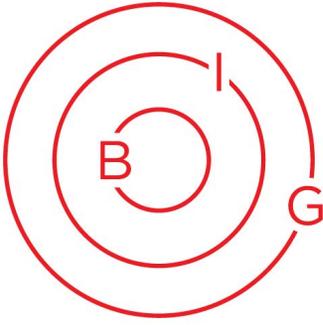




**BORDERS IN  
GLOBALIZATION**





## **Borders in Globalization Research Project 16**

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# **(Re)Defining Indigenous Economic Borders in British Columbia: An Examination of Forestry Revenue Sharing Policies in British Columbia**

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## **Introduction**

Throughout the past decade, the government of British Columbia (BC) has expressed a need for reconciliation and renewed positive relationships with Indigenous peoples in BC. However, rather than focusing on initiatives encouraging Indigenous resurgence, ‘reconciliation’ strategies are premised on the control and development of Indigenous territories and natural resources. Examples of efforts commonly thought of as geared towards reconciliation include modern day treaty agreements and self-government agreements. Recently though, the BC provincial government has made efforts toward renewing positive relationships in regards to revenue sharing agreements, particularly in the forestry industry. Forestry Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreements (FCRSA) and Forestry Tenure Operation Agreements (FTOA) have been unilaterally developed by the Province with the hope of invoking the notion that Indigenous nations are being meaningfully consulted and fairly compensated for the timber that is being unjustly extracted and profited from, from unceded Indigenous territories. Signing one of these agreements forces Indigenous nations to concede to colonial notions of traditional territorial boundaries and provincial conditions for consultation and accommodation.

Through FCRSA and FTOA regimes, state actors wish to develop and exploit Indigenous territories for monetary gain without thoroughly consulting with and involving Indigenous communities in these pursuits. I argue that FCRSA and FTOA frameworks impose colonial notions of territorial boundaries on Indigenous communities and act as detrimental documents which do not aid in the positive (re)strengthening of some Indigenous nation-to-nation relationships. Additionally, I argue that within the context of FCRSA and FTOA frameworks and colonial non-Indigenous institutions, are

working to replace Indigenous led economic philosophies and systems of governance. In spite of these oppressive policies, there are movements of resistance that do act to maintain Indigenous economic traditions and networks. In this paper, I explore ways in which Indigenous philosophies and systems of knowledge operate to (re)build Indigenous trade networks and nation-to-nation relationship building initiatives within the context of the forestry industry. Additionally, I examine how these systems of knowledge and relationships may function as an alternative or in addition to the signing of and FCRSA and/or FTOA.

I will begin this paper with a historical and contextual overview of the forestry industry and policies in BC. This overview will also feature how Indigenous peoples were – and to a large extent still – are systematically excluded from forestry business ventures in British Columbia, and how presently, the Province is attempting to include more First Nations in the BC forestry sector. Secondly, I will provide a review of relevant literature pertaining to the idea that in some Indigenous ontologies, the notion of ‘borders’ is conceptualized through both human-to-human and human-to-nonhuman relationships rather than through lines of longitude and latitude. Moreover, this overview of literature will also feature discussions related to border imperialism and the negative influence that colonial ideas of borders and mapping have had in many Indigenous communities. Finally, I will discuss how FCRSA and FTOA regimes have consequently impacted Indigenous nation-to-nation relationships and how the ‘divide and conquer’ colonial attitude of the state results from these frameworks. Building from the negative effects resulting from FCRSA and FTOA policies, I will highlight ways in which First Nations

are resisting state colonialism and instead, are developing movements of resurgence to stronger build Indigenous borders and networks.

### **Historical Context**

Currently, it is the Crown who possess ‘ownership’ of approximately 90% of forests in British Columbia. It is the Province, under section 92(a) of the Canadian Constitution (1867), who is designated to possess control of the natural resources within provincial boundaries. It is therefore, the jurisdiction of the Province to determine who may harvest timber from ‘Crown lands.’ In 2003, 10 corporations controlled more than 70% of the annual allowable cut (AAC) in BC. Eventual reform of BC forestry policies occurred due to the monopoly possessed by these corporations on such vast amounts of forestlands in BC. Questions regarding Indigenous authority over land and assertions of Aboriginal title and rights also encouraged the reform of forestry policies.

Approximately 85% of Indigenous populations in Canada are located within forests, and therefore issues regarding forests and timber resources are of high priority to many First Nations peoples in British Columbia (Booth and Skelton, 2008). The harvest of timber from Indigenous territories for capitalist interests has been ensuing for over one hundred years, and the intent of the many policies regarding forestry practices created in the 1940s continues (First Nations Forestry Council, 2007). British Columbia originally designed its forestry policies to encourage large corporations to invest and operate within British Columbia, and as such, these policies excluded Indigenous peoples from participating in the operation and decision making processes of major forestry endeavours in BC: “Historically...assignments of large areas of forestland and large

volumes of timber did not go to our people. We were effectively locked out of timber assignments, even though all of the logging activities took place on land claimed by First Nations” (Coates and Carlson, 2013). Policy makers argue that it is in the interest of BC to distribute long-term tenures to large and wealthy investors who have the finances to support the mass employment of British Columbians and therefore, support the well-being of the rural economies where forestry operations primarily exist. It is also argued that long-term tenures should be distributed to large logging corporations, so that these companies will be invested in the long-term stability of the environment, and will “facilitate the orderly conversion of old growth forests into managed forests to be harvested on periodic rotations” (Clogg, 2012). Moreover, “companies received valuable timber harvesting rights at no charge in exchange for bringing their private lands under ‘sustained yield management’” (Ibid).

Policy reforms to the *Forestry Act* were introduced in 2003 by the provincial government, and were created to change the processes regarding how pricing for lumber materials and the awarding of forest tenures happened. Five bills were composed: Bill 27 (market-based pricing), Bill 28 (tenure reallocation and industry compensation, transition), Bill 29 (changes to tenure obligations), Bill 44 (defined forest areas management), and Bill 45 (market-based pricing and changes to tenure obligations) (Ibid). It is Bill 28 that I argue has been the most controversial and has enabled much of the status-quo in forestry to persist. The purpose of Bill 28 was to introduce a one-time reduction of the volume of forestry tenures possessed by the major forestry operations in BC. Corporations whose tenure volumes were affected, were monetarily reimbursed by the Province for this eventual loss in profit. The 8.3 million cubic meters of tenure that

were repossessed by British Columbia were to be reallocated to smaller forestry tenures, First Nations communities, and designated as community forests. Bill 28 is vague in that it does not detail which areas of tenure would be repossessed by the province, and as such, the lands of poorest value and those hardest to access were returned to the Province. These low quality tenure tracts impact the potential success of First Nation forestry ventures, as the quality of resources and poor and may end up costing more money to access than would be made from harvesting.

One of the primary organizations that works to distribute tenures to Indigenous community forestry operations, British Columbia Timber Sales (BCTS), is irresponsible in its approach to accommodation and consultative duties to Indigenous peoples. The BCTS has allocated only small volumes for tenure to First Nations; some argue that there is no organizational framework that exists within the BCTS to protect against violations of Indigenous rights and interests. The BCTS operates as a third party organization, but is still considered to be under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) and controls almost 20 percent of the AAC. The primary mandate of the BCTS is stated as being to “provide the cost and price benchmarks for timber harvested from public land in British Columbia” through the auctioning of forest resources (British Columbia Timber Sales, 2015).

Further issues that have come about with the new approach in which the Province and BCTS allocates timber harvesting privileges to First Nations communities includes, a failure to alter the *Forestry Act* to comprise new policies incorporating shared-decision making processes between First Nations and Provincial actors and “meaningfully accommodate Aboriginal title and rights” (Clogg, 2003). Even though Bill 28 designates

a specific amount of timber volumes to be allocated to First Nations, “no parameters are provided for in legislation as to how volume available is to be distributed” (British Columbia, 2005). The outcomes resulting from this particular oversimplification within the *Forestry Act* can be seen through the small amounts of forest tenures that have actually been distributed to First Nations.

Forest and Range Agreements (FRAs) were the first measure in which revenue sharing from the forestry industry was first introduced by BC to First Nations communities. These agreements involved both revenue sharing and forest tenure allocation were intended to be designed as an interim framework until the more comprehensive FRO (Forest Revenue Opportunity) agreement was introduced. This new take on revenue sharing and tenure distribution was “created to provide for ‘workable accommodation’ of aboriginal interests that may be impacted by forestry decisions during the term of the agreement, until such time as those interests are resolved through treaty” (British Columbia, 2004).

The ‘fair’ distribution of profits and timber with Indigenous communities was developed as a result of the adoption of the *New Relationship* (2005), created and signed by both Provincial and First Nations leadership in British Columbia. Revisions to FRAs were adopted after the signing of the *New Relationship*, as Provincial leaders were demonstrating that this agreement was not solely a symbol, but honestly signaled a state commitment to accommodating Aboriginal title and rights and higher standards of consultation. Shared-decision making processes involving the stewardship of Indigenous lands and resources were founded in an attempt to offer an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to gain greater decision making power and control over how their traditional

territories would be utilized by industry and government actors. The goals established by the *New Relationship* applicable to this paper are:

1. To restore, revitalize and strengthen First Nations and their communities and families to eliminate the gap in standards of living with other British Columbians, and substantially improve the circumstances of First Nations people...;
2. To achieve First Nations self-determination through the exercise of their aboriginal title including realizing the economic component of aboriginal title, and exercising their jurisdiction over the use of the land and resources through their own structures;
3. To ensure the lands and resources are managed in accordance with First Nations laws, knowledge and values and that resource development is carried out in a sustainable manner including primary responsibility of preserving healthy lands, resources and ecosystems for present and future generations (British Columbia, 2005).

FRA evolved into the FRO agreements in 2005 after the duty to consult and accommodate has been clarified courts and the *New Relationship* document had been signed. FROs created opportunities for an increased number of discussions to occur between First Nations and provincial government officials to determine the scope and terms of the agreement, and allowed for Aboriginal title and rights to be more freely expressed and asserted by signatory communities. Substantial issues remained regarding the alterations to the terms First Nations agreed to in order to receive tenure and revenue sharing commitments from the state. Most notably, revenues shared with signatory communities still continued to be determined utilizing a per-capita formula: “An arbitrary \$500 per year is given for each First Nation person counted... Timber offers would again vary depending on an individual nation’s population” (Parfitt, 2007).

Criticisms of FRA and FRO frameworks involved the absence of measures to work consult and accommodate First Nations signatories, and a ‘one size fits all’ methodology to revenue sharing utilized by provincial authorities that did not consider

the varying impacts that forestry activities have in each community. As a reaction to these criticisms, in 2010, the BC government unilaterally, developed a revised approach to FROs, and a new method in which First Nation communities would be awarded land tenures from their own unneeded territories: FCRSAs and FTOAs. FCRSAs did change the approach undertaken by Provincial actors in the distribution and calculation of tenures and revenue sharing funds to be received by signatory communities as the amount of revenue distributed to a community was no longer calculated on a per capita basis. Regardless, there is still dissatisfaction among First Nation communities as to how the FCRSAs and FTOAs function to aid in advancing the interests of signatory communities. Discontent articulated by First Nations also involves a shortage of opportunities for First Nation communities to integrate community philosophies and traditions into Indigenous forestry business initiatives. Additionally, within the context of FCRSA and FTOAs, there are challenges in the ways in which the Province attempts to come between and undermine the relationships and structures of governance between some Indigenous communities.

## **Overview of Literature**

In recent years, discourses regarding Indigenous economic development in British Columbia have emerged along with the negotiation of modern-day treaty agreements and state sponsored natural resource development projects. While the literature pertaining to the perceived benefits of Indigenous participation in state sponsored neoliberal territorial development projects is plentiful, there is a void in literature addressing how economies founded in culturally integral Indigenous philosophies may function as a mode to offset

the colonial nature of neoliberal land and resource development projects. While this paper does not seek to argue that the development of land and resources is inherently detrimental towards Indigenous self-determination and community well-being, it is fundamental to note that Indigenous resource economies should be greatly informed by Indigenous ontologies rather than solely by colonial processes. Many of these Indigenous ontologies include principles of respect and reciprocity towards the natural environment (Simpson, 2011). As such, Indigenous economies are premised on the long-term use and sustainability of land, and reciprocities that balance the human production of goods with the production of resources by nature (Shiva, 2005). The economic activities emphasized by the Canadian state to occur in Indigenous territories do not feature such Indigenous ontological teachings. Furthermore, Altamirano-Jimenez argues that in neoliberal resource economies, ontological teachings associated with the non-human world are disassociated from Indigenous governance structures (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013). Sassen presents the argument that the notion of ‘territory’ and the power of mapping ones territory only became relevant when today’s system of the nation-state evolved from the feudal system. As a result of this evolution, the authority of a sovereign was distanced from the notion that governance was structured under the auspices of the divinity of the nobility, and was centered around the idea that authority is structured around a collective territorial membership. Therefore, “boundaries of the sovereign became geographic” (Sassen, 2006).

Shalene Jobin highlights that in many Indigenous nations, economic activities are more substantial and meaningful than the flow and exchange of goods and money: economic institutions “cannot be understood apart from the social relations in which they

are embedded” (Jobin, 2014). Leanne Simpson further articulates that in many Indigenous economies, familial and international relationships are integral to upholding Indigenous based economic practices (Simpson, 2011). Thus, I draw upon *relationships* as foundations for borders in Indigenous nations, directly calling upon the importance of relationships in Indigenous governance and economic praxis. In her book *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back*, Simpson states that territorial “boundaries in an Indigenous sense, are about relationships” (Ibid). Simpson argues that through this lens relationships involve both human-to-human and human-to-nonhuman interactions. Additionally, these relations are maintained through international social networks of sharing of land and resources as well as through the upholding of political traditions. Indigenous national borders are fluid and are forever evolving due to their basis on social relationships with both the human and the natural world (Ibid).

Bauerkemper and Stark (2012) build from Simpson’s argument with the assertion that in Indigenous cultures, borders are permeable and are influenced by the “alliances, social structures, and [cultural] practices.” Cruikshank reinforces this assertion by stating that through the oral stories told to her by Tlingit and Athapaskan peoples, it is clear that boundaries, from the viewpoint of some Indigenous ontologies, are permeable and involve long standing relationships between human and nonhumans. Cruikshank states that relationships “chart shifting social boundaries that proceeded and followed the arrival of Europeans” (Cruikshank, 2005). While the concept of relationships as borders is a longstanding ontology of Indigenous teachings, there is limited academic literature surrounding this topic. In order to supplement this implicit critique of the study of colonial boundaries, the inclusion of literature pertaining to decolonial studies and the

critique of colonial borders is integral to understanding Indigenous international relationships as borders.

Cherokee scholar Zainab Amadahy (2012) asserts that relationships are integral so that “we don’t see ourselves, our communities, or our species as inherently superior to any other, but rather [we] see our roles and responsibilities to each other as inherent to enjoying life experiences.” (Re)Imagining borders as relationships is key for subverting what Harsha Walia refers to as ‘border imperialism.’ Walia defines border imperialism as: “creating and reproducing global mass displacements...which are inscribed by the racialized and gendered violence of empire as well as capitalist segregation” (Walia, 2013). The nature of borders as socially constructed entities used to further the colonial goals of the dispossession of Indigenous territories and enforce capitalist interests, is discussed by Walia through the discourse of border imperialism. Walia argues, “while borders are understood as lines demarcating territory, an analysis of border imperialism interrogates the modes and networks of governance” that regulate *who* is included within the nation-state, and *how* territories are controlled within global empires and capitalism (Ibid). Furthermore, Altamirano-Jimenez (2013) argues that territorial boundaries were constructed by colonizing actors in North America in order to create differences to “legitimize their [European] racial superiority.” Through this logic, it is argued that colonial discourses centered Indigenous peoples as ‘uncivilized’ in order to justify the ‘civilized’ European territorial expansion and imperialism of Indigenous lands. Today, it is argued that this hierarchy of the civilized and the uncivilized is perpetuated through the “process of negotiating and imposing borders and constructing difference [creating] a complex colonial hierarchy of peoples that continues to exist today in subtle forms.”

Moreover, state imposed borders are argued to be a function of control by colonial actors, as they are institutions intended to monopolize information and ‘silence’ local practices not in line with the goals of imperialists (Cruikshank, 2005). Cruikshank asserts that natural resources such as gold, fur, timber, and access to coastal territories motivated European colonists to demarcate territorial boundaries so as to manage the land originally governed by Indigenous peoples (Ibid). Cruikshank furthers this argument by asserting that territorial boundaries, which delineate land and resources, are so powerful that it is common for many to identify borders as natural occurrences rather than socially constructed. The concept of borders that are based on sovereign territoriality, for Nadasdy (2012), has become the only model available for Indigenous peoples who are pursuing a degree of self-determination. Nadasdy continues that while the state’s imposed template of borders is “culturally inappropriate” for many Indigenous peoples, the Indigenous acceptance of these templates “represent a tacit agreement to play by the rules of the political game as formulated by the colonizer” (Nadasdy 2012). Nadasdy (2003) expands from this argument with his assertion that as Indigenous-state discourses do not acknowledge Indigenous ways of live and social structures, Indigenous peoples are forced to restructure their communities to be formally recognized by state institutions. According to Gwilym Lucas Eades (2015), political boundaries, such as the lines separating the United States and Canadian states, or those distinguishing British Columbian territory from Albertan territory, “are often arbitrary and pay no heed to natural and cultural boundaries, or do so inconsistently.”

In British Columbia, borders enforced by state institutions have been utilized to define fixed spaces for Indigenous occupation; these colonial entities do not allow for a

fluid and permeable understanding of territorial boundaries. An example of borders that have been imposed on Indigenous peoples can be seen through the state borders established to define Indigenous territories in land claim, self-government, and treaty agreements. While these state imposed boundaries are artificial and do not necessarily represent an Indigenous understanding of territorial borders, they hold power in the distribution of land and the revenues that are generated as a result of capitalist economic development of natural resources in Indigenous territories. In the case of timber extraction in British Columbia, the province of British Columbia uses state imposed borders to delineate each Indigenous national territory in order to control the distribution of profit from timber extraction.

The power relationships that developed between Indigenous communities and state actors as a result of state imposed borders are argued by many to perpetuate the disruptive nature of colonialism. As the notion of sovereign borders are weighted in favour of state and colonial institutions in Indigenous-state relationships, the power balance between these two entities is also heavily weighted in favour of the state. Irlbacher-Fox (2009) argues that state interactions with Indigenous peoples, particularly when premised around revenue sharing negotiations, is biased in such a way so as to limit and marginalize Indigenous peoples' experiences and narratives. The power and bias of those who possess decision-making powers regarding the implementation of boundaries influence final decisions on where a boundary exists. Moreover, while boundaries are subjective entities, they possess a seemingly permanent nature that may only be disrupted through extreme conflict and war.

Eades (2015) argues that Indigenous boundaries are shaped through “topological and relational aspects of space with much less focus” on precisely defining a location.

Furthermore, it is argued that Indigenous territories are defined from,

space [that] is made up of places, the sum of which is constitutive of ecological webs of relationships... Where the colonizer’s view of space consists of abstract grids and lines inscribed upon maps, in the indigenous view there is a mapping between experience and reality upon a topological surface nodes, each of which has meaning.... (Ibid).

One may infer that territorial ‘boundaries’ functioned through relationships in part due to many Indigenous community governance systems also being structured around both human to human and human to non-human relationships. For example, the Tl’azt’en Nation utilized the *keyohs* systems, “which organizes and regulates the ownership and use of their territories’ resources” (Booth and Skelton, 2008). Moreover, *keyohs* is an institution in which family and clan systems operate through the implementation of strict regulations regarding land access and utilization (Ibid). Similarly, the Tsimshian First Nations governed through family/clan alliances and systems of governance. The *walp* was a fundamental institution within Tsimshian First Nations social structure; the *walp* was the institution at which social, economic, political, and ceremonial decisions were established (Hosmer, 1997). A chief, or *s’moygiet* leads community actions, such as maintaining or creating trade routes and ensuring that territorial boundaries were respected. Both of these examples of community governance systems also held potlatches, as is common practice with many Indigenous communities and nations in British Columbia, to affirm and build relationships (both inter- and intra-national relationships), establish community privileges, and distribute wealth. The economic and political nature of these ceremonies aided in the affirmation and establishment of

territorial relationships, particularly if leaders or representatives from other communities or nations attended these ceremonies (Ibid; Rogers, 2009; Booth and Skelton, 2008). These examples of how community governance systems in these two communities illustrate that boundaries are not necessarily discrete entities, such that territories, in these examples, are predicated on “networks and assemblages of topographically related” spaces, species, and communities, rather than “blocks of mutually exclusive and non-overlapping territory” (Eades, 2015).

### **Resistances and Relationships**

Building upon the overview of literature, in this section, I will discuss two significant issues within the FCRSA and FTOA regimes that function to undermine the (re)strengthening of Indigenous nation-to-nation relationships. First, the state does not promote the use of Indigenous ways of mapping and definition of territory. In September 2014, the First Nations Leadership Council (composed of leaders from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the First Nations Summit, and the BC Assembly of First Nations) released the document, “All Our Relations” (2014), and backgrounder and framework document of goals, guiding principles and mechanisms for the resolution of overlap and shared territory issues. This document states, “There is widely held, general agreement that resolution of overlap and shared territory issues is foremost an issue to be resolved among First Nations, through approaches grounded in...cultural traditions, practices and Indigenous lands.”

This, as a result, has led to the colonial imposition of Euro-Canadian ways of mapping and the drawing of territorial borders. I argue that the term ‘cartographic

erasure,' addressed by Eades (2015) in the previous section, outlining the re-drawing of Indigenous territories is applicable to the disregard of Indigenous mapping systems. Cartographic erasure refers to the colonial practice of “‘mapping out’ through the use of blank white space, the indigenous peoples, their traditional settlements, and their lives from official documents.” ‘Blank space’ refers to land that are not utilized in such a way that is considered to be ‘productive.’ Blank space follows the philosophies of Locke who argues that a territories and peoples in a state of nature “‘lies unimproved and lacking and moral argument, legal decree, or claim relevant to the land, such land is appropriable under the auspices of improved productivity” (Ibid). As a result of the state’s cartographic erasure of Indigenous territorial relationships and understanding of territorial governance through relationships with the human and non-human world, Indigenous systems of mapping and borders are erased, and Euroamerican systems of governance, mapping, and relationships take effect, to the detriment of Indigenous nations. Indigenous peoples are now forced to govern their lands, or what little is left of their traditional territories, through the Band Council system and through Euroamerican mapping techniques, that do not accurately highlight that some Indigenous national territories overlap.

The nature of many Indigenous territories being shared or overlapping in certain regions of land, has imposed a complex conundrum when the state has required Indigenous nations to outline the specific coordinates and boundaries of their territory not only in revenue sharing and land tenure agreements, but also in modern treaty negotiations and affirmations of Aboriginal title. A requirement of FCRSA and FTOA policies is that the signatory Indigenous nations must “‘provide a hard copy map of its

Traditional Territory and a digital copy of the Traditional Territory boundary conforming to current government mapping standards” (British Columbia and Penticton Indian Band, 2014). The requirement of an Indigenous nations to define its territory, when this method of territory demarcation is not necessarily the most appropriate method of demarcating ones territory, forces many Indigenous nations to subscribe to a colonial method of understanding of space and land use. As the state has forced a colonial understanding of mapping and territorial space, territories that may have been shared, and demarcated through alternative ways of understanding boundaries, such as through the employment of relationships, as discussed in previous sections of this paper, has contributed to the significant issue of overlap and shared territory relationships to harm relations between some Indigenous nations. By not considering Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding territorial borders, FCRSA and FTOA documents promote long-term instability within nations due to the internal disagreements regarding territorial boundaries that it may cause or may instigate. This in effect, on the level of the collective, works against capacity building and long-term planning between communities (Alfred, 2009).

Warren Houde manager of the Penticton Indian Bands Snpinktn Forestry LP Houde illustrates that “under those agreements [FTOA and FCRSA] you are asked to draw a line on a map, and that essentially becomes your operating territory that you can harvest timber,” and therefore, “restricts a community that has a belief that that is their territory, it restricts them from accessing that volume and start the competitive nature of getting and using the volume that you’re allocated to rope in as much of the timber that you can and put that under permit” (Houde, 2015).

Shared territorial disputes as a result of FCRSA and FTOAs in effect, may undermine political and economic relationships and social networks between Indigenous communities. Revenue sharing and land tenure agreements represent opportunities for increased overall community prosperity and locally based job opportunities for community members within the forestry sector. Communities are likely to sign one or both of these agreements in order to bring more socio-economic benefits to the community. Moreover, it is also likely a community will sign these agreements in order to gain more control of traditional territories. While the promise of territorial control and community prosperity lure nations into agreeing to state mandated terms of revenue sharing and tenure allocation, the reality is, is that in order to receive the most out of these benefits, particularly from FTOAs where originally, nations were awarded tenure on a first come first serve basis, nations are positioned in competition with one another. Similarly, the first-come-first-serve manner in which forest tenures are being allocated through FRA, FRO, and FTOA agreements has facilitated an atmosphere in which First Nations communities are vying with each other for the most highest quality spaces (Clogg, 2012). I argue that the positioning of Indigenous nations in direct competition with one another, particularly through FTOAs, relates directly to policies of assimilation by state in which nations are forced to focus on a territorial model that does not reflect Indigenous philosophies. Positioning Indigenous nations in an adversarial position against one another works to undermine collective strength and abilities to work with each other, for to achieve shared goals.

Literature and social movements regarding Indigenous decolonization and Aboriginal title and rights suggests that Indigenous peoples possess a desire for the state

to recognize that Indigenous peoples have not ceded their territories, and that Indigenous lands in British Columbia in particular have been usurped through unjust colonial means (Alfred, 2009). As such, Indigenous nations are demanding that the Province acknowledge and respect the inherent jurisdiction Indigenous peoples possess over their territories, and that the Province should relinquish it much of its authority in these territories to Indigenous nations. This process, in the context of FCRSA frameworks, occurs through FCRSAs being altered so as to distribute a 50% of revenues collected from third-party forestry operations in Indigenous traditional territories to the community or communities who possess a historical relationship with those lands, and the other 50% being distributed to the Province. As such, this altered method of revenue sharing would also involve the Province fundamentally alter its understanding of land ownership. As Houde (2015) explains:

If the Province had more of a recognition of ownership of the land base, then I would believe that the idea of sharing revenue that comes off of the land would be the other way around. It isn't them sharing the revenue with us per se, but it's more us sharing the land base and the revenue with them. [The Province is] under their own mandate, their own understanding of the land, and Aboriginal people have a totally different understanding of how that is.

An altered perception of who control the land would then lead Indigenous nations sharing with the Province. This 50/50 sharing of revenues discussed by Houde is in line with the desires of some chiefs, who as part of the Okanagan Nation Alliance, signed a declaration advocating for a 50/50 forestry revenue sharing plan to be implemented between the Province and those nations located in the Okanagan (Ibid). The revitalization or creation of national alliances, such as the Okanagan Nation Alliance, is a strategy that I argue would aid in the strengthening of national relationships while also working to combat colonial processes that disrupt Indigenous practices. There is a truth to the saying that

there is ‘strength in numbers.’ Not only does collective action through the organization of national alliances work to demonstrate a unified sense of Indigenous power and goals, but it also allows for nations to collaborate and work together to develop strategies that are in line with Indigenous laws, histories, and community needs. Not all community needs are the same, but if resources – both human and inanimate – are compiled together a system of support is developed. This collectivity could also come in the form of a treaty between Indigenous nations that outlines common goals and governance structures that enable communities to work together to achieve self-sufficiency. Through a treaty agreement, and relational network that is subsequently organized, Indigenous communities may also work within traditional systems of governance, politics, and law to uphold pre-colonial institutions.

Collectively acting together disrupts the state assimilative mandate of divide and conquer: “the most important strength of Indigenous resistance, unity, is also constantly under attack as colonial power erase community histories and senses of place...” (Alfred and Cornthassel, 2005). Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Cornthassel draw on Frantz Fanon to demonstrate that Indigenous solidarity is integral in the “bigger picture of decolonization,” and that unity and working collectively are integral to working against colonial systems of power: “In the colonial context...the natives fight among themselves. They tend to use each other as a screen, and each hides from his neighbor the national enemy” (Ibid; Fanon 1963).

Unity may also come through not only through local national and community alliances and treaties, but it also may come through the strengthening of bodies whose sole mandate is to work to strengthen Indigenous participation within forestry – in this

case this body is the BC First Nations Forestry Council (FNFC). The BC FNFC works to support Indigenous communities in the advancement and protection of their territories, economic, social, and cultural relationships with territorial forestlands (First Nations Forestry Council, 2008). The BC FNFC works to promote Indigenous solidarity regarding forestry issues, and advocates for nations and community needs. While theoretically the BC FNFC appears to be an answer to how nations may collaborate and form alliances to promote community well-being, the council is chronically underfunded and as such, has limited capacity to support Indigenous nations. How can such an alliance of so many communities move beyond the practicalities of funding to functioning at full capacity against colonial authorities? While this question is beyond the scope of this project, attaining such resources and capacity is a fundamental issue that plagues Indigenous efforts working contrary to state interests.

Signing FCRSA and/or FTOAs presents a catch-22 issue – if a community does not participate in these frameworks, lands and resources are being taken from their traditional territories and communities will not be compensated for such actions, but if a community does participate in these agreements, they are reaffirming the power and authority of the state and enabling colonial frameworks to operate within their communities. As illustrated previously, forestry is a long established industry in British Columbia, and the companies that operate and profit from Indigenous territories hold massive amounts of influence and power. As a result of this power, one of the primary reasons the Province would work to create revenue sharing and tenure distribution agreements for Indigenous communities is to ease the anxieties of industry actors who worry that their activities in Indigenous territories will be jeopardized by future

affirmations of Aboriginal title within the boundaries of their designated tenures (Clogg, 2003).

Furthermore, within the revitalization of Indigenous social networks, I argue that there is an opportunity for enhancing trade networks of information regarding environmental stewardship and Indigenous knowledge in the forestry industry. Currently, there are no provisions in FCRSA and FTOA regimes that guide how the integrity of Indigenous territories is to be maintained when it is being affected by logging practices. It is therefore Provincial guidelines and industry actors that work to maintain the environment and the health of the territories they operate within and formal Indigenous participation in resource management is limited to co-management agreements and other various forms of Euroamerican resource management frameworks. As a result, Indigenous knowledge is integrated, when convenient, into the stewardship of the environment, rather than utilized as a primary guiding philosophy of resource and land stewardship practices. There is as such, an opportunity for Indigenous knowledge of traditional territories to be utilized to strengthen and inform nation-to-nation relationships in the preservation of territories that are being affected by logging.

The strengthening of Indigenous knowledge trade networks and sharing strengthens Indigenous nation-to-nation relationships through collective activism, but it also works to strengthen Indigenous relationships with their territories. Undertaking the revitalization or upholding of Indigenous philosophies is integral for those who wish to preserve and maintain connections with culture and resist efforts of assimilation and colonization by the state. The sharing and practice of knowledge that connects communities to territories and also allows for communities to be self-sustaining through

employing local based initiatives economic initiatives based in Indigenous philosophies. There is no limit to what these local economic opportunities are – they may be in fact grounded in the forestry industry – but the important factor is that the “honouring of longstanding, reciprocal relationships with the natural world,” and the transmission of “knowledge and everyday cultural practices to future generations” is occurring (Corntassel and Bryce, 2012). An example of this is the creation of the ‘Compliance Management System’ developed by the FNFC to govern how industry operates within Indigenous territories. This system integrates modern technology with Indigenous knowledge and systems of governance over territory. Through a database hosted by the FNFC, communities are able to monitor and verify industry activities within their territory. Communities may also communicate with other nations who are impacted by forestry activities to build a network of information regarding how industry operates within traditional territories and effective ways in which to mitigate issues that occur as a result of industry operating within Indigenous traditional territories. As a result of Indigenous communities utilizing this program, the FNFC is able to consolidate the information of participatory First Nations regarding how industry behaves in their territories, and enables communication and the building of networks of information to aid First Nation communities to prosper from industry activities in traditional territories. While still in its beginnings, I argue that under the Compliance Management System, Indigenous territorial philosophies and social networks may be upheld as this system does not dictate a colonial ideal of borders. Moreover, it is the community relationships with industry that are highlighted as a result of participation in the building of this database.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, while the majority of Indigenous territories in BC has not been ceded to any body of Canadian government, Canada and the Province of BC have systematically worked to undermine the interests and systems of relationships and networks utilized by Indigenous peoples. Through the examination of FCRSA and FTOAs, I have demonstrated how, in the natural resource sector of British Columbia, Indigenous social networks are at risk of being undermined. Regardless of the effects of BC attempting to colonize Indigenous peoples, there are projects and efforts being undertaken to work against the oppressive nature of BC and its policies. In this paper, these efforts were recognized as being the structuring of new social alliances, such as the FNFC, and the strengthening of old alliances, such as the Okanagan Nation Alliance.

There is truth in the saying that ‘there is strength in numbers.’ Through the initiatives discussed in this paper, it has been demonstrated that against all odds, Indigenous peoples in BC are still strong in efforts to resist the oppressive nature of the state.

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