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Border Securitization as Settler Colonialism

James M. Hundley

In a well-known short story by American-born Canadian author Thomas King, the narrator's mother drives up to the border with her daughter in the car, attempting to cross into Montana. The Canada Border Services Agency officer asks, "Wow, you both Canadians?" "Blackfoot" is her reply. After a discussion about the agent knowing a Blackfoot person, she asks again. "Citizenship?" "Blackfoot" again is the reply. "'I know,' said the woman, 'and I'd be proud of being Blackfoot if I were Blackfoot. But you have to be American or Canadian.'"[1] While this is a fictional short story, there are plenty of instances of this situation occurring not just for the Blackfoot/Blackfeet (the designation depending on whether one is referring to the nation in what is now Montana—Blackfeet—or Alberta—Blackfoot), but also the Haudenosaunee in the New York, Ontario, or Quebec region, the Coast Salish of the Pacific Northwest, and others across the continent.[2] What these instances of division, citizenship, and frustration have in common is the international border.

From a state-centric position, international borders mark the power of the state to control movement, bestow citizenship, and define those who reside within its territory. In North America, particularly the Canada–United States border, there is little concern about a military threat. However, "risky others" remain a concern for both countries due to the real or perceived threat from potential terrorists, migrants, smugglers, and, because of settler colonialism, Indigenous peoples.[3] These fears have only grown in the past two decades as the state continues to present Indigenous peoples, and others, as a threat to justify and extend its imperialist agenda.[4] Though regularly ignored by settler politicians, Indigenous perspectives continue to challenge this state-centric position.[5]

This article argues that securitization at the Canada-US border, most visible after the events of 9/11 and continuing today, is an ongoing form of settler colonialism. I

Figure 1. *State-provincial-federal borders of the Pacific Northwest of North America. Image courtesy Lauren Tierney.*

theorize this by foregrounding critical Indigenous studies scholarship and placing it alongside anthropology and border studies. While border studies and anthropology benefit from the inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies and theorizing, critical Indigenous studies can benefit from including a comparative analysis and framework from the anthropological study of borders. Approaching securitization policy through the lens of anthropology foregrounds securitization as policy ecology that continues to deny Indigenous nations recognition as more than ethnic minorities within their territories and the states that attempt to regulate them.[6,7] Securitization at the Canada-US border and the negative effects this has on Indigenous nations is not a coincidence or an accident of history, but a result of ongoing settler colonial processes that continue to shape borderland nations. This approach to securitization as settler colonialism moves away from those manifestations of settler colonialism premised on "elimination." Instead, spotlighting dispossession, I argue, addresses the influence of borders on Indigenous polities. To develop this argument, I draw upon literature that links together the biopolitical framework of scholar Michel Foucault (among others) with geopolitical scholarship that presents the nation-state as a biopolitical and geopolitical project.[8,9,10] Through a case study of the Pacific Northwest, I argue that the Canada-US border dispossesses the Coast Salish First Nations of the ability to fully access their traditional territories, which includes their social, economic, and political relationships with one another and with the more-than-human world reflected in their collective histories. This dispossession is not unique to the Coast Salish, and the lessons learned will have implications for other tribal nations along the Canada-US and US-Mexico borders.

The Pacific Northwest as a Case Study

While all Indigenous nations grapple with the problems of dispossession and racialization under settler colonialism, being in the borderlands highlights this for those nations whose lands intersect with international borders. Every tribal nation experiences the effects of settler colonialism differently; however, there are some structural conditions that present themselves in common ways. For this reason, this article primarily

focuses on the Coast Salish First Nations whose territory spans the border in what is now Washington State and British Columbia. I approach this subject as an outsider. I am not Coast Salish. I am a settler, also known as a *xwelítem* in the Halq'eméylem language.[11] A past research project about the impacts of 9/11 on the lives and livelihoods of borderland communities in the Pacific Northwest led me to work with several Coast Salish collaborators, who always referenced their ongoing struggles with security issues through the framework of settler colonialism.[12] Settler colonialism was the dominant referent that they themselves used to explain their experiences of dealing with increased surveillance and harassment in the decades following 9/11.

Figure 1 shows the political borders of the western states and provinces; missing are Indigenous nations as polities. Overlaid is "Cascadia"—an ecological and social region that spans multiple jurisdictions, though it has since additionally become an economic and political term.[13,14] Political borders are the primary feature of the map and orient a settler perspective in viewing and understanding this territory as "mapping plays an important ontological role in the making, unmaking, and remaking of 'worlds.'"[15]

There are numerous Coast Salish nations across the region—fifty-four First Nations in British Columbia and twenty-four tribal nations on the American side of the border, with considerable cultural and linguistic diversity.[16] Nevertheless, they have long maintained social and economic ties despite the presence of the international border. One of the effects of securitization was the strengthening of political ties across the region in response to the threat posed by division.[17] These can be seen through petitions to intervene in government hearings or through international treaties signed by tribes and First Nations across the continent.

The second map (fig. 2) is of the Salish Sea, a marine ecosystem centered in the Cascadia region from figure 1. This binational area was renamed in 2009 and 2010 to recognize the transnational dimension to these lands and waters.[18] Unlike the previous map, political borders do not appear nor do any place names that reference the state. While bodies of water are settler names, the prominent mountain peaks appear in Coast Salish languages.

The argument that I present in this article proceeds first with a discussion of settler colonialism and the two dominant modes for theorizing it—what some have termed an "elimination" versus "dispossession" focus.[19] Following that, I describe what securitization entails and the relationship between securitization and international borders, primarily through the intersection of biopolitics and geopolitics—which, I argue, places Indigenous nations in a peculiar position with respect to the settler colonial state. I conclude with a discussion of some of the implications of this for Indigenous nations as well as scholars who work with them.

Settler Colonialism and Transnational Nations

Settler colonialism continues to shape Coast Salish and Indigenous lifeways across North America and beyond. The policies of Canada and the United States, in their own respective ways, perpetuate a settler colonial ideology. Settler colonialism, as a

Figure 2. *Map of the Salish Sea and surrounding basin. Image courtesy Stefan Freelan, 2023.*

field of inquiry, has grown considerably since the turn of the century, though it has roots dating back much further.[20,21] While some scholars ground their theorizing in what Wolfe termed a "logic of elimination," many scholars have critiqued this use.[22,23,24] Settler colonialism as debated by these scholars is a term that recognizes dispossession, displacement, and erasure of Indigenous peoples from their lands. Nonsettler colonialism, by quick comparison, may exploit Indigenous peoples as a labor force for an extractive economy, but it's not settlement based or premised on displacement.[25] In Clifford Atleo's words, "Put simply, settler colonialism arose when European colonists did not leave or relinquish power and instead continued to occupy Indigenous lands, setting up Euro-Canadian political and economic institutions."[26] Through dispossession, settlers do not leave and instead seek to replace.

The concept of settler colonialism has garnered more academic attention over the past two decades since "the settler colonial turn"—often, but inappropriately attributed to Patrick Wolfe and continued by Lorenzo Veracini.[27,28,29,30] Many Indigenous scholars such as Audra Simpson, Glen Coulthard, and Jean O'Brien suggest that "accumulation

by dispossession" should be the central analytic that makes this applicable beyond the Anglophone world.[31,32,33,34] Doing so enables Latin American, African, and Asian contexts to contribute to settler colonial studies. We can then redefine the term as "the ongoing process which maintains European economic systems, political structures, social norms, and occupation on Indigenous lands."[35]

Settler colonialism and the invasion of Indigenous lands is a structure rather than an event, suggesting that scholars must locate it in ongoing processes and institutions in society.[36] Anthropologist Audra Simpson, among others, has argued that both Canada and the United States only came into being because of settler colonialism and Indigenous dispossession.[37] This dispossession is reinforced in the present. It rewrites the history of contact and settlement, making it a nonevent that erases colonialism from the cultural memory of the settler nation while perpetuating it.[38] Despite the incredible variety of Indigenous-settler interactions—for instance, settlers not arriving in the Pacific Northwest until centuries after arriving on the East Coast—settler colonialism "is not simply a legacy but a persistent reality that Indigenous peoples still endure."[39]

Central to the power dynamics that influence the relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples today are three premises: that settler colonialism is not displaced in time or space; that settlers are not migrants; and that it is not finished.[40,41] Settler colonialism's unfinished nature permits scholars to explore the mechanisms through which it still operates. It is important to recognize, too, that the impacts of settler colonialism are largely uneven and unequal, particularly when Indigenous nations span an international border and are forced to engage multiple colonial agents.

Looking at Canada specifically, Glen Coulthard argues that, for the past half century, state responses to Indigenous activism work to "contain these outbursts through largely symbolic gestures of political inclusion and recognition."[42] For some scholars, including Coulthard and others such as Maddison and Nakata, the desire for reconciliation is purely symbolic, in pursuit of redemption rather than transformation of the material conditions that shape Indigenous lifeways.[43] In a legal capacity, "reconciliation," as it is understood in Canada, stops at the international border. The bifurcation of the Coast Salish—and any other transnational Indigenous nation—under two different political, economic, and legal regimes is an example of how settler colonialism persists by maintaining the material conditions that shape their lifeways.[44]

The "elimination" narrative of settler colonialism advocated by Wolfe and Veracini above is often criticized along several lines: that it is too restrictive and homogenizing of Indigenous experiences; that it is not as distinctive as some have suggested; that it neglects Indigenous agency; and that it built upon critical Indigenous studies but rarely acknowledges this historical foundation.[45,46,47,48] These are productive—yet unresolved—disagreements that mandate engagement in critical Indigenous studies. I do not want to jettison elimination, which remains a component of settler colonialism, but I agree with these Indigenous scholars that Wolfe's work has some prominent gaps. With that said, I focus on the dispossession aspect while acknowledging that settler colonialism as elimination continues and is a part of the fabric of US and Canadian society and the security regime that dominates at the international border.

Geopolitics and Border Securitization

International borders are often portrayed as the limits of state sovereignty, a visible marker of the power of the state. Security of the nation, that imagined political community that is presented as united within a specific territory, is defended by the state.[49] Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola describes those who use this framework as treating security as "some kind of an ontological condition of a state."[50] There are other actors involved in shaping the practices of security and securitization: these range from NGOs to supranational entities such as the European Union and even to airlines.[51,52,53,54] All are involved in what Chris Rumford termed "borderwork," or the variety of ways that disparate actors make, unmake, and remake borders.[55]

The second concept I want to introduce is securitization. One definition is the "widely accepted representation of someone or something as an existential threat to a particular group of people, which legitimizes the use of extraordinary measures to avert the threat."[56] Studies of securitization largely fall under two primary schools of thought, namely those of the Copenhagen or Paris Schools. The first understands securitization as a linguistic process where a political elite names an emergency as an existential threat which is accepted by the public or audience, reducing democratic debate around the security concern. This treats security threats as standing outside normal political discourse.[57]

The Paris School, by contrast, drawing on scholars Mark Salter and Geneviève Piché's analysis, suggests that securitization is not solely a linguistic act of naming an emergency and that this process happens in a complex social context that is constantly in motion, with the actor, audience, and social context as variables.[58] This enables us to see securitization not as one solitary event but as a process.[59] Scholars have since examined how bureaucrats and others "do" security and how those security practices are performed in a wide array of contexts.[60]

Salter and Piché treat securitization as a linguistic act *and* occurring within a social context—it is an iterative process rather than a singular outcome. Much like settler colonialism, securitization also offers more utility when viewed as a process rather than a singular event. While securitization has been prominent for some time, particularly in fields such as international relations, it was 9/11 that brought it front and center for Canada and the US and border studies; more recent events, like the closure of the border during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrate that securitization persists. The ways that we talk about security and the border quickly changed. Nine-eleven led to a regime in which "security almost immediately became irrevocably intertwined with economic governance" and was ubiquitous.[61]

Why Securitization at Borders?

Borders and border regions are, according to scholars Don Alper and James Loucky, "the best place to trace out the implications of intensified state security policies."[62] Borders serve as the edge of the state where "different ideas of space, territoriality, sovereignty, citizenship, and identity are formulated, practiced, and negotiated."[63] As

such, borders are not marginal but are rather central to the formation and maintenance of the state. Alper and Loucky continue:

> Just as nations are never wholly sovereign entities, borders have multiple meanings and realities. . . . Because an important dimension of the change in the Canada-US border is the *way we talk about it*, there are strong reasons for concern regarding the implications of how the "undefended Canadian border" has been transformed in post-9/11 narratives as a "dangerous vulnerability in the US," [prompting a] quest to ensure the protection of . . . the homeland.[64]

I quote this at length because it shows that the way we talk about securitization is connected to the border that separates and divides the two countries. Securitization influences the way border agents interact with those that cross it, it influences the policies of those who trade and work across it, and it influences the perceptions and ideologies of those who live near it.

From a state perspective with an emphasis on sovereignty, territory is "a geographical space that has a boundary or limit that is fixed and in stasis; the Westphalian system created a jigsaw puzzle of territories that conform to the nation-state system."[65] This international system is itself part of an ongoing and historical process.[66] It is not enough to examine the Canada-US border historically, but to place international borders themselves in a historical context to explicate how settler colonialism became intertwined with its development. Drawing on the work of Sheila McManus, we must place Indigenous borderlands within the history of the development of the borders of North America to understand how contemporary borders actually work.[67]

Securitization is also viewed and theorized through a militarization lens, particularly along the US-Mexico border. While there are significant differences in the histories, economies, and politics between the borders of North America, seeing securitization and militarization together allows for insights into how they work in tandem to erode tribal sovereignty. Felicity Schaeffer describes securitization as a form of "preemptive combat" that was used to extend settler surveillance to expand state sovereignty over Indigenous nations.[68] Schaeffer argues that "it is imperative to situate settler seeing within the historical and scientific context in which surveillance emerges, including the settler military imaginaries that continue to hide how this gaze targets Indigenous bodies and land, transplanted globally to mean any foe that threatens the colonizers' land-based power."[69]

Border studies, as an interdisciplinary field of study, has undergone multiple shifts over the past half-century. Sergio Peña recently reviewed various paradigms in border studies that include seeing borders as lines in the sand, borders used for differentiation and identity formation, borders as hybrids, a borderless world of spaces of flows, borders as relational spaces, and borders as contested spaces.[70,71,72,73,74,75,76] These are not always discrete approaches, and scholars can draw upon multiple frameworks.[77] What these approaches largely omit are not just Indigenous nations that cross international borders but Indigenous epistemologies and theorizing.[78]

For this article, several of these border studies paradigms are relevant, particularly those that "move from the state-security-mobility agenda toward the 'politics of the

everyday.'"[79] There are numerous agents, actors, practices, and ideologies involved in "borderwork," where the mundane actions of daily life enact the border.[80] In writing about borders and the process of bordering, Thomas Wilson says, "contemporary scholarship has focused on how people in their everyday lives reproduce the often unequal relations of power and other forms of inequality that create, maintain, and reproduce geopolitical and social boundaries."[81] Similarly, it is in the politics of the everyday that contemporary settler colonialism is to be produced and reproduced, not solely in official government announcements or documents. One prominent site for the reproduction of settler colonialism in North America is at the Canada-US border, in part due to the state's ability to control territory and the mobility of people within that territory.

Indigenous scholar Mishuana Goeman (Tonawanda Band of Seneca) describes the border as "a place of deep power struggle and enunciation—a moment that crosses time and various conceptions of territories and ultimately affects subjecthood."[82] This moment that crosses time can be read as a reference to the ongoing struggle that Indigenous nations have regarding the state, which claims the right to define who is and is not a tribal nation, a form of biopolitical power. Statements by scholars such as Audra Simpson (Kahnawà:ke Mohawk)—whose back-and-forth conversations with border agents entailed shouting "I am Mohawk!" with the response, "No, you are American"—are not uncommon, as the Thomas King story at the opening to this article suggests.[83] Crossing the border foregrounds this position by the state: citizenship, whether it is Canadian, American, or Indigenous, cannot be ignored because of the border itself. Within a postcontact framework, the history of border crossing and the acknowledged but often ignored Indigenous right to cross the border dates to the Jay Treaty, which recognized the existing right of tribal nations to cross the newly created border between the United States and British territory following the American Revolution.[84] A series of subsequent treaties, Supreme Court decisions, and executive orders created considerable disparities between Canada and the US regarding what those rights are and how to exercise them. Both Canada and the United States had long accepted tribal and First Nations ID cards for crossing the border.[85] The events of 9/11 and subsequent securitization posed a significant new challenge to how those rights are asserted.

Securitization has only heightened post-9/11—it is inappropriate to say that securitization itself began with those events in 2001. Political scientist Bruno Dupeyron argues that, following 9/11, a "process of resecuritization of the Canada-US border propelled the US federal government and its border security apparatus to the forefront of cross-border regions."[86] Indigenous nations split by the border have long dealt with this; now, other borderland communities are, too. Scholar Kathleen Staudt argues that "security is *the* overwhelming issue connected with border discourse in twenty-first-century public affairs. . . . Each terrorist act prompts states and their people to prioritize national and regional security regimes until, for some states, *permanent* securitization is in place."[87] For Staudt, and many others, securitization is a structure, not an event; border closures to protect both economic stability and public health during the pandemic attest to this.

Much of the work in biopolitics stems from Foucault's ideas about biopower first popularized in *The History of Sexuality*.[88] This form of power relies on surveillance, observation, and categorization to enable the creation of populations.[89] Biopolitics builds on this and is organized through capitalism and the rise of the nation-state. Scholar Giorgio Agamben extends this discussion of biopolitics to the concentration camp, and how the state manifests through those who become expendable and removable[90]—and to this I add those who can be dispossessed by the state, such as Indigenous peoples, particularly nonheteronormative individuals.[91] Biopolitics, then, concerns how the "biological life of populations is made into an object of political power and the strategies of states and other political actors."[92] For some, biopolitics is inherently a security issue, as it concerns the very foundation of the nation and the state.[93]

The biopolitical power to determine the membership of a population is combined with the geopolitical power to control territory and mobility at a particular location—the border. Indigenous nations who live in the borderlands experience this most acutely. Adding critical Indigenous literature to this illustrates that under the surface of this securitization is the ongoing attempt to define Indigenous peoples in ways that limit them to the confines of one state. In his review of the border studies literature, Sergio Peña argues that "these studies have shown how border studies and space can be reconceptualised and moved beyond the 'territorial trap.' They point to a move from the state-security-mobility agenda towards the 'politics of everyday', and use the legal tools by the State, which means a focus away from the control of territory to the control of mobility; from geopolitics to biopolitics."[94] For Indigenous nations in the borderlands, the politics of everyday and the state-security-mobility agenda are one in the same.

Implications

Per Salter and Piché: "Not only are the events of September 11, 2001, referred to in an attempt to securitize the US-Canada border, the date has become a marker for the birth of a new security era."[95] To assert the right to securitize a border requires control and domination. This is premised on "us" on one side of a border and "them" on the other. Border studies scholars, of course, recognize the myriad connections that exist among borderland communities and the ways they resist and push back. How does Indigenous sovereignty enter the discussion? Securitization exists because Indigenous peoples have been displaced and dispossessed, denied the ability to control their traditional territory and to manage their affairs across the border. Their elimination *as political entities* by recrafting them as racial or ethnic minorities strips them of sovereignty and the ability to engage politically under state structures of settler colonialism which have become hegemonic and hidden when it comes to the international border.

I interviewed a former state legislator from the Pacific Northwest in 2012 to discuss post-9/11 securitization broadly and the effects of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) specifically on his constituents and tribal nation.[96] This legislator explained that in the three years after the implementation of WHTI there

had been considerably less cross-border traffic from his Indigenous constituents. His office regularly fielded calls from upset constituents about border problems and the inconsistency in how the border operates. As an example, he mentioned that the Jay Treaty, which recognizes the right for tribal nations to travel across the border, is regularly neglected. I could confirm this from the years I spent in Coast Salish territory, which included interviews with Indigenous peoples as well as former border agents.[97] This legislator, along with countless others I interviewed, suggested that the application of the law, whether it be the WHTI, the Jay Treaty, or any other border policy or law, is up to the discretion of each individual agent. Through my ethnographic research, I came to see not a unified Canada-US border; instead, there are as many borders as there are agents who oversee them.[98] Securitization—in this case, using the post-9/11 era to make changes to longstanding practices and ideologies about the border—touched the lives of all who live in the borderlands.

Whether we take securitization as defined by the Copenhagen or the Paris Schools, both make the state the central agent in charge of securing territory against an external threat to the body politic. It links nation-state-territory in a Westphalian model of sovereignty, one that is at odds with Indigenous conceptions of sovereignty.[99,100] The Coast Salish, and all Indigenous nations that maintain connections across more than one state, are dispossessed of their lands through the biopolitics of determining membership. Indigeneity itself becomes a threat to the state, because the existence of Indigenous nations does not neatly map onto the logic of the nation-state; this demonstrates the continued failure of settler colonialism to completely displace or eliminate. In both countries, there is a history of confining Indigenous peoples to reserves or reservations: "Reserves facilitated systems of colonial surveillance, and through surveillance, manipulation and control."[101] Some scholars in border studies write about the "mobility turn" whereby states aim to control who and what traverse borders.[102] For my Indigenous interlocutors, this form of securitization at the border is what they have experienced for generations. It was similar to the colonial-era requirement to have a pass to leave reservations, and the surveillance they suffered. This is why they framed their experience of contemporary securitization through the lens of settler colonialism.

American studies scholar Sabine Meyer argues that, "in the context of settler colonialism, geopolitics and biopolitics were intimately intertwined and operated in tandem."[103] She shows that the US Indian Removal Act was a bio-geopolitical measure that not only claimed Cherokee land (the geopolitical), but it did so by disrupting Cherokee modes of identification, reducing them from a nation in a distinct territory to a manageable population—in Meyer's case, bare life.[104] The situation in the Northwest is similar, with Canada and the US bifurcating the Coast Salish world under two nation-states, creating different populations—status Indians and treaty tribes are examples. For many in the Coast Salish world, post-9/11 securitization has revealed that they are either not eligible to cross the international border or have made the difficult decision to forego crossing to prevent harassment by border agents. In either case, they have been displaced from their traditional territory, which does not neatly map onto the settler states of Canada and the US, a form of cartographic violence.[105]

The dispossession of Indigenous nations from their lands went hand in hand with the process of mapping the continent.[106] This intertwining of bio- and geopolitics is not limited to the Coast Salish, nor exclusively to Indigenous peoples, when international borders concern the "biopolitics of submission and confession before the state."[107]

When I conducted fieldwork with the Coast Salish on both sides of the border, many used settler colonialism as their frame of reference to explain how securitization at the border was affecting their lives. For them, the changes at the border were not a singular event; they were part of a larger, ongoing process. One shortcoming of securitization theory and border studies is often the neglect of Indigenous nations. When the Canada-US border is discussed, it is often about the state. In either case, it concerns *only* Canada or the United States. This is a problem because Indigenous nations are political entities, not ethnic minorities. Securitization discourse forecloses the ability to discuss Indigenous sovereignty because indigeneity becomes an existential threat to the state; post-9/11 security policies at the border aim to divide Indigenous nations to protect against this threat.

The two states have a history of cooperation with policies such as developing a preclearance option to screen travelers before departing one country for the other.[108] Cooperation in this capacity is discussed as "sovereignty sharing," yet fails to acknowledge tribal sovereignty.[109] Continuing to exclude Indigenous participants as fully fledged nations and viewing them instead as ethnic minority communities with cross-border ties can only happen because of their dispossession as sovereign nations. Securitization erases other modes of belonging, not just privileging the nation-state but positively foreclosing the opportunity for anything else. Glen Coulthard writes not about the violence of settler colonialism but "forms of life that make settler-colonialism's constitutive hierarchies seem natural."[110] The slow spread of settler colonialism and the rise of the nation-state in North America led to a naturalization of settler citizenship as a default identification in which citizenship was used as a ploy to eliminate tribal rights, sovereignty, and the ability to cross freely into either country.[111] Scholar Michael Sullivan argues that one way forward through this conundrum that divides tribal nations split by the border would be to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples.[112] The Jay Treaty, referenced earlier, is not considered to be in force in Canada. While it *is* in the US, it relies on a blood quantum definition that treats indigeneity as a racial category rather than a political one.[113] Another option offered by Sullivan extends both American and Canadian citizenship to tribal nations. One issue here is that it still elevates settler citizenship above tribal nationhood and reifies the position of the settler state. While it may serve a pragmatic purpose for border crossing, it would undoubtedly raise concerns from tribal nations and First Nations regarding their sovereignty.

Because biopolitics, geopolitics, and security are intimately intertwined, ongoing changes at the international border and beyond will mandate continued engagement in the ways Indigenous nations are pulled into this debate. This is heightened under the current American administration and its threats of annexing territories outside the United States, as well as the changes to how the various agencies under the Department of Homeland Security are currently operating.[114,115]

Resistance, Refusal, Resurgence, and Renaissance

There are several interrelated terms that reference renewal: revitalization, resurgence, reprisal, and renaissance are common. Resurgence is a useful term, particularly when contrasted with cultural revitalization, which often implies death or intimates that past customs and traditions ceased to be practiced and are coming alive in the present. In writing about resurgence, scholar Gina Starblanket (Cree-Salteaux) says,

> The term 'resurgence' implies a process of renewal or awakening from a period of dormancy. In Indigenous contexts, it also carries a particular cultural and political connotation, referring to a form of mobilization and action that is grounded in the revitalization of our traditional ways. Practices of resurgence emerge from a worldview that acknowledges a living relationship between past, present, and future, and makes possible the imagination of strategies of cultural renewal based on the interplay of precolonial pasts and decolonial futures.[116]

The cultural and political connotations of resurgence cannot be understated. Centuries of settler colonialism have elicited a variety of resistance strategies from Indigenous nations, including ethnographic refusal.[117] I want to be clear: I am not saying that Indigenous nations are victims or lack agency because of securitization, settler colonialism, or the international border. Kevin Bruyneel said that "the literal and explicit practice of boundary-crossing represents the political position of those Indigenous people who do not accept the notion that the presence of settler-states and nations deprives them of their rights of citizenship in their own nations."[118] Citizenship, while not bestowed at international borders, becomes salient when crossing the border because it is a category that provides a state-sanctioned identity while simultaneously operating as a mechanism for exclusion.[119] I say that citizenship becomes salient at the border; this includes Indigenous citizenship, as many Indigenous nations use their citizenship to frame their national identity when crossing to push back against the hegemony of the state. One such example concerns the Haudenosaunee Nation, which issues its own passport, giving rise to a legal drama that followed the attempt by a Native lacrosse team to travel internationally using these passports.[120]

Asserting a national identity, as the Coast Salish do when they engage the border, is an act of resistance and even refusal (I use "engage the border" to avoid limiting the influence of the border to the moment of crossing). For many borderland communities, the border is both backdrop and agent. Resistance, then, happens in numerous ways. I draw upon Glen Coulthard's discussion of resistance.[121] In the face of a dominant colonial discourse, resistance has often been portrayed as a zero-sum game. It is not. Indigenous resistance is not solely a negative response. The now infamous white paper put forth by the Canadian government in 1969, and the national response to it, is an example of explicit resistance in this capacity.[122] Resistance—or resurgence as others have termed it[123]—is also an "affirmative enactment of another modality of being, a different way of relating to and with the world."[124] Two examples of this affirmative resistance in action can be found with Clifford Atleo's work on resource extraction and settler colonialism in First Nations' lands.[125] He highlights the diversity of how

Indigenous nations experience settler colonialism. British Columbia's position within a global supply chain regarding energy products has led some First Nations to outright reject certain projects, such as the Trans Mountain or the Dakota Access Pipelines. Other First Nations have expressed support.[126] Both are instances of exerting tribal sovereignty. Leaders do what they believe is in the best interest of their citizens; however, the options available under settler colonial conditions are reduced.

The second example also concerns the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. I worked with several Coast Salish nations on both sides of the border.[127] Some were opposed to the Trans Mountain expansion, none more so than the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, though opponents can be found across the Salish Sea (fig. 2). What marks their resistance as unique was their manipulation of identity. Historian Keith Carlson has argued that the Coast Salish, lacking a central government historically and today, always kept multiple identity options available to be deployed differently depending on the context.[128] While not all Coast Salish First Nations oppose the Trans Mountain pipeline, a majority have. In their opposition, they reached across the border to argue that, as Coast Salish, they reject the pipeline; it is not just an alliance of First Nations, it was a Coast Salish *Nation* that intervened to reject the pipeline.[129] In their resistance against the state, they drew upon their shared history that predates settler colonialism and utilized a new identity option: a transnational national identity. Insofar as the category of "Indigenous" emerges in opposition to the category "settler," the Coast Salish Nation of the early twenty-first century emerges in opposition to the border and to the state itself.[130] Scholar Gerald Vizenor's concept of survivance, which he describes as an "active sense of presence over absence" and that it is "an active resistance and repudiation of dominance, obtrusive themes of tragedy, nihilism, and victimry," is crucial here as well.[131] That I am framing securitization as an extension of ongoing settler colonialism is intended to serve as a window to demonstrate how Indigenous nations are interacting with, not merely reacting to, the state. For critical Indigenous studies, seeing securitization through this lens should enable more scholars to move past the settler colonialism-as-elimination definition to better theorize how settler colonialism persists today.

In the post-9/11 era of increased securitization, the Coast Salish have experienced a reprisal or a renaissance of their traditions and lifeways. They appealed to their own ontologies of relating to the land and to *S'ólh Téméxw* (translated from Halq'eméylem as "our land"). They argued before the Canadian government that their ancestral relations to one another and to the land itself—across the international border—should legitimize a rejection of the Trans Mountain pipeline, indicative of a larger trend of a resurgence of Indigenous knowledges being taken seriously.[132] The changes at the border following 9/11 includes an attempt to "enclose and foreclose Indigenous relationships to place and political authority."[133] For the settler colonial states, securing the border entails dividing those who live on either side into distinct populations, undermining their political authority by displacing them from the territory they have traditionally occupied. These changes continue into the present. Like the Coast Salish in the Pacific Northwest, leaders from the Tohono O'odham nation in the US-Mexico borderlands refer to Trump's border policies as

a weapon that wounds the body, also acting as a form of ontological erasure.[134] One example concerns the waiving of legal compliance by the Department of Homeland Security when it comes to environmental and tribal law.[135] The Mohawk Nation, also situated in the Canada-US borderlands, similarly contends with border crossing and sovereignty issues.[136] It is not only these nations that contend with these issues; every tribal nation across the Canada-US and US-Mexico borders confronts issues of securitization, because the rationale for waiving or bypassing Indigenous rights and tribal law is rooted in settler colonialism.

Conclusion

The events of 9/11 were not the sole cause for border securitization. They did act as a catalyst and accelerated processes that were already underway. The way securitization has unfolded at the Canada-US border in the past two decades is an example of a long-standing structure that continues to dispossess Indigenous nations of their territory by claiming the right to determine who is Indigenous. This biopolitical process is most visible at the border due to the state's attempt to control mobility as an assertion of sovereignty: at the border, only national state citizenship becomes relevant. The settler state creates a paradigm that, according to scholar Rene Dietrich, "produce[s] settler-defined modes of life and forms of land use that are defined and reiterated as a universalizing self-evident norm and as normative demand placed on all peoples."[137] This article argued that securitization perpetuates the production of settler normativity when viewed from both a bio- and geopolitical perspective.

This article contributes to scholarship in border studies and critical Indigenous studies, which shows that "the local" is never solely about local issues. It considers multiple scales, multiple agents, and how these affect and influence one another. Border studies cannot do without critical Indigenous studies and Indigenous theorizing. Understanding contemporary international borders mandates taking account of those nations that exist outside the national state system. Failure to do so not only leaves significant gaps in understanding the contemporary nature of borders but it simultaneously perpetuates the settler colonial system in North America that displaces Indigenous nations from their lands and prevents them from having a seat at the table. The shift to naturalizing securitization at the Canada-US border masks the ongoing processes of the settler colonial state.

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