer, 1895 (Rathbun 1900: Plate 13).*

As Boxberger notes: “More than any other method, the traps rendered Indian fishing useless, and because most of the traps were owned and operated by canneries and required little labor, they obviated the need for Indian fishermen” (1989:42). Further, the few Indigenous reef net fishers that remained on the water were subject to harassment from enforcement officers (Boxberger 1980:52; 1989:102), and the comparatively few fish that these Indigenous reef net fishers caught were bought by settlers for less than the going market rate (Boxberger 1989:49; Rathbun 1900:321). Similar to the Canadian context, these fishing places and rights were protected under historic treaties. In 1855, Straits Salish peoples in the United States signed the Point Elliott Treaty (Boxberger 1988a:165). This treaty stated: “the right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory” (Boxberger 1988a:165). However, in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, this was interpreted by the courts to mean that “the Indians retained equal fishing rights, not special fishing privileges such as

permanent protected locations” (Boxberger 1989:51). Thus, as encroachment increased in frequency and severity, many reef net fishing grounds were abandoned, and Straits Salish peoples in the United States—pressured by the 1887 *Dawes Act*’s alienation of already scarce reservation lands to third-party interests—retreated to reservations to practice agriculture and engage in an equally threatened river fishery (Boxberger 1980:51-52; 1989:56, 86-87). Boxberger notes that “the decline of the reef net fishery was fairly complete by 1915” (1989:75), and thus W̱SÁNEĆ peoples were excluded from their SWELSWÁLET in both Canada and the United States. Earl Claxton Sr. and STOLÇEŁ note that Dave Elliott Sr. was able to travel to LEEŁIN,ÇEŁ (Henry Island) in 1916 to participate in the reef net fishery (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:50). However, “as a young man of 16 years old (1926), Dave Elliott [Sr.] returned to fish with his relatives on the American side of the border and was given 48 hours to leave the United States or be arrested” (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:51; STOLÇEŁ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016).

In 1934, Initiative 77 was passed in Washington State, “eliminating the use of fixed gear [*i.e.* traps] in the state” (Boxberger 1989:62). This measure, enacted for conservation purposes, inordinately affected the settlers and canneries that had originally ousted Indigenous peoples from the Washington State fisheries. With the intention of preserving their industry, these settlers argued that the reef net should be exempt from Initiative 77 due to it being both a movable fishing technology and “a real conservation gear” (Boxberger 1980:53 Lowman 1939:47). With fish traps banned, these settlers hoped to preserve the legality of the reef net fishery and become reef net fishers themselves. Indigenous reef net fishers—hampered by poverty, uneven legislation, and intentional misinformation (Boxberger 1989:61, 150-152; 1980:52)—were unable to compete with established commercial fishers, and these settlers took over SWELSWÁLET. Compare Figure 7, below, showing the locations of settlers’ reef net fishing places—as they appeared between

approximately 1955 and 1960—to both the “Indian Reef Net Ledge” found on Figure 6 and the Straits Salish SWELSWÁLET—as they appeared in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century—documented by Suttles on Figure 1 (1974:209; Rathbun 1900: Plate 9). The locations of these gears are nearly identical.



*Figure 7: Area Charts Showing Reef Net Locations in Puget Sounds: Point Roberts (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 1955-1960).*

Herman Olsen, an elder of the Lummi Nation, argued that settlers also stole the design of the reef net itself:

When we went out there and put in those reef nets, we caught fish right off starting the first day and the white fisherman never had one to eat. They didn't know how to catch them. They didn't know how to use a reef net. Every night when we'd go home, you could go down and sit on the beach and see them out there measuring our reef net and copying it. They'd wait until it was nighttime before they'd go and copy our reef net. Measure all the lines and then they'd go back and try to fix theirs the same way (Herman Olsen as cited in Stein 2000:32).



Lowman, writing in 1939, documented how successful this takeover was, stating that in 1934—the year of the “abolishment of fish traps”—there were only 10 reef net licenses (1939:45). By 1938, however, there were 74, “with more white men than Indians using this type of gear” (Lowman 1939:45). During World War II, due to a reduction in the general labour force, Straits Salish people were able to obtain entry back into the commercial reef net fishery again, operating their own vessels at historical SWELSWÁLET and, more often, working as hired hands on the reef net locations of settlers (Boxberger 1989:118, 123). This is the period in which Skip Sam, May Sam, and SELEMTEN became involved in the commercial reef net fishery in Washington State.

Even during this period, Straits Salish peoples’ role in the commercial reef net fishery was precarious. The open season for sockeye salmon was cut down from four to three days a week (Boxberger 1980:54), a development that led Skip Sam to note: “We didn’t really make much, that I know of, fishing” (pers. comm., June 23, 2016). Further, despite the banishment of fish traps, some settlers continued to “[get] out in front” of Straits Salish reef net fishers (Barsh 1982:172): “sometimes the seiners would go right in there, kind of block us” (Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016), and “the seiners used to swarm around too. The place got full of boats, setting their nets right in front of us” (SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2017). These disruptive settler practices, in concert with legislative changes, further threatened an already unstable economic practice. W̱SÁNEĆ peoples were excluded once again from the commercial reef net fishery in the United States when, in the 1960s, enforcement officers deported W̱SÁNEĆ peoples from the country (Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016; XEMFOLTW̱, pers. comm., June 16, 2016). Skip Sam stated that, around 1963, his family was removed from the United States:

So, that Charlie Chevalier, I didn’t know he used Swinomish cards so that we could fish out there. So, but when my cousin from Discovery Island went over, it was us

for a while, and then the fishery was checking all the fishing licenses on the reef net. So, my cousin told him we're all Canadians [laughter]. So, we got booted out of there. (pers. comm., June 23, 2016).

Both SELEMTEN and his brother Earl Claxton Sr. were deported from the United States around the same time (XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016). Until the 1960s, W̱SÁNEĆ peoples would cross the International Boundary to reef net fish—in accordance with the intent of the Jay Treaty (Miller 2012:25)—at places not designated as Ports of Entry, without inspection, and, sometimes, in the middle of the night (Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016; Guy Tom, pers. comm., June 8, 2016; XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016; STOLÇEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016; XA'LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016). However, after the 1960s, this ability was eroded and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples were excluded from their SWELSWÁLET in the United States (Miller 1996; 2012).

Point Elliott Treaty Tribes in the United States, however, retained limited access to the commercial reef net fishery. And, in 1974 and 1979, the Boldt decisions allocated 50% of the annual salmon harvest to the Point Elliott Treaty Tribes, thus enabling these Straits Salish peoples to develop highly-commercialized enterprises in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century. The W̱SÁNEĆ Nation—with no guarantee that their commercial rights would be recognized or prioritized in Canadian case law (Boxberger 1994:5-6), and no ability to exploit U.S. reef net fisheries—have not yet had these same opportunities. Instead, reef net fishing as a cultural practice was criminalized and curtailed for members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, and, as a result, few W̱SÁNEĆ community members have been able to share its practice and associated knowledge with their descendants (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:50, 52).

## **“Nation (Re)Building”**

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, STOLČEĒL remembers his father, Dave Elliott Sr., saying: “One day we have to do something about the reef net” (pers. comm., June 28, 2016). This statement seems to have been taken quite seriously. Since then there have been nearly three decades of consistent work by W̱SÁNEĆ community members to revitalize the practice. Most recently—on August 9, 2014—XEMFOLTW̱ and a crew of W̱SÁNEĆ community members set a reef net in Canadian waters for the first time in nearly 100 years (Tsawout First Nation 2014:5). That day, they set the reef net facing south. However, while fishing, the back eddy that forms at the south end of North Pender Island dragged the lead off the reef and into deeper water. XEMFOLTW̱ realized that the reef net, at this SWÁLET, ought to be set differently. Instead of south, as he assumed, it should face north during the flood tide. Unfortunately, XEMFOLTW̱ and his crew did not catch any fish that day. Regardless, he emphasized the value of the experience: “We learned something by actually going fishing. There’s only so much you can get from reading about it. Just to complete the knowledge you actually have to go out and do it. So, that’s what we learned” (pers. comm., June 16, 2016). This idea of “complet[ing] the knowledge” is one of the three broad steps that XEMFOLTW̱ identified in his PhD dissertation for the “nation (re)building process” (pers. comm., June 16, 2016; N. Claxton 2015a:193-194). The other steps include bringing people together as a nation and actually reef net fishing again (N. Claxton 2015a:193-194). Each of these steps hinges on the other. By actually reef net fishing again, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation can work to “complete the knowledge” (XEMFOLTW̱, pers. comm., June 16, 2016), and by bringing people together as a nation, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation can take advantage of the resources and community support necessary to reef net fish consistently and effectively.

However, XEMFOLTW also has more specific plans for the future. He wants reef net fishing to become a family-based practice once again. Thus, part of the “nation (re)building process” for XEMFOLTW includes specific families reef net fishing as units at their inherited SWELSWÁLET (N. Claxton 2015a:193-194). Referring to the 2014 reef net fishing excursion, he stated:

Nowadays we’re in a position of trying to regain knowledge and information and practices. We’re the only ones in this generation that ever went reef net fishing. And, we had members from many families taking part in our reef net fishing that day. So, we’re kind of not following those traditional ways where it would have been just the family. And, usually, what I’ve read in different places, a reef net captain would first look to his family to hire his crew, then after that he would look outside of his family for crew members . . . Obviously we’re trying to rebuild our knowledge and practice so that we can all once again be a reef net fishing people with knowledge of our own history and connections to all of the reef net sites in our territory. We’re not there yet. We’re moving that way. (XEMFOLTW, pers. comm., June 16, 2016)

XA’LATE, however, sees this differently. Within Coast Salish land tenure systems, the familial rights that XEMFOLTW notes above—*e.g.* that specific individuals and families have the right to determine who fishes at specific SWELSWÁLET—are also constrained by the rights of others (Suttles 1963:513), expectations regarding how and to what extent this place will be shared (Thom 2009), and obligations to “keep [the place] ‘clean’” so that it may continue to exist for itself (Barsh 2008:220-221). For XA’LATE these constraints are not emphasized enough in conversations regarding the revitalization of the reef net fishery. What he chose to centre in our conversation was how WŚÁNEĆ peoples shared, and should come to share, these places:

Our people shared. Our family here, they got what they needed and then they say, “Oh you can come here, go here, you can get some.” It’s shared all the time. We shared all the time. Government don’t understand that. It brings your feelings that you respect people, respect other families, and what they need: “Ok, here, have some of this. Go over there and get it. I’m not going to fish it for you. You go get your own.” (XA’LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016)

Thus, when talking about Coast Salish land tenure systems and the revitalization of the reef net fishery, XA'LATE expressed frustration with the exclusionary language that some W̱SÁNEĆ community members—as well as settlers and other Indigenous peoples—employ to talk about familial territory (pers. comm., June 14, 2016). The phrase “you’re not from here”—a saying that XA'LATE says is used by many Coast Salish peoples to exclude others from specific places—makes him, as he says, “close [his] eyes” (pers. comm., June 14, 2016). When I asked about the rights and SWELSWÁLET of specific families, he responded: “No, I don’t know any specific families. Why do we ask specific families, because we’re all W̱SÁNEĆ people? All W̱SÁNEĆ people that fished, they were there” (XA'LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016).

Despite their differences, both perspectives recognize that reef net fishing practices are informed by kin relationships and the “inter-village ties” that members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation have with neighbouring Straits Salish—and, more generally, Coast Salish<sup>32</sup>—peoples. Skip Sam fished with his relatives from the “Mitchell Bay Band” at Reid Harbour, Stuart Island (pers. comm., June 23, 2016; Walker 2015); Dave Elliott Sr. and his relatives fished with members of the Lummi Nation at Open Bay, Henry Island (STOLØEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:51); and Suttles notes that

one striking thing about the Point Roberts fishermen was their diverse origins. Of the gears listed above only three or four were operated by members of the Semiahmoo group, although the Semiahmoo settlement was just across the bay. Two or three gears were operated by two men from further south, Captain Jack and Joe Morris, who had married Semiahmoo or part Semiahmoo women and settled with their wives’ group. But six or seven gears were operated by men from across the Gulf, Saanich and Malahat. The Malahat people are the southernmost Halkomelem-speaking group, who live just across Saanich Inlet from Cole Bay

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<sup>32</sup> XEMFOLTW states that reef net fishing was “a unique sustainable fishing technology [that] distinguished the Straits Salish” (N. Claxton 2015a:213). While Straits Salish peoples—along with individuals from the Malahat Nation—were in control of specific SWELSWÁLET (Suttles 1974:211-212), individuals from Cowichan, Nanaimo, Pentlatch, Comox, and Squamish often reef net fished at Straits Salish peoples’ SWELSWÁLET on Straits Salish vessels (Barnett as cited in Suttles 1974:155 n. 1). Likewise, Straits Salish peoples utilized the fishing locations of other Indigenous peoples. For example, Suttles documents W̱SÁNEĆ peoples using the salmon weirs on the Cowichan River (1960:299-230).

[sic]. My informants believed that the two Malahat owners had inherited their locations from Saanich ancestors. Of the four Saanich owners, the Saanichton man, Jim silx<sup>w</sup>e'm, evidently did not fish regularly and possibly did not claim to own the location he used. LP [Louie Pelkey, Saanich, lived at Saanichton] said that his own grandfather, a Saanichton man, had a location at Point Roberts somewhere in the middle, long before. It may have been this location that silx<sup>w</sup>e'm used. The other three Saanich owners were all from Patricia Bay; they were also the owners of three of the four plank houses of the settlement there. (Suttles 1974:212-213)

Thus, in order to revitalize reef net fishing as a family-based practice, it is important to recognize these “inter-village ties” (Suttles 1963). XEMFOLTW has reached out to members of the Lummi Nation—signatories to the Point Elliott Treaty discussed above, successful industrial reef net fishers, and kin to many W̱SÁNEĆ community members—in hopes that they can “walk this journey together” (pers. comm., June 16, 2016). It should be noted, however, that not all W̱SÁNEĆ community members have kinship ties with Lummi peoples. Many W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with chose instead to align themselves with different Indigenous communities: *e.g.* the Malahat Nation, the “Mitchell Bay Band” (Walker 2015), or the Swinomish Tribe. Those with kinship ties to members of the Lummi Nation (as explored in Chapters 2 and 3), however, see the relationship between these two nations as especially important. Thus, XEMFOLTW has made it a priority to revitalize these international kinship ties. Referring to a time before colonization, XEMFOLTW stated that “there wasn’t even the notion that we were different people at that time” (pers. comm., June 16, 2016). To develop this relationship in the present-day, members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation have discussed place name information with members of the Lummi Nation, members of the Lummi Nation have assisted members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation in the construction of their reef net, and members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation gifted a ÇENÁLYEN pole carved by Charles Elliott to the Lummi Nation.

Taking inspiration from these developments, XEMFOLTW stated:

There's actually a Lummi Nation member building industrial reef net gear. He's investing his own money into building it . . . Those commercial fisherman that are doing it already are promoting it as a sustainable model fishery. And, it's our fishery. Why not us do that as well. That's what I hope for too. (pers. comm., June 16, 2016)

Other W̱SÁNEĆ community members have similar long-term goals. For Adam Olsen (pers. comm., June 7, 2016), the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation should work, once again, to participate in the commercial reef net fishery—much like the Lummi Nation has been able to do—thus fulfilling many of their “economic development” needs. Several of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with made the argument that W̱SÁNEĆ peoples have always reef net fished, traded, and bartered for salmon, and that their Douglas Treaty rights should enable them to continue to do so (SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2016; XEMFOLTW̱, pers. comm., June 16, 2016; Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016): “We traded. There's nothing new about us” (XA'LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016). Adam Olsen has argued for the recognition of Douglas Treaty rights for many years, and, most recently, he did so in a written submission made to the National Energy Board in opposition to the Trans Mountain Expansion Project (Olsen 2015). XA'LATE feels that in order for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation to have these Douglas Treaty rights recognized, W̱SÁNEĆ community members, especially youth, need to “go out there and do it” (pers. comm., June 14, 2016). By doing so, he believes that W̱SÁNEĆ peoples (and their descendants) will gain the recognition of their legal rights (through judicial decisions), the technical abilities and skills, and the traditional knowledge needed to engage in reef net fishing (commercially or otherwise) once again:

We got to go out there and do it. Talk is cheap. If we want something back, we need to get out there and do it. That's the only way. Even invite the fisheries. This is how we did it. This is our teachings. You go to Victoria, “Oh well you can't do that.” We call them janitors. We don't like to talk to janitors anymore because they go by the book. Some of them are bad janitors. But, it's the head people from Ottawa, get them out here and show them, “This is what we're going to do.” I'd go out there.

It's worth it for me to go to jail just to prove for my grandkids that we're here. We don't want them running into trouble when I leave this world. They need to go out there and be free to do what they want to do, what we taught, what our ancestors taught us. That's so important. The hunting and fishing. Everything. (pers. comm., June 14, 2016)

Others appealed for the right to commercially reef net fish based upon the participation of members of the WSÁNEĆ Nation in the commercial reef net fishery of the late-19<sup>th</sup> century and early-/mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. When asked if his rights extended throughout the Southern Gulf Islands and the San Juan Islands, SELEMTEN responded: "Yeah. We're the only ones that fished that. Because, you know, like I say, the Tsartlips, most of them were working by the hour . . . There was another guy from the Tseycum band. He's Sandy Jones. He was a commercial fisherman . . . I held four licenses too" (pers. comm., June 21, 2016). Further, several WSÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with remain fond of this period. With nostalgia, Skip and May Sam shared their photographs with me (pers. comm., June 23, 2016), and SELEMTEN shared his stories (pers. comm., June 21, 2016). A return to reef net fishing, then, is sometimes imagined as a return to the practice as it existed during this period, or, at least, as a revitalization informed by the techniques, technologies, and logic of this era (SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2016; Skip Sam, pers. comm., June 23, 2016).

Although most of the WSÁNEĆ community members that I interviewed feel that any real revitalization of the reef net must encompass the ability to sell the fish they catch, certain individuals are skeptical of the dangers that come with large-scale commercial fisheries. STOLČEEL argued that since settlers took control of the fishery, the salmon have been "wiped out" (pers. comm., June 28, 2016). Adam Olsen stressed that "the way that we fished for the last 100 years has been extremely destructive, there's nothing sacred about it whatsoever . . . what is sacred is the way that we fished for the thousands of years before that in a way that was, well, as they say



around here, ‘in a good way’” (Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016). This does not mean that Adam Olsen imagines a return to reef net fishing as it existed pre-contact. In fact, no W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with expressed the belief that the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation should return to reef net fishing using only traditional technologies and techniques. What *was* stressed about “the way [W̱SÁNEĆ peoples] fished for thousands of years,” was a return to the reef net as a tool of salmon *conservation* (STOLČEŁ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016; Guy Tom, pers. comm., June 8, 2016):

There were these cultural practices that evolved over time that allowed for the relationship between the fish and the human to balance and to be balanced. The human wasn’t completely dominant. We understood the value of those fish. I think, in terms of conservation values, I think what’s critically important is that. . . the Straits Salish people saw the value of dead fish and we saw the value of live fish . . . because we weren’t killing all the fish, the people up the river got fish, and it fed the river, and it fed the forests, and it fed the people, and it fed the animals, and it fed everybody. And, so, to me, the selective nature of the reef net is what is so beautiful about it, in modern times . . . I think that the fact that we can set our net up, pick up a school—basically—lift it up out of the water, and then select the fish we wanted, and select the fish that were going to go and breed, I think provides us with an example of how we can manage resources more responsibly in modern . . . today and in the future. (Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016)

Further, this conservation-based language was often used in the conversations I had with W̱SÁNEĆ community members when discussing other interrelated topics, including: Indigenous relational ontologies, the revitalization of the reef net fishery, and the recognition of Douglas Treaty rights and Aboriginal rights and title. As discussed earlier, the S,HELIS, the First Salmon Ceremony, and the obligation to “keep [SWELSWÁLET] ‘clean’” all contributed to the fulfillment of W̱SÁNEĆ and salmon peoples familial obligations as QELWOSTEL (“in-laws to one another”) and the practical conservation of the salmon resource (Barsh 2008:220-221). During the 2014 reef net fishing excursion, XEMFOLTW̱ included a S,HELIS in the construction of the reef net (N. Claxton 2015a:188), tying the present-day practice of reef net fishing to those of his ancestors who

burned KEXMIN to sustain the salmon (Jenness 1934-1936:45) and ensured that the salmon were “reborn into their continued journey” (STOLČEĚ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). Thus, XEMFOLTW and those who reef net fished with him linked themselves—“through practices, customs and . . . which have continuity with the practices, customs and traditions that existed prior to contact” (*R. v. Van der Peet* 1996)—to the countless generations of WŚÁNEĆ peoples that successfully managed the salmon resource before them. In contrast, the state’s management regime, as STOLČEĚ argues (pers. comm., June 28, 2016), has floundered (D. Harris 2008; Wadewitz 2012; Lutz 2008; Hoekstra 2016). Thus, specific members of the WŚÁNEĆ Nation that I spoke with felt that their long-standing connection to the reef net fishery—as it relates to conservation and the fulfillment of specific familial/relational obligations—is a compelling argument in favour of the WŚÁNEĆ Nation’s right to manage the salmon resource in line with the needs of their community (and other Indigenous communities), the salmon peoples, and ecosystems more broadly. Aiming for a more fulsome recognition of the role of WŚÁNEĆ peoples in the management of the salmon, STOLČEĚ stated: “It can’t just be lip service kind of a thing. It has to be actual, and then it will change. Things will change. You know, our people need to walk in dignity again within their own homeland” (pers. comm., June 28, 2016).

The SENĆOTEN term NEĚET means, “bring the canoes together” (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:23). As Earl Claxton Sr. and STOLČEĚ note, “When it was time to make a haul, the captain would call NEĚET . . . at which time the pin was pulled [to release the lines holding the canoes to the anchor]. Team work was essential for the reef net activities” (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:23). This phrase, I believe, is an appropriate metaphor for the WŚÁNEĆ Nation’s project to revitalize the reef net fishery. Different individuals, often belonging to different families with different interests, have, together, set nets and worked toward the revitalization reef net fishing (N. Claxton

2015a:193-194). Thus, the divergent, interactive and, at times, conflicting narratives recounted here—of history, of reef net fishing, and of cultural resurgence—have been brought together, much like the above canoes, to depict the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s complex journey to “do something about the reef net” (STOLČEL, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). These narratives are not mutually exclusive. One does not cancel out the other. Instead, different individuals have chosen to prioritize different aspects of the reef net fishery: they remember its practice through the lens of the commercial reef net fishery; discuss its role as a familial practice associated with trade, barter, wealth, and status; see it as a spiritual device that helps W̱SÁNEĆ peoples manage their familial relationship with the salmon peoples; emphasize its qualities as a tool of conservation; and/or centre it in conversations about Douglas Treaty rights and Aboriginal rights and title.

By exploring this variation, I have attempted to highlight the “alternative political approaches” that different W̱SÁNEĆ community members (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59)—each “with their own strong personal agenda[s] motivated by concerns for forthcoming generations” (Allen & Hamby 2011:222)—have focused on in their efforts to revitalize the reef net fishery. Revisiting the argument put forward by Indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, many works within the published documentary record depict Indigenous peoples as those that “cannot change, cannot recreate themselves,” and cannot “be complicated, internally diverse or contradictory” (2012:76-77). I have attempted to move away from this here, focusing on the “spaces of synthesis and renewal” that individual W̱SÁNEĆ community members have carved out for themselves within the “nation (re)building process” (Vizenor as cited in Tuck 2009:422; N. Claxton 2015a:193-194). I believe that the different perspectives explored here—and the “alternative political approaches” to cultural revitalization that they engender (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59)—make clear the truthfulness of Starn’s important claim: “Anything short of appreciating that native

experience is ‘an ocean of terrifying complexity’ is to treat Indians as less than ‘fully human’ all over again” (2011:194).

## 2. DESNEUEL<sup>33</sup>: Division, Dispossession, and Resistance within the Politics of Recognition

Coulthard states that the current “politics of recognition” in Canada—or “the emergence of an unprecedented degree of recognition for Aboriginal ‘cultural’ rights”—emerged from the state’s failure to pass the White Paper of 1969 (2014:2). As a manifestation of liberal democracy, the White Paper sought to enfranchise all Indigenous peoples within Canada and enact a singular view of citizenship that emphasized “ontological equality and equality of opportunity rather than more strenuous notions of equality of condition (involving an attempt to make the conditions of life equal for relevant social groups) or equality of outcome” (Merlan 2009:314). This failure of the state—precipitated by mass Indigenous resistance across Canada (Coulthard 2014:4-5; De Costa 2008:302-303)—marked a shift in state strategies from techniques of assimilation to those of *recognition* (Mack 2011:299). Counter to the emancipatory potential that many have claimed will come with this shift (Merlan 2009:314-316), Coulthard states that “although [the politics of recognition] may alter the intensity of some of the effects of colonial-capitalist exploitation and domination, it does little to address their generative structures, in this case a capitalist economy constituted by racial and gender hierarchies and the colonial state” (2014:35). It is important to recognize, here, that the intention behind the politics of recognition is not necessarily to grapple with these “generative structures” (Taylor 1997; Coulthard 2014:35). Instead, the politics of recognition operates as a *new* “apparatus” for enacting colonial desires of dispossession and subject creation (Lattas 2011:89; Coulthard 2014:14).

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<sup>33</sup> “And, it’s unnecessary [the divisions caused by the BC Treaty Process]. It’s unnecessary, but I guess it serves their purpose. It serves their purpose to kind of keep us from kind of grouping together and becoming stronger. That’s probably part of the strategies that they receive from their strategists, I suppose. They’re trying to keep us, what we call DESNEUEL, shattered into little pieces” (STOLCÉE, pers. comm., June 28, 2016).

In this chapter, I explore how the politics of recognition acts as an extension of the state's historical strategies for undermining Indigenous peoples' foundational "borderless kin networks" and dividing Indigenous peoples into discrete village units—*e.g.* through the creation of reserves, the promotion of agriculture, the dismantling of multi-family housing, and the criminalization of the potlatch by the state (Suttles 1963:515-516)—in order to more fully dispossess Indigenous peoples of their land/water (Thom 2009:180; Nadasdy 2012; Coulthard 2014). Further, I analyze the ways in which specific mechanisms within the politics of recognition—namely, the BC Treaty Process (BCTP)—work to "entice Indigenous peoples to identify, *either implicitly or explicitly*, with the profoundly asymmetrical and nonreciprocal forms of recognition" that reinforce these divisions (Coulthard 2014:25, emphasis added). Through various engagements with the state, Indigenous peoples are able to negotiate some measure of control over their land/water in the form of co-management agreements, the right to govern their own affairs within certain content-based and spatial jurisdictions, and essential cash infusions into their communities. However, by accepting the terms of these negotiations, Indigenous peoples are also encouraged to see their relationships with their neighbours and kin as redefined through the language of "overlapping claims," "exclusive territories," and the "resolution" of these "issues." Further, those that do not enact the desires of the state often see the state, their neighbours, and their relatives in neighbouring communities profit from land/water, resources, and opportunities that they—either actively or through the deprioritization of *their* state-based recognition—have been excluded from (Thom 2014b). In this chapter, I identify discourses of territoriality within the BC Treaty Commission's Annual Reports and mechanisms embedded within the BCTP that pressure Indigenous peoples to both accept these terms and reproduce these discourses.

In doing so, I explore how Indigenous peoples both reinforce and subvert hegemonic ideologies found within the BCTP and the politics of recognition. Rather than argue that Indigenous peoples who enter into land claims negotiations are merely reproducing the colonial will (Alfred 2005:26, 30), I tease out instances where Indigenous peoples engage divisive language/practice and instances where Indigenous peoples resist creating “boundaries among kin” (Nadasdy 2012). Just as the politics of recognition is theorized as a continuation of historical processes that have divided Indigenous peoples and dispossessed them of their land/water, I explore the strategic methods that Indigenous peoples are currently using—in resistance to the politics of recognition—to maintain important relationships between communities and kin. While set in a historical context 50 years later, I see this chapter as treading similar ground to that explored by Suttles in 1963: namely, the documentation of historical methods used by Indigenous peoples to *maintain* kin relationships and “inter-village ties” throughout the many guises of settler colonialism. These historical methods have included seasonal employment, winter dances, canoe races, summer sports, “Indian brass bands,” new political/legal relationships, the “funeral collection system,” and other such activities (Suttles 1963; Crosby 2016; Mitchell 1976:71-73).

I focus here on fieldwork and interviews I conducted with members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation between 2014 and 2017 as they chose to engage in this research project. In the many conversations I had with W̱SÁNEĆ community members, it became clear that this research project—and, specifically, any potential mapping component—was firmly situated in a context where BCTP discourses influenced how W̱SÁNEĆ community members chose to represent W̱SÁNEĆ territory and their relationships with neighbouring Indigenous communities. Thus, in this chapter, I will examine the ways in which members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation have chosen to avoid the long and arduous process of gaining state-based recognition (and thus “regulation”

[Merlan 2009]), and have, instead, opted to focus their energy on projects and goals that respect Coast Salish cultural protocol and land tenures systems (Coulthard 2014:60-64). Notable for my analysis is the fact that the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has refused to enter into the BCTP. One of the primary reasons for this refusal is the fact that the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has already signed historic treaties. These Douglas Treaties, however, have not yet been honoured. W̱SÁNEĆ community members, then, do not trust that a Final Agreement signed under the BCTP will be honoured either. Additionally, many of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with stated that the BCTP encourages and allows neighbouring Indigenous communities to disrupt Coast Salish cultural protocol and the land tenure system. Concerns were expressed regarding the potential for W̱SÁNEĆ community members themselves—if the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation was to engage with the BCTP—to be pressured into participating in these disruptions. The W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with did not want this to happen. Instead, the band councils of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation have supported the efforts of certain W̱SÁNEĆ community members who are working to revitalize the reef net fishery in concert with members of the Lummi Nation in Washington State (N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a). Because of the border’s *symbolic impermeability* (Scott 2009)—*i.e.* the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation cannot “claim” Lummi Nation territory within the United States and *vice versa*—members of these two communities have been able to foster an international relationship (with minimal influence or interference from either state) that honours familial ties, shared places and knowledge, and Strait Salish land tenure systems.

In stark contrast, the Lummi Nation has been involved in numerous semi-public conflicts with neighbouring Indigenous communities in the U.S. surrounding their desire to hold exclusive rights to utilize especially productive and contested “primary” fishing areas (Barsh 2008:229, 234). And, within Canada, the Tsawwassen First Nation, in their Final Agreement under the BCTP, has



negotiated for harvesting rights to the land and foreshore of several Southern Gulf Islands where W̱SÁNEĆ Nation Indian Reserves are located (Tsawwassen First Nation *et al.* 2007b). From conversations I have had with several W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders, it is my understanding that—as a result of non-exclusive treaty rights embedded in the Tsawwassen Final Agreement—at least one W̱SÁNEĆ Nation band council has received letters of trespass from the Tsawwassen First Nation requesting that W̱SÁNEĆ community members not harvest bivalves along the foreshore of certain W̱SÁNEĆ Nation Indian Reserves located within Tsawwassen Harvest Areas (field notes, March 22, 2016). Former Tsartlip Nation Chief Chris Tom, in response to these sorts of actions, stated: “the government has become a wedge in First Nations communities . . . Taking from Peter to pay Paul is not a solution” (Chris Tom as cited in Langdon 2007:15). These *intranational* conflicts, I argue, have been exacerbated by each state’s intervention in Indigenous peoples’ relationships with one another: *i.e.* the commonplace scenario where one Indigenous community is able to experience the benefits of participation in the politics of recognition, often disrupting their relationships with neighbours and kin. By examining these contexts, I elucidate discourses found within the politics of recognition, the mechanisms for their enforcement, and the ways that Indigenous peoples engage with these projects in ways that are both reproductive and subversive of hegemony (Kingfisher & Maskovsky 2008:122-123).

### **The Politics of Recognition**

Coulthard describes the politics of recognition as the “now expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to ‘reconcile’ Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship with the Canadian state” (2014:3). However, he states that this “recognition,” instead of allowing for some form of justice, serves to reinforce colonial

relationships. Coulthard argues that the mechanisms of the politics of recognition (namely, the BCTP, co-management agreements, and self-government agreements) continue to dispossess and divide Indigenous peoples through their embeddedness within (and reproduction of) the “interrelated discursive and nondiscursive facets of economic, gendered, racial, and state power” (Coulthard 2014:6-7, 34-35).

In his theorization of the different “apparatuses” that have ensured colonial dispossession at different historical moments in time (Lattas 2011:89), Coulthard seeks to bring Marx’s theory of primitive accumulation within capitalism to bear on these contexts (2014:14). Marx identifies “primitive accumulation”—or, the violent dispossession of the means of production and subsistence from non-capitalist producers—as the “birth of the capitalist mode of production” (Coulthard 2014:7). Coulthard, however, seeks to strip Marx of his temporally limited theorization (*i.e.* “birth”) and explores the “persistent role that unconcealed, violent dispossession continues to play in the reproduction of colonial and capitalist social relations” (2014:9; Raibmon 2008). This continuous dispossession within settler colonialism, Coulthard argues with reference to Fanon, is aided by the ongoing creation of “colonial subjects” (Coulthard 2014:13; Mack 2011:289; Egan 2013:34-25; Kulchyski 2005:271; Raibmon 2008): *i.e.* “the production of . . . specific modes of colonial thought, desire, and behavior that implicitly or explicitly commit the colonized to the types of practices and subject positions that are required for their continued domination” (Coulthard 2014:16). However, while Fanon examined the creation of colonial subjects within contexts where settler colonialism was reproduced through “openly coercive and violent” measures (or, as Fanon writes, with “rifle butts and napalm”), Coulthard argues that this process is also enacted in contexts where explicit force is not the sole mechanism of colonial reproduction

(2014:16). He argues, here, that “misrecognition” plays a substantial role in the creation of colonial subjects:

Over time, colonized populations tend to internalize the derogatory images imposed on them by their colonial ‘masters,’ and . . . as a result of this process, these images, along with the structural relations with which they are entwined come to be recognized (or at least endured) as more or less natural. (Coulthard 2014:32)

Thus, the politics of recognition has been proposed by theorists such as Charles Taylor as a method to repair this invisible, internalized damage. Using a theorization of intersubjective identity creation, Taylor argues that recognition ought to be “elevated to the status of a ‘vital human need’” (1997:25). Fulsome recognition, then, would enable Indigenous peoples to “[flourish] . . . as distinct and self-determining entities” (Taylor 1997:25). This, of course, corresponds with the work of Fanon: he argues that to achieve “transformative justice” colonized peoples must rid themselves of their colonized subjecthoods (Coulthard 2014:34). Following this argument, Indigenous academics, specifically in the past decade or so—accompanied by substantive political movements (Idle No More, Standing Rock, Unist’ot’en Camp, *etc.*)—have worked to develop a rich body of literature that promotes Indigenous efforts of decolonization and resurgence (Tuck & Yang 2012; Alfred 2005; Simpson 2008, 2011; Mack 2011; Coulthard 2014:154-179; L. Smith 2012). Within these writings, the effects of *misrecognition* are theorized as a foundational hurdle to Indigenous liberation (Coulthard 2014). However, as these scholars recognize (and as Fanon argues), if the transformative power of recognition is not achieved from within a community—and is instead *granted* by the state—the colonized subject will simply move from “one way of life to another, but not one life to another” (Fanon as cited in Coulthard 2014:38).

The problem with Taylor’s conceptualization of “recognition,” then, is twofold. First, it fails to adequately address the subject creation mechanisms of settler colonialism by granting the state the ability to *recognize* people: “the recognition of which Taylor speaks is not equal,

reciprocal, and freely given but a partial and grudgingly bestowed gift from an identity that sees itself as intrinsically valuable to a series of others whose right to existence is questionable” (Day & Sadik 2002:19). For instance, the Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement under the BCTP contains three provisions in the preamble which acknowledge various “aspirations,” “claims,” and “perspectives” of the Tsawwassen First Nation: *e.g.* “Canada and British Columbia acknowledge *the perspective of Tsawwassen First Nation* that harm and losses in relation to its aboriginal rights have occurred in the past and express regret if any acts or omissions of the Crown have contributed to that perspective” (Tsawwassen First Nation *et al.* 2007a:1, emphasis added). In contrast, only one such provision acknowledges—without the qualifications found in the above—the history and existence of the Tsawwassen First Nation: “the Parties are committed to the reconciliation of the prior presence of Tsawwassen First Nation and of the sovereignty of the Crown” (Tsawwassen First Nation *et al.* 2007a:1-2). This provision is in line with questions raised in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* [1997] concerning the Crown’s obligation to Indigenous peoples based on the pre-existence of complex Indigenous polities before colonization (1997). However, within the Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement, this *recognition* of pre-existence—made without validating the specific nature or extent of Tsawwassen First Nation claims to Aboriginal rights and title, instead modifying whatever those Aboriginal rights and title may have been, proven or not, to that set out in the text of the Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement (Tsawwassen First Nation *et al.* 2007a)—is subsumed within the unquestioned “sovereignty of the Crown” (Tsawwassen First Nation *et al.* 2007a:1-2). Coulthard argues that these embedded taken-for-granted work to reproduce Indigenous peoples’ “attachments to . . . structurally circumscribed modes of recognition” *offered* by the state, modes of recognition that are represented by the state—

and accepted by some Indigenous peoples—as natural and “somehow capable of producing liberatory effects” (2014:17-18, 23).

Second, Taylor’s work fails to address the structural/objective roots of settler colonialism (*i.e.* the modern colonial “apparatus” that enables the state to continue the process of primitive accumulation). As Coulthard notes, settler colonialism is enacted in this historical moment through the “multifarious ways in which capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and the totalizing character of state power interact with one another” (2014:14; Lattas 2011:89). Taylor does not address this. Instead, the assumption underlying Taylor’s work is that liberal democratic institutions—which “grant” Indigenous peoples state mandated forms of recognition and economic “equality of opportunity rather than . . . equality of condition” (Curry *et al.* 2014; Alcantara 2008:354)—have justified legitimacy and sovereignty and are the best positioned actors to achieve “transformative justice” for Indigenous peoples (Merlan 2009:314). Day and Sadik call this sort of maneuvering a “pseudo-postcolonial position” which “simultaneously recognizes and attempts to thwart the radical possibilities of the multicultural context” (Day & Sadik 2002:19). This “pseudo-postcolonial position” is visibly at work in the context of a liberal democratic Canada (Day & Sadik 2002:19): “colonial powers will only recognize the collective rights and identities of Indigenous peoples insofar as this recognition does not throw into question the background legal, political, and economic framework of the colonial relationship itself” (Coulthard 2014:41).

Thus, the state uses specific mechanisms—co-management agreements, land claims negotiations, self-government agreements, *etc.*—to recognize Indigenous peoples in ways that aim to “produce legitimacy,” “guarantee certainty,” and contribute to the continued business of primitive accumulation (Blackburn 2005; Blackburn 2007). Through the state’s framing of these mechanisms as potential arenas for “transformative justice” (Merlan 2009:314)—and the state’s

emphasis on the risks that Indigenous peoples *may* incur by not participating (Nadasdy 2003:264)—many authors argue that the state has channeled Indigenous peoples’ methods and content of resistance into language/practice that aligns with colonial hegemonic ideologies (Coulthard 2014; Morgen & Gonzales 2008:221; Alcantara 2008:355; Egan 2012:401; Thom 2009:194; Nadasdy 2012:505; Mack 2011:300; Day & Sadik 2002). A similar argument can be seen in Lattas’ exploration of local resistance to logging in Melanesia (2011). He notes that through the threat of violence the Melanesian state channelled local resistance away from a questioning of the “everyday coercive structure of market relations, which impose poverty and inequality through unequal terms of exchange,” toward compensation claims for gravel and water (Lattas 2011:95, 97). Coulthard provides a similar example from his own community:

The last forty years have witnessed a gradual erosion of this transformative vision within the mainstream Dene self-determination movement, which in the context of northern land claims and economic development has resulted in a partial decoupling of Indigenous ‘cultural’ claims from radical aspirations for social, political and economic change that once underpinned them. (2014:19)

This “reorientation of Indigenous struggle,” for Coulthard, has emerged out of Indigenous peoples’ interactions with state mechanisms that have been designed as “vehicle[s] for . . . ‘domestication’” (2014:67, 78). Through these interactions, Indigenous peoples are pressured to reproduce hegemonic ideologies, and, as Coulthard claims, these ideologies can “eventually ‘seep’ into the colonized and subtly structure and limit the possibility of their freedom” (2014:39). From this perspective, the politics of recognition, then, is theorized as a neoliberal form of governmentality “that acts on action” and “involves the application of knowledge toward a population in order to achieve effects that are deemed simultaneously beneficial for an individual, a collectivity, and a state” (Rudnyckyj 2004:410).

Other authors (Nadasdy 2012; Thom 2014b), however, feel that Indigenous peoples' engagements with the state cannot be reduced to a simple reproduction of the colonial will. It is important to recognize that Indigenous peoples have struggled for decades to achieve this current form of state-based recognition (Feit & Beaulieu 2001). The "counter-hegemonic outcomes" that have emerged from the politics of recognition—including "changes to development plans," "partial recognition of Aboriginal rights," and much "needed cash"—should not be credited, then, to either an especially cunning or especially altruistic state (Feit & Beaulieu 2001:140; Feit 2005:269): "local demands are not initiated by outside interest" (Feit & Beaulieu 2001:144). Instead, Feit argues that through Indigenous peoples' engagements with the state "the terms initially set by governments have been contested and changed, alliances of affected groups have been built, and struggles continue albeit often with a mix of victories and setbacks" (2005:269). These contestations, as many authors argue, are often imbued with "the very cultural meanings and practices [Indigenous peoples] are trying to 'preserve'" (Nadasdy 2003:3; Thom 2014b; Feit 2004; 2005; Feit & Beaulieu 2001). For example, James Bay Cree hunting leaders chose to engage with the state on the implementation of beaver preserves within their territory in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Feit 2005:274-275). They did so, however, only when the boundaries and policies of these preserves matched their own ideas of beaver conservation and expressed an understanding of "mutuality" between the James Bay Cree and the state (Feit 2005:275). In a sense, the James Bay Cree refused the state's exclusive claims to the management of beaver populations (Feit 2005:275), and they attempted, instead, to develop relationships that recognized state actors (and other settlers) as "sociable and responsible people . . . [that could be] invited to reciprocally share the land with the Cree despite the extensive destruction they had been causing" (Feit 2004:121). These efforts ensured that James Bay Cree governance of beaver populations and tenure over specific

hunting and trapping areas were recognized by state actors as concurrent with state sovereignty and the establishment of beaver preserves (Feit 2005:282). These actions, and the continued efforts of the James Bay Cree, are theorized by Feit as attempts to “cure” state actors and settlers who behave like Atuush—a solitary cannibal-like figure that “treat[s] humans as objects, and use[s] them solely for their own interests, without acknowledging their value as persons . . . Atuush are beings beyond the boundaries of social and moral life”—by “actively going into the forest and reuniting people and spirits and environments” (2004:118-119, 123). This imagery of “going into the forest” can be seen as a metaphor for Indigenous peoples’ engagements with the state. Through engagement, the James Bay Cree feel that they can incorporate larger political entities and individual state actors into their relational ontology: “Cree show that one should not just resist, one can seek to cure. Whether Atuush is a rampant person or a destructive corporation, the ideal aim is to return them to the social fold, for their destructive effects continue until they are transformed” (Feit 2004:123).

Despite Indigenous peoples’ engagement with, resistance to, and attempts to cure the state and state actors in *culturally appropriate* ways, Nadasdy argues that “nothing ever seems to come of these challenges” (2003:6). The processes of division and primitive accumulation seem to continue as they were (Nadasdy 2012; Thom 2008; Mack 2011). With this in mind, many authors are equally hesitant of the ability of Indigenous peoples to resist the subject creation desires embedded within the politics of recognition. Despite recognizing that Indigenous peoples have achieved significant progress with the state, they note that the framing of these mechanisms as potentially transformative by Indigenous peoples (even when engaging with the state in “culturally appropriate ways”) is related to, and may come to further entrench, the “attachments to . . . structurally circumscribed modes of recognition” discussed above (Nadasdy 2012; Alfred 2005;



Barsh 2008; Thom 2014b; Mack 2011; Coulthard 2014:61). For example, it has been argued that one such indicator of a colonized subject position is the use of language/practice by Indigenous peoples that contributes to the disruption of reciprocal relationships with the land/water and one another (Thom 2014b; Nadasdy 2012). Nadasdy notes that land claims processes create, between Indigenous peoples, “reasons to distinguish themselves from those relatives who live in other villages and are members of distinct First Nations” (2003:17).

In the next section, I will analyze this claim. I will focus on the *subjective* methods the state has employed within the BCTP (as a mechanism of the politics of recognition) to encourage Indigenous peoples to conceptualize their neighbours as both competitors for, and barriers to, land/water, treaty settlement, and recognition. I will also analyze the *objective* methods the state uses to pressure Indigenous peoples to sign Final Agreements that reproduce these conceptualizations, thus continuing the processes of division and primitive accumulation. In contrast, I will also explore (further on in this chapter) the ways that specific members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation have employed “creative, culturally significant forms of resistance” to subvert the hegemonic ideologies that exacerbate these divisions (Kulchyski & Tester 2007:138).

### **The BC Treaty Process**

As noted earlier, with the failure of the White Paper in 1969 a sea-change occurred in how the state chose to engage with Indigenous peoples (Coulthard 2014; De Costa 2008). This shift was reinforced by the 1973 *Calder* and 1997 *Delgamuukw* Supreme Court decisions. In these cases, Aboriginal rights and title were recognized by the Crown, and this recognition was due to the pre-existence of complex Indigenous polities on the land before colonization (*Calder v. British Columbia (AG)* 1973; *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* 1997; Woolford 2005:6). The state, then, had a “moral, if not, legal duty” to treat with Indigenous peoples (Woolford 2005:2; Alcantara

2008:344; *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* 1997). Thus, the Comprehensive Land Claims (CLC) process was established in 1973 to treat with those that had not signed historic treaties. Forty-eight percent of First Nations engaged in land claims negotiations are located outside of BC, and the remaining 52 percent are located within the province (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada 2014). This discrepancy is due to the fact that, while historic treaties were signed within the rest of Canada between 1701 and 1923, BC did not recognize the legality of Aboriginal title. Instead, BC engaged in, overlooked, and encouraged continued acts of settler dispossession (C. Harris 2002:30-34; Foster & Grove 2008:90-94). As a result, few historic treaties were signed in the province, and those that were applied only to small tracts of land on Vancouver Island and in northeastern BC. Thus, in 1992, the BC Treaty Commission (BCTC) was established as an independent facilitator (between Canada, BC, and First Nations) of the newly-created BCTP. This process was intended to deal with the unique condition of Indigenous peoples in the province, to include (at the province's insistence) the participation of BC in what are elsewhere "nation-to-nation" negotiations, and, logistically, to unburden the CLC process (Woolford 2005:2; Alcantara 2008:344).

Through the BCTP, as Alcantara argues, the state is "interested in empowering Aboriginal peoples by helping them to increase their capacity for governance and self-sufficiency" (2008:351). Curry *et al.* are optimistic about the potential economic benefits and development opportunities that a modern treaty may bring to an Indigenous community (2014). Further, through the BCTP, the state negotiates the *recognition* of Aboriginal cultural rights with Indigenous communities (Alcantara 2008:354). Thom has argued that with the proper recognition of these Aboriginal cultural rights (which have not yet been seen in BCTP negotiations), supported by the above necessary economic development, Indigenous communities in Canada may flourish

(2008:28). Nadasdy mentions a litany of potential benefits an Indigenous community may experience if they were to engage in the politics of recognition and sign a modern treaty, including: real self-government powers, the recognition of a nation-to-nation relationship, a role in the management of land/water and resources, cash infusions, protected harvesting rights to significant portions of their territory, and ownership over parcels of land larger than those reserved under the *Indian Act* (Nadasdy 2012:499-500).

Alternatively, Blackburn argues that while the BCTP is framed as an “important step toward reconciliation and the dream of true equality” (2007:622), the state continues to ensure that the outcomes of BCTP negotiations are not aimed toward the achievement of “transformative justice” for Indigenous peoples (Blackburn 2005:588; Coulthard 2014:19). Instead, as Penikett, a former provincial BCTP negotiator, notes: “the federal government has admitted to using the treaty commission to diminish the frequency of road blockades and office occupations; in that sense, the treaty process has been a tool for managing the ‘Indian issue’ in British Columbia” (2006:171). Thus, although the state is not a “monolithic” entity with “some grand design”—*i.e.* the state “often [has] conflicting agendas,” ministry by ministry, department by department (Nadasdy 2003:4)—claims made by the state regarding the desire for First Nations, Canada, and BC to achieve this “dream of true equality” continue to ring false (Blackburn 2007:622). This is especially true as the processes of primitive accumulation and dispossession continue to intensify throughout Indigenous peoples’ territories while negotiations are ongoing. Further, after Final Agreements have been signed, these territories are reduced to Treaty Settlement Lands outside of which the state can continue with development projects unimpeded by questions of Aboriginal rights and title (Woolford 2004; Nadasdy 2003:264). In response, Alcantara notes: “Aboriginal groups realize that governments will engage in economic development on their lands anyway, so negotiating CLC

treaties are the only way to ensure that their interests are protected” (2008:355). The first clause of the above quotation is true, of course, and is one of the pressing reasons—in concert with the potential benefits that may come from a Final Agreement—that Indigenous peoples enter into land claims negotiations (Willow 2013:881; Nadasdy 2003:264). However, the second clause—that “negotiating CLC treaties are the only way to ensure that [an Aboriginal group’s] interests are protected” (Alcantara 2008:355)—is misleading and potentially damaging.

The BCTP has not yet been able to satisfy the desires of many First Nations that are party to negotiations (Thom 2008). Under the BCTP, thus far, First Nations have been offered limited cultural rights (including harvesting rights), the ability to exercise some formalized self-government powers, and fee-simple ownership of approximately 5% of their traditional territories, among other such arrangements (Mack 2011:291; Thom 2008:27-28). Further, BCTP negotiations have often caused First Nations to accrue massive federal loans that, at times, can become greater than the cash they are likely to receive under a Final Agreement (Curry *et al.* 2014:294; Thom 2014b:6). Considering the above, it seems clear that First Nations are forced to make trade-offs within the BCTP that do not protect the full range of their interests. This is compounded by the fact that many of the substantial outcomes of BCTP negotiations are often decided in advance by the state. Provincial and federal negotiators come to BTCP tables with *secret* mandates that determine the scope of BCTP negotiations based on the bargaining power, membership, and land-base of a particular First Nation, the interests of non-aboriginal and non-state parties, and the current government/political climate (Penikett 2006:161-166; De Costa 2008:309). Penikett notes that despite these pre-determined limitations set by the state, if a First Nation were to pull out of tripartite negotiations some of the funding they received as *loans* would transform into *debts* that—for many who are seeking redress for historical and continued economic development, resource

extraction, dispossession, and primitive accumulation within their territories—would be unpayable (2006:170). Thus, through its unilateral ability to determine the scope of negotiations, the state has positioned itself as a “rights-granting entit[y]” that engages in the BCTP in order to achieve “certainty” and “affirmative justice” (Alcantara 2008:354; Blackburn 2005:588)—or, the achievement of “treaty settlements that do not substantially alter prevailing societal patterns of economic production and cultural valuation” (Woolford 2004:118).

Certainty, in this context, can be looked at from three perspectives: temporal, content-based, and spatial. First, the state stipulates that injustices committed in the past against Indigenous peoples remain in the past and, thus, the culpability of the state is not available as a topic for BCTP negotiations (Blackburn 2007): “the Crown . . . has clearly stated that it will not compensate First Nations for ‘past use and alienation of the lands and resources within their traditional territories’” (Egan 2013:43). Second, the content of Aboriginal rights in BCTP negotiations becomes “modified” from an amorphous category to a clearly defined list of negotiated treaty rights, the scope of which is pre-established by the above noted mandates (Blackburn 2005:591-591; Woolford 2004:112). Thom argues that through this modification, treaty rights become limited to “symbolic” cultural practices “rather than practices which may have political or economic component[s]” (2008:27). Third, the state requires Indigenous communities involved in BCTP negotiations to spatially delimit areas of territorial sovereignty (through Statement of Intent maps) within which the contents of future treaty rights may be negotiated (Thom 2009; 2014b; Nadasdy 2012; C. Turner & Fondahl 2015). These modified treaty rights are further limited through the ways that they apply differently in either exclusive Treaty Settlement Lands or state-approved Treaty Harvest Areas:

The state continues to extend its vision of property in the text of modern-day land claim settlements by developing entirely new categories of land ownership—treaty

settlement land—that harden the “exclusivity” distinctions expressed in common-law Aboriginal title. Here, we more clearly see Canada’s interest in exclusivity: exclusivity neatly clarifies which legal person—the collective members of a First Nation—has property rights to which the state may owe a duty, and precludes having multiple duties to two or more First Nations if each has title to the same land. (Thom 2014b:17)

When embedded in modern treaties that are designed to be “full and final settlements” (Alcantara 2008:354), the above parameters of BCTP negotiations enable the state to achieve economic and jurisdictional certainty (Nadasdy 2012; Blackburn 2005). With this certainty, the state—by *recognizing* Indigenous peoples in ways congruent with the current “apparatus” of the politics of recognition—is able to expedite the process of economic development, resource extraction, dispossession, and primitive accumulation (Lattas 2011:89; Nadasdy 2012; Blackburn 2005; Coulthard 2014:14, 35). To expand upon this point, I would like to focus on the third perspective of *certainty* outlined above: the spatial delimitation of traditional territories using the discourse of “territorial sovereignty” (Nadasdy 2012:500). I would like to analyze how this element of BCTP negotiations works to “entice Indigenous peoples to identify, *either implicitly or explicitly*, with the[se] profoundly asymmetrical and nonreciprocal forms of recognition” that ultimately work to reinforce divisions among Indigenous peoples and further dispossess them of their land/water (Coulthard 2014:25, emphasis added).

While Nadasdy argues that the benefits of a modern treaty have the potential to “clearly empower . . . First Nation people and their governments,” he also argues that “to the extent that [empowerment] requires formerly disempowered peoples to alter their personhood and society as a prerequisite for the exercise of that power, ‘empowerment’ must also be viewed as a form of subjection” (Nadasdy 2012:500). When Nadasdy states that Indigenous peoples are required to “alter their personhood and society,” he is referring to the pressures the state embeds in land claims processes for Indigenous peoples to adopt the language of both property and territorial sovereignty

(2002; 2003; 2012; Egan 2013:35). This pressure is manifest in the requirement of First Nations who enter into BCTP negotiations to submit Statement of Intent maps at the onset of BCTP negotiations to determine their spatial scope (Blackburn 2007:627; Egan 2013:47). Nadasdy argues that this requirement is bound up with the state's conception of "sovereignty" that has "territorial jurisdiction" as its foundational criteria: "to qualify as a government in the first place, a political entity must have jurisdiction over a clearly defined territory" (2012:501-502). Within these bounded territories, the establishment of marginal Treaty Settlement Lands and significantly larger Treaty Harvest Areas for a particular First Nation are discussed. Thus, to achieve these potential benefits (and those listed above), First Nations—often in the form of a village-based association (*e.g.* Tsawwassen First Nation, Tla'amin Nation, *etc.*), but not always (*e.g.* The Maa-nulth First Nations, Nisga'a Nation, *etc.*)—are put in a position where they must assert their claims to territory in the form of "fixed, polygonal boundaries" (Thom 2009:181). Further, these First Nations must be prepared to receive treaty rights within Treaty Harvest Areas and exclusive ownership of Treaty Settlement Lands—both of which may be within other Indigenous communities' territories—also in the form of "fixed, polygonal boundaries" (Thom 2009:181).

Within the Coast Salish world, however, the village is not *the* foundational unit of social organization, and, thus, this form of boundary making can be seen as inaccurate, disruptive, and dismissive of other Indigenous communities' territories. Instead, under Coast Salish land tenure systems, the rights that each individual receives from their "nondiscrete, nonlocalized, property-holding kin group" interact with one's residence-based rights to form the core of Coast Salish social organization (Suttles 1963:513; Boas 1887:289). As Thom notes:

Territories are actually experienced as an element of individual 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 allows individuals to draw on the potential wealth of both community and ancestor as needed during the course of one's life. (Thom 2009:186)

So, while an individual may have rights to a specific productive resource site within the territory of their home community (or places much farther afield), members of their geographically extensive web-like kin networks (who may belong to other geographically dispersed First Nations) may also have the right to use this place (Thom 2009). Although these rights are *constrained* by an expectation that one ought to seek “permission,” their utilization is *encouraged* through a “moral ethic of sharing of resources that is a central feature of Coast Salish economic life” (Thom 2009:185). The Coast Salish land tenure system, by emphasizing kin-based property rights, sharing, and mutuality, in turn, perpetuates further processes of exchange and reciprocity between neighbours and kin in other Indigenous communities (Suttles 1987). As a result of these territorial considerations, Thom has proposed a “radical cartography,” inspired by an unconventional map drawn by Barnett (1955:xix), to better represent this land tenure system:

The Coast Salish world would be represented by lines radiating out from the chosen residence location of each individual. These lines would connect to the owned areas (properties) of all of the ancestors (bilaterally reckoned), with as much temporal depth as can be legitimately demonstrated. Additional lines would radiate out to all the fixed properties owned by the residence group of that individual. This would create 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 change over a lifetime, and as people are born and die. (Thom 2009:199)

This territorial framing, and others like it (McHalsie 2001:32-33), have not yet been adopted in present-day political negotiations. Here, conventional territorial boundaries represented by single, discrete polygons remain the norm (Thom 2009:200).

With the above in mind—as each First Nation that is party to the BCTP draws its traditional territory as a “fixed, polygonal boundar[y]” (Thom 2009:181)—it seems inevitable that these lines



will overlap. This is, of course, the case. “Overlapping territories,” however, do not provide the state with their vision of certainty. Thus, the state has prioritized the “resolution” of “overlapping claims,” which, in turn, has pressured Indigenous peoples to draw and assert “boundaries among kin” (Nadasdy 2012). The front cover of the 2014 Annual Report of the BCTC highlights and reiterates “Recommendation 8” of the 1991 Report of the British Columbia Claims Task Force: “First Nations resolve issues related to overlapping traditional territories among themselves” (2014: cover page). This language is arguably the most prominent discourse found within the BCTC’s Annual Reports between 2007 and 2016. This date range was chosen as it marks the time between settlement of the Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement (the first treaty settled through the BCTP) and the present-day. These reports regularly emphasize what is at stake if Indigenous communities do not “resolve” *their* “overlapping claims,” including: future treaty benefits (land, rights, and cash), past and future negotiation money loaned by the state to First Nations (Penikett 2006:170), and litigation money spent by First Nations to protest the state’s settlement of overlapping Final Agreements (BC Treaty Commission 2011:4, 6, 12).

With regard to the latter, Langdon notes that the state has consistently finalized treaties without satisfying their own need for the “resolution” of “overlapping claims” (2007). To this the BCTC states: “there are sufficient protections in place for those First Nations that are impacted by the treaty” (2008:6), and “no First Nation has been successful in stopping a treaty from being ratified, and legal action only distracts the parties in treaty negotiations” (2011:12). However, some First Nations have raised concerns regarding the legal right of the state to sign, without their consent, Final Agreements that may derogate from their ability to assert Aboriginal rights and title and receive future treaty benefits. Many First Nations have objected to other First Nations being

granted “state-backed harvest areas” within their territories (Langdon 2007; Thom 2009:189). As Christopher Turner and Gail Fondahl note:

Modern treaties in BC are indeed recognizing exclusive treaty rights in overlapping and contested areas. Treaty recognition of exclusive rights is prejudicial to the rights of groups with overlapping claims simply by virtue of the fact that once exclusive rights to land are recognized for one group that land is no longer available to another as part of future treaty settlement. (2015:484)

The problem here is that this sort of pressure, it can be argued, constitutes coercion “in that it may be seen to reward those groups prepared to engage ‘voluntarily’ within the current framework” (C. Turner & Fondahl 2015:484). BCTP negotiations, in this theorization, can become a *race* to claim land/water by adopting (and benefiting from) the position—embedded within the politics of recognition—that encourages Indigenous communities to represent themselves as the exclusive “owners” of bounded territorial spaces (Coulthard 2014; Thom 2014b; C. Turner & Fondahl 2015; Nadasdy 2012). So, while Indigenous communities are ultimately negotiating for what many see as small-scale benefits (Mack 2011; Alfred 2005; Woolford 2004; 2005; Thom 2008; 2009; 2014b; Penikett 2006; Egan 2012; 2013; De Costa 2008; Day & Sadik 2002; Coulthard 2014; Blackburn 2005; 2007), they may also be working (“implicitly or explicitly” [Coulthard 2014:25]) to disrupt Coast Salish land tenure systems and foundational “borderless kin networks” (Thom 2009:180; Nadasdy 2012; Thom 2014b).

Further, Thom argues that the state’s desire and pressure for Indigenous peoples to frame their territorial relations as “fixed, polygonal boundaries” has had a real effect on “local expectations of sharing, reciprocity, and respect” (2009:181; 2014b:4). Much like Suttles’ exploration of how the state has divided Indigenous peoples into discrete village units (1963:515-516), Thom argues that the formalization of inadequate expressions of Coast Salish land tenure

systems has the potential to reorganize Coast Salish society (2014b). He states that Indigenous peoples involved in the BCTP

fear that the bilateral kin group as a significant and powerful social order will be dismantled and replaced by a patchwork of municipal-like self-governments with limited jurisdictions over their lands and territories. While the process established by the BCTC recognizes each community's ability to be self-determining, it created a situation where contemporary political differences among self-defined First Nations—from single-family units to massive multi-village, multi-language polities—are not congruent with the kin and residence based social order of which the older generation of Coast Salish people speak. (Thom 2009:194)

Additionally, many have argued that some Indigenous peoples have moved beyond simply drawing “boundaries among kin” and have begun to reinforce the hegemonic discourse of “overlapping claims” and “exclusive territories” in their daily lives (Thom 2014b:21; Barsh 2008; Mack 2011; Nadasdy 2003; 2012). As the late Simon Charlie, a famous Cowichan carver and widely respected Elder, stated: “Our big problem, I think, is that we’re so intertwined that there was no border. Saanich [W̱SÁNEĆ] would come here and, you know, they were part of the family . . . 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’” (Thom 2009:189). He goes on to state: “Indian Affairs brainwashed our young people that we only belong to one band. That wasn’t the way it was before” (Simon Charlie as cited in Thom 2009:189). In these quotations, it becomes possible to see how the requirements and discursive material of the BCTP—in conjunction with financial pressures levied by the state and the framing of the BCTP as “the ‘only game in town’ for achieving the type of control [Indigenous peoples] want over their lands” (Penikett 2006:170; Alcantara 2008:355)—can foster Indigenous peoples’ “attachments to . . . structurally circumscribed modes of *recognition*” that expedite the continued process of primitive accumulation (Coulthard 2013:17-18). However, I would also like to explore the variety of ways that Indigenous peoples both reinforce and subvert the hegemonic ideologies found within this discursive material. To do so, I

will tease out instances where Indigenous peoples engage divisive language/practice and instances where Indigenous peoples employ “creative, culturally significant forms of resistance” to circumvent the BCTP and the politics of recognition (Kulchyski & Tester 2007:138).

### **Inter-Village Ties**

As noted earlier, I began a research project in 2014 to map reef net fishing places with/for members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. During this project’s development phase, W̱SÁNEĆ community members and I discussed the creation of public and private digital maps that could be used as tools by the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation to assert Douglas Treaty rights and Aboriginal rights and title. Plans to incorporate portions of these maps into the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School’s curriculum were also discussed. By targeting both a public educational venue and the private/legalistic governance structure, it was hoped that these maps could be used in various complementary ways to assist W̱SÁNEĆ community members’ efforts to revitalize the reef net fishery (N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a). That same year, members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation—assisted by participants from the Lummi Nation—set reef nets in Canadian waters for the first time in nearly 100 years (Tsawout First Nation 2014:5). Thus, one of the goals of this project was to “reactivate international kin networks” by facilitating the sharing of knowledge related to the reef net fishery between members of both the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi Nations. In doing so, it was hoped that reef net fishing would come closer to being truly revitalized as a “living practice” (N. Claxton 2015a:142; 2003; 2008). Almost immediately, however, I was struck by the hesitancy of specific W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I interacted with regarding privacy and the potential for the data I gathered to be used against them by other Indigenous communities (documented also by Kennedy *et al.* [1993:28]), the public, and the state.

As a note, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation is not party to the BCTP. Several W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with referenced the fact that the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation is already party to historic treaties—the Douglas Treaties—that, as one W̱SÁNEĆ community member noted, “just sit there” (field notes, November 22, 2016). These W̱SÁNEĆ community members pointed out the absurdity of signing another treaty while the first continues to be dishonoured. Despite their resistance to the process, BCTP negotiations with other First Nations are ongoing. In fact, much of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s traditional territory is already subject to the terms of another First Nations’ Final Agreement (e.g. the Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement [Tsawwassen First Nation *et al.* 2007a]) or has land, harvest rights, and governance interests being negotiated for by other Indigenous communities’ treaty associations (e.g. the Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group and the Te’mexw Treaty Association). STOLČEĒ explained that this process feels as if “they [the state] are allowing those ones within their treaty process to reach into other neighbouring homelands with a claim, and they allow them to go right into their village sites” (pers. comm., June 28, 2016). This has fostered considerable frustration and anxiety within the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. Many of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with argue that if other Indigenous communities were to obtain additional private information from W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge holders, the ability of these other Indigenous communities to “reach into other neighbouring homelands” would be strengthened.<sup>34</sup> These “imagined futures” (Gammeltoft 2014), then, are informed by two factors:

- 1) a concern that the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s ability to exercise Douglas Treaty and Aboriginal rights

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<sup>34</sup> It should be noted that within BCTP negotiations the state does not rely on place names or Traditional Land-Use and Occupancy maps to reach comprehensive treaty settlements. Instead, as Thom notes: “The expectation of governments is that they are not asked to recognize any particular historic land or resource rights, but rather will agree only to describing the scope and extent of future treaty rights” (2009:191). Thus, although the lines drawn on Statement of Intent maps are often developed using these data sources—and thus necessarily contain the shared historical information of the First Nation who produced them (Stocks 2003:353; Thom 2009:191; Egan 2012:407)—the state denies the historicity of these Statement of Intent maps under the guise of accepting them *prima facie* (Thom 2009:191-194). The lines produced using these data sources are then used to delineate the non-exclusive harvest and consultation areas set out in the Final Agreements (Thom 2009; 2014a; 2014b; Woolford 2005:99).

and to claim Aboriginal title will be diminished with other First Nations also exercising non-exclusive, state-sanctioned rights within W̱SÁNEĆ territory, and 2) a perspective that views the actions of other Indigenous communities who lay claim to W̱SÁNEĆ traditional territory as unjustified violations of Coast Salish cultural protocol and land tenure systems (see Sterritt *et al.* for a parallel in the Nass Valley [1998]).

For many of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with, these violations occur either when a Coast Salish community proclaims that their rights (often to places within other Indigenous communities' territories) ought to be recognized by the state without explicit reference or acknowledgement to their neighbours and kin, or when a Coast Salish community transforms the source of their rights as derived from Coast Salish land tenure systems to newly-established modern treaty rights (Thom 2017:155). As XA'LATE, a former chief of the Tseycum Nation, argues:

You look at the Tsawwassen coming into our territory, claiming our islands. The proper consultation for anybody to come into our territory, you come to us and tell us what you're going to do, what your plans are. Tsawwassen didn't do that. So, it's a messy thing. The BC Treaty Process does that. You're making enemies of our own families there. You look at our sacred values, our sacred things . . . Some of my rights are from Tsawwassen. So, that's what happens in the BC Treaty Process . . . You look at the Fraser River. You know that W̱SÁNEĆ people have a fishing station there? Now we can't even go up there because of why? (pers. comm., June 14, 2016)

As I have argued above, these violations are encouraged by the state through discourses embedded within the BCTP and the pressures that the state applies to persuade Indigenous peoples to reproduce these discourses, including: the potential benefits that come with participation in the BCTP (*e.g.* potential co-operative management arrangements, access to loan dollars, and obtaining a regular forum for dialogue with the state), the risks that come with non-participation (*e.g.* a negligible role in land management, limited access to economic opportunities, and no voice at

treaty tables), the requirements of the BCTP for Indigenous communities to submit claims to bounded territories, the prioritization of the “resolution” of any resulting “overlapping claims,” and the ability of the state to settle claims despite the presence of outstanding “unresolved” “overlaps.”

I am not arguing, however, that the BCTP is the sole causative factor in these inter-village conflicts. First, as noted by XA’LATE above, Coast Salish land tenure systems continue to exist and have not been overwhelmed by colonialism (Thom 2014b:21). These land tenure systems—which regulate an individual’s rights as derived from their residence and “nondiscrete, nonlocalized, property-holding kin group[s]” (Suttles 1963:513)—place limits on the previously mentioned “moral ethic of sharing of resources that is a central feature of Coast Salish economic life” (Thom 2009:185). It is this pre-existing organizational structure, in fact, that the state has actively worked to disrupt and replace through multiple historical methods (Suttles 1963:515-516): *e.g.* through the creation of reserves, the promotion of agriculture, the dismantling of multi-family housing, the criminalization of the potlatch, and, currently, the BCTP. However other factors, separate from the above, influence and complicate Coast Salish land tenure systems and contribute to inter-village conflicts (Thom 2014b:4). As Adam Olsen notes:

You wrote this down: ‘old competition dies hard.’ So, I was born with information as a little NENE [child]. I had information in me that I can’t tell you where it came from. There is nothing better than beating certain soccer teams when we played soccer with them. There’s nothing better. It was engrained in my DNA to feel good when that team got beaten. There’s old, old, old history that we’re born with. And, yes, there’s lots of close inter-familial connections, and there has been forever, but I can tell you, in my DNA, my heart feels joy when certain soccer teams are beaten. There’s old, old competition . . . So, some of that is BC Treaty Process stuff. But, also, some of it is animosity and relationships that have been defined over thousands of years. (pers. comm., June 7, 2016)

Adam Olsen, here, recognizes the role that history (both pre- and post-contact) continues to play in present-day tensions within the Coast Salish world. In doing so, he counters the framing of

colonialism as the “fundamental organizing factor” for Indigenous peoples that precipitated “a disjuncture not only with the period immediately preceding it, but with *all* the periods that came before” (Liebmann 2012:28, 32-33). So, while Coast Salish land tenure systems have not been overwhelmed by colonialism, neither have the tensions inherent in their structures. In fact, pre-existing village-based identities continue to resonate strongly with Coast Salish peoples, and the strength of these identities can influence an individual’s ability to exercise rights derived from their “nondiscrete, nonlocalized, property-holding kin group[s]” (Suttles 1963:513; Thom 2010:40). Further, there is an ever-present and generalized “edge” to the relationships between members of these kin groups who live in different places (Suttles 1963:513; Thom 2010:41). Whereas in the past this “edge” was exacerbated by specific violations made while travelling—including, the “potential for gluttony in sharing or over extending one's welcome” (Thom 2010:41)—Coast Salish peoples can now violate cultural protocol and land tenure systems through present-day analogues embedded in the BCTP. So, rather than as a determining factor, “the state’s expectations that indigenous communities should delineate exclusive territories have *exacerbated preexisting tensions* in overlapping territorial relationships,” but also, as Thom notes, they have “created new ones” (2014b:4, emphasis added).

For example, in 2007, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation made a public and legal declaration contesting Tsawwassen First Nation’s territorial claims. This is because, that same year, the Tsawwassen First Nation signed the first Final Agreement under the BCTP (Tsawwassen First Nation *et al.* 2007a). Thus, the Tsawout, Tsartlip, and Pauquachin Nations (constituent nations of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation)—along with the Semiahmoo First Nation in Boundary Bay—signed on as petitioners in a legal action against The Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, arguing that the state’s extension of “harvesting and other rights” to the Tsawwassen First Nation prejudiced the



rights of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation and Semiahmoo First Nation (*Cook v. The Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation* 2007 BCSC 1722).<sup>35</sup> Langdon, paraphrasing former Tsartlip Nation Chief Chris Tom, notes that the state, in this case, failed to “acknowledge that there is some overlap in land being claimed by various First Nations. The WSANEC (Saanich) people on the peninsula of Greater Victoria have said that part of the land given to the Tsawwassen is actually theirs” (Langdon 2007:15). It is important to note, here, that the land “given” to the Tsawwassen First Nation through the BCTP is marginal. It includes 724 hectares of Treaty Settlement Lands near the Tsawwassen BC Ferry Terminal on the lower mainland (which includes the ancestral Tsawwassen village site), limited non-exclusive harvesting rights within Treaty Harvest Areas that extend into the Southern Gulf Islands and up the Fraser River, and the recognition of Tsawwassen Territory through consultation arrangements within these areas (Tsawwassen First Nation *et al.* 2007a; 2007b; Tsawwassen First Nation 2017). The issue then is not just, as has been claimed, that these sorts of agreements are “prejudicial to the rights of groups with overlapping claims” (C. Turner & Fondahl 2015:484). Instead, the issue is exemplified by the fact that since the signature of the Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement—as relayed to me by a former councillor of a W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation—at least one W̱SÁNEĆ Nation band council has received letters of trespass from the Tsawwassen First Nation requesting that W̱SÁNEĆ community members not harvest bivalves along the foreshore of certain W̱SÁNEĆ Nation Indian Reserves located within Tsawwassen Harvest Areas (field notes, March 22, 2016; Tsawwassen First Nation *et al.* 2007b). Many W̱SÁNEĆ community members have familial ties to members of the Tsawwassen First

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<sup>35</sup> This case is notable because, as Kew and Miller argue, it shows how political affiliation between Coast Salish peoples is defined by both “properties of coherence and permanence of affiliation” and “short-term bouts of disaffiliation by individual members, communities, bands, or other constituent groups without substantially altering the long-term social system, disrupting cultural continuity, or dissolving the boundaries of the Coast Salish moral universe” (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59). Here, although the Semiahmoo First Nation participated, the Tseycum Nation (a W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation) did not.

Nation, and, thus, these impersonal territorial claims have fostered both “animosity” and “sadness” within the membership of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. Specific members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, then, are concerned that other Indigenous communities, through their interactions with the state, are willing to disregard expectations of respect, permission, and sharing that are central features of Coast Salish land tenure systems and cultural protocol (Thom 2009:185; Suttles 1963:513). To counter what some W̱SÁNEĆ community members see as the Tsawwassen First Nation’s disruptive, divisive, and impersonal use of their newly-gained treaty rights, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has in turn appealed to the state (through the judicial system) and the discourses of “overlapping claims” and “exclusive territories.”

This conflict is in sharp contrast to many conversations I had with W̱SÁNEĆ community members throughout the course of this research project. While being hesitant of the potential for the data I gathered to be used against them by other Indigenous communities (documented also by Kennedy et al. [1993:28]), the public, and the state, the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I interacted with chose to not exclude other Indigenous communities from W̱SÁNEĆ territory in the research project’s deliverables. Thus, these members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation opted to not draw exclusive territorial boundaries on the digital maps produced. This refusal serves as an acknowledgement that individuals from other Indigenous communities have rights to specific places within the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s traditional territory, as well as an acknowledgement of the complexity of Coast Salish kin-networks and land tenure systems that have been misrepresented within the BCTP (Thom 2009). It also aligned with one of the foundational goals of the project: to foster and maintain important relationships between communities and kin (Suttles 1963). In this sense, members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation have, in specific contexts, worked to actively resist BCTP discourses and pressures that have “pitted First Nation against First Nation” within Canada (BC

Treaty Commission 2011:6). Other Canadian Indigenous communities have done the same. Whereas the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has not entered into the BCTP, the Yale First Nation finalized a modern treaty with Canada and BC in 2013 (BC Treaty Commission 2016:32). The Yale First Nation, however, chose to not implement their Final Agreement. Instead, they reached out to their neighbours—namely, the Stó:lō communities from Stó:lō (SXTA), the Stó:lō Nation, and the Stó:lō Tribal Council—whose territories “overlap.” By doing so, the Yale First Nation hopes to foster “positive and ‘respectful’ talks with the Sto:lo” and to quell outstanding conflicts over fishing rights in the Fraser Canyon that have been exacerbated by their participation in the BCTP (O’Neil & Shaw 2016). These efforts to repair relationships with neighbouring Indigenous communities and kin, and to re-establish Coast Salish cultural protocol and land tenure systems, are similar to the goals and desires of members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation that I spoke with.

Despite these desires, however, BCTP mechanisms and discourses have created an environment where the idea of *actively sharing* kin-based reef net fishing knowledge and places with neighbouring Indigenous communities is met with hesitation and anxiety over undesirable imagined futures (Gammeltoft 2014). These imagined futures include plausible scenarios where Coast Salish cultural protocol and familial ties are continually disrupted, land claims and traditional territories are delegitimized, and division and dispossession are expedited (Barsh 2008; Thom 2014b; Blackburn 2005). It is interesting, here, to note that the state *does* recognize—as non-constitutionally protected political agreements—“shared territory agreements” between First Nations with “overlapping” claims (BC Treaty Commission 2010:8). However, the BCTC is also sure to warn First Nations of the danger that non-exclusive territorial claims may bring: “*Tsilhqot’in* [a 2014 Supreme Court decision] affirmed that a successful aboriginal title claim requires proof of exclusive control of the title lands, and that overlapping claims may result in the

denial of title” (BC Treaty Commission 2014:25). Further, Thom notes that the state, in an international human rights case levied by the Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group, has exploited these overlapping territorial claims in order to delegitimize large portions of BC First Nations’ claims to land/water (2014b:15). The state argued “that 75 percent of the claimed traditional territory [of the Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group] is also claimed by eight other First Nations, so HTG [Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group] may not have adequate proof of its title claims” (Thom 2014b:15). Thus, within Canada, the mechanisms and discourses that have “pitted First Nation against First Nation” remain persuasive (BC Treaty Commission 2011:6).

An environment similar to the above (one where Indigenous communities find themselves pressured to engage in inter-village conflicts) has also emerged in the United States with the evolving implementation of the 1974 Boldt I and 1979 Boldt II decisions (Boxberger 1988b). Both Boldt decisions focused on the wording of the 1855 Point Elliott Treaty—“the right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory” (Boxberger 1988a:165)—interpreting the phrase “in common” as the guaranteed allocation of 50% of the salmon harvest per year to the undifferentiated Point Elliott Treaty Tribes. Interestingly, Boldt II included an additional measure which stated that “if tribes do not utilize the resource their share of the allocation could be reduced accordingly” (Boxberger 1988b:302). This inclusion of “laches” (*i.e.* the loss of a right due to a lack of use) worked to pressure the Lummi Nation to invest significant capital in their fishery, hoping, then, that their rights would not be restricted or denied in the future (Boxberger 1988b; Sepez 2008). With this investment—and because the Point Elliott Treaty Tribes were not differentiated under the Boldt decisions—the Lummi Nation was able to take nearly half of the entire 50% allocation at one point (Boxberger 1988b:302, 309). As resources dwindled, the Lummi Nation’s industrial fishery

became overdeveloped, and they required increasing returns to remain viable (Boxberger 1988b:302, 309; Barsh 1982:172, 175). Thus, Point Elliott Treaty Tribes in the U.S. have found themselves in a context where they must compete with one another for limited resources in order to support large-scale investments—originally aimed at the protection of their fishing rights and the achievement of some degree of relative sovereignty—that they made after the 1979 Boldt II decision (Barsh 2008; Boxberger 1988b:309; Bierwert 1999:239). Barsh highlights many of the resultant semi-public conflicts that have taken place between Treaty Tribes in Washington State, focusing on the Tulalip Tribes’ attempts to extend their fishing rights into the especially productive and exclusive “primary” fishing areas of the Lummi Nation (Barsh 2008:229, 234). Thus, similar to the Canadian context, Indigenous communities in the U.S. were, first, divided into discreet units and, second, pitted against one another as they attempted to move toward moderate economic viability and relative political sovereignty: “the economic salience of fish contributed significantly to reifying the idea of ‘tribe’ as the primary ethnic group affiliation of Coast Salish peoples” (Barsh 2008:236).

This tense environment has provoked significant concerns within the Treaty Tribes regarding the need for privacy along “tribal” lines (Barsh 2008:230). Thus, some Treaty Tribes in the U.S. have centred data security as a key strategy in their efforts to protect/assert their treaty rights and ensure that other Treaty Tribes are not able to claim/delegitimize their territories (Barsh 2008:230). In the 1970s and 1980s, each Treaty Tribe was able to acquire the right to fish within “usual and accustomed area[s]” by presenting historical documents to the court that identified a “tribe’s mere ‘presence in the area’” (Barsh 2008:228). As Barsh notes, in most cases, “historical documents and scholarly studies were to be preferred over the testimony of living elders” (2008:228). In response, the lawyers, academics, and researchers associated with Treaty Tribes were tasked with

scouring historical documents for specific and elusive pieces of information—which may have already been well known within the community—to place the ancestors of at least one member of that Treaty Tribe (who may also be the ancestors of other individuals from other Treaty Tribes) at a specific location in the past: “The Suquamish . . . won fishing rights in the Hood Canal on the basis of five historical references to their fishing there, of which only three referred to specific locations or streams” (Barsh 2008:229). In fact, while working with/for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, I was asked by a lawyer for the Lummi Nation if I was able to provide the Lummi Nation with *any* historical data pertaining to Lummi peoples’ halibut fishing in the open water south of the San Juan Islands and west of Whidbey Island. It is clear—considering the importance of data for the economic and political well-being of the various Treaty Tribes—that an environment similar to that experienced by Canadian Indigenous communities has emerged in the U.S. In these environments, as discussed above, the idea of actively sharing knowledge and places with neighbouring Indigenous communities is met with hesitation and anxiety over undesirable imagined futures (Gammeltoft 2014). Although this system has now been supplanted by “closed-door negotiations within the Northwest Indian Tribal Fisheries Commission,” Barsh notes that these negotiations still function under lingering “conditions of mistrust and uncertainty” (2008:234).

Thus, despite the desires of many Indigenous peoples to maintain foundational kin networks and “inter-village ties” (Suttles 1963), mechanisms within the U.S. and Canada pressure Indigenous peoples to engage in *intranational* territorial disputes. I would argue, however, that Indigenous communities that work across the International Boundary—and who do not compete for land/water and who are not actively encouraged to reproduce the discourses of “overlapping claims” (Thom 2014b)—are not subject to the direct application of these same pressures. This

theory interacts with the work of Miller who documents the substantial ways in which Coast Salish life and social organization have been disrupted by the imposition of the border as a “really real” thing (1996; 2012). Since the westernmost portion of the International Boundary’s establishment in 1872, the gradual intensification of its enforcement has alienated the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation from extensive kin networks and large portions of their traditional territory located on the other side (Thom 2009:187-188; Wadewitz 2012:68). Miller links this incremental “hardening” of the border to similar processes that have divided Indigenous peoples from one another throughout history (Miller 2012:29; Suttles 1963:515-516). However, Miller also corroborates Suttles’ claim that Coast Salish peoples have actively worked—through seasonal employment, winter dances, canoe races, summer sports, “Indian brass bands,” new political/legal relationships, the “funeral collection system,” and other such activities—to ensure that fluid, amorphous kin groups remain the core of Coast Salish social organization (Suttles 1963; Miller 1996:64-65; Crosby 2016; Mitchell 1976:71-73). Another method by which “Indigenous groups have resisted this separation of peoples and have continued their struggle to remain cohesive,” as Luna-Firebaugh explores (2002:162), is through inter/intra-community resistance to the legitimacy of borders themselves.

I argue that the research projects that the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has chosen to engage with can be seen in this light. The W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has chosen to not focus on the long and arduous process of gaining state-based recognition (and thus “regulation” [Merlan 2009]). As XEMFOLTW notes:

My community is not a part of the BC Treaty Process and they continue to say that we have this Douglas Treaty already. But, the treaty hasn’t been interpreted or understood or respected the way that I think our ancestors understood it to be. So, I think that if we start to look back to practices like the reef net and look back at reconnecting to our territory that way. I think it can only be more beneficial, healthier, than trying to relate to the territories through neo-colonial means like treaties and traditional territories and all of that. (pers. comm., June 16, 2016)

Instead, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has prioritized projects that focus on sharing reef net fishing knowledge with members of the Lummi Nation back and forth across the International Boundary

(N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a). To do so, I would argue that the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi nations have exploited the *symbolic impermeability* of the border (Scott 2009): the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation cannot “claim” the territory of the Lummi Nation within the U.S., and, likewise, the Lummi Nation cannot “claim” W̱SÁNEĆ territory in Canada. Both are free to state that their territories “overlapped” on either side of the border, with no state-based consequences. Thus, a cross-border environment has developed where the idea of sharing knowledge with neighbouring Indigenous communities is not necessarily met with hesitation and anxiety over undesirable imagined futures (Gammeltoft 2014). By both relying on and contesting the legitimacy of the International Boundary, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has been able to explore projects and goals that more easily comport with Coast Salish cultural protocol, land tenure systems, and the continued strengthening of “inter-village ties” (Coulthard 2014:60-64; Suttles 1963). For example, XEMFOLTW has described his efforts to revitalize the reef net fishery between the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi nations as a project of “active participatory transnational decolonisation” that has “reinvigorated cross border cooperation between the W̱SÁNEĆ and their Xwelemi [Lummi] relatives” (N. Claxton 2015a:iii-iv, 2).

The research project directed by XEMFOLTW is situated in a context where W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi peoples have been historically divided from one another and divorced, to differing degrees, from their SWELSWÁLET (reef net fishing locations). As discussed in Chapter 1, SWELSWÁLET are located along the path of migratory salmon on their way to their spawning rivers. At especially prosperous locations, several SWELSWÁLET are anchored to adjacent sections of a reef, side by side, within a bay or off an island’s coast. Each of these neighbouring SWELSWÁLET (also called “gears”) is “owned”—or “belonged to”/“looked after”—by a ÇENÁLYEN (reef net fishing captain). Further, it is likely that each ÇENÁLYEN at each of these



gears belongs to a different “nondiscrete, nonlocalized, property-holding kin group[s]” and lives in different residence locations (Suttles 1963:513), making an area where reef net fishing is practiced appear to be *shared* by geographically dispersed peoples. In Figure 1, Suttles depicts individuals’ “ownership” of SWELSWÁLET at SMOKEĆ (Point Roberts) in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century (1974:209). Suttles expands upon this map by naming the residence locations that each of the above individuals belonged to (1974:208-212), summarizing his findings thus: “at Point Roberts [SMOKEĆ] Cowichan and possibly Nanaimo and others worked in the crews of Saanich, Semiahmoo, and Lummi location owners” (Suttles 1974:155, n.1). SMOKEĆ is one of 29 reef net locations identified by XEMFOLTW (N. Claxton 2015a:166-167). Thus, the on-the-ground territorial relations between the Lummi and WŚÁNEĆ nations were intricately entangled. In fact, the WŚÁNEĆ community members that I interviewed frequently reminisced about time spent during the summer on the San Juan and Gulf Islands with relatives from neighbouring Indigenous communities. Referring to SMOKEĆ, STOLČEL notes: “people from all over would come to meet up there and fish together” (pers. comm., June 28, 2016).

The International Boundary, strategic exclusion of Indigenous peoples from the ocean by commercial fishers who claimed a “right not to be excluded,” and the eventual criminalization of the reef net, however, worked to sever these unique territorial relations (D. Harris 2008:189). In the early-20<sup>th</sup> century, Canadian settlers operating commercial fisheries outcompeted and actively excluded Coast Salish peoples from the Salish Sea, overfishing the local salmon population in the process (Wadewitz 2012:74-75; D. Harris 2008:14). In 1916, reef net fishing was outlawed in Canada, forcing members of the WŚÁNEĆ Nation to set nets in U.S. waters (N. Claxton 2003:35-36; E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:11; D. Elliott 1990:60; Lutz 2008:260; Easton 1985:220-222). Similarly, settlers in the U.S. unionized and barred non-U.S. citizens (including most WŚÁNEĆ

peoples) from working at their commercial reef net fisheries (Puget Sound Reef Netters Union Local #4:5-6), they formally registered the SWELSWÁLET of Coast Salish peoples (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 1955-1960; Unknown 1950), and they placed fish traps immediately in front of others (Clark 1980; Rathbun 1900:302, Plate 13). These efforts worked together to block Indigenous peoples from accessing the salmon. Thus, between 1916 and the 1960s, W̱SÁNEĆ individuals fished as hired-hands at the depleted SWELSWÁLET of their Lummi, Swinomish, and Samish kin, or alongside them at settlers' registered commercial reef net fishing locations. In the 1960s, however, as noted in Chapter 1, several W̱SÁNEĆ community members were removed from the U.S. by enforcement officers. These events marked the functional end in a period of gradual decline for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's reef net fishery. The Lummi Nation (and other Treaty Tribes), however, eventually regained access to their reef net fishery through the 1974 and 1979 Boldt decisions, enabling them to develop a highly-commercialized enterprise. The W̱SÁNEĆ Nation—with no guarantee that their commercial rights would be recognized or prioritized in Canadian case law, and no ability to exploit U.S. reef net fisheries—have not yet had these same opportunities. Instead, reef net fishing as a cultural practice was criminalized and curtailed in Canada, and, as a result, few of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation were able to share its practice and associated knowledge with their descendants (E. Claxton & J. Elliott 1994:50, 52).

Although their histories diverged, the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi nations continue to share significant familial and cultural ties. It is these connections—to one another and to the reef net fishery—that XEMFOLTW̱ has worked to cultivate throughout his PhD research. For instance, several W̱SÁNEĆ community members travelled to Cherry Point to witness the reinvigoration of the traditional Lummi reef net fishery, members of the Lummi Nation showed XEMFOLTW̱ and

others W̱SÁNEĆ community members the specifications of their own reef nets, and members of the Lummi Nation assisted in the construction of the W̱SÁNEĆ reef net (Northwest Treaty Tribes 2014; N. Claxton 2015a:179-188). In turn, XEMFOLTW shared the knowledge he had gathered of the reef net with specific members of the Lummi Nation (N. Claxton 2015a:179), members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation were happy to discuss place name information with members of the Lummi Nation (COLOŁEMKEN, pers. comm. October 20, 2014), and Charles Elliott from the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation carved a ÇENÁLYEN pole for the Lummi Nation to commemorate a SWÁLET that both nations have ties to in Westcott Bay. With the above support, in 2014, members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation reef net fished in Canadian waters for the first time in nearly 100 years (Tsawout First Nation 2014:5; UVic Community Mapping Collaboratory 2014). Alongside the achievement of this central goal, the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi nations developed a “Coast Salish Mini University” (Northwest Treaty Tribes 2015). In 2015, elders from both communities gathered on San Juan and Stuart Island to share knowledge of the land/water and the reef net fishery with students from the Lummi Nation School and the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School. Further, members of the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi nations have made plans to reef net fish together annually. Unfortunately, these efforts have been hampered, so far, by inordinately low Fraser River salmon runs (Hoekstra 2016). XEMFOLTW is hopeful, however, that, with the “reinvigorat[ion of] cross border cooperation,” the histories of the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi nations will converge once again (N. Claxton 2015a:iii-iv, 171).

The research project discussed throughout this thesis attempted to build upon this community momentum. I was asked by W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders to develop a mapping project that specifically focused on reef net fishing with the Lummi Nation and the idea of “no borders.” As discussed above, the desire here was to not exclude W̱SÁNEĆ neighbours and kin

from W̱SÁNEĆ territory and to question the legitimacy of the International Boundary itself. I was told to remove the International Boundary from the maps we produced and ensure that I worked hard to put as much data as possible on “the other side.” On the “Places of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation” map, I did just that. This map, however, was compiled using only published sources. In order for these maps to be useful for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders and I recognized that it was integral that this historical data be enriched with local knowledge of the reef net fishery. In June 2016, I conducted interviews with seven knowledgeable W̱SÁNEĆ community members chosen by W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders (see Appendix A). In these interviews, W̱SÁNEĆ community members discussed the historical and present-day importance of the Lummi Nation—specifically, as “family”—for the W̱SÁNEĆ reef net fishery. XEMFOLTW̱, in an interview for this research project, stated:

I think it's this year that there's actually a Lummi Nation member building industrial reef net gear. He's investing his own money into building it . . . Those commercial fishermen that are doing it already are promoting it as a sustainable model fishery. And, it's our fishery. Why not us do that as well. That's what I hope for too . . . We're walking this journey together, I think. So, supporting each other. Even being from both sides of that arbitrary International Boundary is also helpful. Helpful for us to rebuild our relationship to the land on either side of the territory. And, raising awareness and recognition of that . . . Well, if we both have experienced the same, or very similar, disconnection and disruption through colonization. So, if we can break down those boundaries together. It strengthens us all, I think. (pers. comm., June 16, 2016)

As this increasing desire for the reactivation of international kin networks with the Lummi Nation emerged, W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders and I discussed the idea that several knowledgeable community members from both the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi nations should engage in a participatory mapping workshop. I imagined that at this workshop, members of both nations would collaborate further, editing and adding information to the maps I had already created with/for W̱SÁNEĆ community members (Corbett 2009; Corbett 2013). I imagined that this exercise would be a novel

way to share knowledge between communities and produce an educational/legalistic resource that could be edited and developed more in the future, thus binding, at least bureaucratically, the futures of both communities. Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts this participatory mapping workshop never took place. A more detailed discussion of these failures can be found in Chapter 3. Regardless, members of the Lummi and W̱SÁNEĆ Nations, without my participation as a facilitator, continue to collaborate with one another. Occasionally, I will hear of small gatherings or discussions that took place between members of Lummi and W̱SÁNEĆ nations. I recognize that although my presence may be valued for technical/research-based purposes, it is less useful and appropriate in other contexts. The W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's engagement with specific members of the Lummi Nation through private family discussions and on-the-ground territorial arrangements is likely more in line with Coast Salish cultural protocol and land tenure systems (Thom 2014b:21).

As XA'LATE noted:

The lawyer says "Oh, you can get a lot of money if you say 'no' to this" to the W̱SÁNEĆ people. "You can claim this." It's all about claim nowadays and all about money . . . Leave the lawyers out of it. Leave them out. We can agree or disagree. We can agree to disagree, but it's our teachings and how it was taught to us . . . We got to really put that [conflict between nations] aside and really talk about our teachings. That's the main thing. (pers. comm, June 14, 2016)

Although certain aspects of this research project were not successful, I maintain that there is an increased potential for Indigenous peoples to share knowledge and land/water—and to reactivate ties amongst each other, as they have done in the past (Suttles 1963) and, at times, continue to do (Thom 2014b)—if the states' various methods of division and dispossession can be avoided. One such way to avoid the state, I would argue, is by exploiting the *symbolic impermeability* of the International Boundary (Scott 2009). Without state pressure, however, Indigenous peoples would not necessarily *share* land/water freely (Sterritt *et al.* 1998). As Thom notes, Coast Salish land tenure systems continue to exist and have not been overwhelmed by

colonization (2014b:21). Further, long-standing inter-village tensions (Snyder as cited in Thom 2010:41), now exacerbated by the BCTP, continue to complicate these structures. Thus, Indigenous peoples, in different circumstances, adopt different models of territoriality according to their current needs/desires: at times, engaging in land/water and knowledge sharing in line with Coast Salish land tenure systems (as in the case of the relationship between members of the Lummi and W̱SÁNEĆ Nations) and, at others, engaging the Canadian judicial system (as in the case of the relationship between the Tsawwassen First Nation and the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation) (Thom 2014b:21). Perhaps, however, without the state's active and disruptive presence, conflicts within the Coast Salish world would be managed, primarily, with self-determinative reference to Coast Salish cultural protocol and land tenure systems.

As a final note, tension between Indigenous communities still exist, to some degree, across the International Boundary. Miller states that “members of one BC band have taken the position that they wish to exclude from commercial Native fisheries on the Fraser River any “non-signatory” band members; namely, those who reside in Washington and who are presumed to have access to the Puget Sound Native fishery” (Miller 1996:72). Further, the formalized governance of the Lummi Nation (through the Sche’lang’en Department) chose to not participate in this research project. Members of the Lummi Nation that I spoke with stated that the Lummi Sche’lang’en Department is wary of sharing information within and without the community (including with members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation). Further, a few W̱SÁNEĆ community members have mentioned encounters with members of the Sche’lang’en Department where W̱SÁNEĆ peoples’ rights to places across the International Boundary were questioned. Thus, even in circumstances where there is no *direct* pressure to adopt the state’s hegemonic ideologies, Indigenous peoples—either in the statements of their formal governments or in the daily life of

their memberships—engage in both the subversion and reification of “boundaries among kin” (Nadasdy 2012; Kingfisher & Maskovsky 2008:122-123).

### **Closing Thoughts**

By engaging with the BCTP, Indigenous communities accrue massive federal loans/debts (Curry *et al.* 2014:294; Thom 2014b:6; Penikett 2006:170); negotiate for limited cultural rights (including harvesting rights), the ability to exercise some formalized self-government powers, and fee-simple ownership of approximately 5% of their traditional territories, among other such arrangements (Mack 2011:291; Thom 2008:27-28); and effectively disrupt foundational “borderless kin networks” (Thom 2009:180; Nadasdy 2012; Thom 2014b). Meanwhile, these same Indigenous communities bolster the legitimacy of the state (Wainwright & Bryan 2009:164), guarantee its economic “certainty” (Blackburn 2005), and come to implicitly reproduce hegemonic ideologies through the ways in which, as Coulthard claims, “these values eventually ‘seep’ into the colonized and subtly structure and limit the possibility of their freedom” (2014:39). However, the mapping project discussed throughout this thesis, as it interacts tangentially with BCTP negotiations, has the capacity to unveil the ways that Indigenous peoples both reproduce and resist the discursive materials embedded within the politics of recognition and the BCTP (Kingfisher & Maskovsky 2008:122-123). At times, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has engaged with the state’s desired colonized subject position by representing themselves as a discrete nation whose relationships with their neighbours (and kin) are defined through the language of “overlapping claims,” “exclusive territories,” and the “resolution” of these “issues” (Coulthard 2014; *Cook v. The Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation* 2007 BCSC 1722). In doing so, it could be argued, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has come to “identify, *either implicitly or explicitly*, with the profoundly asymmetrical and nonreciprocal forms of recognition” that reinforce divisions between Indigenous

peoples and the continued process of primitive accumulation (Coulthard 2014:25, emphasis added). As I have shown, however, these responses have emerged from specific contexts where neighbouring Indigenous communities have been pressured by the state to participate in the violation of Coast Salish cultural protocol and land tenure systems. Further, at other times, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has chosen to engage notions of territoriality centred around Coast Salish land tenure systems and cultural protocol, thus emphasizing “core social relationships . . . embedded in a moral ethos of borderless kin networks” (Thom 2009:179). So, just as the state has rejigged the “objective” and “subjective” qualities of the settler colonial “apparatus” to divide and dispossess Indigenous peoples at different historical moments in time (Coulthard 2014; Lattas 2011:89; Suttles 1963), so too have Indigenous peoples employed varied “creative, culturally significant forms of resistance” to maintain important relationships between communities and kin (Kulchyski & Tester 2007:138).



### 3. ONEU,ĒĒ<sup>36</sup>: Reef Net Fishing, Cultural Protocol, and Research with/for Indigenous Communities

In 2005, *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography* was published (Lassiter 2005). In it, Lassiter writes strongly about the importance of collaboration and community engagement in research projects (specifically those involving marginalized peoples), and he tells the story of how he came to be the researcher that he is today (2005:20-24). The following quotation, written by James P. Spradley in 1979, was formative for him:

In many places we can no longer collect cultural information from people merely to fill the bank of scientific knowledge. Informants are asking, even, demanding, “Ethnography for what?” . . . One way to synchronize the needs of people and the goals of ethnography is to consult with informants to determine urgent research topics. Instead of beginning with theoretical problems, the ethnographer can begin with informant-expressed needs, then develop a research agenda to relate these topics to the enduring concerns within social science. Surely the needs of informants should have equal weight with “scientific interest” in setting ethnographic priorities. (Spradley as cited in Lassiter 2005:21)

Much like Lassiter, I find the theoretical questions and practical advice put forward by Spradley compelling. Nearly 40 years have passed, however, since these words were written. More recent literature has emerged that highlights not just the *virtue* of Indigenous methodologies, collaborative research, community-engagement, *etc.*, but, instead, the *necessity* of these methodologies and theoretical framings considering the profound impact that academic research can have on the lives of those “studied” (Allen & Hamby 2011; Canadian Institute of Health Research *et al.* 2010; Fairhead *et al.* 2006; Johnson 2008; Lassiter 2005; Minh-ha 1989; Simpson 2008; Sluka 2007; L. Smith 2012; Thom 2012; Tuck 2009). Thus, in beginning this research project, I hoped I would be able to move in this direction and join the “potential pool of researchers

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<sup>36</sup> ONEU,ĒĒ is a SENĆOŦEN verb that means to “be in the middle” (Montler n.d.). This word, I believe, describes the tension within this research project between my expectations of community-based collaborative research, the desires of the four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations’ band councils, and specific W̱SÁNEĆ community members’ cultural protocol surrounding the reef net fishery.

who could work in collaboration with activism” (L. Smith 2012:224). However, as I will explore in this chapter, this did not pan out. Instead, when I was asked recently by another MA student whether the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation had proposed this project or if I had, I responded with the truth. The answer was “somewhere in the middle.”

Before beginning my MA program, I worked as a research consultant with/for C̱OLOŁEMKEN (a Tsartlip Nation Councillor) and his family. Even though I was a contractor working on projects initiated by his family, C̱OLOŁEMKEN and I spoke regularly and engaged in co-research, sharing new developments and thoughts as they emerged. Thus, when I began my MA research, I had specific (and possibly unrealistic) expectations for how future collaborative work would look. I anticipated that if this project was to be successful, W̱SÁNEĆ community members and I should work side by side as colleagues on a project of the community’s choosing. I am not implying here that these visions of collaboration and community engagement are necessarily naïve or untenable. Instead, these expectations, as I learned, are not necessarily appropriate for all research projects (Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* 2010:108; Lassiter 2005:xi; L. Smith 2012:10). In this research project, for instance, my expectations did not materialize. With regard to a litany of questions that researchers should expect to be asked by community members—*e.g.* “Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interest does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up?” (2012:10)—Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes that they should not be answered prescriptively. Collaboration and community engagement do not look the same in all contexts and “what may appear as the ‘right,’ most desirable answer can still be judged incorrect” (L. Smith 2012:10). So, although I desired to answer each of the above questions by stating firmly “the community” (sometimes having to include “and myself”), this was not always the case. My

engagement with the community, throughout this research project, could be described more accurately as a select few WSÁNEĆ community leaders—particularly ÇOLOŁEMKEN, the band councils/administrators of the four WSÁNEĆ First Nations, and other cultural leaders that ÇOLOŁEMKEN sought permission from (L. Smith 2012:15)—acting as representatives *of* a broader WSÁNEĆ “community” and requesting that I complete contract-like work in an agreed-upon direction *for* this community.

This agreed-upon direction was to involve the creation of maps relevant to Aboriginal rights and title and Douglas Treaty rights. As stated by the Tsartlip Nation’s Chief and Council: “Our Nations will continue to work towards making a strong statement to government and our neighbors regarding our Douglas Treaty and Aboriginal rights and title . . . Council accepts the recommendation to enter into an agreement with Justin Fritz for a digital mapping project” (Meeting Minutes, February 23, 2015). Further, I was asked that this project include, in some capacity, the recent efforts of members of the WSÁNEĆ Nation to revitalize the reef net fishery (N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a). I quote, at length, from my early correspondence with ÇOLOŁEMKEN:

I have an idea in regard to mapping and traditional territory. I will summarize: You mentioned in an earlier email about our reef netting project; it was an amazing experience and really connected us to our heritage and our relatives across the border as well. Traditionally a lot of families of Saanich held the right to reef net fish and most of our most productive reef net locations were across border. Two weeks ago, we held a wrap up dinner meeting regarding the reef net fishery and some initial dialogue was introduced for next year. Our Gulf Islands and traditional territory were divided when the U.S./Canada border was put in place. I spoke with the director of San Juan Islands Park Reserve and there is a lot [of] interest to rename a National Park at a traditional village site on San Juan Island. The current name is English Camp, I believe, but when we told the Lummi people that we visited with our traditional name for it they were very relieved and happy that we knew it. The mapping project could be of traditional territory with an aspect also of reef net locations and inclusion of the cross-border Saanich territory. Also, we are planning on reef netting at our family’s traditional site on San Juan Island (Mitchell

Bay) alongside the Lummi people. So, I am sure we can identify something within this dialogue for your project? (pers. comm., October 20, 2014)

While the direction for this project was clearly set out by W̱SÁNEĆ community members (*e.g.* by ÇOLOŁEMKEN above), I was the one working toward my MA. Thus, in the end, the workplan, project design, and execution were left up to me. As a result, critical elements of the project became less collaborative and began to look more like a traditional MA thesis project (or contract-like work). This arrangement did not mesh with my expectations regarding how collaborative and community-based research should be conducted. Regardless, W̱SÁNEĆ community members anticipated that the research project would begin in a timely manner. Thus, as funding, ethics, and other deadlines approached, I developed the research project that has culminated in this thesis. Through many conversations with W̱SÁNEĆ community members, the following additional community-based goals were established: educating the public and the community, sharing place-based knowledge, reactivating international kin networks (specifically, with members of the Lummi Nation), and revitalizing reef net fishing.

With these loose ideas approved, I wanted to move forward and involve other W̱SÁNEĆ community members in designing the research project's more specific structure. I assumed that I (as a non-community member) had made mistakes in thinking through this project's workplan, design, and execution, and I sought the input of other W̱SÁNEĆ community members to *correct* for these mistakes. It should be clear that my conception of "collaboration," at this point, was both *intensive* and *extensive*. I wanted to collaborate deeply with specific individuals while also engaging with my own conception of a broader W̱SÁNEĆ community. I assumed that as more W̱SÁNEĆ community members became involved, it was more likely that this research project would produce something useful for their future. To begin the process of community engagement, ÇOLOŁEMKEN recommended that I obtain formal permission through either the W̱SÁNEĆ

Parks Committee or the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board. These committees, because they are composed of members of each constituent First Nation, are designed to represent the interests of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation as a whole. Further, it was my understanding that, compared to the band councils of each W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation, these committees were less involved in political and legal work, and prioritized, instead, cultural, health, and land-based approaches to cultural revitalization and community engagement. I hoped that by working with these committees, I would be able to move beyond the desires of the four W̱SÁNEĆ band councils and connect with what I imagined were the separate interests of the broader W̱SÁNEĆ community. XEMFOLTW, for instance, has engaged with “children, adults, elders, families, communities and nations” in order to foster what he calls a “nation (re)building process” (N. Claxton 2015a:194; 2003; 2008):

The reef net has the power to bring together children, adults, elders, families, communities and nations. When everyone is working together with a like mind and heart, it creates a strong sense of identity and connection to the common history and future. This process that brought everyone together is really a nation (re)building process. (N. Claxton 2015a:194)

Following his work, I believed that by utilizing the community momentum surrounding the reef net fishery—and by engaging with “children, adults, elders, families, communities and nations” directly (N. Claxton 2015a:194)—I could more fruitfully work toward the educational and cultural revitalization goals outlined above.

To be clear, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation is not formally constituted as a single political entity. XEMFOLTW states that the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation is composed of several winter villages that, together, “shared one same language, culture, law, spiritual beliefs, societal structure, education system, and importantly, we all reef net fished” (N. Claxton 2015a:33). While, generally, this may be an apt description, there is not a present-day unified political organization that represents the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. Instead, in different times and in different contexts, the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation has

been composed of different combinations of the following First Nations: Pauquachin, Tsawout, Tseycum, and Tsartlip. The Malahat Nation is also sometimes included as part of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. However, because of strong linguistic and cultural associations with Hul'qumi'num peoples, involvement with the Te'mexw Treaty Association, and on-again/off-again support of the controversial Malahat LNG project (Duffy 2016), they are often excluded in political collaboration with the other four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations. Further, the Sencot'en Alliance—a formalized political body that at one time represented several W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations—included the Semiahmoo First Nation (a non-W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation located near White Rock). It is clear, then, that the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation does not always act together as a bounded cohesive unit. Each First Nation exercises differing amounts of control over their governance jurisdictions (*e.g.* health services, governance, taxation, *etc.*), has independent relationships with their neighbours (*e.g.* municipalities, land-owners, industry, *etc.*), and engages differently with the provincial and federal governments (*e.g.* through parks agreements, regular consultation, funding, *etc.*). Further, each of the four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations has different desires, priorities, access to resources, and relationships with other Indigenous communities. Lastly, they are each internally composed of different individuals who have ties to different geographically dispersed kin-groups and hold different rights under Coast Salish land tenure systems (Thom 2005). Thus, multiple types/levels of internal differentiation enable all four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations (and any group within and across them), at any one time, to pursue their own separate projects, collaborate within the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, or reach out to non-W̱SÁNEĆ Indigenous communities within the Coast Salish world.

Kew and Miller describe this phenomenon:

In addition to the properties of coherence and permanence of affiliation, Coast Salish social networks allow for short-term bouts of disaffiliation by individual members, communities, bands, or other constituent groups without substantially altering the long-term social system, disrupting cultural continuity, or dissolving

the boundaries of the Coast Salish moral universe . . . Perhaps the most important aspect of this strategy is that, eventually, such people or groups are reaffiliated into the larger Coast Salish political community without penalty. Such actions are best understood as routine political actions rather than as schisms and ought not to be taken as evidence of political collapse or ineptitude . . . This property of the social network rests on the idea of permanence and continuity; the First Nations understand that their ancestors affiliated, disaffiliated, and reaffiliated over very long periods and that their descendants and heirs will do the same. (1999:58-59)

Throughout early discussions, it became clear that the WSÁNEĆ community members I spoke with saw this research project as an opportunity to produce something useful for the *entire* WSÁNEĆ Nation. Following the ongoing resurgence efforts spearheaded by XEMFOLTW (N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a), this was to be another vehicle for WSÁNEĆ “affiliation” (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59). Unfortunately, the formal research arrangements with the two committees mentioned above did not materialize. Because of my prior working relationships with several WSÁNEĆ community members involved in formal governance, the opportunity to gain approval for this research project through each First Nation’s band council was still available. In fact, as I learned, the support of the band council is the preferred method of formalization for the University of Victoria’s Human Research Ethics Board, which draws its guidelines from the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* 2010). With regard to “research involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada,” Article 9.2 of this document states: “In geographic and organizational communities that have local governments or formal leadership, engagement prior to the recruitment of participants would normally take the form of review and approval of a research proposal by a designated body” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* 2010:111). This article—regarding approval from “formal leadership”—is enacted in research likely to “affect the welfare of the [relevant] communities,” and, unless it is ascertained that “the welfare of relevant communities is not affected,” this article extends to any project-based engagement a researcher may have with community members (Canadian Institutes of Health

Research *et al.* 2010:111-113). Although the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* does allow for alternative approval methods (when desired by the community itself), they state that in these circumstances “the preferred course is to secure approval for research from both formal leaders of a community and customary authority” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* 2010:115-116). Here, I believe, is a source of tension—that of a Human Research Ethics Board that is self-protective and liability-conscious (Phipps 2013:12), while being aware that within communities there are “individuals and subgroups who may not have a voice in the formal leadership” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* 2010:116).

So, although I was (and remain) grateful for each First Nation’s continued support, I was also hesitant. I was anxious that this research project—because it was designed by myself (a non-community member with experience providing support to First Nations as they engage with industry and the state) and because it was reviewed and approved solely by the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations’ band councils—would become overly concerned with self-determination, reconciliation, and some measure of justice exclusively through state-based means. I was also anxious that these imagined goals—different than many of community-based goals discussed above—would foster a research project that was defined by legalistic jargon, established bureaucratic/administrative protocol, and strict data privacy. I was anxious that this sort of project would, in the end, not represent or be useful for those “individuals and subgroups who may not have a voice in the formal leadership” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* 2010:116). This concern turned out to be somewhat prescient. As I went from band council to band council seeking input and approval, the project coalesced into a more-or-less cohesive endeavor, albeit one whose focus was gradually shifted away from what I saw as the “community” and, instead, toward the legalistic/bureaucratic realm.



The original project that I developed—emergent from my own academic interest in digital mapping and conversations I had with W̱SÁNEĆ community members—was to create a digital map of the SWELSWÁLET of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. First, I was to complete a review of the historical literature related to the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. By extracting references to W̱SÁNEĆ peoples’ use, knowledge, and interest in land/water, the bulk of this literature was to be converted into spatial data and displayed on a map entitled “Places of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation.” Next, I was to conduct interview and mapping sessions with W̱SÁNEĆ community members related, more specifically, to reef net fishing. Several of these interviews were to involve field trips to places deemed important. These field trips were intended to produce both more accurate location data and richer descriptive data. The places discussed in these interviews would be added to the above map, thus enriching the previously collected historical data with W̱SÁNEĆ community members’ living knowledge. During these interviews, I also intended to ask questions about territoriality, traditional land tenure systems, inter-community knowledge sharing, the International Boundary, and the BC Treaty Process—topics identified as pertinent in conversations I had with W̱SÁNEĆ community members and explored in Chapters 1 and 2. Next, I was to facilitate a participatory mapping workshop with members of both the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi Nations. And, finally, a public component of the project was discussed. Select data from the above maps would be released online—separate from the private work being done in the legal domain by these communities—with the intention of “making a strong statement to Government and [W̱SÁNEĆ] neighbors regarding [W̱SÁNEĆ] Douglas Treaty and aboriginal rights and title” (Tsartlip Nation Chief and Council, Meeting Minutes, February 23, 2015). There was some talk that these public maps could also be added as curriculum material at the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School. Before all of this, however, I was to bring the information I had gathered back to a W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee

for possible data additions, edits, and deletions. In the end, I would prepare the maps to match the community's needs, and I would help publish them. Ownership of all data would then be turned over to the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation to use as they saw fit.

Much of the above, however, never occurred. First, there were no field trips: I found obtaining contact information and organizing interviews to be difficult tasks. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in a discussion of Indigenous methodologies among Māori, states that it is the researcher's obligation to "maximize the participation and interest of Māori" (2012:193). My project, however, failed to "maximize the participation and interest of" W̱SÁNEĆ community members (L. Smith 2012:193). I would argue that this is the result of several factors: my role as a white settler man who had few connections within the community, the project's shift toward the "specialized" and bureaucratic interests of the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations' band councils (Nadasdy 2003:257-259), a *burnout* effect felt by W̱SÁNEĆ community member as a result of similar projects (N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a), and the topic of reef net fishing itself. This latter factor is the most important for my purposes and will be discussed in detail further on. Second, the information that I collected was not turned over to the "W̱SÁNEĆ Nation." Instead, much of the information collected—due to anxiety surrounding its theft and subsequent ability to damage the above large-scale political/legal engagements (as discussed in Chapter 2)—was absorbed into the various confidential archives and databases managed by the each of the four W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's band councils. Third, a participatory mapping workshop with members of both the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi Nations did not take place. The Lummi Nation's Sche'lang'en Department chose not to participate, and members of the Lummi Nation—who had collaborated with members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation on the reef net revitalization project (N. Claxton 2015a)—ended up postponing a visit to the Saanich Peninsula for reasons unrelated to this project. I had hoped that the success

of the participatory mapping workshop would become the crux of my community engagement efforts. I imagined that it would foster an environment where people from different Indigenous nations, families, and even countries could earnestly and openly discuss reef net fishing, shared territories, and next steps toward their joint goal of cultural revitalization. Finally, I intended for there to be “check-ups” with W̱SÁNEĆ community members at each of the above stages to ensure that the work I was doing would, in the end, be valuable for the community. Following Lassiter’s suggestion of an editing committee (envisioned as one of the roles played by the W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee), these check-ups were intended to avoid the burden of collaboration that collaborators may experience (2005:142). Despite this, many of these check-ups never occurred and those that did were perfunctory. This resulted in a project that, as noted earlier, appeared more and more like a traditional MA thesis project (or contract-like work).

So, although I attempted to focus my workplan and project design following what I, and others, feel is a moral obligation to “develop research agendas that can be of practical use in tribal *communities* today” (Thom 2012:578, emphasis added), I don’t believe that I was successful in the way I had originally intended. Instead, I would argue that the above failures reveal a tension between my own conceptions of both community-based research and collaboration and those of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with. In our meetings, members of the four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations’ band councils expressed continued support and gratitude for the work that I was doing. Despite the failures noted above, many of the community leaders that I spoke with saw the outcomes of this research project as both successful and culturally appropriate. This is not to say that they did not recognize my concerns. In fact, several community leaders expressed a desire to include the broader community in this project (as well as the general public and other Indigenous communities, as discussed elsewhere). However, at the same time, they also

acknowledged that certain knowledge, according to specific cultural protocol surrounding the management of reef net fishing knowledge, would be diminished if it was shared outside of specific kin-groups. Thus, the topic of reef net fishing itself limited the amount of community engagement that could appropriately take place. Despite this, I remained unsure if this project could be considered community-based or collaborative without broader community support, and, if not, I questioned whether the project could still be considered ethical and valuable. I viewed working closely with a few interested, and well-connected, people as potentially reproducing the internal divisions that exist within any community (L. Smith 2012:115; La Salle 2013:84; Fairhead *et al.* 2006:106). Thus, throughout this research project, it remained important to me that I work in some capacity with an imagined W̱SÁNEĆ “community,” and specific imagined W̱SÁNEĆ community members, whose voices had not yet been heard (L. Smith 2012:115; Canadian Institute of Health Research *et al.* 2010:115-116). Although some W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with expressed frustration with the limited amount of community engagement that came out of this research project, it became clear that other forms of *community engagement* were happening, in accordance with Coast Salish kin-based governance systems, away from the “prying eyes of researchers” like me (L. Smith 2012:139-140).

So, while the “collaborative” and “community engagement” elements of this research project were hampered, to some degree, by the often “specialized” and bureaucratic desires of the W̱SÁNEĆ band councils (Nadasdy 2003:257-259), they were also realigned according to specific Coast Salish cultural protocol related to the role of kin-based governance systems and the management of reef net fishing knowledge. Here, then, Lassiter’s call for research projects that “deliberately and explicitly [emphasize] collaboration at every point in the ethnographic process, without veiling it—from project conceptualization, to fieldwork, and, especially, through the

writing process”—was not directly applicable (2005:16). Instead, a fundamental disconnect between idealized visions of collaboration, the desires of the “specialized” and bureaucratic WSÁNEĆ band councils (Nadasdy 2003:257-259), and specific cultural protocol surrounding the management of reef net fishing knowledge caused significant methodological tensions within this research project.

### **“Private Knowledge”**

Suttles argues that “while the lineage (or village) identified itself with its country, exploitation of the most productive fishing and other sites was often in the hands of certain individuals who were able to use whatever surplus might be produced” (1958:502). Many authors argue that certain Coast Salish individuals and families “own” specific places, and that their extended kin-groups benefit from this ownership through their rights to access these places (with permission) and the normalization of sharing within the Coast Salish world (Suttles 1958; Barsh 2008; Thom 2014b). Reef net fishing is one of these family-“owned” inherited rights: “In some cases, wealth came from the possession of hereditary rights, as in the case of a Songish or Lummi reef-net owner; but even then, the man not only owned the right to use a net at a certain place but also usually possess the special practical and ritual knowledge necessary for its successful operation” (Suttles 1958:500-501). Bouchard and Kennedy break these different forms of inheritance down into two categories: *CELÁNEN* (Montler n.d.)—or ““inherited privileges”” (Bouchard & Kennedy 1996:2)—refers to the “right to use a net at a certain place” (Suttles 1958:500-501), and SNEP (STOLØEL, pers. comm., November 3, 2017)—or “advice” (Suttles 1958:501)—refers to the “special practical and ritual knowledge necessary for its successful operation” (Suttles 1958:500-501). The inherited knowledge referred to as SNEP, according to Suttles, consists of

genealogies and family traditions revealing family greatness, gossip about other families demonstrating how inferior they are, instruction in practical matters such as how to quest for the right kind of guardian spirit, secret signals for indicating that someone is of lower-class descent, and a good deal of solid moral training. (Suttles 1958:501)

In contrast, “low-class people were people who had ‘lost their history,’ who ‘had no advice’ (a’wənə snə’ps),” and thus, according to this theorization, would know little about the history, practice, and land tenure system associated with reef net fishing (Suttles 1958:501).

The dichotomy between those who ‘know’ and those who ‘don’t know’ often emerged throughout the course of this research project. When talking about who should be involved in this research project, some WŚÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with said of others, “they won’t know anything”—alluding to the fact that these individuals are not connected to specific families and have not inherited reef net fishing places and knowledge from their ancestors. STOLČEL explained this differences in knowledge—rather than with reference to class and status—in terms of *direction*. He stated that each family belongs to a specific NEHIYMET that gives them rights to certain places, knowledge, songs, and names, all of which *direct* them toward certain *spheres* of the WŚÁNEĆ territory (e.g. the land, the sea, the mountains, *etc.*). He stated:

Your NEHIYMET is the oldest traceable name that you can go back to within your family. That NEHIYMET gives you rights to certain SWÁLET or certain reef net locations. That’s how you make your connection back to which particular reef net you belong to, or reef net location. Not just that, but it gives you rights to other societies that we have in the WŚÁNEĆ area. Because we had a society that is in respect to the life of the sea. And, that’s called SYELMEWĆES society. And, it’s in honour of the whale spirit and all the living things in the sea . . . We have a SXĪXI society, which is all the different masks, depict different animals of the animal kingdom. And, that’s a society that some families belong to. And, that’s like their connection to nature. ŠKELEĆEN society which is a cedar and basket society which is a society which connects us to the land and the spirits of the land. And, those societies were the original government of this homeland and responsibly taking care of the land, the sea, and the mountain places, and the sacred places where we have to live . . . That’s the responsibility that they were given through their societies. Whether it’s to do with plants and medicines or does it have to do

with the fishery . . . Not every family [had connections to the reef net fishery], but everybody was fed by the reef net. (STOLČEĽ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016)

By sharing intimate knowledge of the reef net fishery with other families who are directed toward different *spheres*, some WŚÁNEĆ community members believe that the power of this knowledge may be irrevocably diminished. Often others—whose families may be directed toward, for instance, the management of burial places—feel similarly about their family’s own “private knowledge” (Suttles 1958). Thus, while most WŚÁNEĆ community members I spoke with *did* express a desire to include the broader community in this project, reef net fishing itself, as a topic, worked to limit the inclusion of certain other WŚÁNEĆ community members. Further, the individuals that I collaborated with were hesitant to structure the project in a way that would give others—who, traditionally, would not be privy to certain private familial information—unfettered access. So, in my efforts to engage in the standard academic model of collaboration and community engagement, I found myself immediately at risk of breaching the cultural protocol and desires of the people who had chosen to collaborate with me.

I will draw on a Coast Salish narrative form to illustrate this mistake. In the narrative of the “Bungling Host” (Holden 1976:272), a man (often a Trickster-like character) visits his neighbours who feed him generously and with hospitality. The man, attempting to engage in reciprocity, returns the favour by inviting them over to his home. The “host” then fails miserably in his attempt to feed and care for his guests: he hurts himself while cooking, destroys his home, and kills his family, all by accident. Coast Salish peoples, in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century, began to alter this narrative form to satirize the behaviour of white settlers. The Bungling Host, in this repurposing, engages in talk of gold mines, setting up stores, buying and selling land, and the law, all while eating the food of his neighbours—an obvious tell to the *whiteness* of the Bungling Host. This narrative serves an allegorical purpose. As Holden notes, it presents a “model of everything

human reciprocity should not be” and is “wrought in terms of an irony that exposes the wide gap between the good will of its stated intent and the real effect of its actions on native persons” (1976:273). Unfortunately, I read about this narrative form long after I had completed the bulk of my field work. I would argue that I (and likely many other settler researchers) have acted much like the Bungling Host. However, instead of talk of the law and “flying machines” (Holden 1976:273), I talked endlessly of specific forms of collaboration and community engagement all the while *bungling* any promise of intensive collaboration or true reciprocity with those who chose to work with me: “key individuals” that desired to protect and explore their families’ “private knowledge” (Allen & Hamby 2011:222; Suttles 1958).

### **“Alternative Political Approaches”**

The premise explored above, however, is complicated by the fact that tension, just as in any community, exists within the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation between people who affiliate with different families, belong to different age brackets, identify as different genders, make different amounts of money, are allotted different statuses under the *Indian Act*, and are or are not members of their First Nation’s band council (Robinson 1979; Borrows 1994; Miller 2016:31; Thom 2010:41; Mitchell & Franklin 1984). I would argue that these subtle intra-community tensions—separate, at times, from Coast Salish cultural protocol surrounding the management of the reef net fishery and its associated knowledge—also influenced the form that collaboration and community engagement took in this research project. These tensions, I would argue, are visible to some degree in the different ways that differently situated W̱SÁNEĆ community members speak about reef net fishing. For example, several W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with expressed concern that this project would be used to “prove” that certain families “own” specific SWELSWÁLET (reef net fishing places), thus denying other W̱SÁNEĆ community members’ ties to these places.



Some WŚÁNEĆ community members did, in fact, articulate the idea that only certain families with ties to specific NELHIIMET (the oldest traceable ancestral name within a family) have a ĆENÁLYEN (a SWÁLET “owner” or a reef net fishing captain). Others, however, stated that every family has their own ĆENÁLYEN. In contrast, some WŚÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with denied the role of the ĆENÁLYEN entirely, stating that the reef net belongs either to certain families as units or to WŚÁNEĆ peoples as a whole. STOLĈEŁ, whose great-great-grandfather was listed as the “owner” of a reef net fishing location at SMOKEĆ (Suttles 1974:209, 211), disagrees. He stated that reef net fishing is *not* an activity that *belongs* to all WŚÁNEĆ community members (or even to every family), but that “everybody was fed by the reef net” (STOLĈEŁ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). In this view, although a ĆENÁLYEN has obligations to other WŚÁNEĆ peoples—through both the requirement of these individuals to “keep . . . ‘clean’” the locations and resources that they utilize (Barsh 2008:220-221), and through the “WŚÁNEĆ law of kindness” (STOLĈEŁ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016)—those without ties to a relevant NEHIYMET do not have the same rights to the reef net fishery as those of a ĆENÁLYEN and his kin.

These competing narratives are intricately woven. Individuals who state that SWELSWÁLET belong to all WŚÁNEĆ peoples have argued that families who claim “ownership” over them were asked, at some point in the past, to “look after” those places for everyone’s benefit. The phrase “look after,” in the Coast Salish context, is generally understood to mean the active management and preservation of a resource or thing for future generations. Over time, from this perspective, these individuals tasked with “looking after” certain places began to frame land/water as a *thing* that could be subject to individual ownership (Egan 2013). These individuals, according to some members of the WŚÁNEĆ Nation that I spoke with, then chose to

represent themselves as the owners of specific SWELSWÁLET, and, later, they passed this information on to their descendants. These teachings are linked to unique WŚÁNEĆ creation stories, private knowledge, and ‘advice’ passed down from generation to generation within specific familial lines. One WŚÁNEĆ community member discussed having to regularly make pragmatic decisions in their political career between acting in a “WŚÁNEĆ way” (*i.e.* together, as one people) or a “colonial way” (*i.e.* as families, intra-community groupings, or village-based First Nations). In contrast, several WŚÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with argued that some individuals are not privy to the “private knowledge” that flows through specific NELHIIMET (Suttles 1958). Further, by promoting present-day assumption found within settler society that depict Indigenous nations as “ostensibly homogenous local polities” (Barsh 2008:216), one WŚÁNEĆ community members claimed that these individuals have inadvertently delegitimized traditional owners and Straits Salish land tenure systems. This individual also spoke with me about how, in the past, a ĆENÁLYEN may have boasted about their reef net fishing sites, their status, and their wealth. Now, however, according to them, ĆENĆENÁLYEN feel compelled to sacrifice the wealth, influence, and prestige allotted to them through their inherited rights, and to engage in egalitarian discourses which prioritize wholesale WŚÁNEĆ “affiliation” (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59). They then expressed the dilemma inherent in this phenomenon as the constant choice between doing what is “ethically right” and what is “culturally true” (field notes, March 22, 2016).

Miller argues that these narratives and counter-narratives are expressions of an ever-present and generalized tension in the Coast Salish world between “competing but interconnected family networks” who are further cross-cut by class, gender, age, governance role, *Indian Act* status, and First Nation membership (Miller 2001:38; 2016:31; Robinson 1979; Borrows 1994; Thom 2010:41; Mitchell & Franklin 1984). Using the work of Snyder, Miller discusses the

major ‘fissure points’ within Coast Salish societies . . . between in-laws, between members of the same family of different social class, and between men and women, especially postmenopausal women establishing political careers. In each of these cases, cultural values stood in contrast to one another, thereby creating alternative grounds on which claims to resources and authority could be made, albeit with difficulty and with the potential for conflict. (2001:50)

The above “alternative grounds” (*e.g.* the arguments supporting and negating the individual “ownership” of SWELSWÁLET), despite their contradictory nature, can be seen, then, as evidence of the “toleration of some differences in practice and viewpoint” within the broader W̱SÁNEĆ community (Miller 2001:50, 59). In fact, despite some W̱SÁNEĆ community members’ use of the dichotomy between those that ‘know’ and those that ‘don’t know,’ many of these same individuals also acknowledge and validate different familial perspectives on class, ownership, inherited rights, the land tenure system, and cultural protocol by consistently returning to the phrase “everyone has their own history.”

A clear example of how these multiple and intersecting internal conflicts emerged within this research project can be found in the first (and only) meeting of the W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee. I had asked ƆOLOŁEMKEN and STOLƆEŁ to put together a list of people from within the community that they thought should be a part of the W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee (making sure to include people of all genders and from all W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations). Five people (three men and two women) were chosen. There were four general purposes for this organization: 1) to limit the burden of collaboration (Lassiter 2005:142), 2) to manage potential tensions between the four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations by including, equally, members of each, 3) to have a larger conversation about what collaboration and community-based research should look like, and 4) to compile a list of W̱SÁNEĆ community members who should be included in this research project. The last point, above, was a purposeful effort to respond to the grievances of several W̱SÁNEĆ community members who stated that certain others were often ignored as valuable sources of

knowledge. I wanted to make sure that this did not occur, and I expressed my desire for this project to act as a tool to promote a diversity of voices within the community. Thirteen individuals were recommended to me that day. Of those 13, one individual was a woman, and, in the end, seven men were available to be interviewed.

Speaking with a W̱SÁNEĆ community member after the meeting, I heard concerns that this research project, and the committee itself, was serving the interests of specific individuals within the community. In fact, two women that I spoke with, while recognizing that this research project may have valuable outcomes, chose to limit their participation. Despite the *Tri-Council Policy Statement's* recognition of this kind of response—"communities may also choose not to engage actively in a research project, but simply to acknowledge it and register no objection to it" (Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* 2010:108)—I believe that this action can be more accurately framed as an example of the "pulling-out strategy" that Kew and Miller observed among other Coast Salish communities:

Individual people, including leaders, sometimes practise what one Sto:lo chief called a 'pulling-out strategy' to express reservations about decisions taken by the collective, or to influence internal political processes . . . this property of the social network is a resource that allows for changing configurations of public opinion and for the establishment of alternative directions. One might argue that Sto:lo people can choose between alternative political approaches before a consensus gradually emerges among the leaders of the constituent bands. (1999:58-59)

Although these women did not state a clear "alternative political [approach]," their hesitation to participate indicated to me a desire for a research project that was more attentive to the complexities of inter-community tension (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59).

Over the course of this research project, I met several W̱SÁNEĆ community members that had profound knowledge about the reef net fishery. However, I found that some of these W̱SÁNEĆ community members were not prioritized as valuable knowledge holders by others. For instance,

I was repeatedly told that a certain W̱SÁNEĆ community member was an integral knowledge holder because he was the only living W̱SÁNEĆ person (who still lived in the community) that had reef net fished. However, I had heard in other conversations that another W̱SÁNEĆ community member had also reef net fished when he was younger. In the end, both men were recommended to me by the W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee, and I interviewed them separately. What is interesting about this, however, is that, although they both shared rich knowledge, one individual was more actively promoted by the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with. Additionally, in two of the interviews I conducted, the men's wives were present. These women would occasionally participate in the interviews to correct their husbands, add additional details, or tell their own stories. In fact, one of the women had reef net fished herself as a child. Interestingly, neither of these women's names were mentioned at the meeting of the W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee.

With this said, the “alternative political [approach]” mentioned above could be the inclusion of individuals knowledgeable of reef net fishing that are not usually recognized in research projects conducted with/for the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. For example, women, in general, were under-represented in this project as reef netting is said to be an activity traditionally practiced by men. Thus, women were not often represented as those that ‘know.’ However, it seems that several W̱SÁNEĆ women (specifically, in this instance, those mentioned above who participated in their husbands’ interviews) have relevant knowledge and experience with the subject matter. So, during this research project, it seemed that the value of some W̱SÁNEĆ community members’ knowledge was not sufficiently recognized. On the other hand, if those individuals who are said to not ‘know anything’ about reef net fishing, in fact, do not ‘know anything’ about reef net fishing, then another “alternative political [approach]” emerges. This approach would consist of the exploration of a

topic that allows for the inclusion of a wider array of voices, thus avoiding the scenario, noted above, whereby a project can be viewed as a vehicle for the interests of a specific few individuals. By doing so, those who do not have familial ties to a reef net fishing NEHIYMET, many women, individuals whose families are oriented toward a different *sphere* of the WSÁNEĆ territory, and other WSÁNEĆ community members may then have an opportunity to share valuable information related to their own interests/knowledge-base, despite not ‘know[ing] anything’ specifically about reef net fishing. So, although this project emerged from a “nation (re)building process” (N. Claxton 2015a:194; 2003; 2008), it revealed, in some ways, ever-present and generalized intra-community tensions within the WSÁNEĆ Nation (Miller 2001:47-50). And, unfortunately, it served as a continuation of an anthropological legacy roundly critiqued by second-wave feminist scholars in the 1960s: that of “male anthropologists studying male topics” (Lassiter 2005:52).

### **“Highly Experimental and Deeply Traditional”**

While recognizing that Coast Salish First Nations are composed of “competing but interconnected family networks” (who are further cross-cut by the above listed indices), it is important to recognize the ways in which the *Indian Act* imposed band council system has at times exacerbated pre-existent intra/inter-community tensions (Miller 2001:38; Miller 2016:5, 28). As many authors have noted, through discriminatory, disruptive, and dispossessive state measures, the band council system is often beset with social, gender-based, political, administrative, and economic issues (Mitchell & Franklin 1984; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1991a; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1991b:128; Graham 2010; Sossin 2012:625-626; Borrows 2003:111, 122; Monture 2004:3-4; Borrows 1994:35-37, 45; Robinson 1979; Washington 2004; Miller 2001; Barsh 2008). However, this is not how the band council system influenced the collaborative/community-based goals that I had for this research project. Instead, alongside the

cultural protocol and intra-community tensions noted above, the “specialized” and bureaucratic desires of the W̱SÁNEĆ band councils limited the number of W̱SÁNEĆ community members who were involved in this research project by shifting the focus of the project away from community engagement/collaboration and toward contract-like work submitted directly to the band councils themselves (Nadasdy 2003:257-259). For instance, the data I collected was not used for educational purposes (although community leaders and I are still discussing if and how the “Places of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation” map could be made available as curriculum material at the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School). Instead, the maps have, thus far, only been shown in closed-door negotiations with Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Parks Canada, and the Capital Regional District to assert Aboriginal rights and title and Douglas Treaty rights.

This is not to say that band councils are entities unconcerned with the needs of the community’s “grassroots” (L. Smith 2012:100). In fact, as alluded to above, the four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations are all involved in rigorous political wrangling with the state surrounding the establishment of national parks and marine conservation areas, the National Energy Board’s approval of an energy project located squarely within W̱SÁNEĆ territory (National Energy Board 2016), and other equally complex matters. There is no doubt that the negotiation and settlement of these grievances will profoundly affect current W̱SÁNEĆ community members and their descendants. Further, in working with members of the four W̱SÁNEĆ Nations’ band councils, I was struck by the thoughtfulness and grace with which they balanced these large-scale political/legal questions with smaller-scale local matters. More personally, despite being stretched unreasonably thin (Graham 2010:2, 5), the four W̱SÁNEĆ Nation band councils took considerable amounts of time out of their busy schedules to offer input and suggestions on a project that—in contrast to the other jurisdictions they are tasked with managing—had little immediate impact on

their community. Further, one W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation's band council granted me unfettered access to confidential documents from their Lands Department so that I could develop the "Places of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation" map. When it was completed, they saw its potential long-term benefits and allowed me to share this map (confidential documents and all) with the other W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations and interested W̱SÁNEĆ community members.

Despite these significant acts in the interest of W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, it remains clear to me that this research project's focus was gradually fine-tuned to the interests of the "specialized" and bureaucratic W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations' band councils (Nadasdy 2003:257-259). Although this project piggy-backed on previous efforts aimed at W̱SÁNEĆ "affiliation" (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59; N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a), much of the information collected—due to anxiety surrounding its theft and subsequent ability to damage the above large-scale political/legal engagements (as discussed in Chapter 2)—was absorbed into the various confidential archives and databases managed by the each of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation's band councils. For instance, I was bound by a Data Management Protocol Agreement requested by one W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation's band council. This agreement required that I not share the data obtained from that First Nation's membership with the other W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations. Instead, all data relevant to that specific First Nation was to be imported exclusively into their private proprietary database. Although the use of this database will surely assist the band council in their assertion of Aboriginal rights and title and Douglas Treaty rights, the database itself is managed by a for-profit non-Indigenous company and access is managed by members of the First Nation's band council and administrators. Thus, this system of data management—if for no other reason than the inconvenience of contacting the band council or administration and acquiring a user account and password—may have the effect of separating the data from its source community (and the other W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations). In the end,



the transcripts, videos, and spatial data of the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I interviewed were returned only to the First Nation that they held membership in. In contrast, as noted above, I was granted permission to share the publicly-available historical data collected in the “Places of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation” map with all four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations (as well as interested W̱SÁNEĆ community members). This, however, presented its own problems. By turning over individual copies of the “Places of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation” map to each W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation (rather than leaving one copy with an institutional body that represents the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation), the ability to version control (*i.e.* manage changes to) the digital map was lost. The map’s practical editability—a significant benefit of digital mapping technologies for Indigenous peoples who have experienced the “freezing” of cultural practices and territorial boundaries through outsiders’ interpretations of static paper maps (Corbett 2013; Peluso 1995)—was severely degraded. Thus, through this project’s entrenchment within the band council system, the broader community seems to have been overlooked and the information shared was made potentially inaccessible to W̱SÁNEĆ community members that do not have connections to the administration or governance bodies of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation.

Alongside this critique, it is important to recognize that Indigenous peoples have utilized numerous “creative, culturally significant ways” to imbue the band council system with traditional governance principles and structures (Kulchyski & Tester 2007:138). For example, several Indigenous communities have purposefully falsified their elections to repeatedly appoint their traditional hereditary leaders as Chief (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1991a:263), and others have utilized “consultative” kin-based governance systems—or “informal leaders [that] articulate community values and coalesce public opinion”—in order to adapt the formalized band council system to their specific cultural needs (Kew & Miller 1999:57, 60). Considering this, I

should note that while I have argued that this research project's overall direction and goals were shifted away from what I imagined were the interests of the broader community, this is not an uncomplicated statement of fact.

Although I engaged with certain elected and cultural leaders, steps toward the achievement of large scale community engagement were not promoted during our discussions. As noted earlier, this aligns with a conception of W̱SÁNEĆ cultural protocol held by specific community members surrounding the management of knowledge related to the reef net fishery (Suttles 1958). However, there were also periods of time in this research project where ÇOLOŁEMKEN and other community collaborators requested that I stop work while they consulted with other W̱SÁNEĆ community members and family heads who held inherited rights to specific SWELSWÁLET or reef net fishing knowledge. These internal *check-ins*—which, to my knowledge, occurred several times—seem strikingly similar to the “consultative” kin-based governance systems described by Kew and Miller above (1999:57, 60): Stó:lō Nation leaders, when describing their governance system,

emphasize that the formal political structure decreed in the *Indian Act* is not the sole relevant political and decision-making unit . . . governance is both highly experimental and deeply traditional. More precisely, the present political structures are neo-traditional in that concepts with considerable antiquity continue as the basis for community social and political organization but are manifest in new ways. (Kew & Miller 1999:57)

I had originally intended for the W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee to do this consultative *oversight* work. However, even though the membership of the W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee's membership was chosen by ÇOLOŁEMKEN and STOLÇEŁ, it is important to recognize that the idea came from outside the community. In response, W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders, in line with their self-determinative desires, chose to make decisions about community-engagement at their own pace and according to cultural protocol that I have not yet been privy to. It is clear to me now

that the W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with are not likely to group the “many aunties, uncles and elders whose views must be sought prior to conducting any interviews in a community” into technical committees as their first choice (L. Smith 2012:15). Further, Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that by obscuring Indigenous values, attitudes and practices with technical terms and foreign concepts—e.g. collaborative research, community engagement, the W̱SÁNEĆ Mapping Committee, *etc.*—“institutions such as the academy and major funding agencies maintain and reinforce the idea that research is a highly specialized skill that by definition is developed and supported at a distance from the community” (2012:128). Thus, members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation chose to practice their own form of “community engagement,” according to their own needs and cultural protocol, away from the “prying eyes of researchers” (L. Smith 2012:139-140).

So, again, through my hesitation toward the band council system, I may have bungled the promise of intensive collaboration or true reciprocity with those who chose to collaborate with me (Holden 1976:272): “key individuals” that desired to protect and explore their families’ “private knowledge” (Allen & Hamby 2011:222; Suttles 1958). This is not to say that researchers should not seek out “alternative political approaches” that are desired by “individuals and subgroups who may not have a voice in the formal leadership” (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59; Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* 2010:116). Instead, I am attempting to grapple with how it may have been prudent to have realigned my potentially idealistic visions of collaboration and community engagement. In doing so, I believe a more culturally appropriate environment in which real collaboration with a select few W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders and their families may have been fostered. A final note on band councils: in bringing attention to the flaws of the *Indian Act* imposed band council system, it is not my intent to aid the opponents of Indigenous sovereignty who choose to highlight abuses of power, a lack of accountability, and nepotism within First Nations’ band

councils (Borrows 1994; Nadasdy 2003; Sossin 2012; Barsh 2008). Rather, I hope this section is read in support of the radical acts of Indigenous resurgence, resilience, and resistance practiced by members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation and Indigenous peoples more generally (Kew & Miller 1999; Kulchyski & Tester 2007; Tuck 2009; N. Claxton 2003; 2008; 2015a; Monture 2004; Tuck & Yang 2012; Alfred 2005; Simpson 2008, 2011; Mack 2011; Coulthard 2014:154-179; L. Smith 2012).

### **Methodological Insights**

Many, if not all, of those that I collaborated with were men who hold influence within the community. Cultural protocol surrounding the management of reef net fishing knowledge broadly supports this type of collaboration. However, some evidence from my engagement with other W̱SÁNEĆ community members suggests that knowledge of the reef net fishery is more widespread than one would expect. Further, differently situated W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with had profoundly different ways of articulating concepts of SWELSWÁLET “ownership” and how reef net fishing knowledge ought to be managed (see Chapter 1). Thus, unavoidable questions were raised over the course of this research project: If I had pushed to realize my idealized vision of community-based collaboration, would I, as a white settler man, be working to undermine the important bureaucratic, self-determinative, and resurgent work of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation’s cultural and elected leaders? Or, would this sort of behaviour be considered engagement with the W̱SÁNEĆ “community” itself rather than with W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders that are represented, at this moment in time, as the face of the community?

With these questions in mind, I would like to offer some concluding thoughts regarding collaboration, community-based research, and how these methodologies can manifest differently in different contexts. As stated earlier, I would argue that discourses surrounding reef net fishing,

tensions within the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation between “competing but interconnected family networks” (Miller 2001:38), and the desires of the “specialized” and bureaucratic W̱SÁNEĆ band councils (Nadasdy 2003:257-259) influenced the form that collaboration and community-based research took in this project. In the end, my expectations did not materialize. However, with respect to Coast Salish reef net fishing knowledge management systems, I would argue that completing contract-like work in an agreed-upon direction can be considered “collaborative,” in a sense, if community members have actively chosen that level of interaction. Here, however, I would like to be cautious of utilizing too inclusive a definition of collaboration which could work to negate the on-the-ground participatory meaning of the term that others have adopted (Lassiter 2005). Further, I do not want to fall into the category of scholars who, as Chapin *et al.* note, overuse, abuse, and leverage the terms “collaboration” and “participation” to claim legitimacy within academia (2005:627), or who do the same to “grease the wheels” of a community so that “‘we’ can continue ‘our’ research” (La Salle 2013:84). In the same vein, Lassiter argues against the “use of experience [with a community] as a trope of ‘penetration’” to signal to an audience that the author has achieved an *insider’s perspective*, thus enabling them to “authentically and authoritatively [speak] for the Other” (2005:105). I hope that I have made the extent of my “collaboration” and “community engagement” clear and have not depicted myself as an authority on W̱SÁNEĆ peoples.

While I did “collaborate” with certain W̱SÁNEĆ community members, “collaboration” with certain others—and with the broader W̱SÁNEĆ community in general—was not promoted in our discussions. Although Allen and Hamby state that “working with as many people as possible is a key element in this strategy of collaboration,” they state that certain people—those who are both knowledgeable and who hold some degree of influence within their communities—“do not

represent the generic ‘source community,’ but are key individuals pivotal to these engagements” (2011:222). They also recognize that the logistical benefits that come with strategic collaborations are paired with these individuals’ “strong personal agenda[s]” (Allen & Hamby 2011:222). It is then up to the researcher to align themselves (through specific community networks or through the content one engages) with those whose agendas align with their own, with that of broader social justice goals, and with the community’s “grassroots” (L. Smith 2012:115, 180). Although it is impossible to completely avoid the complexities I have noted here, I would recommend that universities commit a certain amount of resources to the research needs of specific local First Nations. For instance, the UVic Anthropology Department (or, perhaps, more appropriately, an interdisciplinary body within the university such as the UVic Office of Community-University Engagement) could establish a formal relationship with the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation (or the Lekwungen/Songhees Nation) to develop research projects relevant to their needs. Linda Tuhiwai Smith has imagined what this positive and supportive relationship may look like: “In a world where indigenous peoples wielded some political and economic power, activists would be able to call up their ‘think tank,’ with its head office near the other institutions of power, and ask for research on any given topic. Researchers would be trained to provide it in multiple forms” (2012:226). In this model, what is avoided is the difficulty that inexperienced researchers face in choosing who to collaborate with and the possibility that they may not “develop research agendas that can be of practical use in tribal *communities* today” (Thom 2012:578, emphasis added). However, what remains in this move toward bureaucratization is the possibility that the university would align itself, for pragmatic/logistical reasons, with non-representative formalized governance systems, thus circling us back to the original problem. To avoid this, the tensions that exist in universities’ engagements with Indigenous peoples need to be resolved: they cannot claim to work for

“individuals and subgroups who may not have a voice in the formal leadership” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* 2010:116) while acting primarily in the interest of self-protection and liability-avoidance (Phipps 2013:12). Even then, if the university was to work with/for the broader community, individuals with “strong personal agenda[s]” will always emerge (Allen & Hamby 2011:222). It is then—perhaps, problematically, considering the university’s historically tenuous role in Indigenous peoples’ lives—up to the university to align itself with the broader goals of social justice and Indigenous “grassroots” movements, some of which may be opposed to the interests of formal Indigenous governments and those of the university itself (L. Smith 2012:115, 180).

Luckily, in the analysis of Allen and Hamby, the community leaders they engaged with were motivated by a “[concern] for forthcoming generations” and not by other more selfish motives (2011:222). I would argue that this research project was no different. Although my engagement with the broader community was not promoted by particular W̱SÁNEĆ community leaders—who each had their own “strong personal agenda[s]” (Allen & Hamby 2011:222)—this should not be seen as self-interested behaviour. Instead, it should be seen as self-determinative. In fact, as discussed above, some members of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation chose to practice their own form of “community engagement,” according to their own needs and cultural protocol, without my involvement (L. Smith 2012:139-140). Further, XEMFOLTW̱ has also practiced “community-engagement,” and, in the process, he has determined when it is appropriate to revoke cultural protocol. He shared valuable “private knowledge” related to the reef net fishery with students at the ŁÁU, WELNEW̱ Tribal School, with W̱SÁNEĆ community members at an open presentation, and with members of the Lummi Nation (N. Claxton 2015a:142-188; Suttles 1958). Further, in 2014, XEMFOLTW̱ invited approximately two dozen W̱SÁNEĆ community members (some of

whom were not closely related to XEMFOLTW himself or to a reef net fishing NEHIMET) to reef net fish at his family's SWÁLET on Pender Island (N. Claxton 2015a:142-188). These practices are not strictly in line with WŚÁNEĆ cultural protocol surrounding the management of reef net fishing knowledge. Regardless, he has done so because he recognizes the ways in which colonialism has disrupted intergenerational knowledge transfer, thus affecting the ability of future generations to learn about reef net fishing in culturally appropriate ways (N. Claxton 2015a:51). In this sense, XEMFOLTW has chosen to temporarily revoke cultural protocol in order to truly revitalize it as a "living practice" (N. Claxton 2015a:142; 2003; 2008). Interestingly, these efforts to include the broader community mirror the perspectives of WŚÁNEĆ community members who argue that SWELSWÁLET cannot be owned, and who are frustrated with what they see as the dichotomy between the "WŚÁNEĆ way" (*i.e.* acting together, as one people) and the "colonial way" (*i.e.* acting as families, intra-community groupings, or village-based First Nations). Regardless, his idea is that once reef net fishing is revitalized, traditional familial governance systems can then be reinstated (N. Claxton 2008:56-57):

It . . . presents a challenge to the WŚÁNEĆ to preserve and revive these ancient fisheries and systems of governance and to once again be WŚÁNEĆ. Instead of living our lives in complacency under the *Indian Act*, the WŚÁNEĆ should rebuild our WŚÁNEĆ society, and reinstitute our governance systems that honour our traditions, which are protected by the Douglas Treaties signed in 1852. (N. Claxton 2008:57)

These are clearly acts of self-determination.

While many of the WŚÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with desired to share knowledge of the reef net fishery as a vehicle for WŚÁNEĆ "affiliation" (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59), others were frustrated with this logic. They did not want to uncritically embrace what they saw as present-day democratic norms found within settler society by freely sharing their private familial knowledge. They were hesitant to engage in a process that, much like colonialism itself,



had the potential to disrupt their traditional leadership systems and cultural protocol surrounding the management of reef net fishing knowledge. I would argue that both positions explored here—the desires to share and withhold information—represent the continued resilience of WSÁNEĆ peoples in preserving what remains important to them. However, my idealized expectations of what a collaborative community-based research project with/for an Indigenous nation should look like often worked to obscure and distort these important efforts. Further, because the desires of the “specialized” and bureaucratic WSÁNEĆ band councils limited the scope of my idealized vision of collaborative community-based research (Nadasdy 2003:257-259), I was often hesitant. Neither of these outcomes were productive, nor did they work to support the important goals—surrounding the prioritization of traditional leadership systems, the preservation of cultural protocol, and the achievement of state-based self-determination—that members of the WSÁNEĆ Nation have been working toward. So, although I would still argue that it is imperative for researchers to seek out “alternative political approaches” that enable the centring of individuals whose inclusion in research projects has been limited (Kew & Miller 1999:58-59), in the future I hope to be more comfortable not fulfilling my own personal expectations. And, if asked whether the community or myself has developed a specific research project, I hope to be more comfortable stating—in contrast to the potentially uncritical and prescriptive response of “the community”—that, in actuality, the nuanced answer lies “somewhere in the middle.”

## Conclusion

On February 24, 2017, I attended a meeting of the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council. I was asked to present the “Places of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation” map that I had made to Chiefs, Councillors, and Elders from each of the four W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations (field notes, February 24, 2017). At around 10 a.m., we paused for a late breakfast. A W̱SÁNEĆ community member catered the event, and they had prepared scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, fruit salad, coffee, juice, *etc.* I had already eaten that morning, so I wasn’t hungry. But, as we all noted, it looked great. As people were helping themselves, I grabbed a sausage from the pan and ate it with my hands. Manners would paint this as inappropriate. But, everyone was in good spirits that morning, so I took a chance. One W̱SÁNEĆ community leader, however, jokingly chastised me. This individual told me that what I had done would cause my future wife to become fat. This is something that this individual had been told by their parents. Fitting with the mood, I responded with what I thought was a clever line. I said, “Oh well! I’ll love her just the same.” This W̱SÁNEĆ community leader replied curtly, “The point is, don’t do it.” For a moment, the mood shifted. This person had said something serious that demanded attention. However, back at the table, the laughter returned. With amusement, my actions were relayed to the group. They mocked me and invited me to laugh at myself too. I did. I found it funny that, in the moment, I thought I could escape reproach by recognizing the *silliness* of the W̱SÁNEĆ community leader’s statement: *e.g.* 1) that my future wife would get fat because I ate directly from the pan, and 2) that this was something I should actively try to avoid. I thought that by making light of this, I could continue to act as I had. The point, however, was that I should change my behaviour. Although I found my failure funny, it was also illuminating. It made me realize just how out of my depth I was. This small mistake exposed a potential world of cultural understanding that was—and largely remains—hidden to me.

Clifford describes the many strategies that anthropologists use to obscure these moments. He argues that in their written texts, authors work to transform the “garrulous, overdetermined, cross cultural encounter shot through with power relations and personal cross purposes” into “an adequate version of a more-or-less discrete ‘other world,’ composed by an individual author” (Clifford 1983:120). In doing so, they attempt to convey their “ethnographic authority” (Clifford 1983). One specific way that anthropologists do this, Clifford argues, is by positioning themselves as “arranging ethnographer[s]” (1983:140). Here, a “strategic choice” is enacted to “quote regularly and at length from informants” (Clifford 1983:139, 142). Although this allows for some “polyphony” (*i.e.* multiple voices) within the work, it produces what Clifford calls a “*domesticated* heteroglossia” (1983:139, emphasis added). He states: “Quotations are always staged by the quoter, and tend to serve merely as examples, or confirming testimonies” (Clifford 1983:139). Further, by *harnessing* these quotations, the anthropologist is able to claim some legitimacy; they are able to say, “I was there” (Clifford 1983:128). Clifford also acknowledges, however, that as a result of this strategy, unforeseen benefits may emerge:

Polyphonic works are particularly open to readings not specifically intended. Trobriand readers may find Malinowski's interpretations tiresome but his examples and extensive transcriptions still evocative. And Ndembu will not gloss as quickly as European readers over the different voices embedded in Turner's works. (1983:141)

I acknowledge, here, that throughout this thesis I have acted as an “arranging ethnographer” (Clifford 1983:140). However, in doing so, I have also attempted to represent, in as fair and balanced a manner as possible, my own non-authoritative voice alongside the powerful and complex voices of W̱SÁNEĆ community members. Throughout this research project, I was presented with a breadth of different perspectives from a select few W̱SÁNEĆ community members. As noted in each of the proceeding chapters, these perspectives interact with one another

in interesting and unexpected ways. They also often conflict. These perspectives—and the quotations I have chosen to represent them—when taken together, form a dense meshwork that if put down properly could come close to representing the complexity of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. However, composing a coherent piece of writing out of these multiple competing voices (including my own) was an incredibly difficult task. Whenever I sought to explore one idea, I found its counter-point nagging to be expressed. This was exacerbated by the fact that the W̱SÁNEĆ community members involved in this research project, for the most part, did not engage in discussions of the reef net fishery while I was present. Unfortunately, a participatory mapping workshop—where members of both the W̱SÁNEĆ and Lummi Nations would jointly develop, edit, and add information to shared SWELSWÁLET maps (Corbett 2009; Corbett 2013)—and other such plans did not take place. Thus, this written thesis does not represent a fluid dialogue. It is composed of quotations frozen in time and shared in isolation. As a result, the jagged edges of one quotation are imperfectly aligned with those of the next. Compromise and understanding are not represented well here. For these reasons, it has been especially difficult to explore the complexity that is the “nation (re)building process” without “bungling” it all up (Holden 1976): *e.g.* fomenting divisions within the community, misunderstanding W̱SÁNEĆ cultural protocol and incorporating it incorrectly into the design of the research project, or highlighting tropes favoured by those opposed to Indigenous sovereignty (N. Claxton 2015a:193-194; Borrows 1994; Nadasdy 2003; Sossin 2012; Barsh 2008; L. Smith 2012:132).

Once I realized that the complexity discussed above was firmly embedded in this research project—*e.g.* the different perspectives expressed in Chapter 1, the privacy concerns discussed in Chapter 2, and the interpretations of cultural protocol explored in Chapter 3—I spoke with ÇOLOŁEMKEN and STOLÇEŁ about my hesitations (field notes, November 12, 2015). I didn’t

want to cause any discontent or divisions within the community, and I didn't want to recreate the fallout described by Tuck: "After the research team leaves, after the town meeting, after the news cameras have gone away, all we are left with is the damage" (2009:415). This "damage," as I found out, could emerge at many points in this research project, not just "after the research team leaves" (Tuck 2009:415). First, I was told by a former Councillor of the Tseycum Nation, that if I asked the interview questions I had originally planned on asking, I would be "getting away" with "prying" because I am a WENITEM (field notes, March 22, 2016). WENITEM is translated as "a person that just appeared" and refers to white settlers (field notes, March 22, 2016; Montler n.d.). According to this individual, WENITEM are often excused from their "prying" because of their ignorance of specific WSÁNEĆ cultural protocol (field notes, March 22, 2016). WSÁNEĆ community members, on the other hand, don't "pry" because they know that certain information is "not [theirs] to know" (field notes, March 22, 2016). Second, many WENITEM—especially those with technical skills seen as potential assets in Indigenous peoples' cultural resurgence efforts or engagements with the state—are given a pass because of the potential benefits that may emerge from their work. Speaking to an Indigenous audience, Simpson notes:

In contemporary times, the colonizer continues to tell us that if we do not write down our knowledge, it will be lost forever. That if we do not adhere to the Western intellectual traditions to ethically conduct research in our communities, we will do our communities a disservice. That if we do not publish our theses and dissertations in written English, rather than our own languages or adhering to our oral traditions, we will not be sharing our work with the widest audience and we will not be living up to our responsibilities to share knowledge. That if we do not participate in their projects to document as much of our knowledge as possible, we will lose the knowledge forever. (2008:75-76)

Unfortunately, the claims of specific settler researchers outlined by Simpson (2008:75-76)—whether made with specific intention or not—continue to hold sway within Indigenous communities. As a result of specific historical contexts (one of which is explored in Chapter 2),

these individuals can “pry” using the need for “preservation” as justification. Lastly, as Philip Kevin Paul, a WSÁNEĆ community members and notable poet, states: “The first problem I had with the other works [that of settlers] is simple, but important. The reason these works seem too clinical is because they speak directly about their subject. My people rarely spoke directly about anything” (1995:1). Thus, just as “prying”—whether it be allowed because of ignorance or technical ability—is often seen as inappropriate, so too is writing *directly* about the knowledge obtained through “prying.”

When I expressed my concerns to ÇOLOŁEMKEN and STOLÇEŁ, they knowingly laughed. They made it clear that by having the sorts of conversations embedded in this research project, uncovering certain tensions, to some extent, was unavoidable. ÇOLOŁEMKEN—who was also there when I took the food from the pan—then made reference to the mythical Pandora’s box, stating that within the WSÁNEĆ community it had long since been opened (field notes, November 12, 2015). Despite the potential for me to “bungle” it all up (Holden 1976), I was only one of the many hands propping up the lid and looking in. He did not say this to indicate that the “damage” had been done and that there was no point in stopping now, but to make it clear that the WSÁNEĆ Nation was already engaged in internal debates about how best to move forward. Thus, while I was told that I may be “putting people in a tricky situation” by asking particular questions (field notes, March 22, 2016), other WSÁNEĆ community members that I spoke with, referring to these same questions, said things like, “it’s good you’re talking about the names” (STOLÇEŁ, pers. comm., June 28, 2016). Creating alliances with settler researchers—as explored in the Introduction—is one such strategy that specific WSÁNEĆ community members feel will enable them to work toward the revitalization of the reef net fishery (XA’LATE, pers. comm., June 14, 2016; Feit 2004:123). Others, however, fall more in line with the work of Simpson (2008). They

are “sick of being studied,” hesitant of the fixed nature of writing, and/or simply not interested in this sort of research project (field notes, October 21, 2015). Although many W̱SÁNEĆ community members limited their participation (a strategy noted by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research *et al.* [2010:108]), some of these individuals expressed excitement about the end product being made available to the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School (as discussed in Chapter 3, unfortunately, this has not yet occurred). On the other hand, those that did participate—the seven W̱SÁNEĆ community members that I interviewed specifically—devoted significant amounts of time to this research project, welcomed my questions, and looked forward to having their responses seen by others. As XA’LATE noted: “Our way of life means a lot. We don’t want it to be a memory. And, what you’re doing here is sharing. It’s important to share. And, we need to share with our youth” (pers. comm., June 14, 2016).

As mentioned elsewhere, this profound difference in perspectives made it difficult for me to know how best to proceed. I felt that each decision I made could be conceived of as another metaphorical act of ‘taking the sausage from the pan.’ Following the quotation from XA’LATE above, what I have tried to do in this written thesis is honour both the different perspectives shared with me and the stated motivations of those that shared them. Thus, it remains my sincere desire that present-day and future W̱SÁNEĆ community members will come to recognize some semblance of the diverse, powerful, and unique voices of their peers and/or ancestors in these pages. Following Clifford’s acknowledgement that some works are more valuable than others to Indigenous peoples—“Ndembu will not gloss as quickly as European readers over the different voices embedded in Turner’s works” (Clifford 1983:141)—I did not want to compose a “domesticated heteroglossia” (1983:139-140). Instead, as an “arranging ethnographer” (Clifford 1983:140), I wanted to emphasize the same qualities that Philip Kevin Paul sees in his own

community: “Family histories expressed through oral tradition are often intertwined, each family maintaining a unique perspective of a shared event. The result is a keen sense of community” (1995:2). Similarly, for Adam Olsen, a true representation of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation is not found in the “romantic notion of the Indigenous people of North America,” instead “the beauty of who [the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples] are” is embedded in how W̱SÁNEĆ peoples have always “adopt[ed] things in our culture, and adopt[ed] things into our worldview, and accept[ed] new things, and thr[ew] some things out, and question[ed] others, and whole-heartedly embrac[ed] others” (pers. comm., June 7, 2016). I agree with him. And, I would further argue that these acts were not the result of some unchanging entity known as “the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation.” Instead, historical changes were taken up by individuals, families, villages, “nondiscrete, nonlocalized, property-holding kin group[s],” inter-community organizations, and other scalar units that aligned themselves with a specific W̱SÁNEĆ identity at countless historical moments (Suttles 1963:513). This constant “synthesis and renewal” has worked to form and reform the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation over time (Vizenor as cited in Tuck 2009:422). Thus, the ‘internal debates’ mentioned above, and the contexts in which they arise, are fundamental to the “beauty” of the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation as it exists today (Adam Olsen, pers. comm., June 7, 2016).

As a final note, in my exploration of this complexity, I may have both exposed things that some W̱SÁNEĆ community members feel should not have been exposed and ignored others that deserve a proper treatment. If this is so, I profoundly apologize. I hope that I have not hardened divisions within the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation, misrepresented anyone, or unintentionally rejigged W̱SÁNEĆ community members’ expressions of cultural values. Even if only through knowing laughter—much like that directed, many times, at my lack of understanding and naiveté—I hope that this thesis will instead provide opportunities for W̱SÁNEĆ community members to continue



to engage in private discussions amongst themselves—as discussed in Chapter 3 (Kew & Miller 1999:57, 60)—away from the “prying eye of researchers” (L. Smith 2012:139-140).

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## **Appendix A: List of WSÁNEĆ Community Members Interviewed**

Below is a list of WSÁNEĆ Community Members formally interviewed for this research project. Interview video files, audio files, spatial data, consent forms, and transcripts reside with the First Nation that each individual is a member of and with the individual themselves. The names written below are those that each individual chose to be called throughout this thesis. These names include nicknames, middle names, and SENĆOTEN names. Their “legal” English names are given in brackets. As noted throughout this thesis, I also had discussions with other WSÁNEĆ community members including members of the four WSÁNEĆ Nation band councils and other individuals. These discussions occurred privately, in governance meetings, and also, at times, during the interviews themselves. Although they are not listed below, when possible, I have given these individuals’ names in the text of the thesis itself.

- 1. Adam Olsen:** June 7, 2016 at his home.
- 2. Guy (Maurice) Tom:** June 8, 2016 at the Pauquachin Nation Office.
- 3. XA’LATE (Vern Jack):** June 14, 2016 at his home.
- 4. XEMFOLTW (Nicholas “Nick” Claxton):** June 16, 2016 at the University of Victoria’s Ethnographic Mapping Lab.
- 5. SELEMTEN (Louis “Lou” Claxton):** June 21, 2016 at his home. Adelynne Claxton, the wife of SELEMTEN, was also present.
- 6. Skip (Gabriel) Sam:** June 23, 2016 at his home. May Sam, Skip Sam’s wife, was also present.
- 7. STOLČEEL (John Elliott):** June 26, 2016 at the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School and August 17, 2016 at Sassy’s Family Restaurant.

## Appendix B: SENĆOTEN Alphabet and Pronunciation Guide<sup>37</sup>

A – short “A” sound	M – normal “M” sound
Á – an “AE” sound with an abrupt stop	N – normal “N” sound
Ā – long “A” sound	ᑭ – an “NG” sound
B – sharp “B” sound-popping sound	O – a short “O” sound
C – hard “C” sound	P – normal “P” sound
Ć – a “CH” sound	Q – a hollow “QW” sound
Č – a hard “CW” sound	S – normal “S” sound
D – a sharp “D” sound, between “D” and “T”	Ś – an “SH” sound
E – a short “U” sound	T – a normal “T” sound
H – a normal “H” sound	ᑭ – a “TS” sound
I – a long “E” sound	F – a “TH” sound
Î – a long “I” sound	ᑭ – a “TL” sound
J – a sharp “J” sound	U – a double “U” sound
K – a sharp “K” sound	W – a normal “W” sound
ᑭ – a sharp “KW” sound	ᑭ – a wind sound or sharp “WH”
ᑭ – a soft “K” sound, said in back of mouth	X – a short sound made by placing tongue close to roof of mouth and exhaling
ᑭ – a soft “KW” sound done by rounding the mouth	ᑭ – a “XW” sound
L – ordinary “L” sound	Y – a normal “Y” sound
Ł – a sound made by blowing slightly under the tongue	Z – a normal “Z” sound

<sup>37</sup> The SENĆOTEN alphabet and pronunciation guide provided here was obtained from XEMFOLTW (N. Claxton 2003:47-48). For additional linguistic information (including audio files) please see Montler (n.d.).

## Appendix C: The History of James Island<sup>38</sup>

On June 12, 2012 Eric Pelkey shared a story that was handed down from our Elders, Earl Claxton and Ray Sam. He commented that they shared stories that he had never heard before, regarding James Island.

We are going to go back to when our people used to live out on James Island. They lived on the main village, which was always considered Tsawout, where the powder wharf is now. One of the main reasons why they lived out there was because there was beautiful beaches out there. One of the beaches could contain 200 people out there with their canoes. They used to go out there to get ready for the reef net season. And people from our territory who had rights to have reef nets would go out there to prepare themselves for their journey to the sites on the Gulf Islands and the San Juan Islands.

So he said, we are going to go back in time when our great warrior KWUL LAH XUN THUT was a child. KWUL LAH XUN THUT's father was a chief of Tsawout at the time and his uncle was a chief of LEL,TOS [James Island] out in the Gulf Islands. KWUL LAH XUN THUT's father lived with his younger brother at the long house in Tsawout. KWUL LAH XUN THUT had one younger brother that was with him.

One day when they were preparing to start their season of reef net fishing, KWUL LAH XUN THUT's father and his uncles came to him and told him they were going out to James Island to get ready for the reef net season. So they came around on this side of Tsawout, they came around

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<sup>38</sup> On June 21, 2016, SELEMTEN [Lou Claxton] shared a paper document with me. He stated: "My wife [Adelynn Claxton] gave me this [referring to the paper document], because this is the kind of work she does too. It says right on the bottom of this one here: 'Comment from Lou Claxton [SELEMTEN]: This needs to get out to the general public, how the millionaires have treated our own territory on James Island. This is a very special story.' When I asked her about it, she wanted me to give that to you" (SELEMTEN, pers. comm., June 21, 2016). I have rewritten the document here. I have, however, corrected a few small mistakes. For instance, "KWUL LAH XUN THUT" is also spelled "KWAH LAH XUN THUT" in the document. I have chosen to use the spelling "KWUL LAH XUN THUT" throughout. The other changes I have made are similarly minute. In doing so, I have not altered the meaning of this document. See Mitchell for another version of this story (1976:86-87).

to this side, to the main village site. When they got there KWUL LAH XUN THUT's uncle and his boys met his father and his brother on the beach.

They started to get all their gear together, what they do is they could combine their reef nets up into one, they would all have sections of reef nets, they would join the nets to create one big reef net at that time they would inspect the net to see if there needed to be any repairs. If their nets had any weakness in any way then they would lose out on the fishing season because the currents were so strong and it would tear the net apart and also because the salmon were strong enough to tear through the nets. So when they were still on the beach they surveyed where they could do any repair work. Then they put them together with willow inner bark to make twine to do the repair work. Harvesting the willow bark was done by all the men, they went into the woods up in the hills from the beach. When the nets were all repaired they had to be strong enough to catch up to 300 fish in one set.

All of the men went up into the woods and were harvesting the willow bark and while they were up in the woods, there was raiders from up north raiding their village site. They attacked the Tsawout people by surprise. The thing about that, is that is supposed to be a watch man out at the village in Maine Island in Active Pass that was established for that purpose, to warn people if there were any raiders coming, but they were all taken by surprise.

While they were up in the woods, they could hear the screams and they could see the fires down below. KWUL LAH XUN THUT's uncle ran down to the village. You must remember that KWUL LAH XUN THUT and his brother were only 11, 12, years old at the time this happened. They men went down to the village to fight the northerners, KWUL LAH XUN THUT's uncle told his father, you have to take your boys and save yourselves. I have to go down and fight with my people, then he ran down to fight the raiders.

As soon as he did, he took his boys and ran down to the other side of the island to get to Tsawout. While they were trying to get away they could hear the raiders. KWUL LAH XUN THUT's father was crashing thru the bush and then KWUL LAH XUN THUT's father saw what was a racoon trail or rabbit trail and told him and his brother to go thru the trail and stay there until they thought it was safe and not to make any noise, to keep very quiet and try to keep the younger brother from crying.

When they were hiding there, they could hear the raiders come crashing thru and they could hear the fight between the raiders and their father. KWUL LAH XUN THUT's father killed the raiders and threw some of them over the cliff. When it got quiet, they could hear the crows and the ravens coming around eat on the dead bodies after the slaughter.

The boys crawled out and followed the trail and they found their father but he had been killed. They knew that their village was destroyed by northern raiders. They found their mother TAH and she saw them coming by canoe. She took them back to Tsawout then she proceeded to gather the remains of members of TSAWOUT to bring them back for burial.

After three days she called the chiefs together to decide who would be the new chief. She brought her two boys over to Tsartlip to become the Warrior Society.

Earl and Ray have said that this is part of our history. If it wasn't for KWUL LAH XUN THUT, we would not be here. This is the history of James Island.

Comment: Lou Claxton [SELEMTEN]: This needs to get out to the general public, how the millionaires have treated us on our own territory of James Island. This is a very special story.

## Appendix D: The W̱SÁNEĆ Reef Net Fishery as Described by STOLÇEEL<sup>39</sup>

Reef net, the SXOLE, is a very basic part of the fisheries for the W̱SÁNEĆ people. And, the SXOLE was originated here in W̱SÁNEĆ. And, it was . . . I look at it this way. It was a gift to the W̱SÁNEĆ people from the great spirit who . . . one of our W̱SÁNEĆ ladies in our history became the first SXOLE and she was, when the spirit of the—the human spirit of the salmon—came onto the land in the form of a human being and took this young W̱SÁNEĆ lady for his mate, and in return gave us the SXOLE, they call the reef net today. So, after coming onto the land and receiving permission from the W̱SÁNEĆ family to take the daughter as a wife, and then asked that they stay here for, stay with the family for at least a year. And, when it was time for the young man to return to the sea with his mate, before he left he said, “I have a gift for you, for your family.” And, his gift was that of the knowledge around SXOLE. And, that’s reef net fishing.

That’s the one thing that makes the W̱SÁNEĆ people different than other people. Living along the coast here in this part of the world. Because we have no major river where the main salmon runs return. And, so, our main fishery is within the salt water itself. They’re fished before they reach the river with the SXOLE, and the knowledge of that SXOLE came from this young man I was mentioning. And, so, he said to that family, the head of the family back then, he said, “Have your family relatives go out into the bush and bring me some SXOLE. And, if you bring me the right kind of SXOLE, I’ll tell you which one it is.” And, it was different kind of branches they were bringing. And, finally when they brought the bough of the willow branch and he said, “That’s the one, is the SXOLE.” And, so, he peeled it of its bark. It’s a young shoot of the willow tree. He peeled it of its bark and separated the inner bark from the outer bark and started making

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<sup>39</sup> This is an excerpt from the transcript of an interview I conducted with STOLÇEEL on June 28, 2016. Here, in great detail, STOLÇEEL describes the reef net fishery as it relates to W̱SÁNEĆ peoples.

it into twine. Twining it into twine. And, then he said, “Get more and more of this and I’ll show you how to make this.” So, he showed them how to make the original reef net which was made of the inner bark of the willow tree, which is a water plant. It’s on the land but it’s a water plant. And, so, he made the first SXOLE which is a big net.

The big net itself is 40 feet square. And, that’s made in the shape of a huge big bag that is set between two big 40 foot canoes they call SXELÁÇEL. SXELÁÇEL is the SENĆOTEN word for reef net boat. And, all that knowledge, and part of the knowledge that was being given to the family before he returned to the sea with the WSÁNEĆ young lady as his wife, as a gift to the people here in WSÁNEĆ. And, at the very bag end of the reef net itself, had a willow ring in place. That willow ring in place is an escapement hole. And, its name in SENĆOTEN is called S,HELIS. It means “its life.” So, referring to the life of the salmon that are being caught somewhere to continue to go through this, through this escapement hole. And, it’s like you’re being reborn into they’re continued journey to returning to their place of origin, whether it’s part of the main river or maybe a side stream. So, that they can replenish that river bed with their eggs again. And, so that’s the SXOLE and that spirit of the—human spirit of the salmon—he then taught the family back then how to build the lead that leads into that. There’s a false bottom lead that leads into the main SXOLE itself and that’s made—it’s like it has walls and a floor. And, at the part that ends between the canoes, they’re like 30 or 40 feet wide at the mouth of the net itself and it opens up to 70 feet wide at the widest part. I can’t remember how many fathoms deep it is down to the floor.

When the salmon are travelling with the outgoing tide, or when the tide is running out there, they’re travelling together in schools. Our people call them families. They’re travelling in families, returning to the place where they were first hatched. And when they’re travelling in schools and running with the tide, they’re not really travelling very deep. They’re travelling near



to the surface. So, when they're moving and travelling with the tide and then they come to the false bottom that is there, or the lead of the reef net which is made out of ropes and cables made of cedar bark, they start to follow this lead up into the shallow entrance of the SXOLE, laid out in the tide, bagged out into the tide between these two SXELÁCEL canoes. And, they become near to the surface and they get a little nervous because it's getting more shallow and more shallow but then they see the depth of the bag of the net in between these two canoes and they pretty much just dive into the net. So, it's a very efficient technology to make use, the knowledge of this, how salmon travel.

And, that was given to the families, how to build the net itself, how to build the lead of that net was all part of that. It all has names. All those parts and pieces have names. There's four main anchors that are set to hold this net in place in the swift running tide. And, those are the first things that are put down when the families first go out to fish at the beginning of fishing season here in WSÁNEĆ to gather their food for winter. There's a ceremony, like, dropping these four anchors. So, and when those four anchors are put in place—and they're big boulders. And, you can't lift them by—they're too big to lift by hand—but they use another technology which is the rising tide attached to these two big 40 foot canoes, and there was boards, what we call S,ILETEW boards making a huge big deck between these two SXELÁCEL, became like catamaran with these huge big 40 foot deck. And, those big stones would be picked up with that catamaran at a half tide and when the tide would lift them, and then they would move them into place. And, the captain of that particular location, the captain is a QENÁLYEN, he's the one that knows the location. He knows the—the captain knows the landmarks where to drop those down. He knows the prayer words that go down with those first anchor stones, and the setting out of the reef net for the season.

This all begins with the blossoming out of KÁTELĆ, nowadays they call it ocean spray. Different people call it Ironwood, *spiraea*. But, it blooms in the moon of PENAWEN, or June, and it's a signal to our people in that time, it's a marker in nature itself to let us know that the salmon are travelling into, and are now in the straits where we can reach them with this reef net technology that was given to us by the human spirit of the salmon. And the knowledge of all of this is part of what was given. This human spirit of the salmon that took one of our young ladies as his wife to go life in the sea. That was the gift. So, our people were fishing, setting these SXOLE reef nets in all the—each family had what we call a SWÁLET which is a family reef net location, where they would set these fishing nets to receive the salmon that are in bays facing south, bays facing south where the tide would run into the bay. And, the tide would run inside the bay and start running out of the bay and that's where the reef net would be set, so when the salmon were leaving the bay they would go right into the net. When they had a full catch within the net, then a call would be made to let go of those four anchors. The tide itself would pull the two canoes together because the tide was running and they would be pulled together. When the two big canoes are pulled together then they'd lift the net and roll into one canoe, or the other, or both if it was a big catch. And, they'd bring the catch into the shore and then they'd go back out and set their net in place again and wait for another school of fish to come.

And, so, the camp itself was set up in such a way that the QENÁLYEN had his cabin there at the head of that little bay, and the crew, little cabins were beside it. And, when they weren't using their canoes they would be flipped over upside down right where they could look after and take care of them when they weren't being fished. But, those SWÁLET were places that families, our WSÁNEĆ families went to gather their salmon for the oncoming winter. So, all of that salmon was then sundried, cleaned, and sundried on big drying racks. And, even that had its own

technology because at a certain height the flies don't go. So, they made them up high enough where the flies don't go. And, then they had a lot of wind, catch a lot of wind. And, they'd make a small smoke fire and that itself was also connected to the knowledge of the people. That there's certain wood that you can burn in summer that won't cause a forest fire. And, certain wood that is good for smoking and drying fish. And, so, they would have their fire, a small fire, smoky fire, so that once the fish are hung up, hopefully above where the flies are gathering, that the smoke will help to cure those salmon that are hanging in the drying racks.

And, all of this is part of the life of the W̱SÁNEĆ people that originally lived here on this peninsula here. And, we are one tribe. We are one tribe. Even though we have what we call Á,LEN,ENEĆ or village sites on four different parts of this peninsula. This whole peninsula, the elders said that this whole peninsula was like a winter home for the W̱SÁNEĆ people. And, so, our reef nets were set out in those bays facing south and all of the TELETÁCES, those islands that are out there between here at W̱SÁNEĆ peninsula and the mainland, they now call them the Gulf and San Juan Islands, our people just call them TELETÁCES. TELETÁCES means "island," but it has another meaning. It has a meaning that it means that it's a "relative of the deep." If you interpret that word it comes from TETÁCES and SCÁLEĆE. TELETÁCES it's our relatives of the deep and that goes back to older history. Older history when the creator came on the land as a human being. And, he arrived over to the shore of the peninsula over on the east side near STÁUTW. And, he disembarked from his canoe there and when he walked up on the shore on the beach there was lots of QEN,TOLES, QEN,TOLES is like a smooth shiny black stone. It'll be similar to this stone that I have, like this one [STOLÇEŁ pulls a small black stone from his pocket and places it on the table]. It's called a QEN,TOLES stone and they were on that beach in different sizes where XÁ,EL,S came ashore. And, XÁ,EL,S walked up on the beach there and he bent

down and he picked up one of these QEN,TOLES off of the beach there and he tossed it inward from the east to the west, toward the centre of the peninsula. And, nothing grew there where he threw the first stone . . . Nothing grew. When XÁ,EL,S disembarked his canoe on East Side, arriving on east side of the peninsula, and they found the QEN,TOLES there on the shore, he bent down and picked one up, threw it from east to west toward the centre of the peninsula. And, that first one he threw nothing grew there. So, he took another step or two and he bent down and picked up another one and he tossed it inward. And, when he tossed the second one that mountain is still there today. It's still there. LÁWELNEW Mountain, our people call it. And, the white people call it Mount Newton. That's the one that grew there. That was part of the sacred work that he did when he came to the shore that day and he had a basket on his arm and he reached down and picked up a few more of those and put them in his basket. And, then people followed him up to that mountain and there's a rock face cliff on the mountain where they went. And, then that rock face cliff, he took the rest of those stones and he tossed them around and they grew the other mountains that are still there today in this area. And, that's how those mountains came to be.

And, then when he was finished with that work, and then he grabbed some of our people, one by one, our ancestors, and he threw them out into the straits. And, as he tossed them out into the straits he said "QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE, QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE, QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE, QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE": "Look after your relatives, look after your relatives, look after your relatives." And, as he threw them out into the straits, and as they landed into the straits, and then they became those islands that are still there today. What they call the Gulf and San Juan Islands. Those were our original ancestors that got changed by the Creator. "Look" . . . "QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE" . . . "Look after your relatives, look after your relatives, look after your relatives." And, that's why we call the islands TELETÁĆES, relative of the deep. And, when he

was done tossing those out there into the straits, and he turned to the remainder of the people there and he said “I, TÁU, ÇENS QENT E TFE SCÁLEĆE LÁ,E TOL.” “And, you will also look after your relatives of the deep.” That became a law, the word of God himself, created XÁ,EL,S, said to our people “I, TÁU, ÇENS QENT E TFE SCÁLEĆE LÁ,E TOL”: “You will also look after your relatives of the deep,” meaning those islands.

So, each year when the KÁTELĆ bloomed, Oceanspray tree blooms, it’s a signal or a sign in nature for our people to begin to move out into the straits and look after those family relatives, ancestor relative islands by fishing there, using the SXOLE and having the way of life. And, that law was given to us by the great spirit. So, each year when that first KÁTELĆ bloomed and then what we call a TIFE, our ritualist priest, would sacrifice himself and leave the shores of WSÁNEĆ. And, by himself, paddle out to the edge of the territory, what we call SMOQEĆ, the edge of the WSÁNEĆ territory is SMOQEĆ, it’s now called Point Roberts. He paddled out there by himself. It’s a two-day trip when you’re paddling by yourself out there. He paddled half way first through SKFAK, a beautiful little spring water there, called YAYEMNEĆ, where he would have his first drink of water and he would rest. And, still no food because he was Q,ĆÁSET. Q,ĆÁSET is sacrificing yourself, fasting, no water no food, very little water no food, and each stroke of his paddle in that hungry state is a sacrifice for the people and a prayer that he himself, the ritualist priest, TIFE, was offering for the people to have a good fishing season. And, after his rest there one night at SKFAK YAYEMNEĆ, at SKFAK, they call that island Mayne Island today, and then they would go to SMOQEĆ. And, when he reached SMOQEĆ, facing south, all those islands facing south that he would see from there, he would speak to them like relatives. He was standing above his canoe there and address them like they were people. Relatives. Like our ancestors. And, he would speak to them. “QENT E TFEN SCÁLEĆE. XEN SEN ENÁ TELÁĆEL TFÁ,IYE”:

“Look after your relatives, soon they will be here, look after your relatives, soon they will be here. You’re to look after them like Creator said you were to look after them.” [spoken in SENĆOTEN].

“And they will look after you.”

And, that is a yearly happening until it was interrupted by the coming of the white people, interrupting our way of life which was a natural life-cycle, yearly cycle, to be out moving around, in and around all of those islands places, in those bays and looking after those islands like a relative. Where our people hunted, dug clams, fished, picked berries, they made camp fires, and they set up their reef nets, and their reef net camps, their SWÁLET. And, they educated our children. They gathered their medicines and they taught their children how to know . . . have the knowledge of the plants and the medicines on the lands, when you gather, what words to say with it when they were gathering it, and all such things as that. Those are all part of taking care of this WŚÁNEĆ homeland which is spread out all throughout that Gulf, what they call the Gulf and San Juan Islands today. And, when they took that away from our people, and started taking over our lands, no one asked. No one consulted our people in a meaningful way about whether they could have that land, buy that land, use that land, or borrow that land. It was just taken systematically over. The places where, the place over, they big swamp over here, XOĆE ET WJOŁEŁP where they gathered all of the willow trees, the white people came here and they drained that land. They drained it so the willows will die. And, where they gathered their cedar for their big SXELÁĆEŁ, their big canoes up here on this farm they call Woodwind Farm now, it was a huge big cedar growth. Huge big trees, 10 and 8 feet through at the base. Nice tall clear trees. They fell those trees and just burned them. They didn’t even use them. They just burned them so we wouldn’t be able to make our canoes anymore. That’s the cultural genocide that they practiced on our people in this area. How

we lose our fishery, how we lose our connection to those places which were given to us as a responsibility by the Creator himself.