

**“WE LET THEM BE OUR EXTENDED FAMILY”:
DISENTANGLING STÓ:LŌ FAMILIES FROM THE COLONIAL PAST**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to problematize current historiographic approaches to family, generally, and Indigenous families, specifically. Contrary to much of the scholarship on this topic, Indigenous families like the Stó:lō have found ways to accommodate changes resulting from colonial interference, allowing them to retain an impressive degree of cultural continuity even as they adapt. The methodology for this study combines ethnohistorical approaches with discourse analysis, placing community-based research and interviews alongside archival documents and historical records to show that families are actively defined and constructed in response to both external and internal change. As this thesis argues, Stó:lō families are individually and uniquely connected to their cultural traditions in ways that are flexible and innovative, and their responses to change have been facilitated by this flexibility.

The first chapter analyses recorded oral histories and myth-age stories of the Stó:lō to expand understandings of the ways families were defined, maintained, and experienced prior to contact. Chapter two places these perspectives alongside fur trade records, missionary reports, Department of Indian Affairs reports, and documented personal accounts to assert that Stó:lō families were not simply passive receptors or archives of historical change, but were historical agents actively negotiating this change. The final chapter overlaps historical documents and secondary sources with recent interviews with Stó:lō community members to show that internal systems to facilitate changes to families remain, but have shifted to become more inclusive—partially in response to colonial restrictions, and partially as a way to expand family networks and the social obligations that accompany families.

Although this study draws on examples of Indigenous families, it also points out some of the broader benefits of approaching the family as a set of multiple and dynamic social relationships that contain and exert power within a culturally defined historical continuum. Families provide us with another way of thinking about how local knowledge, tradition, and innovation are defined and applied. While changes did occur within and among Coast Salish families, they were largely filtered through local Indigenous knowledge and expectations. As the example of the Stó:lō asserts, there is not a singular or normative definition of families. Rather, the expansive approaches to Stó:lō families are shaped by precedent and culturally normative assumptions, allowing them to remain meaningful as they change over time.

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Community-based research projects are inherently collaborative, and this thesis is no different. This makes it difficult to acknowledge all of those people who contributed to or supported this work, but here it goes...

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FOREWORD

As we travelled from the Abbotsford Airport through Stó:lō territory, Professor Keith Thor Carlson relayed the place name stories connected to the surrounding landscape. It was my first time in this place, and I had come to participate in an Ethnohistory Fieldschool with the Stó:lō.¹ As I listened to the stories, I tried to remember the Halq'eméylem names and stories that connected to these places.

Later, I would hear some of these stories repeated by Albert [Sonny] McHalsie, the Director & Cultural Advisor of the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre. A few weeks into the fieldschool, Sonny took our class of students on a tour of places significant to the history of the Stó:lō. It became clear that a vast network of stories connected these individual places across a broad landscape. The place names not only referenced a story, but they linked the stories and their meanings together to form the collective history and cultural understandings of the Stó:lō people.

I would come to understand that Stó:lō families operated in a similar manner. My fieldschool project was to write the family history of Joe and Irene Aleck of the Cheam First Nation, and I spent many hours in interviews with them. I was struck by the complex family dynamics they described, as their articulations of the connections between past and present revealed a unique perspective of families. From the Aleck's narration of their multi-levelled kinship relationships surfaced different levels of relationality between families, which became more complex as the conversations continued. I began to hear more and more about children who they had taken in—or unofficially fostered or adopted—over their lifetime. I was intrigued by the way they spoke of these children as family members, rather than using terms that distinguished them from their nuclear or extended family. Many of the Stó:lō people I spoke to while at the fieldschool voiced a similar perspective on families, as I heard things like, “My mom—well, she's not actually my mom, she's my aunty...,” or... “I was adopted...well not

¹ The Ethnohistory Fieldschool school is a collaborative project co-taught by Professor John Sutton Lutz and Professor Keith Thor Carlson, and co-managed by the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Victoria. For a month, students live in Stó:lō territory, attend seminars related to various aspects of ethnohistory and Stó:lō history and culture, and conduct oral history research projects determine by Stó:lō community representatives.

really adopted, but, you know...” I didn’t know. Spurred on by my conversations with the Alecks and others, I decided to inquire further into these complex definitions of family and family practices, making it the focus of this thesis project.

Although it may seem that I fell into this project, I had been interested in aspects of Aboriginal kinship, adoption and fostering for quite some time. Initial research and my experience at the fieldschool led me to decide that a meaningful study should be grounded in local history and local knowledge of families if it were to be sensitive to the diversity among Indigenous people and communities. One year later, I returned to Stó:lō territory to conduct interviews for my study. Throughout these interviews, my understanding of the Stó:lō and their relationships to one another changed. I began to see increasing diversity within and among First Nations families. But I still had more to learn about the depth and complexity of the dynamics between Stó:lō families. In my mind at that time, Stó:lō families defined themselves in opposition to non-Indigenous families, and their family practices in reaction or resistance to the policies and practices of the colonial and Canadian government in relation to these families. But this was a gross oversimplification, I soon learned.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with Stó:lō Elders and community members. I spoke with many people who unofficially adopt, foster, or “take in” children, including Joe and Irene Aleck, Frank Malloway, Archie Charles, Ralph and Lorraine George, Leona Kelly, Maxine Prevost. I also spoke with people who interacted with the government-run child welfare system in various ways: Rose Charlie, who advocated for First Nations children through various political avenues, as well as Herb Joe, Glenda Campbell, Dianne Garner and Kelowa Edel, who worked in both the province-run child welfare system and the Stó:lō -directed child and family services program Xyolhemeylh. And I spoke with one man whose life was significantly altered as a result of government policies and practices of interference within Indigenous families. William [Harry] Adolph shared with me many painful memories of his experience in residential school, his time in a tuberculosis hospital, and the abusive treatment of him and his brother Danny while in foster care.² His experiences, as well as the experiences of two people who I never met—Delvis Morrison and Elizabeth Herling—helped shaped this project. These two have passed on, but I heard Delvis mentioned many times as an example of a child caught up in the foster system, and

² William [Harry] Adolph, interview, July 1, 2010, Chilliwack, BC.

Elizabeth Herling was often cited as an example for those who brought children into their homes, unaided by outside sources. Whether or not their voices are directly represented in this thesis, the words and experiences of all of these people informed this thesis immensely, and I thank all those who took the time to speak with me on this subject. These conversations led me to see that definitions of Stó:l̓ō families and their related practices were much deeper than either fixed and unchanging kin networks or simple reactions and resistance to colonial power. Instead, Stó:l̓ō families today encompass a dynamic relationship between the past and the present, as they pull from the past to confront their present circumstances. Certainly, these families have changes over time, but the people I spoke with remained insistent that they maintained a connection to families and traditions of the past.

Specifically, what these Stó:l̓ō Elders and community members revealed was a flexible understanding of families and traditions related to family. The Stó:l̓ō were insistent that their practices were traditional, yet their conversations disclosed an understanding that their actions likewise departed from traditions of the past. While the interference of residential schools and child welfare policies and practices may have changed the ways that families operated, they did not change the ways that families were understood or the meaning that informed the experiences of family. I came to see that relatedness is not simply a state—it is an active, dynamic process that is constantly in flux, and it is this dynamic process of negotiation that helps to facilitate change.

I also came to see that some of the complexities among these familial relationships are emotionally, socially, and culturally charged. I have tried my best to present these complexities while remaining sensitive to the culture of the people I interviewed. Certainly, there is difficulty in finding the balance between telling people's stories and taking a critical scholarly approach. I have tried to maintain this balance, and any errors in interpretation are my own. All relationships contain power dynamics, and I acknowledge that Stó:l̓ō families too contain undercurrents of power. As an outside observer, I hesitate to deconstruct their words without a fulsome knowledge of the epistemologies and cultural knowledge that informed their meaning. In an effort to contextualize their expressions and experience, I elected to place these conversations alongside of ethnographic studies and archival evidence in order to place them within their

cultural and historical context without being prescriptive of the meaning underlying their words and actions.

The path that this thesis took to its final product was certainly guided by people in the Stó:lō community, but it was also shaped by another community—the myriad of other scholars from a multitude of disciplines who have been working among the Stó:lō and other Coast Salish groups. Over the past few decades, there has been a flurry of research activity among the Stó:lō, and my study is a part of this burgeoning research. This thesis is therefore informed by the work of these scholars.³ However, it also sits alongside the research of former fieldschool students, many of whom provided feedback on initial drafts for this project.⁴ In light of the flourishing interdisciplinary work being conducted within Stó:lō and other Coast Salish communities, I made the choice to concentrate on particular aspects of Stó:lō families with the knowledge that deeper studies of certain of the other features of Stó:lō culture that I engage are being dealt with in a more fulsome manner by others.

Like the connections between place names and their corresponding stories, multiple relational connections link people within their broad and shifting family networks. My conversations with Stó:lō people emphasized complexity of their relationships with each other and with the past. Talking to these people forced me to consider much more deeply the connections between Indigenous families and history beyond tribal identity or other essentialist notions of collective history, and consider the ways that Indigenous families themselves experienced history. What some people may perceive as a discontinuity in the voices I quote between applications of ideas of the past versus the past “as it happened” do not necessarily indicate a deviation from tradition or an inadequate understanding of the past. They may indicate that history is not experience uniformly among Indigenous communities, and internal differences among communities, such as variations among status or gender, may mean that individuals within one tribal group experience history in multiple ways. The history of Stó:lō families certainly point to these differences, and so this study focuses on the diversity of ways that families and traditions have been made meaningful over time, and problematizes the relatively

³ This study draws on the research of Keith Thor Carlson, John Sutton Lutz, Albert [Sonny] McHalsie, Bruce Granville Miller, Dave Schaepe, and Wayne Suttles.

⁴ Those whose research, advice, and encouragement helped shaped this project include: Andrée Boiselle, Amanda Fehr, Liam Haggarty, Megan Harvey, Katya MacDonald, and Margaret Robbins.

singular and static way that Indigenous families have been represented thus far. Simply put, it examines change and continuity among families and traditions between and among Stó:lō families over time.

INTRODUCTION

A child wasn't just brought up by Mom and Dad, it was brought up by Grandmas, Grandpas, Aunts, Uncles, older cousins, everybody had permission to mold that child... Everybody took care of its needs. It was everybody's child because we had that communal living idea.⁵

-Irene Aleck

They were not adopted, but moved in and were raised there... Not officially adopted, it's just the Indian way, you know. Go to your extended family and they raise you.⁶

-Frank Malloway

[It's] a way of life. When people need a home—if they're not even extended family, but...we let them be our extended family.⁷

-Leona Kelly

When speaking about their families, Stó:lō people often highlight the importance of their traditional extended kinship networks. As these three Stó:lō speakers express, traditional extended family networks continue to inform the ways that families operate presently. Yet these speakers also vary in their articulations of what they find meaningful about extended families and their connected traditions. These variations speak to the central place of innovation within Stó:lō history and Stó:lō society. Irene Aleck, for instance, highlights the importance of the broader community's connection with families, while Frank Malloway discusses the importance of traditions related to ensuring that individuals were cared for. Leona Kelly's words reveal the inherent flexibility of a term and concept that are typically regarded by outsiders as fixed by blood – families. Her representation of extended family as dynamic and actively defined situates Frank's and Irene's words within a flexible and adaptive body of tradition that is informed by – and indeed characterized by – innovation. By innovation, I am referring to the adaptive application of cultural traditions, which accommodates continuity and change. Taken together, the words of these speakers signify the complex connections among individual formulations of meaning that underpin Stó:lō families. The people interviewed for this project all spoke of

⁵ Irene Aleck, August 8, 1996, interview.

⁶ Frank Malloway, July 2, 2010, interview.

⁷ Leona Kelly, July 5, 2010, interview.

families as not only sites of innovation, but as dynamic entities. Stó:lō people regard their families not as a type of cultural object that can be captured within a snapshot of time, but as responsive networks based on kinship—but kinship that is socially constructed. They portray Stó:lō families as flexible, and often progressive in their application of cultural traditions. One of the key features that connects Stó:lō families today to Stó:lō families of the past is this ever-present flexibility. As individuals respond uniquely to their circumstances, created by colonial forces or otherwise, their responses are informed by shared cultural understandings. The ways that cultural knowledge is filtered and applied to changes within Stó:lō families—at times as a result of colonial pressures, and at times as a result of internally directed change—means that each family is unique and flexible in their application of tradition. As this thesis argues, Stó:lō families are individually and uniquely connected to their cultural traditions in ways that are flexible and innovative, and their responses to change over time have been facilitated by this flexibility.

Seeking to historicize the Stó:lō family—to trace changes within and among these families over time— this analysis reveals the various and complex ways that Stó:lō people have defined the most intimate of social collectives. The ways that Stó:lō people collectively identify reveal the multiple and complex roles of the family within broader Stó:lō social networks, as well as the systems of power and cultural currency from which they draw. The Stó:lō are the Indigenous inhabitants of the Lower Fraser River in British Columbia. They are united through their traditional language, Halq'eméylem, and speak the upriver dialect of this language. The word “Stó:lō” itself is Halq'eméylem for river, and so the people who share this language and territory self-identify as the “people of the river.” In the past and continuing through to today, methods of expressing collective identity included the practice of Stó:lō cultural beliefs and traditions, intimately connecting the Stó:lō within their kinship networks. However, over time, the Stó:lō have not simply resided in a static geographical area or share a static language and culture—these aspects and the connections formed among them have changed. Ultimately, these changes contribute to Stó:lō people’s perspectives of families, and the various ways that these connections have shifted have been facilitated by the flexibility of family networks.

Part of the flexibility of families is drawn from sources of cultural power. The relationality between and among families is not void of power dynamics, and indeed moments of interactions

between Stó:l̓o people and their families are no different. Just as relational and positional power emerge from interactions with colonial power, so too does power emerge within interactions between families. And as the examples of Stó:l̓o families show, sometimes their actions are as much an attempt to navigate internal systems of power as they are efforts to negotiate outside colonial forces. Prior to contact, these internal power systems operated to provide families with the care that they required, although these systems were not free from either status or gender biases. As demonstrated in chapter one for example, status and resources were inherited and controlled within family networks, and so power was located within the family, although the individual's class and gender influenced the ways that these are acquired. Internal power systems began to shift with contact, as shown in chapter two. As this chapter illustrates, changes to families shifted the ways that power could be acquired and employed. The final chapter examines ways that internal systems of power continue to be present within Stó:l̓o families, and continue to influence understandings of family and family practices today. In this thesis, I will specifically examine how gender, class, and individual experience combine with collective cultural memories and understandings of families to impact the ways that Stó:l̓o people have defined kinship connections over time.

Accomplishing this task involves dissecting the ways that various power relationships—both internal and external—are defined and enacted. While I acknowledge the complexities that underlie extracting or drawing this information from static archival sources, equally complex is interpreting the meaning of Stó:l̓o people's oral histories and discussions of families today. The Stó:l̓o people who I interviewed for the purpose of this thesis are certainly not free of bias, but it is not the principal task of this thesis to sort through these biases. Rather, this study looks to contextualize and situate how and why Stó:l̓o people approach and give meaning to their families in connection to their traditions and cultural practices. In the effort to make room for the meaning that they attribute to families and family practices, I have sought primarily to place these expressions in their historical and cultural context and in so doing to provide a frame of reference for their perspectives. In this, I aim to complicate or provide alternatives to the static representation of Indigenous families and family practices, and suggest that multilayered histories and identities are often more influential in how families and their traditions are approached and defined than are ascribing to simplistic notions of tribal identity or Indigeneity.

Where the colonial policies and practices of newcomers interacting with Indigenous people often sought to assimilate families in ways that undermined Indigenous understandings, historians have, at times, responded by normalizing the ideal traditional Indigenous extended family model.⁸ In this approach, Indigenous definitions of family are treated as singular within one cultural or tribal group, and insufficient thought has been given to reasons for either diachronic or synchronic differences—within communities and families, as well as over time—outside of changes caused by colonial forces. Families who vary from the ideal traditional model are often portrayed as succumbing to imposed policies and practices of various colonial powers, responsible for creating and enforcing external systems of classification within Indigenous communities. Indigenous families, once coerced into adopting a Western European bourgeois family model, now have to prove that they retain some form of the idealized traditional extended family. As such, insufficient attention has been paid to the ways that Indigenous individuals have experienced these changes themselves, or the ways that responses to change may have varied based on internal power relations, like status and gender differences. I discuss these issues in connection with a more comprehensive review of the historiography in the second chapter of this thesis. This chapter will also historicize the different ways that Indigenous people and communities have defined family for themselves. That is to say, there was not a unilateral response to change within families, and their responses often hinged on the gender and status of individual family members.

Historiography that examines the recent history of Indigenous families tends to focus on how government policies and assimilationist practices impacted and redefined notions of what constituted family for Indigenous people. This type of focus often correlates policies and practices of the state and other colonial authorities with the supposed breakdown of kin networks, and depicts the result as a crisis within Indigenous families.⁹ Put another way,

⁸ For a regional ethnographic perspective, see Claudia Lewis, *Indian Families of the Northwest Coast: The Impact of Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); For a generalized, materialist-semiotic approach to this topic, see Julia Emberley, *Defamiliarizing the Aboriginal: Cultural Practices and Decolonization in Canada* (Toronto: U of T Press, 2007).

⁹ For example, see Patrick Johnston, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1983); Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey, *Stolen from Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997); Sally Babidge, *Indigenous Families and the State: Conditions of History* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2010); Veronica Strong-Boag, *Fostering Nation?: Canada Confronts its History of Childhood Disadvantage* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2010).

historiography of this kind contains underlying assumptions about Indigenous experiences based upon the supposed outcomes of colonial actions. Indigenous ideas about family are treated as a constant, with the focus on the colonial powers as the driving force for change. This leaves little room for accounts of agency or for different responses to changes over time. And one need only turn to the postmodern theoretical musings of Homi Bhabha, for instance, to recognize that agency manifests itself in all forms of colonial relationships, and that the dynamics between tradition and the forces of colonial acculturation often assume expressions that are as innovative as they are subversive.¹⁰ A static approach to Indigenous family risks constructing narratives of dysfunction as normative meta-narratives, wherein all families who stray from the ideal are demonstrative of the breakdown of the “traditional” Indigenous families that occurred as a result of colonization. I explore this type of historiography further in the third chapter of this thesis. In exchange, I offer a discussion of the local epistemological meanings that shaped the lived experiences of Stó:lō families to test whether colonial expectations were met, and to assess (to the degree that they were not met) the way that flexible applications of tradition shape the way Indigenous people themselves construct and experience family.

This thesis seeks to problematize current historiographic approaches to family through the assertion that families are not only not static entities, but are also dynamic in ways that do not necessarily follow positivist notions of unidirectional change. That is to say, families are actively defined and constructed in response to both external and internal change along lines that are unpredictable, and yet shaped by precedent and culturally normative assumptions. As a set of relationships and social obligations among individuals, families are constantly in the process of negotiating and reacting to internal dynamics. But they also have agency. Thus, examining the role of the individual in the family collective is as important as examining the place of the family in its broader social, cultural and historical context. As historian Nancy Christie points out in the context of nineteenth century non-Native Canadian families, “the family must be conceived like any other set of social relationships, as a regulatory institution resting upon a system of unequal hierarchies of age, gender and social status.”¹¹ As Christie asserts, to date, historians have been

¹⁰ As Homi Bhabha demonstrates in *The Location of Culture*, colonized peoples were not passive recipients of change inflicted upon them by the colonizers, but adapted these changes in ways that were filtered through their own epistemologies. See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2005) 121-131.

¹¹ Nancy Christie and Michael Gavreau, ed., *Mapping the Margins: The Family and Social Discipline in Canada, 1700-1975* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), 4.

preoccupied with uncovering normative structuring of the family.¹² In line with Christie's observations, I hope to make explicit the value of looking beyond demographics and policy history to examine the multiple and diverse ways that families are defined and operate. Although this study draws on examples of Indigenous families, I also point out some of the broader benefits of approaching the family, not as an undifferentiated unit, but as a set of multiple and dynamic social relationships that contain and exert power within a culturally defined historical continuum. The analysis explores class and gender dynamics within and among families, drawing attention to the shifting boundaries between the individual, the family and the community. Negotiating internal dynamics at the same time as external changes, the family is not simply an archive of historical change, but has the capacity to act as an agent of cultural continuity even as it serves to facilitate certain expressions of change emerging from introduced circumstances.

The approach taken in this thesis is not meant to diminish the effects of colonization on families, but it looks to complicate the relatively singular ways in which Indigenous families have been defined and constructed. As Adele Perry and Sarah Carter have successfully demonstrated, shifts in policies and practices are often indicative of colonial anxieties over the control of Indigenous individuals and families. In *On the Edge of Empire*, Adele Perry examines the ways that policies of the colonial government reflect anxieties of colonial authorities and articulate the failure to assert colonial control.¹³ Perry draws attention to the extent that tensions between class, gender and race played a role in the formulation of these anxieties. Additionally, Sarah Carter's work *The Importance of Being Monogamous* examines the ways that alternative definitions of family posed a threat to the perceived social order, prompting state anxieties to attempt to control and limit Indigenous families through marriage and divorce laws.¹⁴ Carter points out that while "destructive consequences" resulted from these policies, the "persistence of Indigenous marriage and divorce law" demonstrates the "determined insistence of Indigenous people that they had the right to live under their own laws."¹⁵ Building on these works, I also

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire, Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: U of T Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008).

¹⁵ Ibid, 9.

aim to consider the ways that these colonial anxieties were filtered through Stó:lō people's innovative application of tradition that underlies their understandings of family.

My approach is also influenced by scholarship that explores and complicates the relationship between history and culture. As Marshall Sahlins demonstrates, ignoring cultural context results in a fundamental misinterpretation of historical events.¹⁶ Institutions and cultural structures act as mediators between individuals and society at a local historical level, which requires that these cultural structures are not defined in isolation from other cultures they are in contact with. Nor should they be defined against other cultures, as they are formulated in relation to them. Sahlins states:

“The cultural order (even if it were monolithic) functions in an intersubjective field. Individuals have partial and differential relations in it—for which reasons, incidentally, the argument that the cultural categories are fuzzy or cultural logics indeterminate because people have contrasting and negotiable versions of them does not seem cogent.”¹⁷

Integral to his concept of the intersubjectivity of culture is Sahlins' formulation of individual agency within history, as well as the ability for individuals who subscribe to certain cultural institutions to relate to it in different ways. Sahlins demonstrates that individual agency is correlated with personal experience and related to historical and cultural context. He explains: “The concrete individual, whose relations to the totality are mediated by a particular biographical experience in familial and other institutions, must thus express the cultural universals in an individual form.”¹⁸ These ideas are important for considering how Stó:lō interactions with cultural institutions—whether their own, or those of outside cultures—have led the Stó:lō to an active consideration of kinship, and have implications for their actions in light of this. For contemporary Stó:lō families, this might be best reflected through the various ways that they consciously connect current practices of adoption and fostering to past traditions. Using Sahlins' approach, I likewise seek to investigate the various and distinctive ways that contemporary Stó:lō individuals have expressed their understandings of past families.

¹⁶ Marshall Sahlins, *Apologies To Thucydides: Understanding History as Culture and Vice Versa* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2004), 10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

As experiences of Stó:lō families show, change is mediated in a way that accommodates and is shaped by cultural traditions. Stó:lō families have retained the flexibility to maintain particular traditions and cultural aspects associated with kinship in a way that has come to mean new things and fulfill new objectives. As Aletta Biersack has noted in the context of Oceania, despite the pressures of colonialism and globalization to create conformity on European dictated terms, Indigenous people have continued to find new ways to be different.¹⁹ My analysis builds from Biersack's ideas, and on Keith Carlson's work on the Coast Salish, specifically his examination of the interrelated dynamics between tradition and innovation.²⁰ As Carlson asserts in his book *The Power of Place the Problem of Time*, "the passage of time presents problems for collective affiliations, and these problems cause shared identities to be periodically reconstituted along new lines."²¹ With this in mind, I am seeking to explore ways that tensions between tradition and innovation have always existed within families, and have been renegotiated in response to change.

Although Stó:lō families are connected through tradition, their diverse practices and conflicting responses to change indicate that there are neither monolithic nor singular approaches to family. As Julie Cruikshank argues in *Do Glaciers Listen?*, local knowledge is made apparent at moments of change and negotiation.²² In my analysis, I draw from Cruikshank's definition of "local knowledge," which she defines as "tacit knowledge embodied in life experiences and reproduced in everyday behaviour and speech."²³ Her discussion of oral traditions among the Athapaskan and Tlingit demonstrates that local knowledge "is not encapsulated in closed traditions, but is produced during human encounters rather than discovered."²⁴ This interpretive model sets up the framework for my approach. With Cruikshank's ideas in mind, I aim to consider how encounters with unfamiliar practices pushed Stó:lō families to articulate their understandings of family. I also examine Stó:lō people's experiences in, reactions to, and

¹⁹ Aletta Biersack, *Clio in Oceania: Toward a Historical Anthropology* (University of Michigan: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

²⁰ As one example, see "Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism, and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon," in Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan, eds., *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada's Native Past* (UBC Press, 2007).

²¹ Keith Carlson, *The Power of Place the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: U of T Press, 2010), 24.

²² Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).

²³ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

negotiation of family networks in order to gain an understanding of ways that local knowledge of the family was configured. In this way, even changes to the family that are coerced by colonial policies are not necessarily representational of colonial powers, as meaning and experience are filtered through the epistemologies and local knowledge of Indigenous people. While there are very distinctive examples of authorized versions of family on the part of colonial authorities, certain aspects of colonial cultures are also being adapted to allow for greater agency on the part of these Indigenous groups. As the expansive ways that kinship is defined necessitates considering the relationship between action and its representation, I will examine how discursive and active expressions on the part of the Stó:lō reflect a dynamic relationship between families and tradition that looks beyond Anderson's "imagined communities"²⁵ and Hobsbawm's "invented traditions"²⁶ to consider ground level consequences and implications. These actions and experiences demonstrate an integral connection between the Stó:lō and their cultural understandings, and it is the stories and traditions that provide an anchor to their meanings as they are described and applied by Stó:lō people.

The time period of this thesis is broad, as it begins by considering pre-contact narratives of the Stó:lō and moves into an examination of Stó:lō families spanning nearly two centuries: from the Stó:lō people's contact with newcomers in the early nineteenth century to a discussion of Stó:lō families today. My methodology combines ethnohistorical approaches with discourse analysis. In considering the connections between culture and history, I use this approach to analyze the ways these are articulated and represented through action. I predominantly draw from written records, historical documents, and ethnographic studies in chapters one and two, which span the pre-contact period to the mid-twentieth century. The first chapter analyses recorded oral histories and myth-age stories to begin constructing an understanding of Stó:lō perspectives on families. In chapter two, I place these perspectives alongside fur trade records, missionary reports, reports from the Department of Indian Affairs, and documented personal accounts in an attempt to gain Stó:lō perspectives on their actions and the meaning behind them. In the final chapter, I overlap historical documents and secondary sources with interviews I conducted with Stó:lō community members to complicate contemporary representations of

²⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

²⁶ Eric Hobsbawm and Terry Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Indigenous families. To be sure, this analysis is not meant to be exhaustive or comprehensive. I recognize that there is little record of Stó:lō people's articulations of families from early contact through to the early twentieth century, and the lack of oral histories from this period make it difficult to draw any conclusions. For this reason, I simply try to pluck at particular available strings that are representative of some key moments that seem to reflect the ways that Stó:lō people defined families, and aim to complicate the ways that these families have been represented in much of the historical record.

More specifically, chapter one analyzes the creation, maintenance, and negotiation of symbolic kin relationships in ancient myth-age stories like Stó:lō *Sxwóxwiyám*, which were recorded in the late nineteenth century through to the present. In this chapter, I argue that pre-contact Indigenous families were more flexible and dynamic than they have been defined in ethnographic studies. In these myth-age stories, families are represented as accommodating and expectant of change, and I suggest that local knowledge of families at this time was constructed along similar lines. This chapter looks at these narratives in conjunction with linguistic and ethnographic studies in order to consider how oral narratives of kinship may have shaped the historical consciousness of pre-contact Stó:lō communities. I also suggest that experiences within families may have differed based on internal power relations such as status, gender and familial affiliations. The analysis in this first chapter helps to understand ways that families were defined and contested among different communities and individuals. This will set the framework for the following chapters in this thesis.

Chapter two builds on the flexible ideas of families, as established in the first chapter, and reexamines the written record to argue that the perspectives of newcomer observers were very different from the actual lived experience of Stó:lō families. In this, I examine places of perceived fracturing between individuals and families to suggest that the lived experience of Stó:lō families shows a diversity of response to change that is not reflected within the documented history. I argue that these places of perceived fracturing between traditional approaches to families demonstrate that Stó:lō families were being innovative in their responses to change, and that divisions based on class and gender contributed to differences among these responses.

Chapter three considers how Stó:lō people approach and define families today. Building on the research findings in the previous chapters, which demonstrate that families are in a constant state of negotiation, and have internal systems to help them respond to change, this chapter asserts that Stó:lō people are placing the past and tradition in dialogue with present experiences of families and understandings of culture in order to draw on and renegotiate various networks the Stó:lō have in place to care for and maintain family networks. Contemporary Stó:lō families innovatively apply past understandings of family in ways that have allowed them to become more inclusive, but this inclusivity is not void of status or gendered power dynamics or social obligations. This fits into a growing historiography on the dynamics between tradition and innovation in Salish society. In many ways, contemporary Indigenous family practices have been represented as reactions to government policies and practices. However, examples of Stó:lō people's ground level practices not only challenge government enforced policies on a political level, but they also move beyond this type of representation and assert their autonomy and authority over families at a social, cultural, and individual family level. Using interviews that I conducted with Stó:lō people, I analyze the different ways that the Stó:lō speak about kinship, adoption, and fostering in an attempt to determine how these reflect contemporary understandings of family. In addition, I consider how they speak to, oppose, and connect with one another. As I argue, these cultural beliefs and the application of them are not unilateral, but need to be understood in a way that reflects collective cultural understandings of families and allows for individual differences.

Taken together, these chapters aim to arrive at an understanding of the history of families from a Stó:lō perspective as they are negotiated over time. Whereas chapter one expands understandings of the ways families were defined, maintained, and experienced, chapter two asserts that families are not simply passive receptors or archives of historical change, but are historical agents actively negotiating this change. The third chapter shows that internal systems to facilitate changes to families remain, but have shifted to become more inclusive—partially in response to colonial restrictions, and partially as a way to expand family networks and the social obligations that accompany families. Contrary to much of the scholarship on this topic, Indigenous families like the Stó:lō have found ways to accommodate changes resulting from colonial interference, allowing them to retain an impressive degree of cultural continuity even as they adapt.

CHAPTER ONE

Apprehending Kinship: Approaching Stó:lō Perspectives on Families Through Myth

They became angry, took the child and threw him out of the house. But Mink was standing outside with his mountain goat cape spread wide; he caught the child in it and went away with him. After a while the girl's father became sad that he lost his grandson. So he sent to Ká'iq and begged him to send him back. Mink granted his wish and sent the boy back. He was named T'e'qual'tca.²⁷

This story of T'e'qual'tca, as recorded by Franz Boas in the late nineteenth century, unsettles some basic assumptions about families. As it resists moralizing the actions of the grandparents, it also blurs the boundaries between the human agency and spirit power, both of which are responsible for enacting change within the family. The story begins with the impregnation of the daughter of the chief by Mink, and the birth of their son. The family becomes angry and tosses the child away, but are able to receive him back into their home when they so wish. As the remainder of the story explains, T'e'qual'tca becomes the ancestor of the Chilliwack people, forever remaining a part of Stó:lō collective memory with his transformation into stone. As an ancestor of the Chilliwack people, T'e'qual'tca²⁸ is distinguished as a figure of prominence and high status. However, T'e'qual'tca also embodies change. Born from elements of the spirit world, he is rejected and reclaimed by his high status family, and is later transformed into stone through an altercation with beings from the spirit world once again. His final transformation allows him to remain in the landscape as an ever-present reminder of the many changes that occur within family networks.

An exploration of expressions of family as they are articulated through Stó:lō Sxwóxwiyám, or what anthropologists have referred to as myth-age legends, reveals that Stó:lō families are anchored by a system of stories or 'narrative memory' that adjust to experience and

²⁷ Boas *Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast*, edited by Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy (Talon Books, 2002), 105.

²⁸ Also sometimes spelled as Tixwelatsa and as T'xwelátse

interaction.²⁹ For the Indigenous inhabitants of the Lower Fraser River in British Columbia, these myth age legends are a means of expressing collective identity, which combine with many others to inform Stó:l̓o cultural beliefs and traditions. Sxwóxwiyám provide a valuable access point for engaging local Indigenous epistemologies through which to understand the impacts of and reactions to historical change.³⁰ Through their representations of families, these myths provide insight into the local Indigenous knowledge and expectations in relation to expressions of Stó:l̓o families. Although there must be a consistency and culturally grounded coherence to families in order for them to function, so too are families flexible in their actions and interactions. This study invites readers to consider this very flexibility as the factor that remains constant while families organize themselves to accommodate changing cultural and historical circumstances. The ways that Stó:l̓o people define families are influenced by their surrounding historical circumstances as well as their interactions with cultural beliefs and practices, which suggests that there is not a singular or normative traditional family model. As this chapter will demonstrate, multiple networks and internal systems of power were called on and made meaningful at different times, and so Stó:l̓o stories that represent families are more about negotiating changes to family networks than they are expressions of an idealized, traditional or singular definition of family.

This chapter engages with anthropological approaches and literary analysis to gain insight into the context and interactions of families as they are expressed within and through selected Stó:l̓o Sxwóxwiyám. Through this analysis, I establish a framework for understanding change in Stó:l̓o approaches to families over time. This framework will be applied to subsequent chapters to show that these families not only demonstrate a fluidity and dynamism of definition, but this essential fluidity and dynamism allow Stó:l̓o families the flexibility to respond to change. As they are filtered through Western European perspectives in historical and ethnographic observations, pre-contact Stó:l̓o perspectives on families are not easily accessed or

²⁹ Neal McLeod offers his concept of “narrative memory” as a way to move beyond essentialist notions of Indigenous identity. McLeod defines narrative memory as collection of multilayered oral histories that form a collective history of a tribal group, and links the past to the present. Additionally, McLeod asserts that narrative memory is not static, since “[n]arratives are constantly being reinterpreted and recreated in light of shifting experience and context.” See Neal McLeod, *Cree Narrative Memory: From Treaties to Contemporary Times* (Saskatoon, Purich Publishing, 2007), 11-18. While I employ McLeod’s term, I attempt to do so in a way that is cognizant of the different and various ways that stories among specific tribal groups, as status and gender differences influence how individuals find meaning in stories as much as tribal identities.

³⁰ I acknowledge the problems inherent to dealing with these myths in their translated form, as the very structure of the English language as the potential to alter the meaning of the story in comparison to the Halqu’emeylem version.

understood through the written record. As the work of Keith Basso among the Apache establishes, myths provide us with images of the past which, in turn, deepen our awareness of the present.³¹ Anchored in shared local knowledge, these myths not only provide insight into how families may have been formulated in the past, but they also give some indication of how past ideas shape Stó:lō families presently.

As myth and narrative memory help shape cultural and historical processes that inform families, these Sxwóxwiyám express the dynamism and flexibility that has remained a consistent part of Stó:lō families. Sxwóxwiyám are an important category of Stó:lō historical narrative, and are often defined in relation to people's personal histories, or sqwelqwel. Whereas Sxwóxwiyám operate in the mythic realm, sqwelqwel are generally anchored in time and place, and the term is often translated as “true news.” However, as Keith Carlson articulates, “both types of historical narrative are regarded as equally real.”³² Thus, we need to be cautious of laying “Western” definitions (and, often, dichotomies) of myth and history over top of Indigenous epistemologies. This divergence in semiotic understanding points to anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s assertions that metaphors, and not people, require ethnography. Certainly, culture is a text;³³ but our interpretations must constantly be re-evaluated with historical context in mind. Without context and temporal sensitivities, outside observers risk obscuring the local expressions of meaning as they are connected to historical perspectives.

Studies by historians and anthropologists on the topic of Pacific Northwest Indigenous mythology as a source of history are diverse, ranging from culturally focused to socio-linguistically based analysis. The premier ethnographer in this area, Franz Boas, first identified the importance of the study of myth as an access point to culture.³⁴ Boas saw myth as encapsulating ethnographic information through which cultural elements could be categorized

³¹ Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 32.

³² Keith Thor Carlson, “Reflections of Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact” in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*, edited by John Lutz, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 50. See this article for an extensive discussion of the intersections and importance of Sxwóxwiyám and sqwelqwel for Stó:lō historical consciousness.

³³ Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-32.

³⁴ As an example of this approach, see Franz Boas, “On Certain Songs and Dances of the Kwakiutl of British Columbia,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 1, (1888): 49-64, wherein Boas looks to connect the winter dances to certain myths. He states: “Its origin and development are still obscure, but it is to be hoped that a further study of the folk-lore and language will clear up many doubtful points,” 64.

and analyzed. He observed that Salish myths were expressions of culture, anchored in specific communities and places, and told by specific individuals at specific times.³⁵ As a key component of his analysis, Boas attempted to locate the geographic, ethnographic, and temporal origin of myths in order to trace their movement and elucidate their significance. In tracing these origins, he felt that he could understand the relations between communities and kin groups. Boas himself acknowledged the difficulty in achieving this objective, divorced as it was from historical context.³⁶ While with the benefit of a century of intervening scholarship, we may conclude that his engagement with myth over-emphasized and oversimplified the idea that myths are articulations of normative cultural behavior, Boas recognized the important connections between knowledge, history, and kinship networks. His acknowledgement of the complexity of the transmission of myths among the Coast Salish indicates that the ideas in them are multiplicitous in their articulations of cultural meaning and historical processes.

Others have seen value in separating myths from their local and historical context. Nearly a century later, in contrast to Boas, Claud Levi-Strauss' analysis of Salish myth and culture stressed the importance of collecting all existing versions of the myth in order to locate their underlying structural elements. Levi-Strauss thought that it was this structure that defines meaning and determines its cultural function.³⁷ Content and context are arbitrary and irrelevant to Levi-Strauss, as myth orders reality in a way that is removed from its "said" meaning. Read this way, a latent universal structure underlies myth, and is indicative of universal human laws. In Levi-Strauss' mind, mythic expressions of sociocultural processes order reality in a manner that is ahistorical in both objective and function. In other words, the universal laws expressed through myth transcend time and place. Levi-Strauss' approach was influential to future structural anthropologists who sought to explain individual understanding through their connection to social structures. However, removed as it is from the analysis of local meaning and historical processes, Levi-Strauss' approach loses sight of the intimate connections between myth and history, as well as people's geographically and historically anchored identities and the application of agency.

³⁵ Ronald Rohner, ed., *The Ethnography of Boas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 49-58.

³⁶ In a letter to the Ethnography Society in 1887, Boas wrote: "The longer I studied the more I became convinced that phenomena, customs, traditions, and migrations are far too complex in their origin to enable a study of psychological causes without a thorough knowledge of their history" (Boas *Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast*, edited by Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy Talon Books, 2002, 32.)

³⁷ Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Way of the Mask*, 3rd edition, translated by Sylvia Modelski, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992).

More recently, sociolinguistic interpretations of Indigenous myth move the focus beyond the study of text and toward an understanding of the connections between text and context. Rather than extracting ethnographic information from myths, sociolinguists like Dell Hymes suggest that it is from the living, performative aspect of these stories that meaning emanates. As Hymes argues, the meaning behind what is being told emerges out of how it is being told. Meaning is determined by communicative context and interaction, and not simply by either structural or historical particulars.³⁸ Hymes does not ignore the contribution of formal structural elements to the meaning of myths, but suggests that within the implicit form of narratives also lies “a rhetoric of action; they embody an implicit schema for the organization of experience.”³⁹ The order of the narrative influences the way its meaning is experienced, understood, and applied. There is therefore an active process to be found in the connection between language and social processes. Distinguishing Hymes’ approach to myth from previous approaches is his insistence that language is not simply a vehicle for meaning, but it is a living, active process, which carries illocutionary force. That is to say, the utterance carries an implied, culturally defined force, which incites action, a response, or reaction from the listener. Additionally, Hymes points to the need to move beyond what he regards as falsely dichotomizing supposed elements of “fact” and “fiction” within myth. In past studies, this approach privileged some interpretations of myth over others, excluding certain oral narratives from the historical record. In the same way that an “unfamiliar pattern may be taken to be absence of pattern,” the unfamiliar historical narrative was taken to be an absence of history.⁴⁰ In considering the interaction between language and social process as active and dynamic, the importance of Hymes’ ideas lies in his consideration of culture and history alongside structural elements of myth.

As an active and interactional process, myths express local knowledge at the same time as they shape it. Focusing specifically on the intersections between Stó:lō myth and historical consciousness, Keith Thor Carlson analyses myths to trace Stó:lō historical consciousness. Carlson affirms that Stó:lō perspectives of myth and history differ from Western standpoints, as

³⁸ See Dell Hymes, *In Vain I Tried to Tell You: Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics* (University of Nebraska Press, 2004). I do acknowledge that working with these texts as though they are “living” is slightly problematic given the difficulty in knowing the exact context in which they were performed and recorded.

³⁹ Dell Hymes, *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality: Toward an Understanding of Voice* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1996), 121.

⁴⁰ Hymes, *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality*, 174.

he stresses that “in a way that is often difficult for outsiders to appreciate, the Coast Salish world remains anchored to a foundation of shared memory and historical understanding, constructed from overlapping shared oral history and historiography.”⁴¹ In his book *The Power of Place, The Problem of Time*, Carlson emphasizes that myths inform the actions and reactions of the Stó:lō, so that they are accommodating of shifting historical processes in a way that is filtered through uniquely Stó:lō epistemologies.⁴² He asserts that Stó:lō “belief in the historical legitimacy of the contents of such stories shapes [Stó:lō] people’s subsequent historical behavior.”⁴³ Thus, these stories provide Stó:lō communities with a framework for negotiating challenges posed to the underlying structures of society by the force of sudden (and often externally introduced) events. Read this way, myths serve as road maps that provide people with multiple precedented pathways toward change by reminding people of where they have been. Where Carlson examines movement and mobility within the landscape in his analysis of these linkages, I look to these narratives to shed light on how families are represented as negotiating changes to kin networks as they shift and adapt to various challenges.⁴⁴ Certainly, Sxwóxwiyám would have provided a framework for understanding family connections in much the same way as Carlson suggests they do for understanding collective identities. Myths informed as they comforted during times of change, but they provided guidelines for accommodating change as well; as such, they served more as sign posts than prescribed pathways.

As shared narratives, stories provide a cultural context through which reactions to historical processes can be defined and understood. Sxwóxwiyám do not represent normative precontact families, but they do reflect underlying ideological expressions of families. Interpreting these narratives with their performative and other contextual aspects in mind unsettles ideas about Indigenous families as they have been represented in the ethnographic literature and historiography. The complexities of family dynamics are made apparent within the “First Ancestor Legends,” which represent changes to families as a result of their encounters

⁴¹ Carlson, *Myth and Memory*, 49.

⁴² Keith Carlson, *The Power of Place, The Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: U of T Press, 2010), 80.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

with Xexals, the Transformers.⁴⁵ Three siblings, collectively referred to as Xexals, moved through Stó:lō territory in what was once a chaotic world, ordering the landscape and the beings within it through various transformations.⁴⁶ In narratives recorded by Boas, the first ancestors are turned into animals, plants, or rocks: the first ancestor of the Kwantlen, K-aE'tsEmEs, is turned into a badger;⁴⁷ the ancestors of the Matsqui, Sk-Ele'yitl and his son are transformed into beavers;⁴⁸ the Chilliwack's ancestor, T'e'qual'tca, is changed into stone.⁴⁹ The Sxwóxwiyám about Xexals and the first families act as “origin stories” for Stó:lō communities, that is certain. Like these individuals, many others who encounter Xexals are likewise transformed, becoming a continuing and living part of Stó:lō territory. Through their transformation, they are inscribed into the landscape, and as these stories are told, they are reanimated through their narration. The status that this affords the descendants of the first ancestors is maintained for the past, present, and future generations of these families.

The Stó:lō had their own categories of kinship, and their definitions were intimately connected to local knowledge systems that were transmitted through Sxwóxwiyám. Early ethnographers like Homer Barnett defined Stó:lō kinship through the study of linguistic evidence, which led to the overly simplistic assertion that family networks were linearly and statically defined through marriage and blood ties, rather than through a complex system of relationality.⁵⁰ The ways that connections among communities and families are defined are not static; they involve complex systems of responsibility and reciprocity, encompassing economic, political, social, cultural and spiritual aspects of the Coast Salish world. Communities were divided between high and low class people, and slaves.⁵¹ Within these communities were clusters

⁴⁵ These are found in Franz Boas' book *Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast*, edited by Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy (Talon Books, 2002), 101-108. As the editors explain, “these legends explain the coming of the First Ancestors of specific clusters of villages...beginning at the mouth of the Fraser and moving upriver” (101).

⁴⁶ Xexa:ls, or Xals in the singular, are also referred to as the “Transformers.” For a detailed discussion of Xexa:ls and the transformers sites, see Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, David M. Schaepe and Keith Thor Carlson, “Making The World Right Through Transformations”, *A Stó:lō -Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Carlson, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 6.

⁴⁷ Boas, *Indian Myths and Legends*, 102.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 103-104.

⁵⁰ See Homer Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1955).

⁵¹ Wayne Suttles, “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish,” *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1987), 11.

of families, usually living communally under one roof in a longhouse. Marriages were often polygamous, and high status men usually had more wives and slaves than lower status men. As anthropologist Wayne Suttles explain, “Kinship was reckoned bilaterally. [...] The nuclear families of brothers, cousins, and brothers-in-law formed extended families...claiming rights to certain local resources and to certain inherited privileges.”⁵² Additionally, family roles varied on an individual level, and there was both a class and a gendered division of labour. It is important to remember that the work done by slaves in high status households would have been done by family members of lower status households. This would have resulted in higher status members having more time to educate and train their children, for example, to learn Sxwóxwiyám and interpret them, or to engage in spiritual activities. Not only would those individuals with access to resource sites have learned special information about plants and other resources, but times of resource gathering were times when myths and family histories were shared. This would have been another important time of instruction for children. This type of knowledge would have increased their social capital within their social networks, as to be a high status person also meant that you were from a family that knew its history. In this way, times of gathering, preparing and sharing food would also have been key to the welfare of children and their families, and these variances would have influenced their position as adults in their kin networks and the broader Stó:lō community.

These ethnographic details suggest that elite families would have more opportunity to interpret and deploy stories for various reasons, and also, perhaps, greater self-interest in insuring references to the stories. Their contribution to the local knowledge of families suggests that these stories may have shaped expectations among family members. As Suttles explains, the distinction between classes is indicative of a correlation between private knowledge and status went beyond simply economic distinctions, as “high class people preserved the knowledge of their own heritage and valued it, and possessed a knowledge of good conduct,” while “low-class people were people who had ‘lost their history,’ or who ‘had no advice.’”⁵³ Family dynamics were thus defined in relation to each other’s history, and used as a way to position themselves in relation to one another as assertions of status and ability to draw from cultural knowledge.

⁵² Ibid., 16-17.

⁵³ Ibid., 8.

Suttles' descriptions of Stó:lō social networks not only demonstrate the complexity of the relationships within these networks, but also imply an intimate connection between status and knowledge in their definition. These connections were maintained through knowledge of a family's history, as well as the collective history of the Stó:lō.

In addition to transmitting the broader collective Coast Salish history, Sxwóxwiyám were important for the connections that they provided to status by connecting families to their ancestors in the stories. The observations of Boas make the connection between status and these First Ancestor Sxwóxwiyám apparent, as he witnessed performances of these narratives at potlatches and social gatherings.⁵⁴ As these stories were told by family leaders, they not only demonstrated their own private knowledge, but they reminded the listeners of the status of families, their connections to specific territories, and the resources that these connections afforded. Performed this way, these stories are a type of anchor for their kin networks. That is to say, the very act of telling these stories contains an implied, sociocultural force that provides both verification and explanation for these families' claims to high status. Family leaders performing these stories asserted their past, present and future connections to the territory through symbolic renderings of their ancestors within these myths.

Families defined themselves in relation to one another through spiritual connections as defined and communicated through knowledge that is discussed in a rhetoric of "privacy." For this reason, the connections that these stories assert have deeper meaning than a claim to territory or resources. While the transformation of these first ancestors anchors them into the historical consciousness of the Stó:lō, they also represent connections between the physical and spirit worlds. As Xexals transform these First Ancestors, they disrupt the boundaries between these worlds while anchoring these individuals within the mnemonic landscape. By the mnemonic landscape, I am referring to the collection of stories, memories, and layers of meaning that a specific, or collection of places, place imbibe. For example, the story of the transformation of T'e'qual'tca begins with the mingling between the human world and the spirit world, as the daughter of the chief of the Chilliwack tribe gives birth to Mink's child. Later, T'e'qual'tca meets Xexals, and they fight to transform each other. Xexals eventually wins, and turns

⁵⁴ Rohner, 37.

T'e'qual'tca into stone. For Stó:lō people, the reference to first ancestors like T'e'qual'tca is representative of the connections between the human and spirit worlds. Embedding these families into a shared narrative memory, they provide Stó:lō families and communities with an anchor to their family history. Ancestral names act as a method of embedding the individual within their kin network and the social memory of the family, as they are a basis for grounding the individual within the family history. While on one level, names determined who could safely travel within specific territories, naming defined who were kin and who were not and names also served as a method of mediating power and authority between community members who were not kin. An ancestral name represents more than an individual; it also provides connections to the past, including such things as ancestry, history and resources. As Keith Carlson points out, "Special inherited high status names guaranteed access to and ownership of family assets."⁵⁵ In addition, however, it is representative of the spiritual dimension of the Stó:lō's belief system. The name not only provides the individual with spiritual guidance and close spiritual proximity to their ancestral spirit, but they would themselves be the embodiment of this ancestral spirit for the individual that took the name in the future. This adds another dimension to these stories, as they communicate a complex spiritual understanding of the role of the individual within their families. Indeed, T'e'qual'tca is not simply a mythological figure, but the stone figure that is believed to house his spirit can be found at the Stó:lō community of Tzeachten today, and a descendent of T'e'qual'tca carries this name.⁵⁶ Just as First Ancestors are representative of past, present and future generations of Stó:lō ancestry, so too are Stó:lō people who carry those names today.

Private knowledge of family history therefore informs the place of the individual within their family and community networks. As Stó:lō Sxwóxwiyám show, the processes of defining these networks are characterized by a complex and multiplicitous balance between the individual and their community, and the understanding that an individual's place within the community can change. Many Sxwóxwiyám narrate the process of coming of age among young family members,

⁵⁵ Keith Carlson, *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lō in Canada's Pacific Coast History* (Chilliwack, BC: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 1997), 89.

⁵⁶ Stone T'e'qual'tca [T'xwelátse] was recently repatriated to the Stó:lō community from the Burke Museum of Natural History, University of Washington Seattle, USA. For more information on the history of the Stone T'xwelátse, see Emmy-Lou Campbell, "The transformative power of: a collaborative case study in search of new approaches to Indigenous cultural repatriation processes," MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 2004.

highlighting changes to family connections as a result of disruptions to an individual's place within the collective.⁵⁷ Examples of these stories include the Raven stories recorded by Norman Lerman in the mid twentieth century. Lerman recorded many versions of this story, but each shares a common plot. The plot involves an individual who is forced to leave his or her community after committing a taboo act. Aided by knowledge they acquire following their banishment, they renegotiate their place within their family and community—both physically and symbolically. In the end, their knowledge helps them regain status and overcome the stain of their past misconduct. While the individuals in these stories renegotiate their connections to their families, their territory, and to their history, the change results from a poor choice on the part of the individual, not, as in the First Ancestor Stories, a result of encounters with the spirit world. Unanchored as these stories are either through place names, or reference to individuals, tribes or specific family networks, these Sxwóxwiyám communicate more general ideas about negotiating the place of the individual within their community. The content of these stories suggests that, although Stó:lō people lived as a collective, individuals had an active role in how kinship was negotiated and maintained.

The role of the individual within their families was not prescribed, but involved a process of negotiation within both the family and the broader collective. While these “coming of age” stories portray a common theme of a loss of innocence that results from change, they also articulate the redemption that can be found through individual agency. They communicate that individual actions have repercussions for entire communities.⁵⁸ Relating the potential for disruption and change among women and men in relation to their families and communities, clear status and gender distinctions are revealed within these narratives, and whether the protagonist is male or female determines the specific plot of the story. The gendered differences between the taboo acts signify different anxieties in relation to male and female roles. In the Sxwóxwiyám that focus on a female protagonist, the cause for disruption is often incited by either sexual deviance or sexual violence. The young high status girl is tricked or forced into intercourse with a taboo partner, and is forced to leave the community, often with the offspring of this union. As a result, she must rely on herself to survive. Following some time spent in

⁵⁷ Norman Lerman, “Raven One” and “Raven Two,” *An Analysis of Folktales of Lower Fraser Indians, British Columbia* (unpublished, M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1952), 6-49.

⁵⁸ Boas, *Indian Myths and Legends*, 100-108.

seclusion, she meets a suitor with spiritual power. Through their marriage, she regains higher status, and returns to her family and community. More specifically, in “Raven One-First Version,” recorded by Lerman, a high status girl is left behind by her lover after having relations with him against her father’s wishes. She is forced out of the community to an isolated location, where she must survive on her own. After some time, she meets another suitor, whose spirit power facilitates their return to the community, and they return with gifts of food for her starving people.⁵⁹ The girl and her family are only able to return after acquiring resources that will help her community, which raises her status. Additionally, these versions of the Raven story connect the female protagonist to a separate Sxwóxwiyám that details the origins of salmon in the Lower Fraser River.⁶⁰ The connection among these stories is significant, as ties to territories and resource sites were often maintained through the marriage of a woman into another family network, and a family’s status was connected to these elements. As high class marriages were often patrilocal and exogamous, marriage between family groups would have been a significant factor in maintaining connections to resource sites. Lower status community members would not have been linked to the places that provided these resources in such a way, as the couple could choose to live in the village of either parents, or move between them. However, lower status families had much more mobility, and would often move between communities where members of their extended families resided in order to gain access to resource sites. As Suttles further explains the differences among these classes, “For men of property it was certainly preferable to stay in one’s father’s village,” while lower status families moved from place to place in search of resources.⁶¹ Just as they act as connecting factors within these stories, these women brought together family networks with marriage bonds. But these were bonds that could be dissolved if they were not properly maintained. Thus, on one level, these stories narrate the importance of upholding family connections, as the knowledge and spirit power held by the suitor of the female protagonist help restore the status of the girl and her family. On another level, they caution against the disruption that occurs when individuals step away from their familial responsibilities.

⁵⁹ Lerman, “Raven One-First Version” and “Raven One-Second Version,” *An Analysis*, 13-29. For additional examples, see “The Dog Children” and “The Fish Man” in Franz Boas, ed. *Folk-Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 103-131.

⁶⁰ Lerman, “Raven One-First Version” and “Raven One-Second Version,” *An Analysis*, 13-29.

⁶¹ Suttles, 54.

Regardless of gendered differences, conflict, as the catalyst for change, originates within the family in both versions. However, the source of resolution of the conflict varies between the female and male protagonists. Within the female-centred narrative, the focus is on maintaining connections and the conflict is resolved with the aid of an outside source, while in the male-centred narratives, conflict is resolved through the agency of the man himself. Typically, the male protagonist is forced to leave his community after committing a taboo act that interferes with his attainment of spirit power.⁶² For example, the boy's quest for spiritual guidance is interrupted when he consumes forbidden food, and he is subsequently abandoned by his community.⁶³ This results in an encounter with a spiritual guide. In some versions, his grandmother, who represents ancestral knowledge, aids the boy, as in Mr. Bob Joe's "Raven two-Second Version,"⁶⁴ while in others, he is given a magical cloak by a spirit guide he encounters while alone in the woods.⁶⁵ With the help of this newly acquired spirit power, he returns to guide his community out of an impending crisis. In this version of the Raven story, the power the boy acquires allows him to accumulate great wealth and return to save his starving community.⁶⁶ Ultimately, the boy's individual actions both condemn and save him, while it is the girl's encounters with outside forces that result in both her abandonment and return. The Raven *Sxwóxywiyám* highlight the gender dynamics involved in defining and retaining individual status: the attainment of spiritual knowledge for males, and the protection of the status that is passed genealogically through females. These dynamics correspond to the roles that genders play in passing on spiritual knowledge. One such example is found in the transmission of the *Sxwo:yxwey* dances and practices. Whereas the knowledge of the practices associated with the masks are passed through the male line, the masks themselves belong to and are passed to men through female descendants, and at the discretion of family matriarchs.⁶⁷ Delving past the importance of the role of family in transmitting teachings, these stories also communicate the complex balance between the individual and the collective family unit. Although change is negotiated through their individual agency, the errant characters are aided through family-held knowledge.

⁶² See Lerman, "Raven Two-First Version" and "Raven Two-Second Version" in *An Analysis*, 30-49.

⁶³ Lerman, "Raven Two-Second Version" in *An Analysis*, 34-40.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 34-40.

⁶⁵ Lerman, "Raven Two-First Version," *An Analysis*, 30-34.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ See Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, "Sxwo:yxwey Origins and Movements," *A Stó:lō -Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Carlson, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 10.

These stories highlight both positional and relational power through the reference to sudden changes to individual status in relation to communities in these Stó:lō Sxwóxwiyám, and give an indication of the ways that authority in families is defined and contested by both communities and individuals. For example, in “The Fish-Man” story, a girl takes a suitor who professes to be of lower class.⁶⁸ Her parents and her community admonish her for her poor choice. At their refusal of the union, the suitor causes the seas to rise, so that the community cannot find anything to eat or drink. To save themselves, they decide to allow the girl to marry her suitor, and she goes under the sea to live with him in “fish country.” She returns briefly to provide the people in the territory with an abundance of fish. Positional power is derived from man’s spirit power, while the relational power from women’s marriage to him aids her community. While marriage alliances brought together two separate kin networks, they still relied on and built on a relationship between two individuals. Suttles speaks to the importance of the individual in establishing cross-tribal connections through exogamous marriage, and explains, “in the socio-economic system of these tribes a role of crucial importance was played by the ties established through intercommunity marriage.”⁶⁹ Additionally, defining authority within the family and the larger community would have depended on individual status, gender and tribal affiliations. These classifications would have determined the knowledge, spiritual guidance, and physical location held by the individual, and perhaps most importantly, the individual’s reputation and status. These were not static, and would have shifted throughout an individual’s lifetime, perhaps significantly. These Stó:lō Sxwóxwiyám may have served as reminders of the inevitability of sudden and often unwelcome change, and the importance of the family network in helping to navigate change. Disruptions in individual status had repercussions for entire kin groups. Prior to contact with non-Indigenous newcomers, the people of the river were not unfamiliar with threats to families and communities. For example, up until the 1860s raids and counter-raids were common, and slaves were often captured as a part of these raids. Depending on the status, resources, the tenacity of the family in relation to other families, and the status of the individual in relation to others within the family, they were either held for ransom, sold to more distant tribes, or remained the private property of their “owners,” who,

⁶⁸ “The Fish Man” in Franz Boas, ed., *Folk-Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 131.

⁶⁹ Suttles, 16.

according to Suttles, “were always of upper class.”⁷⁰ However, ransomed captives retained the stigma associated with slaves.⁷¹ Thus, as this narrative articulates, the maintenance and protection of family networks corresponded to the maintenance and protection of individual and inter-community connections.

The diverse expressions of meaning in these Sxwóxwiyám show biases based on status and gender differences, but their exact meaning differs on an individual level according to the context in which these stories were told. Adapting these stories to fit local circumstances, they could be shared in order to validate or invalidate a family’s claim to status, and Sxwóxwiyám are part of the advice and private knowledge that accompanies these claims.⁷² Suttles explains: “Advice consisted of genealogies and family traditions revealing family greatness, gossip about other families revealing how inferior they are, [and] instruction in practical matters such as how to acquire the right kind of guardian spirit,” among others.⁷³ Reflecting the ideological underpinnings of Coast Salish societies, these myths indicate the ability to protect and defend status, or to contest another family’s claim to status, through performed local knowledge. As Keith Carlson clarifies:

Prior to depopulation associated with contact, lower classes were real. Later, upper and lower class individuals married causing confusion and blurring class lines, which caused the myth of the lower class to be more important than the reality in that you needed the gossip about rival families’ lower class ancestry.⁷⁴

As Carlson explains here, in responses to the dissipating lower class, myths are employed as an important part of gossip to contest another family’s claim to status. Initially collected by Boas toward the end of the nineteenth century,⁷⁵ these sxwóxwiyám appear again in Norman Lerman’s collection nearly a century later,⁷⁶ suggesting that these narratives retain important meaning in spite of the significant amount of time passed. As Keith Basso reminds us, it is individuals and not institutions who create and act on cultural meaning,⁷⁷ and these narratives certainly seem to have retained cultural significance for Stó:lō individuals. Through their performance, these

⁷⁰ Suttles, 7.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Suttles, 8.

⁷³ Suttles, 8.

⁷⁴ Personal conversation with Keith Carlson, June 6, 2011.

⁷⁵ Boas, *Indian Myths and Legends*.

⁷⁶ Lerman, *An Analysis of Folktales*.

⁷⁷ Basso, 67.

narratives communicate ideas about how family is preserved, and how threats to families are negotiated through private knowledge and individual agency. But the ideological perspectives underlying these narratives also express the ways that family connections were made meaningful at various times.

While place name stories are often conceptualized as anchoring meaning to physical place through shared narrative memory, certain Sxwóxwiyám communicate ideas about renegotiating changes to the connections between the individual, their kin networks, and their roles within them. Place grounds individuals within their collective history and culture, but a family's physical location is also subject to change over time. Albert Sonny McHalsie asserts: "Approaching the family as a basis of a nation, [...]what emerges is a complex web of family relations linking people and place to a broad landscape."⁷⁸ The Coqualeetza Sxwóxwiyám demonstrates the maintenance and negotiation of symbolic kin relationships at the same time as it represents the movement of kin connections across the landscape. At times, this movement resulted from conflict within family networks. A selection from Bob Joe and Dan Milo's version of this legend recounts:

During a famine, greedy men traveled to fish at Coqualeetza and caught salmon. Instead of sharing it with the women, they chose to eat the fish themselves. A boy broke away from the men and returned to the village to inform the women. Enraged, the women set off in a raft to confront the men. Along the way, they beat their husbands' blankets, which contained residual features of the men's spirit power, and called on Xexals to transform the men...Beaver then gave the salmon the men had caught earlier to the women, and in this way, the men and women reconciled.⁷⁹

This representation of familial roles links individual family members to certain responsibilities, and establishes their place in the network. While it is clear that there are repercussions for the men's refusal to fulfill responsibilities to their families, there is also the recognition of the spirit power of the women.⁸⁰ And, at the moment of the men's transformation, the relationship between the men and women changes, as does their physical location. In some versions, Xexals transforms the men into birds, and they establish themselves in another location in Stó:lō

⁷⁸ Albert Sonny McHalsie, "Intergenerational Ties and Movement," *A Stó:lō -Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Carlson, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 32.

⁷⁹ Jody Woods, "Coqualeetza," *A Stó:lō -Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Carlson, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 75.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

territory.⁸¹ Here, the physical location of these family members are re-negotiated in ways that show the fluidity and complexity of family networks. This is a story of change that is well-anchored to place. The name *Coqualeetza*, or “beating the blankets,” reflects this moment of transformation. It is this moment of change that is inscribed into the mnemonic landscape. The linkages that these networks provided to other places are symbolically represented within the continuation of the *Coqualeetza Sxwóxwiyám*. Additional versions of the narrative explain the origins of the salmon to the Lower Fraser River.⁸² In this version, Beaver incites reparation among the families by stealing a sockeye baby, casting its diapers in various places along the river, causing the salmon to originate in these places. Beaver takes the salmon from an area of abundance to one that is in need, reflecting Suttles’ observation that “the Central Coast Salish could and did change residence according to kin and marital ties and this freedom may have been one of the ways they accommodated to local fluctuations in the abundance of resources.”⁸³ Where this story is suggestive of the mobility and movement among individual families, the connections between the two parts of these *Sxwóxwiyám* also relays the importance of accountability to family members. This story represents the persistence and resistance of kin connections at times of change, this does not mean that these networks remain the same in the face of disruption or change.

The importance of sharing, as demonstrated in this *Coqualeetza Sxwóxwiyám*, provides an added layer to definitions of kinship for the Central Coast Salish. The bonds of marriage are dissolved with the men’s refusal to fulfill their responsibility of sharing with their families. As anthropologists like Guemple assert, genealogical ties should be considered alongside the individual’s locality and interactions within the social group. In the context of Inuit kinship, Lee Guemple argues that “social relatedness begins in the local group, not in the kinship tie.”⁸⁴ This is to say that families incorporate non-biological members on the basis of proximity and interactions with one another. As anthropologist Mary Weismantel suggests in her studies of adoption practices in Africa, kin networks are also constructed and enacted through the actual sharing of material goods and culture, such as in the collection and preparation of food and

⁸¹ Sonny McHalsie, personal conversation with the author, May 6, 2009.

⁸² Lerman, 144-159.

⁸³ Suttles, 14.

⁸⁴ Lee Guemple, *Inuit Adoption* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1979), 93.

sharing of meals.⁸⁵ Who owned or controlled access to resources was equally as important as who collected, prepared and shared in the food. Similarly for the Stó:lō , inter-tribal sharing defined social relationships. Sharing resources through ceremonies like the potlatch, as well as with extended family members, was important to the maintenance and survival of the Coast Salish people. Keith Carlson establishes, that “social and spatial ‘closeness’ largely define the types of exchange activities people engage in. In general, family and close friends exchange gifts, strangers trade for profit, while distant enemies sometimes attack and steal from one another.”⁸⁶ In short, the larger the social network, the more it facilitated sharing and trade. Suttles’ description of kinship structures among the Coast Salish reflects the complex and dynamic connections between the social networks of these communities. As he illustrates, “One or more such extended families formed a village or community. The community was linked through ties of marriage and kinship with other communities and these with still others to form a social network with *no very clear boundary*.”⁸⁷ Explaining that flexibility of this kind was integral to the basis of Central Coast Salish economies, Suttles emphasizes that social and physical mobility was facilitated through these non-discrete, overlapping kin networks.⁸⁸ Families, as depicted in Stó:lō Sxwóxwiyám, challenge the overly simplistic notion that Indigenous family networks are based on blood or marriage ties alone. Taking these anthropological approaches into account, it is important to look beyond simply considering the individual’s role in providing access to resources through marriage alliances, and consider alternative ways that families are defined.

The representations of families in Stó:lō Sxwóxwiyám provide a framework for understanding local Indigenous knowledge and expectations in connection with Stó:lō families. As the Sxwóxwiyám provide a framework for understanding kinship, they also provide some insights regarding how and why families reacted to change. A multiplicity of meanings and divergent experiences inform the ways that these myths were told and understood. These narratives reflect the challenge of negotiating family, and demonstrate the fluidity and flexibility

⁸⁵ Mary Weismantel, “Making Kin: Kinship Theory and Zumbagua Adoptions,” *American Ethnologist*, Vol 22, No 4 (Nov, 1995) 685-704.

⁸⁶ Keith Carlson, “Expressions of Trade and Exchange,” *A Stó:lō -Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, edited by Keith Carlson, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 56.

⁸⁷ Suttles, 16-17. Emphasis mine.

⁸⁸ Suttles, 14.

of kinship networks that has persisted over time. There were multiple and varied networks available to provide for the welfare of families, although there internal systems of power and relationality to define how responses to change were negotiate, as demonstrated in the clear class and gender differences among these stories. As these stories provide a framework to place Stó:lō families in, the history of changes within these families can be understood through these ideas and epistemologies, rather than as indicative of assimilation to newcomers and colonial forces.

CHAPTER TWO

Resituating Colonial Encounters in a Stó:l̓o Familial Context

If white children are being held by the Redskins in any pretext, the association will rescue them from what, at best, would be an unnatural existence...The police here gave it as their opinion that the baby was given to an Indian woman by the parents who did not want to be bothered with the care of it. The child, if allowed to remain in the hands of Indian dirt and lice could have nothing but a miserable career.⁸⁹

“Six Children are Held By Indians,”
Vancouver Daily World, September 24,
1904.

Clearly, this article is using a race-based discourse to dismiss the ability of this Indigenous family to parent, deeming it “unnatural” at the same time as rejecting the biological parent’s ability to determine the guardians of their children. These attitudes toward Indigenous families at the turn of the twentieth century foreshadow the policies and practices of the Canadian government half a century later, with the entitlement of “rescuing” Indigenous children from their own families. But the experiences of the families described in this article also overturn the metanarrative of race relations in Canada’s early history. Providing an example of cross-cultural familial relationships, the article reflects a discontinuity between colonial goals and the lived experience of families. We know that policies related to Indigenous families had certain goals, and these policies certainly attempted to shape Indigenous people into ideal Canadian citizens, however, situating their outcomes and ground-level consequences among Coast Salish families reveals that the goals of colonial powers were not always successfully achieved. Put simply, Aboriginal people found ways to exercise agency.

Placing past traditions in dialogue with present circumstances, Stó:l̓o people actively engaged in the process of renegotiating and reconstituting their families as they confronted

⁸⁹ Vancouver Daily World, “Six Children are Held By Indians: Unnatural Mother Believed to Have Given Baby to a Klotchman”(Vancouver, BC), September 24, 1904.

change. The varied responses to newcomers and colonial forces in their territory illustrate their readiness, and, at times, willingness to adapt and change family networks. These changes were not simply or necessarily indicative of colonial power and control, as changes to family networks, and indeed flexible definitions of what constitute family, were not unknown to Stó:lō people prior to colonial incursions. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, flexibility and dynamism were integral to Stó:lō ideas of families, as was change. Through this flexibility, individuals resisted limitations placed on family networks at the same time as they adapted to change. This means that segments of Stó:lō society opted into the colonial system for reasons other than those ascribed or understood by colonial authorities. Participation with colonial apparatuses, whether elected or coerced, was filtered through Stó:lō eyes and worldviews, and thus differed according to individual circumstances such as class and gender.

As individual and community circumstances shift, family becomes one site of the negotiation of these shifts. Looking at the reasons for and outcomes of interactions between newcomers and colonial forces and Stó:lō families reveals that Stó:lō family networks are as much defined by individual circumstances as they are by their cultural circumstances. Prevailing social and cultural values that were central to the ways that Stó:lō people conceived of families shaped the process of redefinition and renegotiation of family networks. As the examples of Stó:lō people's interactions with newcomers throughout the fur trade, with Church officials, and with government policies will show, Stó:lō individuals were constantly negotiating changes to the dynamics between themselves and their community, and so kinship networks were thus affected by and effecting change.

Scholarly engagement with the history of Indigenous families tends to focus on locating the ways that Indigenous families retain vestiges of past cultural elements and traditions, privileging the maintenance of extended families as the prime indicator of cultural survival.⁹⁰ Likewise, historiography examining the interactions of Indigenous families with colonial institutions has primarily focused on the policies and practices produced by colonial anxieties,

⁹⁰ For a more generalized, materialist-semiotic approach on this topic, see Julia Emberley, *Defamiliarizing the Indigenous: Cultural Practices and Decolonization in Canada* (Toronto: U of T Press, 2007); For a regional ethnographic perspective, see Claudia Lewis, *Indian Families of the Northwest Coast: The Impact of Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

the political and social factors that allowed for their justification, and the social effects they induced.⁹¹ Implicit in these approaches is the assumption that changes initiated by these policies resulted in the breakdown of the traditional Indigenous family. In other words, these families somehow grew less Indigenous or traditional as a result of colonial forces. As an approach, it looks to demonstrate how colonial powers set out to limit and breakdown traditional kinship networks of Indigenous families through the imposition of a nuclear family model; at the same time, it seeks to locate ways that communities resisted the imposition of this model. Focusing on how these kin networks are representative of the traditional culture of the past becomes a search for singular, normative definitions of Indigenous families to the exclusion of considering the historical changes that have occurred within Indigenous families as cultures and social values shift. In this lies the implicit assumption that families do not or should not change if they wish to maintain their culture and traditions. These assumptions create or represent Indigenous families as the “pejorative other,” as they imply that these families are somehow less of a social construct or social institution than is the Western nuclear family, and therefore any evidence of change or renegotiation is indicative of a “corruption” rather than simply the result of changes within the social networks over time. Thus constructed as the other, Indigenous families become something exoticized, romanticized or idealized. In an attempt to avoid similar assumptions, I am looking to approach both Western European and Indigenous families as social constructs, defined by processes of constant negotiation and influenced by historical change. In this, I do not seek to overlook or undermine the terrible damage done by colonial powers to Indigenous kinship networks. Rather, in examining ways that families were variously created, defined, and renegotiated over time, I seek to complicate the aforementioned historiographical assumptions that Indigenous families who adopted or adapted to change are somehow less traditional or less Indigenous.

Examining the effects of contact on the Coast Salish Camas communities and families, Claudia Lewis’ *Indian Families of the Northwest Coast: The Impact of Change* discusses

⁹¹For example, see Patrick Johnston, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1983); Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey, *Stolen from Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Indigenous Communities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997); Sally Babidge, *Indigenous Families and the State: Conditions of History* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2010); Veronica Strong-Boag, *Fostering Nation?: Canada Confronts its History of Childhood Disadvantage* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2010).

changes to the “traditional” family over time. Using three different case studies, Lewis demonstrates how these families have synthesized their cultural past with modern life. She maintains that “the values implicit in the old social structure continue to operate in the present,” demonstrating the persistence of extended family networks, and their continued importance to everyday life of the Camas.⁹² To Lewis, however, shifts in family structures that ostensibly deviate from extended family networks are indications of acculturation and the adoption of “Western values.” Thus, she tries to locate an authentic culture and tradition “beneath the external forms introduced by the White man.”⁹³ Lewis views families as the site for the preservations of culture and tradition, as they promote “intimate interdependence” that “facilitated the preservation of the Indian institutions.”⁹⁴ While she does identify reactions to change as multiplicitous, by treating cultural change as simply indicative of assimilating to Western ways, her approach limits considering how change was filtered through Coast Salish epistemologies, or how changes to traditions and culture facilitated the ways that families adapted to change. Thus, she sets up a false binary between the traditional Indigenous extended family and the “modern” nuclear family.

In *Stolen from Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*, Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey use a social history approach to examine the interactions between Indigenous families and state institutions over time.⁹⁵ Their study looks at the historical experiences of Indigenous children from the time of contact to the present, addressing interactions with missionaries, residential schools and child welfare policies, as well as issues related to fetal alcohol syndrome. Throughout this, they trace colonial interferences with Indigenous families and communities to show how “Canada’s Indian policy, from its very inception, has sought to undermine the bond between Aboriginal children and their families.”⁹⁶ Additionally, they highlight that “First Nations across North America are reviving their own strengths in order to survive and flourish.”⁹⁷ Filtering the aforementioned issues

⁹² Lewis, 180.

⁹³ Lewis, 180-184.

⁹⁴ Lewis, 181.

⁹⁵ Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey, *Stolen from Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997).

⁹⁶ Fournier and Crey, 17.

⁹⁷ Fournier and Crey, 18.

through Indigenous perspectives, Fournier and Crey use First Nations voices to localize the impacts of these policies. Through this, they move the history of First Nations families' interactions with these policies beyond a policy-focused history and toward an understanding of the ground level implications for First Nations individuals and communities. However, their social history approach fails to take into account the meaning that people bring to experience and the way such meaning changes diachronically over time, as well as synchronically among individuals, communities, classes, and genders at any given point in time.

Attention to the ways that broader mainstream definitions of families impacted colonial interactions with Indigenous families and communities in Canada is found in Veronica Strong-Boag's book *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves: English Canada Encounters Adoption from the 19th Century to the 1990's*.⁹⁸ Strong-Boag considers the ways that historical experiences of adoption and fostering for Indigenous Canadians have been influenced by broader Canadian approaches to and understandings of families. Focusing on the ways that social institutions, such as Churches, charitable organizations, education, and the media shaped public perceptions of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous families, Strong-Boag demonstrates that recent child welfare policies relating to Indigenous families were the result of a long and complex history of policies and ideas which compounded over time.⁹⁹ Evaluating the history of colonial interference with Indigenous families as a broader indication of Native-newcomer relations, Strong-Boag states that "the reconciliation of First Nations and settler communities [...] has thus been acted out on familial as well as national stages."¹⁰⁰ She argues that many factors contributed to the disempowerment and devaluation of the position of Indigenous men, women and children, ultimately allowing outsiders to authorize their role as custodians of kinship within Indigenous communities. But while Strong-Boag establishes that national policies relating to Indigenous families were influenced by broader socially constructed ideas about family, she still treats Indigenous families as singular and unchanging.

⁹⁸ Veronica Strong-Boag, *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves: English Canada Encounters Adoption from the 19th Century to the 1990's* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁹⁹ Strong-Boag, 142-150.

¹⁰⁰ Strong-Boag, 173.

The remainder of this chapter considers how Stó:lō approaches to families shaped interactions with newcomers and colonial institutions, and draws attention to the ways that their families were renegotiated and redefined through these interactions. Certainly, the shifts in power brought by colonial institutions had many implications for families. Kinship networks were sometimes limited and constrained; sometimes expanded and stretched; at other times, these flexible systems responded in more dynamic and innovative ways. This does not mean that changes to family networks were unilateral, as these were constantly shifting and adapting, and were determined by individual circumstances. As suggested in the previous chapter, Stó:lō families are defined more by multiplicity, dynamism, and flexibility than by the “fixed” place of the individual in the kin group. While newcomers introduced new issues surrounding family, there is evidence to suggest that they did not always shift normalized notions of the Indigenous family within Stó:lō communities in ways that they expected. The imposition of a nuclear family model through efforts such as education, enfranchisement, and enforced monogamy were largely unsuccessful, or were only successful within certain spheres at certain times as dictated by situations.¹⁰¹ Even where this model was adopted, it would not have been adopted with the same understanding as that of the agent wielding colonial power.

The onset of the fur trade in Salish territory increased interactions with outsiders in unprecedented ways. While shifts in both status and kinship networks were not new to Stó:lō people, there were rapid changes to the ways both could be acquired with the introduction of newcomers to the territory. As Keith Carlson has demonstrated in his discussion of the effects that economic change had on Stó:lō social systems, shifting social influence coincided with shifts in economic power, resulting in changes to ways that status could be attained.¹⁰² Lower status women partnered with miners or fur traders, expanding kin networks and forming new alliances, thereby allowing for access to additional resources and increased social capital. In some cases, this certainly increased the potential for agency previously unavailable to lower status women. As scholars like Wayne Suttles have suggested, unions between traders and Coast Salish women were often, especially within the early years, a means of extending economic networks, as

¹⁰¹ Sarah Carter has demonstrated the failure of government policies to enforce monogamy on Indigenous families in the context of the Canadian West in *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton, U of A Press, 2008).

¹⁰² Keith Thor Carlson, “Stó:lō Exchange Dynamics,” *Native Studies Review* 11.1 (1997): 5-48.

“entries [in the Fort Langley Journals] suggest that the women were enterprising in seeking lovers from the among the company men.”¹⁰³ As it would have in the case of precontact exogamous marriages, to the Stó:lō, marriage to a trader brought the fur trade company into their networks of reciprocity that included certain roles and responsibilities such as sharing. As Suttles notes, “it was expected that after a marriage there would be periodic exchanges of food and wealth over the duration of the alliance.”¹⁰⁴ The incorporation of outsiders into Salish kin groups not only demonstrates the flexibility of ideas surrounding family, but incorporating outsiders into these networks actually had the potential to increase the flexibility of these family networks.

The documented interactions and discussions of intermarriages of Salish women with traders at Fort Langley provide insights into the flexibility of Salish ideas of family, especially as they highlight points of divergence with what the traders regarded as normative values, expressions of family groupings and cohesiveness, and, in particular, familial obligations. It is apparent that in comparison to those of European traders, marriage bonds for the Stó:lō were far more flexible. Women were free to return to their parents’ home if they were unhappy, or were sometimes returned by a rejecting husband, putting an end to both the marriage and the affinal relationships.”¹⁰⁵ Exchange of goods and access to territory would also have ended. This was certainly the case for James Murray Yale, who married the daughter of a Kwantlen chief. Yale’s realization of the continual exchange between families prompted his desire to end the union, and Yale “found means to get rid of his lady that has cost so much goods,” as the Fort’s Chief Factor Archibald McDonald put it.¹⁰⁶ This suggests that Stó:lō familial obligations exceeded the understandings of the traders, and points to the possibility that entire families saw the arrival of the traders as an opportunity to “enterprise.” Even after the sexual consummation of the marriages à la façon du pays, it was clear to Salish women, their families, and even their European in-laws, that the bond was not fully secured until such time as the fulsome payment had been received to bind the two families. For example, one Salish woman is described as leaving her husband after being reprimanded for speaking to her mother through Fort gates, with

¹⁰³ Wayne Suttles, ed., *The Fort Langley Journals, 1827-1830* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1999), 190.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 187-190.

¹⁰⁶ Suttles, *Fort Langley Journals*, 90.

claims that “she was not kindly treated or entirely secured as yet with the necessary property.”¹⁰⁷ For anthropologist Wayne Suttles, “By Native standards, she may not have been kindly treated, and her husband may not have lived up to the terms of a marriage, which required continued exchanges of food and wealth.”¹⁰⁸ Chief Factor McDonald refers to this as a “trick” that has been played before, suggesting that many of these women resisted the efforts of traders to limit their agency, and through them European normative ideas about wives and marriage obligations at that time.

Entries in the Fort Langley journals therefore indicate that some women may have married traders with the expectations of the same flexibility their cultural traditions provided. However, the types of changes individual women experienced and levels of agency available to them through their interactions with newcomers to their territory varied on an individual basis, depending on the woman’s class and status—just as it no doubt did within Salish society. Elite women from elite families who controlled resources that the traders wanted to access had a degree of internal and cross-cultural agency that Salish slave girls were never able to express. For example, the Fort Langley journals cite instances where female slaves were prostituted by their masters, and mentions the establishment of a seraglio just outside the fort.¹⁰⁹ As the incorporation of outsiders into Stó:l̓ō kin groups increased the flexibility of family networks for some individuals, it decreased or reinforced the limited mobility and agency of others.

An important point overlooked by the twentieth century anthropological analysts and the nineteenth century traders alike is that the early fur traders operated as a kind of corporate family not entirely different from the expansive corporate kin groups of the Stó:l̓ō at that time.¹¹⁰ The fur trader’s resistance to Salish women’s attempts to exercise agency exemplifies how these actions may have been interpreted by Salish people as demonstrative of familial roles. When a different woman runs away from the fort, she is tracked down and beaten by Chief Factor MacDonald, who explains that “after giving her a sound drubbing sent her home to the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 118.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 190.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 187-192.

¹¹⁰ Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 50-51.

disconsolate husband.”¹¹¹ MacDonald’s display of authority illustrates how familial-like this corporate group was. As the HBC was a mercantile business with a feudal familial structure, they would have appeared to operate much like Salish extended family networks. The fort had elite who directed economic, social and political ties, as did Salish villages. Another incident reported in the Fort Langley Journals exemplifies that the Salish viewed members of the fort as a type of extended family in and of itself. Upon the arrival of Mr. Yale’s father-in-law, a Kwantlen chief, the chief “without much ceremony asked his daughter for [a] blanket & she just as unceremoniously walked in—took it out, & with a pin buckled it on round his neck.”¹¹² It is clear that Yale’s wife believed she was acting within the bounds of her agency, as she would have been had she been married into an elite Salish family. While these newcomers were speaking a discourse of a normative Western European nuclear family, they were living a system of an expansive corporate family. Thus, the Coast Salish generally and the Stó:lō specifically would have interacted with them with the same expectations as with another family with whom they were forging a marriage alliance.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the organization of Stó:lō communities and the ways that their social networks were maintained and understood was shifting, as were attempts at colonial control over definitions of family. The influence of the Church with the increased interaction with missionaries and the movement from longhouses into single family dwellings are representative of shifts in social, political, economic and cultural conditions instituted by the colonial powers in the last half of the nineteenth century.¹¹³ Additionally, both physical and social mobility began to be restricted through policies such as the banning of winter spirit dances (tamanawas) and other large gatherings, and through the establishment of reserves and the fixing of band lists. Policies and practices such as the Indian Act and enforced attendance at residential schools further obscured and undermined these complex and dynamic social networks. Women and their children lost their matrilineal status and connections in the eyes of the Canadian government, and a complex system of naming and hereditary rights were obscured as a result.

¹¹¹ Suttles, *The Fort Langley Journals*, 131.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 93.

¹¹³ For a description of the first interactions between French Oblate missionaries and the Stó:lō, see *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée* (Rome: Maison Generale O.M.I., 1861), 146; For a description of the movement into single family dwelling, see A.W. Vowell, *Report of the Indian Superintendent for British Columbia*, Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1896), 83.

The Stó:lō, then, were beginning to lose the recourse to various traditional social networks that had previously ensured the flexibility of their kinship networks.

But despite the efforts to change family structures through religion, education, health, or the limiting of cultural expressions, Stó:lō ideas surrounding families persisted, even as they adapted. The colonial authorities espoused limiting assumptions about Indigenous ideas related to family, resulting in their underestimation of the flexibility of the Stó:lō family networks. This underestimation is reflected in the failure of various colonial authorities to recognize the plurality of familial organization that existed amongst the Stó:lō. The policy-enforced housing shifts from communal to single-family dwellings and restrictions on polygamous unions had the intention to replace the organization of kinship networks with a monogamous nuclear family model. As the Department of Indian Affairs [DIA] Agricultural Report in 1898 states, “For the transformation of the nomadic denizens of the forest or prairie... the first essential is fixity of residence, and the formation of an idea of home.”¹¹⁴ Within settlement policies of the colonialist government, “home” was defined according to a patriarchal nuclear family household model, which was meant to maintain social order, as well as espouse “cherished cultural, social, religious and gender ideals.”¹¹⁵ Certainly, by the turn of the century, the government was pushing for the Stó:lō and other Coast Salish to move out of longhouses and into Western style houses.¹¹⁶ While this movement to single family units separated extended family networks and decreased the opportunities for spontaneously reinforcing social networks available to provide for the welfare of families, it is important to note that both settled village sites, as well as shifts in dwellings between larger and smaller family households would not have been unfamiliar to Stó:lō people. Their household organization had changed over time, and varied regionally. As archeologist Dave Schaepe notes, around the time of contact, Stó:lō homes “ranged widely with regard to their size and the details of their social arrangements.”¹¹⁷ The upriver Stó:lō lived in small longhouses and in pit houses, while downriver to the coast, they lived in giant longhouses, some

¹¹⁴ J.A. Smart, *Report of the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs*, Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1898), xxi.

¹¹⁵ Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous* (Edmonton: U of A Press), 60, 74-75.

¹¹⁶ A. W. Vowell, *Report of Indian Superintendent for British Columbia*, Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1886), 183.

¹¹⁷ Dave Schaepe, et al., “Changing Households, Changing Houses,” *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), 42.

of which could house hundreds of people.¹¹⁸ Additionally, smaller pithouses were used as winter dwellings throughout Stó:lō territory. These structures also varied regionally between upriver and downriver areas, housing single to numerous families.¹¹⁹

Sociolinguistic evidence further demonstrates the variations between family groups. The Halq'eméylem language term tsélhxwelmexw refers to a household, or all the individuals living under the same roof,¹²⁰ but the terms that refer to family and family members are expansive and situationally dependent. There is no term to distinguish between grandfathers/mothers and granduncles/aunts, as well as no distinguishing term between parents' siblings and cousins. Additionally, the Halq'eméylem term for "sibling" was used to refer to brothers, sisters, and cousins up to and including fourth cousins.¹²¹ However, Wayne Suttles suggests that these terms were actually not used in everyday conversation to refer to relatives. Rather, Suttles identifies certain modifiers which existed to "verb" the kin term, so that the individual would be defined as "the one who is presently being a child/ a mother/ or a grandfather/uncle," depending on the role they were playing at that time.¹²² Here, the emphasis would be on the *act* of kinship, rather than the state of the relationship to the individual. It is possible that this non-distinction occurred because the expansive relationships within one household meant that individual labels were simply less important than how they acted in their social network at a specific time. Stó:lō networks were therefore expansive, communal, and flexible. Shifts between smaller and larger living spaces were not unprecedented, and variations between households over time demonstrate the flexibility of families. While the movement to smaller single family dwellings did act to shift the spatial organization of Stó:lō households, the complexity of Stó:lō families themselves remained intact.

In spite of these changes in spatial organization, there is evidence that the Stó:lō adapted colonial designs to suit the cultural values and social needs of their families. Dennis Peters'

¹¹⁸ Dave Schaepe, "Village Arrangements and Settlements Patterns," *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), 36.

¹¹⁹ Dave Schaepe, et al., "Changing Households, Changing Houses," *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), 46.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 40.

¹²¹ Keith Carlson, "Expressions of Collective Identity," *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), 29.

¹²² Wayne Suttles, "Linguistic Means for Anthropological Ends on the Northwest Coast," *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1987), 250.

house, which was built around 1925 at Chowéthel, exemplifies ways that Stó:lō individuals modified new structures to accommodate their cultural and social values.¹²³ As Schaepe notes, Peters “tailored the design of his European-style frame house to maintain long-standing social traditions such as hosting extended family and community gatherings and maintaining open family interaction.”¹²⁴ However, the DIA homes in the 1930’s were meant to only accommodate single families, which “placed severe restrictions on the household.”¹²⁵ As such, colonial authorities demonstrated their unwillingness or inability to recognize the importance and plurality of these extended networks. The multiple definitions of families and the flexibility of their households indicates that not only were Stó:lō households and families flexible prior to contact, but they maintained this flexibility with contact and interactions with newcomers as they adapted newcomer ideas to suit their own individual needs.

The above examples point to a discontinuity between the intended outcomes of certain policies and their actual implementation and outcomes. Salish people filtered their encounters with newcomers through their own ideas and beliefs, and their encounters with Church policies and practices were no different. The nuns and priests were part of orders that used familial terms to describe their internal relations, and so it is possible that Salish people understood and expected them to act as a family unit. Certainly, they related as a family, at least discursively. These relations were writ-large in the functioning of the orphanages and residential schools. Students were meant to learn how to fit into a patriarchal western nuclear family, but the lived example they saw was that of an institutional extended family where nuns and priests had metaphorical mothers, sisters, brothers, and fathers all around them. Additionally, the children within the institutions were, in a real lived way, children within that system. Indeed, certain Church officials took on the role of family leader in accordance with Salish customs and beliefs. Oblate missionaries like Paul Durieu arranged marriages among Salish Catholic students, thereby mimicking the role of Stó:lō family leaders.¹²⁶ Additionally, Oblate priests attempted to create separate villages in order to maintain Church doctrine and promote their authority over these

¹²³ Dave Schaepe, et al., “Changing Households, Changing Houses,” *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), 43.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 44.

¹²⁶ Vincent J. McNally, *The Lord’s Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia* (Edmonton: U of A Press, 2000), 132.

families. A report from one of the Oblates at St. Mary's states: "It is our intention to establish our students in small homes near Saint Mary on the other side of the Fraser. This will merely be a trial. If it is successful, we will found a small village that will serve as a model to all of our neophytes."¹²⁷ As representatives of the Church adapted and adopted Salish customs and traditions, they were participating in these family networks in a way that fit Salish epistemologies.

Although Church representatives appeared to the Stó:lō and other Salish people to be acting in line with Salish worldviews, the actions of these priests and nuns were affecting real change by placing their expectations and limitations alongside Stó:lō beliefs. Even as they mimicked Salish approaches to family, underlying their actions were their own normative assumptions about families. At times, changes were deliberately perpetrated on behalf of colonizing powers. As an Oblate missionary reported in 1888,

To create a connection between the Indians and this place, His Excellency established two schools: one for Indian girls, under the direction of the Sisters of St. Anne; and one for the boys, under the care of the reverend Oblate Fathers. Later, thanks to the assistance of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Monsignor D'Herbomez drew in the children of infidel parents. These children were reborn and raised as Christians, and have made a great contribution to the conversion of their tribes.¹²⁸

In this case, the family was the targeted site for change by these Catholic missionaries, as they attempted to overwrite Indigenous family networks with their own beliefs. Thus, as these ideas and assumptions increasingly intersected, they were shifting the expectations between individuals and their communities. Women and children, socially constructed as impressionable, weak, and vulnerable, had their actions regulated in a way that severely disrupted their family ties. The language found in Church and state-controlled texts places an emphasis on the importance of patriarchal and maternal care and protection of childhood innocence. Additionally, the gendered division amongst children of school age may have eventually eroded these connections and shifted the relationships between genders into adulthood. A self-congratulatory

¹²⁷ *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, (Rome: Maison Generale O.M.I.,1862), 185. Translation courtesy of Keith Thor Carlson; See also Vincent J. McNally, *The Lord's Distant Vineyard*, 62.

¹²⁸ *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée* (Rome: Maison Generale O.M.I., 1888), 79. Translation courtesy of Keith Thor Carlson

report from St. Mary's in 1896 states that the "separation of boys and girls [was] effective as far as morals are concerned."¹²⁹ In the same year, Coqualeetza school officials demonstrate a concern with protecting girls to the point of limiting their physical mobility. As the 1896 report from Coqualeetza school explains, "On Saturday afternoon the boys are allowed full liberty and many of them visit their relatives in the vicinity, returning at 5 pm."¹³⁰ However, according to these reports, this same freedom was not given to the female students. Additionally, the connections between racially-biased policies of the state and the desire to reshape and control class and gender roles and relationships was foreground in Canadian society's discourse about Indian women, as the curriculum for the Standard 6 Studies for Indian Schools headings suggest and the associated text within the document makes explicit: "Indian and white life. Patriotism. Evils of Indian isolation. Enfranchisement. Labour the Law of Life. Relations of the sexes as to labour. Home and Public duties."¹³¹ Patronizing European notions of the vulnerability of women and children may have affected lower status women most. As Suttles claims, lower status families were most mobile, as they traveled among their kin groups and shared their resources, and so limiting mobility also limited their ability to gather and intermarry among tribes.¹³² With this restricted mobility, lower class women's agency was limited through the inability to relocate to a different settlement with a potentially more generous elite. This would have placed them in an increasingly vulnerable position vis à vis local elite. Much less significant would be the concern of the elite of one settlement over the projection and perception of their obligations at a local level.

These cross cultural encounters brought changes that shifted the dynamics between Stó:lō individuals and their social networks, and re-cast the positions of men, women, and children within their kin network. While in some cases, these changes did decrease the amount of agency available to Stó:lō families, these changes were still filtered through Stó:lō epistemologies. While Church officials believed they were shifting family roles within these networks, there is

¹²⁹ E.C. Chirouse, *Report of the Principal E. C. Chirouse St. Mary's Mission Boarding School*, Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1896), 391.

¹³⁰ E. Robson, *Report of E. Robson, Principal, Coqualeetza Institute*, Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1896).

¹³¹ Tabular Statement No. 3, *Program of Study for Indian Schools*, Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1895), 351.

¹³² Wayne Suttles, "The Persistence of Intervillage Ties Among the Coast Salish," *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1987), 219-221.

evidence to suggest that, although these roles appeared to be changing, some of these changes were merely superficial. Specifically, historical evidence sheds light on variations among the classification of orphan children between the Stó:lō and the Church. What the Oblate Missionaries referred to as orphans and illegitimate children clearly differed from Salish definitions. In 1875, the Department of Indian Affairs reported that there were “a number of orphans in destitute circumstances” as a result of the influx of disease among the Stó:lō.¹³³ However, in the upcoming year, the reports do not contain any mention of a crisis among the Stó:lō as a result of this. Nor do the number of students enrolled in nearby boarding schools rise. This suggests one of two options: first, that the crisis of family was occurring within Stó:lō society but not being understood or reported by European observers; or that variations in the definitions of orphans for the Stó:lō meant that these children were not “orphan” in the European sense of the term, and there were in fact some social networks in place at the time to ensure the welfare of these children. Prior to contact, for the Stó:lō, the category of “orphan” did not have the same meaning as it did for European newcomers. With the exception of slaves, expansive kin networks meant that Salish children were cared for by other family members in the event that both parents were deceased. Since kin ties were not necessarily static or stable relationships, but were actively maintained, it can be assumed that these systems of reciprocity would affect practices of adoption and fostering. Thus, higher status children would be less likely to be left without a social network to care for them.

This not only suggests that, in some cases, ideas about families were not cross-culturally translatable, but it also means that reactions to newcomer ideas, and the resultant change that occurred, were at times less driven by the power of the institution than by shifts in individual circumstances and power dynamics among families. While the Oblate Mission reports contain references to orphans and illegitimate children as the first attendees of schools,¹³⁴ it appears that individual families were using these schools to facilitate change in ways that were perhaps more complex than these Church officials suggest. Sister Mary Theodore, a nun working in St. Ann’s

¹³³ James Lenihan, *Report of the Indian Commissioner*, Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1876), 56.

¹³⁴ Letter from Reverend Father Durieu to Reverend Father Martinet, May 1, 1874, *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, (Rome: Maison Generale O.M.I., Oblats de Marie Immaculée, *Missions* 1874), 302.

orphanage and catering to Coast Salish children in the late nineteenth century, explains in her 1931 memoirs:

From 1858 to 1876 the Sisters of St Ann conducted an orphanage side by side with the Victoria girls' boarding school. The word "orphanage" connotes orphans, but the class of children which went under this appealing name was not such in the real sense of the word... Many, if not all, of these children were half breeds, that is, the offspring of a white man and an Indian woman.¹³⁵

These "orphans," in Sister Mary Theodore's explanation, were actually illegitimate children of socially-unacceptable or intolerant inter-racial sexual unions. To the extent that such parents were unable to operationalize the socially sanctioned systems of care of either their mother's or father's families, the children were orphans. This appears to have been especially the case with European men who fathered a child à la façon du pays with a Salish woman.¹³⁶ Perhaps these men did not want their children growing up in the mother's Indigenous family, or maybe the Indigenous extended family balked at assuming responsibility for a child who came with such social and economic deficiencies through their father's lack of desirable wealth networks, unlike the earlier fur traders whose corporate family were a network into which the Salish elite wanted to integrate. It is possible, though, that these parents were still operationalizing these institutions in a way that was not recognized by Church officials. Sister Mary Theodore, for example, states that certain parents

often made use of a strategy to rid themselves of the care and responsibility of their offspring and at the same time assure their comfortable bringing up. The father, usually, would bring his young child to the convent and pay for a month, sometimes for a longer period, and then consider his obligations filled for ten, fifteen years.¹³⁷

As pointed out by Sister Mary Theodore, individuals would leave their children under the guardianship of the orphanage, but would not relinquish custody of their children permanently. Sister Mary Theodore cites one case where a young man appeared on the doorstep of the orphanage, saying, "Mr.----says I may meet his daughter and, if on acquaintance she is willing, I

¹³⁵ Sister Mary Theodore, S.A.A., *Pioneer Nuns of British Columbia* (Victoria, BC: The Colonist Printing and Publishing Co., 1931), 54.

¹³⁶ James Lenihan, *Report of the Indian Commissioner*, Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1776), 55.

¹³⁷ Sister Mary Theodore, 54.

may marry her.”¹³⁸ Although, to the nuns running the orphanage, these girls were “orphans,” the orphanage was itself a way of mitigating individual circumstances, and ensuring these children were cared for in a way that they may not otherwise have been. In these ways, the Stó:lō and other Coast Salish families were thus using residential schools and orphanages as way to facilitate certain changes brought about with contact. For example, elite children who were not considered “orphans” by their maternal or paternal relatives or the officials at schools attended these schools as well. The daughter of Chief Alexis, a prominent leader, was one of the first to attend the missionary school at St. Mary’s, and she later became a teacher in her community of Cheam.¹³⁹ While Stó:lō families appeared to be falling in line with colonial influences, these instances demonstrate that Stó:lō people were not simply conforming to Church-enforced categories and beliefs in regards to families. Rather, they were providing for their families in spite of changing circumstances.

As Stó:lō individuals were engaging with new circumstances, such as the influence of Church doctrine, the increasing encroachment of newcomers into their territory, and exposure to the new knowledge systems of these newcomers, their responses indicate an attempt at retaining agency in the face of colonial power. In the examples of the fur traders, and, to some extent, the early missionaries, families were the places where these kinship bonds were cemented, and were the main centres of social and cultural learning. However, power shifts began to limit and constrain Stó:lō family networks, as they were forced to operate outside of these networks. The forced movement beyond family networks becomes extreme with the increased attendance at residential schools. The mandate of residential schools was to operate as an institutional “family” run by the Church and state, and by 1900 British Columbia had 14 residential schools and 28 day-schools, with 40 % of Indigenous children in attendance.¹⁴⁰ Amendments to the Indian Act in 1920 made it mandatory for every Indigenous child to attend school. This meant that Church officials responsible for the day to day operations of these schools were now not simply metaphorically, but were in actuality responsible for “parenting” these children, and these approaches were grounded in Western European ideals, such as gendered divisions of labour and

¹³⁸ Ibid., 63.

¹³⁹ Letter from Reverend Father Eugene Chirouse, October 4, 1880, *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée* (Rome: Maison Generale O.M.I., Oblats de Marie Immaculée, 1880), 372.

¹⁴⁰ Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: U of T Press, 2007) 173.

“civilized” behavior.¹⁴¹ Even in cases where this school system had the best intentions to provide “parental” guidance, as John Sheridan Milloy points out in his study on Canadian residential schools, the poor conditions of the school and the limited financial circumstances meant that even well-intentioned school officials “would find themselves unable to care properly for the children they wished to parent.”¹⁴² As these financial restrictions increased with Depression and wartime constraints,¹⁴³ the poor conditions of these schools promoted the rampant spread of tuberculosis in schools,¹⁴⁴ contributing to their eventual closure.

In the period following the Second World War, Canadians began to reconsider the socioeconomic circumstances of the underclass.¹⁴⁵ In the context of changing state run social institutions, child welfare policies and practices were increasingly seen by non-Indigenous Canadians as a rescue, not necessarily from a life of poverty or crime, but from race. As foreshadowed by the article cited at the beginning of this chapter, state sanctioned interference within Indigenous families increased throughout the first half of the nineteenth century to the extent that parents were no longer able to care for their children throughout their formative years.

Even though individual interaction and control within family networks were constrained at this point, the flexible ways that Stó:lō families operated remained. William [Harry] Adolph’s experience as a ward of the state spanned the period from the shift from residential schools as the primary method of state institutionalization of families to the widespread interference of the province-run child welfare system within Indigenous communities. As a child, Harry Adolph was taken to St. Mary’s residential school in Mission, BC, along with his younger brother, Danny.¹⁴⁶ Harry contracted tuberculosis around the age of six, and was then removed to Coqualeetza in Chilliwack, BC, which was by that time a tuberculosis hospital. As he explained, following his recovery, his parents could not be located, and so he and his brother were placed in foster care. Harry remembers being moved between over seven foster homes in five years. The boys were eventually taken in by their aunt, Elizabeth Herling, who Harry calls “mom.” Harry recalls that his aunt was attempting to gain custody of the boys while they were in foster care,

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 172-173.

¹⁴² John Sheridan Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 131.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 132-33.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 121.

¹⁴⁵ Strong-Boag, 142-146.

¹⁴⁶ William [Harry] Adolph, interview, July 1, 2010, Chilliwack, BC.

but that she had difficulty dealing with social services. Once she had them in her care, Elizabeth Herling reintroduced them to their culture and language, teaching them how to make nets and cedar root baskets, and speaking to them in Halqu'emeylem. What is interesting about Harry's experience is not the fact that his extended family assumed care and control over the welfare of these boys. What is significant is that the flexibility of these family networks, or the process through which families are redefined and renegotiated persisted over time in spite of incredible constraints placed on them by colonial institutions.

Considering how changes to Stó:lō family networks were filtered through their unique epistemologies demonstrates that changes to traditions and culture itself facilitated the ways that families adapted to change. Thus, while interactions between Indigenous families, newcomers, and colonial forces may have been responsible for creating new circumstances for change, this does not mean that Indigenous people participated in these new colonial apparatuses for the same reasons that these authorities intended them to. Changes to their kin networks were therefore renegotiated by Stó:lō individuals within their communities in a way that produced responses that were filtered through their own worldview. These responses were multiplicitous and, at times, conflicting, depending on individual, class, and gender circumstances.

CHAPTER THREE

“We let them be our extended family”:

Contemporary Perspectives on Adoption and Fostering

*A lot of things changed where people couldn't use their traditional ways anymore. Like if I had a nephew or something that wanted a home, and you know today we can't go out and get food the way that our grandfathers did. You know, we gotta go to the store—so if you bring a person in now, you have to go to social services to help you raise that person.*¹⁴⁷

—Frank Malloway

Here, Stó:lō elder Frank Malloway describes the reformulation of traditional ways in the face of new circumstances. Even though he underlines the significance of change here, Malloway goes on to link today's practice of taking in children to the “old ways.” He explains: “There's a few families still yet, you know, the history's there. They were not adopted, but moved in and were raised there... Not officially adopted, it's just the Indian way, you know. Go to your extended family and they raise you.”¹⁴⁸ In these statements, Frank Malloway suggests that although traditional practices have changed over time, the flexibility of Stó:lō families allows for the maintenance of the meaning that motivates these practices, even as they adapt to suit modern circumstances.

As the previous chapters have shown, families are dynamic entities defined by a process of negotiation. Whereas chapter one showed the various flexible and internal familial connections that helped to negotiate change, and chapter two showed the flexibility of the family in action—as an agent capable of both negotiating and enacting change, this chapter demonstrates that Stó:lō families have not succumbed to colonial forces. Nor are they holding onto a singular or essentialist notion of families. Rather, they continue to adaptively apply their flexible understandings of family to new circumstances, as demonstrated through their contemporary family welfare practices. As Nancy Christie and Michael Gavreau have shown in their study of Canadian families in the nineteenth century, it is not enough to look at normative

¹⁴⁷ Frank Malloway, July 2, 2010 interview.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

definitions of family in order to fully understand how families operate.¹⁴⁹ The complexity of definition underlying families emerges at times when approaches to families are put into action. For the Stó:lō today, these defining moments are most prominent in approaches to family care practices. As such, the purpose of this chapter is two-fold. First, it seeks to understand the expansive and inclusive approaches to Stó:lō families as they are defined and negotiated in current family welfare practices. This chapter also explores the ways that Stó:lō people locate meaning in past traditions, and innovatively express connections to the past in their current definitions of family.

Stó:lō family welfare practices are therefore informed by the meaning that Stó:lō people give to their traditional extended family networks, but underlying the meaning of the reference to these past family networks is a flexibility and an innovativeness that allow Stó:lō people to assuage challenges internally with the strategic application of their traditions. Government policies and practices related to Indigenous families have been altered numerous times since the era now commonly referred to as the Sixties Scoop. In many respects, these changes indicate an attempt to better reflect Indigenous peoples' traditional or customary approaches to adoption and fostering. But these policies often fail to recognize that traditions vary diachronically and synchronically—among groups, within groups, and over time.¹⁵⁰ Traditional practices are described and prescribed by the very people who apply them, attributing meaning to these practices at the same time as they adjust to surrounding change. As Malloway's words attest, traditional extended family networks remain meaningful to Stó:lō people today; yet, they are variously and flexibly defined. In an effort to trace the meanings that Stó:lō people attribute to traditions related to families, this chapter explores how Stó:lō families have confronted limitations and restrictions on their families, and have responded with the an innovative

¹⁴⁹ Christie and Gavreau, *Mapping the Margins*, 5-10.

¹⁵⁰ As Cindy Baldassi has stated in her comparison of Aboriginal customary adoption across Canada, “the varying traditions of First Nations and Inuit communities do not necessarily mirror Canadian legislative adoption; some customs include additional rights and obligations for all parties, and most flow from a different philosophy of family, kinship, and child rearing than do standard statutory adoptions,” 64. As she argues, these understandings of traditional Indigenous families both between groups and among individuals within the same tribal group has yet to be reflected in Canadian policies regarding customary adoption. See Cindy L. Baldassi, “The Legal Status of Aboriginal Customary Adoption Across Canada: Comparisons, Contrasts, and Convergences,” *UBC Law Review*; 39.1 (2006): 63-100.

application of Stó:lō traditions that fosters inclusivity but maintains connections to past practices and systems of social obligation.

It is important to recognize that in certain instances where Stó:lō people's application of the past appears to conflict with documented history regarding families and traditions of the past, such accounts need not be dismissed as fabricated connections. That is to say, what appear to be historical untruths are sometimes best recognized as strategic deployments of particular narrative tropes used to assert authority (as in the case of cultural insiders). So while members of the Stó:lō community may be drawing from their traditions to construct an inclusive definition of family, they are, at times, being exclusive in their discussion of the past. Although the constraints of this study do not allow me to fully explore this selectivity, it is necessary to acknowledge that accompanying the innovative application of traditions is always some amount of exclusivity or selectiveness.

Scholars examining First Nations' approaches to adoption and fostering tend to focus on the question of tradition as a reinvigorating force for cultural renewal and resistance to colonialism, and offers tradition as a way to counter the effects of colonial policies and practices. In this, the practices of First Nations people are often treated as singular or static, are at times assessed on the basis of their authenticity, or are analyzed in opposition to government policies and practices. In contrast, another stream of analysis examines the extent to which government policies have affected or ignored these traditional approaches, and focuses on how outsider influence has resulted in the breakdown of traditional First Nations family networks.¹⁵¹ Such a focus often ignores First Nations history and perspectives. Little attention is paid to how these practices related to families have endured in spite of government interference, how these traditional practices may have adjusted over time to suit changing historical circumstances, or how government practices may have adjusted over time to accommodate First Nations definition of families. Overlooking the agency of First Nations individuals or communities at the same time

¹⁵¹ For example, see Kenneth L. Levitt and Brian Warf, eds., *The Challenge of Child Welfare* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985); Christopher Walmsely, *Protecting Indigenous Children* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); Julia Emberley, *Defamiliarizing the Indigenous: Cultural Practices and Decolonization in Canada* (Toronto: U of T Press, 2007); Veronica Strong-Boag, *Fostering Nation?: Canada Confronts Its History of Childhood Disadvantage* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2011).

as placing government policy at the centre of inquiry, historiography of this kind does not account for the innovation and differences among these traditional approaches.

The relationship between tradition and innovation has long been a subject of inquiry and analysis for historians and anthropologists alike. Over the past few decades, this analysis has ranged from examining tradition as a social construct to examining tradition as a claim to authority. Eric Hobsbawm and Terry Ranger's influential edited collection *The Invention of Tradition*, set scholarly analysis of tradition on a new track.¹⁵² Approaching tradition as an anthropological and historical construct, contributors examined interactions between the past and present in modern Western traditions. In his introduction to the collection, Hobsbawm defines tradition as "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature," stressing that deliberate formalization and ritualization of certain aspects of the past are central to the invented tradition.¹⁵³ As he explains, traditions are "invented" as "responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition."¹⁵⁴ In other words, what we refer to as "traditions" are simply practices that have been formalized or ritualized through repetition in order to imply a connection to the past. For Hobsbawm, any change to the meaning or practice associated with a tradition signals the start of a new tradition entirely. While he does differentiate between the "invented" and "old" practices, he does not account for the possibility that elements of these "old" practices have been innovatively incorporated within the new tradition.¹⁵⁵ Thus, his theory renders innovation and tradition as dichotomous, and tradition as static. His discussion of tradition as a western social construct influenced scholarship on the subject for the past few decades, and as Mark Salber Phillips comments, for historians, "it has seemed extraordinarily difficult to think about the idea of tradition except in the deconstructive framework of pseudo-traditionality."¹⁵⁶ Subsequent applications of this theoretical perspective have sought to

¹⁵² Eric Hobsbawm and Terry Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 10. As one example, Hobsbawm cites the choice of Gothic style architecture for the rebuilding of the British parliament in the nineteenth century; as another example, he cites boosting nationalist ideas and agendas through the construction of national symbols, such as through the construction of Nazi symbolism at the Nuremberg rallies. See Hobsbawm, 1-2, 4.

¹⁵⁶ Mark Salber Phillips and Gordon Schochet, eds. *Questions of Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), x.

deconstruct and analyze traditions as deliberate constructs or fabrications invoked to serve a specific purpose or ideological function.¹⁵⁷ While Hobsbawm’s approach explored the construction of tradition from a historical perspective, he did not account for particulars in regards to the meaning that underlies these traditions, or the difference among their meaningfulness.

Rethinking this deconstructive framework, contributors to the collection *Questions of Tradition*, edited by Mark Salber Phillips and Gordon Schochet, explore questions of tradition, memory, and authority from a multitude of perspectives and disciplines, such as literary analysis, philosophy and science.¹⁵⁸ In his introduction to the collection, Philips confronts this deconstructive framework with the claim that “tradition in its wider sense has remained undervalued, underutilized, and certainly under-theorized.”¹⁵⁹ Philips argues for a reinvigorated theory of tradition that considers the multiplicity of meaning behind the application of tradition, which includes the invocation of tradition as a claim to authority. To Philips, tradition is “more prescriptive than historical and takes on strong ideological meanings,” and, as he explains, it “may be invoked not simply to call attention to or to recognize historical continuities of this kind but to mark the authority they carry—and even to endorse and sustain it.”¹⁶⁰ As Philips suggests here, tracing the history of a tradition does not go far enough to explain how and why the tradition has meaning for certain people at certain times. Traditions need to be redefined in their connection to innovation, as the meaning of tradition is continuously imagined through a fluid and active process among individuals. This reformulation gives traditions the capacity to be far more pluralist in meaning, dynamic in application, and accommodating of difference.

Indeed, Keith Thor Carlson explores ways in which innovative means are used to achieve traditional ends among the Coast Salish community. In “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism, and Indigenous Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” Carlson argues that “occasionally, innovative actions were designed to protect and preserve traditional systems and, as such, within

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., x.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

restricted circumstances, a degree of innovation was sometimes regarded as being traditional.”¹⁶¹ Using the example of conflict over fishing spots along the Fraser River in the late nineteenth century, Carlson demonstrates that tradition and history was used on both sides of the argument in the effort to gain supremacy over the other’s claim. At times, Salish people worked within the parameters of the colonial authorities in an effort to maintain the meaning that contributes to traditional practices, drawing on new ways to help them do so.¹⁶² As Carlson explains, “the question of tradition is bound up with the problem of authority as the individuals, families, and First Nations involved all cite history and tradition to support and validate their opposing positions.”¹⁶³ Carlson demonstrates that traditions are not defined by strict adherence to ancient principles or precedents, but the meaning that underlies traditions and their related practices are constantly redefined as they are applied to new circumstances.

Stó:l̓ō adoption and fostering practices today are built on beliefs and practices relating to Stó:l̓ō families of the past, but they are not simply an application of past traditions. While certain practices may be correlated to cultural traditions, the significance of the practice, as well as the practice itself, has changed over time, and varies among individuals. As argued in the previous two chapters, for the Stó:l̓ō, there never has been a singularly defined “traditional” family. Therefore, it follows that Stó:l̓ō people have never restricted themselves to a singular traditional approach to family care. In the past, family networks were responsible for providing for the welfare of individual family members, which included providing them with education and cultural knowledge, economic security, food, shelter, and health care. In return, family members had expectations placed upon them—responsibilities and rules that governed these systems of reciprocity. Given the significance of family ties, in the precontact era family collective, it is unlikely that a non-family member would have been cared for in the same way as members of the extended family. While linguistic evidence suggests that adoption and fostering may have occurred outside of kinship networks,¹⁶⁴ class and gender would have been a significant determinant of circumstances for children left without families following contact with European

¹⁶¹ Keith Thor Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism, and Indigenous Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” in Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan, eds., *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada’s Native Past* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 146-147.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Keith Carlson, “Expressions of Collective Identity,” *A Stó:l̓ō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), 28.

newcomers. Increasing contact with newcomers and encounters with colonial authorities brought changes to the make-up of family networks. As demonstrated in the second chapter, the experience of orphaned, abandoned or captured children likely would have varied based on their family's socioeconomic circumstances, as well as the gender of the child. Indeed, analysis by Keith Carlson of contact-era Stó:lō social-spatial relationships relating to sharing and exchange suggests that the weaker one's integration into a family network, the more likely one is to be treated poorly and even exploited by the family collective.¹⁶⁵ These circumstances certainly shifted ways that families acted as a social and economic safety net for members. But care must be taken not to overstate all changes to family networks as a result of outside influence. Current Stó:lō practices of adoption and fostering are not simply reactions to colonial interference, but neither are they simply the retention of past traditions. As Homi Bhabha writes in relation to colonial relationships generally, whenever colonial systems of power are overlaid on colonized people, the two necessarily begin to shape one another – often in unexpected ways.¹⁶⁶ And so where family welfare was once built into the internal systems of families, it continues to be today in ways that facilitate more inclusive and expansive approaches to families, but are still negotiated through internal systems of power.

Many changes to government policies related to Indigenous families in Canada throughout the first half of the twentieth century were meant to alter families to reflect the patriarchal nuclear family model espoused by colonial authorities.¹⁶⁷ Improving economic conditions in the period following the Second World War brought social reforms in the form of programs geared toward the improvement of economic and social conditions.¹⁶⁸ This contributed to the increasing professionalization of child and family care, from which emerged the position of the social worker as a professional, who would distinguish “good” families from “bad.”¹⁶⁹ For Indigenous people in Canada, there was also a movement from residential schools as the primary method of state-run child welfare to social service programs and a child welfare system administered by the provincial governments. The inclusion of Section 88 of the Indian Act in

¹⁶⁵ Keith Thor Carlson, “Familial Cohesion and Colonial Atomization: Governance and Authority in a Coast Salish Community,” *Native Studies Review* 19. 2 (2010): 1-42.

¹⁶⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 123.

¹⁶⁷ Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous* (Edmonton: U of A Press, 2008), 6.

¹⁶⁸ Strong-Boag, *Finding Families, Finding Ourselves*, 142-146.

¹⁶⁹ Ellen Herman, *Kinship By Design: A History of Adoption in the Modern United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 2.

1951 gave jurisdiction over certain areas formerly legislated by the federal government to the provinces, and this included child welfare.¹⁷⁰ This caused some disjuncture and dispute over who was actually responsible for the statutory responsibility over the needs of First Nations families on reserves. This jurisdictional dispute “meant that services that may have kept children in their own families and in their communities were unavailable.”¹⁷¹ Herb Joe, a respected Stó:lō family and cultural leader and a long time social worker working within the Stó:lō community, explained that policies often separated families rather than providing support, as they “said quite clearly that you couldn’t place a child within the same vicinity, or area or even town of the parents because there was a fear of parental interference with the child’s safety and wellbeing.”¹⁷² As well, funding was distributed by the federal government to the provinces on a by-case basis, and so the total amount of funds received was contingent on the number of children apprehended by these provincially regulated programs. These circumstances compounded to the point that, between 1955 and 1964, the number of Indigenous children in care jumped from 1% to almost 35%.¹⁷³ In a reaction to resist these policies through the affirmation of their perspective on families, some First Nations groups began to rearticulate their own definitions of family and family care in a way that fit with the professionalized discourse and provincial policies on child welfare.

Throughout this era, which would later be termed the “Sixties Scoop,” Indigenous organizations and political activists challenged the policies and practices of the government, but asserting the need for inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and approaches was simply not enough. Often, challenging the government required that they fit themselves within government-derived perspectives and procedures. As one example, the Indian Homemakers’ Association challenged the child welfare policies and practices of the province of British Columbia, asserting that First Nations perspectives on families needed to be reflected within them, which often meant resituating their perspectives within the purview of the Canadian political system. The local Stó:lō chapter of the Indian Homemaker’s Association was started by Rose Charlie in the Stó:lō community of Chehalis, BC in the 1950’s. What began as a local gathering for women to discuss

¹⁷⁰ For more information, see “Calling Forth Our Future: Options for the Exercise of Indigenous Peoples’ Authority in Child Welfare,” Prepared by the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, 2002, 11.

¹⁷¹ Patrick Johnston, “Stolen generations,” *Our Native Land*, CBC Radio, March 12, 1983.

¹⁷² Herb Joe, June 28, 2007 interview.

¹⁷³ Patrick Johnston, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1983), 23.

and share their home experiences grew into a province-wide political organization, and Charlie helped found the provincial organization in 1968.¹⁷⁴ On a provincial level, the organization challenged the interference of child welfare policies and practices within First Nations communities. At a local level, the organization advocated for families and provided them with aid. As one example, Rose Charlie cites the way the organization advocated to Social Services on behalf of the McHalsie family in the 1960s. The children's mother had passed away, and their father had broken his leg, prompting Social Services to come in and assess whether the children should be put into foster care. The Indian Homemaker's Association placed a caregiver with the family until the McHalsie's father was well again.¹⁷⁵ In 1974, the Indian Homemakers Association of B.C. passed a resolution calling upon the federal government to recognize First Nations jurisdiction over child welfare and the power of First Nations to make decisions regarding their families. The resolution demanded "the Federal Government place in the hands of each Band Council and members authority to decide the future of all Indian children on reserves who may be without parental control for any reason whatsoever."¹⁷⁶ She also remembers being involved in a two-year court battle in an attempt to return two children who had been apprehended because they lived on traditional foods.¹⁷⁷ Rose Charlie explained that she engaged Thomas Berger, a well-known Indigenous rights advocate who was chairperson of the British Columbia Royal Commission on Family and Children's Law in 1975, to advocate in court for those children who had been unjustifiably put into foster care.¹⁷⁸ On behalf of the organization, Charlie traveled to the United States to learn about the 1978 US Indian Child Welfare Act, which prohibited the adoption of Indigenous children into non-Indigenous homes. She also aided in compiling a report presented to the Department of Indian and Northern Development (DIAND) in 1980. The report involved consultations with a number of First Nations bands and organizations. It presented a number of recommendations to improve the current system, including the recommendation "that the child welfare committee examine all aspects of the traditional extended family system."¹⁷⁹ Rose Charlie's experience and memories reinforce that

¹⁷⁴ For more information on the history of the Indian Homemakers' Association, see Patricia Barkaskas, "The Indian Voice: Centering Women in the Gendered Politics of Indigenous Nationalism in BC, 1969-1984." MA Thesis. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2009.)

¹⁷⁵ Rose Charlie, July 24, 2010 interview.

¹⁷⁶ "Calling Forth Our Future," 16-17.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ "Statement of Native Indian concerns re: Child Welfare Services in British Columbia," prepared by Fay Blaney

much of the Indigenous political activism in the 1960s and 1970s with regards to child welfare challenged policies through reference to traditions in a way that asserted that they were meaningful, but in a way that also rearticulated the discourse on traditional extended families so that it aligned with professionalized discourse on the subject. As the example of Charlie's recollections of the Indian Homemaker's Association demonstrates, strategic articulations of culture and tradition acted as a method of claiming authority over family networks. However, constructing the traditional extended family as an inclusive network in an effort to claim this authority risks oversimplifying the complex and dynamic family networks that varied historically, regionally, and locally.

For other people living in Stó:l̓ō communities, this claim to authority was less predicated on overtly challenging government policies and practices, and involved the application of traditions and cultural beliefs in other strategic ways. Stó:l̓ō people often insist that the standard family model administered in past child welfare policies did not often match traditional Stó:l̓ō ideas of family, as they were based on a patriarchal nuclear family model. At the same time as they confronted restrictive policies, they found new ways to assert that traditional extended family networks remained meaningful. Their actions illustrate the complexity of applying past definitions of these family networks to current circumstances. Herb Joe, whose current job title is "Traditional Counsellor" for the local Stó:l̓ō Child and Family Services program, cautioned that opposing approaches to families in terms of "traditional" versus "modern" families risks oversimplifying the Stó:l̓ō perspective.¹⁸⁰ This opposition ignores the agency expressed through the ways that Stó:l̓ō people define families today, favouring an oversimplified and static family model. Recent scholarship demonstrates that Stó:l̓ō and other Salish people combine traditional approaches with modern means in order to accommodate change.¹⁸¹ The example of interactions between Stó:l̓ō communities and local Social Development workers supports these observations of Salish agency. As Social Development workers, Herb Joe and his colleague Glenda Campbell were employed by the province of BC in the late 1970's and early 1980's. In this capacity, they

for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1980, 11.

¹⁸⁰ Herb Joe, June 28, 2010 interview.

¹⁸¹ See, for example, Keith Carlson, "Familial Cohesion and Colonial Atomization"; John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Bruce Granville Miller, "Folk Law and Contemporary Coast Salish Tribal Code," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 19:3 (1995): 141-164.

were to provide Stó:lō communities with social assistance. However, the expectations and needs of the communities they worked in meant that they often took actions that, in their own words, “exceeded their job description.”¹⁸² From their perspective, they took on the role of social workers in communities, sometimes either as liaisons between the community and child welfare workers, or by facilitating the placement of children where and when the community felt it was necessary.¹⁸³ According to Joe:

The community was stepping forward and saying, “I want you to take care of this child protection issue. So-and-so lives over there and he’s drinking all day long and his children come over here to eat and come over here for safety. So I want you to do something about it.” And those were the scenarios that we were presented with over and over again in our communities. So over time, we just adopted that kind of approach to the financial aid—counselling that we were doing—we ended up doing some social work as well.¹⁸⁴

Members of the Stó:lō Tzeachten community themselves, Campbell and Joe were working within a government system while they anchored their practices in local knowledge and expansive Stó:lō definitions of families.¹⁸⁵ But they had to be innovative in their application of practices of the past. Campbell explained: “We placed children in homes of a relative—they may not have been related—but we would place them in a home that would take a child in.” She goes on to clarify: “[We] placed children in family homes or another family’s home.” Campbell’s description of their actions indicates that although they referred to this as placing the child in the home of a relative, these were not necessarily “relatives” in the sense that they were not family members related by blood. Founded on the meaning that Stó:lō people attribute to traditional extended family networks of the past, the networks that these Social Development workers drew on suggests a broader, more flexible and inclusive definition. They drew authority from the internal systems available to past families, but expanded the definition of families to include others beyond the extended family. Campbell saw this as an effective and preventative method of family care, and recalls times that the Abbotsford Child and Family Welfare Services came to them to help with the placement of First Nations children in their care. As one example, she discussed the case of Delvis Morrison, a First Nations child from Saskatoon who, after being

¹⁸² Glenda Campbell, July 6, 2010 interview.

¹⁸³ Herb Joe, June 28, 2010 interview.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Herb Joe, June 28, 2010 interview; Glenda Campbell, July 6, 2010 interview.

moved between 8 families up to this point, ended up with Abbotsford Child and Family Welfare Services.¹⁸⁶ Social workers in Abbotsford inquired if Campbell and Joe knew of a First Nations family willing to take in Delvis. Knowing that Mary and Frank Malloway often took children in unofficially, Campbell and Joe helped arrange for them to bring Delvis into their family. Delvis remained with the Malloway's into his adulthood.¹⁸⁷ As Herb Joe indicated, "There was help within the community. There were selected people who were recognized—Elders, some of them who were healthy at that time—and the community would recognize them by going to them for help." And yet, in a report from the province in 1974, BC social workers claimed that there was difficulty recruiting on-reserve foster parents, citing "the shortage of adequate housing on the reserves" as the main issue.¹⁸⁸ As Veronica Strong-Boag notes, First Nations foster homes were often rejected by provincial social workers "as materially and otherwise inferior."¹⁸⁹ In contrast, the Social Development workers would not only locate a home for the child, but would also provide them with whatever resources they could, such as cots, food, or money.¹⁹⁰ Herb Joe recalled that people in the communities went to them as an alternative to requesting aid from the Ministry of Social Services, which, at that time, would likely have had the kids removed.¹⁹¹ Their experiences indicate that Stó:lō families were indeed providing foster care in their own communities, unrecorded and away from the surveillance of the Ministry of Social Services. Combining the resources provided by Campbell and Joe through the Social Development program with an expansive definition of extended families, these communities responded to conflicts created by colonial circumstances in ways that were meaningful to them. Connecting their practices with provided them authority as cultural insiders within these communities.

Meanwhile, many Indigenous organizations remained insistent that government policies continue to change in order to adequately reflect Indigenous perspectives on families. Throughout the 1980's and 1990s, Indigenous organizations such as the Indian Homemakers' Association, the Native Women's Society, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs advocated for

¹⁸⁶ Glenda Campbell, July 6, 2010 interview.

¹⁸⁷ Frank Malloway, July 2, 2010 interview.

¹⁸⁸ BC Department of Human Resources, *Annual Report* (1974), quoted in Strong-Boag, *Finding Families*, 69. See also 139, 146-7.

¹⁸⁹ Strong-Boag, 147.

¹⁹⁰ Herb Joe, June 28, 2010 interview.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

culturally appropriate adoption and fostering policies for Indigenous people.¹⁹² The Indian Child Welfare Caravan in 1980 brought together these organizations, as they publicly rallied for Indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare.¹⁹³ In response, government approaches to Indigenous child welfare policies underwent many changes throughout the late twentieth century in an attempt to reflect the different perspectives among First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples. But in the attempt to formalize the traditions of these cultural groups within written policy, these traditions were often simplistically and superficially rendered.¹⁹⁴ In 1995, British Columbia's Adoption Act was amended to include the requirement that child welfare officials make reasonable efforts to discuss the child's placement with their band. The following year, the Report of the Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples included a recommendation that Indigenous people's authority over child welfare be recognized.¹⁹⁵ Policies outlined in the 1996 *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) stated that Indigenous peoples should be involved in the planning and delivery of services to Indigenous families and their children.¹⁹⁶ Between 1987 and 2002, the gradual delegation of authority for delivering child and family services occurred in nearly twenty Indigenous communities in BC.¹⁹⁷ However important these changes and recommendations were to the recognition of Indigenous authority over families and traditions, subsequent application of these policies have failed to recognize the multiple ways both families and traditions are defined. Difficulty remains in trying to capture the depth of the values and meanings underlying traditions. As anthropologist Bruce Miller identifies, social change, such as "the changing roles of women, shifting patterns of participation in the labour force, and the changing relationship between youth and Elders" makes the formalization of customary Salish folk law today problematic, as it attempts to apply the ethos of traditions from an earlier period to contemporary situations.¹⁹⁸ He specifically points out that the formalization of customs and traditions often occurs "without consideration of family organization," adding that "the use of a variety of definitions within the codes of single tribes is a further indication of

¹⁹² For example, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs passed a number of resolutions in relation to child welfare policies at the U.B.C.I.C.'s 12th Annual General Assembly in 1980. See "Calling Forth Our Future: Options for the Exercise of Indigenous Peoples' Authority in Child Welfare," Prepared by the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, 2002, 17-18.

¹⁹³ "Calling Forth Our Future," 17.

¹⁹⁴ Miller, "Folk Law and Contemporary Coast Salish Tribal Code," 142.

¹⁹⁵ Canada, *Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples*, (Ottawa): Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples, 1996.

¹⁹⁶ *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, RSBC 1996, c. 46, Part 1, Section 3, "Service delivery principles," Principle (b) (http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/list_statreg_c.htm).

¹⁹⁷ Walmsley, 29.

¹⁹⁸ Miller, "Folk Law and Contemporary Coast Salish Tribal Code," 143.

this ambiguity and the complexity of creating code that emphasizes traditional values and addresses current issues.”¹⁹⁹ Clearly, certain complexities arise when traditions and customs are encapsulated in formal policies and procedures.

For the Stó:lō, developing a culturally appropriate approach to family care that accommodates Stó:lō definitions of family and still works within parameters set out by government officials has proven to be limiting, as there is insufficient recognition of the multiplicity of meaning underlying their approaches to family and tradition. In the early 1990’s, the Stó:lō regained some control over their Child and Family Services with the creation of Xyolhemeylh Child and Family Services program. The program, established in 1993, was designed to take on responsibilities regarding the delivery of child and family services to their on-reserve population. In 1997, a Delegation Enabling Agreement (DEA) between the Provincial and Federal Governments and Xyolhemeylh stated that the program “will promote positive cultural identity and the recognition of the role of the extended family.”²⁰⁰ According to a social worker who worked with Xyolhemeylh since its inception, this transition was fraught with difficulties. The program had to operate according to government guidelines and policies, thus limiting the power and control of the very people it was meant to engage.²⁰¹ This social worker explained that there was a certain amount of distrust in the individuals enforcing these policies, no doubt in part due to the damaging history of child and family services within the Stó:lō communities, and so there were issues over the delegation of authority.²⁰² The community, in turn, thought they would have more jurisdiction over Xyolhemeylh’s practices, and when it was discovered that this would not necessarily be the case, Xyolhemeylh social workers began to be

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 161.

²⁰⁰ As Andree Boiselle notes in her analysis of Xyolhemeylh, “Within the Stó:lō delegation agreement, this translates into an understanding that Xyolhemeylh will deliver services ‘directed toward the safety, well-being and protection of Stó:lō children and will promote positive cultural identity and the recognition of the role of the extended family, ‘establish administrative, funding and protocol arrangements whereby Xyolhemeylh will provide community based family and child services with an Indigenous perspective, and will ‘deliver them in a culturally sensitive mode that encourages the involvement and hiring of Indigenous employees,’” Andree Boiselle, “Emerging From the Cultural Quicksands: Cultural Hybridity and the Stó:lō Transition to Self-Rule: Examining Stó:lō Discourse Around the Experience of Taking Responsibility for the Deliverance of Child and Family Services”, Unpublished, 2007, 5. See also Child, Family and Community Service Act, RSBC 1996, c. 46, Part 1, Section 3, “Service delivery principles,” Principle (b) (http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/list_statreg_c.htm).

²⁰¹ Kelowa Edel, June 30, 2010 interview.

²⁰² Ibid.

viewed as the colonizers.²⁰³ As Andrée Boiselle explains in her analysis of the program, in 2006 political conflict within the Stó:lō Nation itself over who should run the program, and how, caused “the program [to be] temporarily removed from Stó:lō control and placed under the direct supervision of the Minister of Child and Family Development.”²⁰⁴ Virginia Peters, who was involved with the development of the program, echoes these observations. Peters expressed that the policies and procedures of the government overlooked Stó:lō family structures and social networks:

Our families needed help, support to take better charge of themselves, and overcome the historical effects of the government policies and residential schools. The government thought they knew best what policies to put in place for our people, but they were missing out on a big part of it, the inclusiveness of our traditions, our culture, our spirituality. Our families had systems in place to make sure they would be taken care of internally.²⁰⁵

Here, Peters highlights the ability to resolve conflicts internally through methods predicated on traditional understandings of families. Emphasizing the inclusion of traditions, culture and spirituality to the ways that families were defined and operated in the past, Peters also speaks to the need to reformulate government policies along the lines of Stó:lō traditions. At the same time as she overlooks the power dynamics internal to the family systems of the past in order to represent a unified approach to Stó:lō families she attempts to draw agency and authority back to Stó:lō families. Where Indigenous communities and families were once coerced into conforming to state imposed notions of family and family care, in order to assume control and authority over their families and family practices in the eyes of the state, they now must prove that they uphold singular ideas on practices relating to their tradition and culture.²⁰⁶ Privileging a singular approach to child welfare overlooks the local historical circumstances shaping alternative definitions of family, which underlie reactions to the proposed child welfare program. It fails to take seriously the flexible, complex and sometimes contested understanding of family care

²⁰³ The change of leadership for the provincial government of BC in 1996 prompted a provincial policy shift to focus on delegating authority to First Nation agencies, rather than recognizing and facilitating the jurisdiction of Indigenous Nations; “See Calling Forth Our Future,” 20; Kelowa Edel, June 30, 2010 interview.

²⁰⁴ Boiselle, 2.

²⁰⁵ Virginia Peters, June 27, 2007 interview.

²⁰⁶ A recent news article entitled “B.C. native leaders reject government’s new child welfare agency” exemplifies this type of misinterpretation. The article states: “The new child protection agency was intended to serve the Stó:lō people of the Fraser Valley” but “the Stó:lō people remain [...] bitterly divided over the handling of child protection issues.” “B.C. native leaders reject government’s new child welfare agency,” Thursday, December 3, 2012. Canadian Press.

practices on the part of Stó:lō communities. The example of Xyolhemeylh, the Stó:lō Child and Family Services program, provides one such example of the complexities associated with the dynamic relationship between innovation and tradition as played out over a colonial political system, and in a community with ancient precedents for resolving tribal, gender, and class tensions.

Certainly, the Stó:lō continue to draw on these ancient precedents as they assert the value of families today. As described in chapter one, ceremonies such as the potlatch and naming ceremonies wove individuals into the social fabric of their broader communities, embedding them within the collective memory of the Stó:lō people at the time. As a way of maintaining connections among Salish social networks, these ceremonies not only reinforced social bonds, but they also were a method of mitigating internal conflict. In other words, these large gatherings once brought together groups from all across Stó:lō territory to witness and remember the transference of intergenerational property rights, and to clarify a family's collective ownership,²⁰⁷ and were a place to publicly debate and resolve disputes among groups and families.²⁰⁸ Keith Carlson and Bruce Miller have independently demonstrated that cultural gatherings and ceremonies continue to operate in these ways today.²⁰⁹ In the spring of 2009, I observed a Stó:lō naming ceremony held in the Charlie longhouse on the Chehalis reserve, wherein two non-Stó:lō adults were given traditional names. Through the provincial system, these individuals had formally adopted two young Stó:lō sisters from the Chehalis community. The Chehalis First Nation governance council had articulated a policy of not allowing or endorsing the adoption of Stó:lō children outside of their community. But, in this case, they did not wish these two sisters to be separated. Passing on Stó:lō names to the future parents of these children signified their adoption into the Stó:lō community, and so this gathering operated as both a naming and adoption ceremony. Present at the ceremony were Stó:lō Elders and community members, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Child and Family Development, and the Stó:lō-run child and family services program, Xyolhemeylh. It was Xyolhemeylh (at the time under fairly strict provincial administrative control) that had coordinated the adoption of the two children. But also present was the biological father of the

²⁰⁷ Carlson, 148.

²⁰⁸ Miller, 145

²⁰⁹ See Carlson, "Familial Cohesion,"; Miller, "Folk Law".

children, as well as Elders and other members of this family. In using the naming ceremony as a method of adoption, the Chehalis community asserted its power and authority by affirming connections through Stó:lō traditions. A signal to all present, including the Ministry of Social Services, members of other Stó:lō communities, Elders, and family members, that the family is able and willing to care for their children, this ceremony indicated that the cultural and spiritual connection to the family would be maintained.

Adopting the parents into the Stó:lō community was a way of giving a them symbolic Stó:lō identity, grounding them into this kinship network. As in the past, this ceremony set the foundations for the establishment of these parents and their Stó:lō children within the collective historical memory of the Stó:lō community. These connections are significant in a culture where knowing one's history is attached to status and spiritual power.²¹⁰ Naming is still a way that families position themselves vis à vis one another, and names are a way that segments of families position themselves within a family. Names represent power. While this was a way of recognizing that the parents were “worthy,” it also placed upon them all the obligations of a Stó:lō person within an extended family—matters that were carefully explained to these non-Indigenous parents by Stó:lō Elders during their adoption.²¹¹ Although this family was adopting these children outside of the community, in spite of the Chehalis First Nation governance council's stance against adoptions of this kind, this ceremony inverted the power structure, reframing the adoption “out of the family” was a way to actually expand the family network. In one way, it acted as a reversal of the older system of enfranchising First Nations people out of their communities. Providing these non-Stó:lō parents with names becomes a way to link them to this family, and the Chehalis community, which included an invitation from an elder of the family to join them in Chehalis for Christmas.²¹² And as many of the Elders asserted at the ceremony, this was a way of ensuring that the children remained in their territory, as it connected them to cultural and spiritual precedent of Stó:lō traditions, and embedded them in the history of this family network. The ceremony acted to ensure that the Stó:lō ancestral bonds were reinforced for the children, and to ensure that the ancestors who carried those names continue to

²¹⁰ Wayne Suttles, “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish” *Coast Salish Essays*, (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1987), 8-11.

²¹¹ Keith Carlson, *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lō in Canada's Pacific Coast History* (Chilliwack, BC: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 1997) 89.

²¹² Ray Silver, Naming ceremony at Charlie longhouse, Chehalis, BC. May, 2009.

shape and influence their guardians now carrying the names. In the eyes of this community, these new parents were now responsible for carrying forth the cultures and traditions of the Stó:lō, and for keeping the name clean for future generations. On another level, this ceremony is representative of the negotiation of internal systems of power, as it demonstrated that this family maintained the authority to determine who is a part of their extended network, and proved that they have the resources of a high status family to extend these families bonds beyond their extended family.

Expressions of Stó:lō families take many forms, connected by their expansive understanding of kinship obligations. This expansive understanding is exemplified in the common practice of taking in children. By this, I mean the practice of bringing individuals into a home in order to provide them with care, either for short or extended periods of time. Among the interviewees, there was a clear distaste for the terms “adoption” or “fostering,” and most favoured referring to the practice as “taking in” children. In addition to distinguishing their approach from those imposed on Indigenous communities through colonial policies and practices, taking in children is much more private, often based on the private knowledge of culture and tradition held within extended families. As scholarship on the Coast Salish has affirmed, holding important private knowledge within the extended family remains an important way to maintain status within Coast Salish communities.²¹³ Although the Stó:lō people I interviewed clearly connected their actions to traditions of the past, there likely lie deep, complex, and meaningful layers of cultural significance beneath these practices, which remained un-communicated because of the requirement to retain this knowledge within families. Holding this meaning at bay was a way to ensure that the authority that accompanies cultural knowledge was maintained internally amongst these families.

These Stó:lō people have struck an intriguing balance between communicating the meaning underlying these practices in a way that maintains privacy, but still asserts their cultural significance. Among the Elders I spoke with, it was not uncommon for families to have taken in

²¹³ See Carlson, “Familial Cohesion”; Miller, “Folk Law”.

upwards of twenty individuals over their lifetime.²¹⁴ Irene and Joe Aleck from Cheam are one such example. Irene Aleck linked their actions to her understanding of families in the past:

A child wasn't just brought up by Mom and Dad, it was brought up by Grandmas, Grandpas, Aunts, Uncles, older cousins, everybody had permission to mold that child... Everybody [...] took care of its needs. It was everybody's child because we had that communal living idea.²¹⁵

Here, Irene extends the responsibilities of child rearing to the entire community, and her words imply an inclusive approach to extended family. Although she refers to the precontact form of familial organization here, the Alecks' experience of taking in children exemplifies an inclusivity that is far more accommodating of outsiders to the extended family network. Most of the individuals the Alecks took in were not biological relatives, and many were not Stó:lō. Some were children at St. Mary's Residential School, where Joe Aleck was the Indigenous Administrator, and which operated as an extended family in its own way. Joe and Irene explained that the holidays at St. Mary's were times when the children were expected to return to their families. But since some of the wards could not return home for whatever reasons, the Alecks would often take in children over these holiday periods. When St. Mary's closed, they took in some of these children, and raised them until they reached adulthood. Over the years, other children were taken in by the Alecks at the request of their families. Some of these families were struggling with substance abuse, while others were struggling financially. In one case, they took in the daughter of a woman they had taken in from St. Mary's many years prior. In a way, they took on the responsibility of grandparents of this child.²¹⁶ The Alecks draw from their memories of past traditions and cultural knowledge, and their expressions of their experience are one indication of Stó:lō people's adaptive reformulation of traditional extended family networks in order to accommodate new circumstances.

Speaking of "tradition" and "culture" can mean very different things when Stó:lō people are speaking and interacting with each other in comparison to when they are speaking to cultural outsiders. Individuals who were interviewed reveal that these concepts contain deep layers of

²¹⁴ Irene Aleck, June 30, 2010, interview; Frank Malloway, July 2, 2010 interview; Ralph George, July 5, 2010 interview.

²¹⁵ Irene Aleck, August 8, 1996 interview.

²¹⁶ Irene Aleck, June 30, 2010, interview.

meaning, and their meanings differ depending on the context in which they are used. In part, these differences can be attributed to the variations among these terms as they are mobilized in opposition to non-Indigenous or non-Stó:lō beliefs and practices. The dynamics of meaning that underlie and attribute to these terms does not undercut their significance. As Aletta Biersack asserts, we must “demand for polyphonic representational practices that allow for atonality and cacophony and not just harmony—or even dissonance,” since dissonance still requires “totalization of meaning.”²¹⁷ Certainly, there are instances of internal power struggle among those who have extended the appellation of “family” to individuals outside of their kin group. As outside members are brought into Stó:lō family networks, there are still clear limitations to the benefits they receive as members of their new family. Internal conflicts arise regarding the amount claim adoptees have over the status and private knowledge of the family. A recent conflict over who has claim to a traditional name illustrates this point. Mary Aleck and George Douglas, the grandparents of Joe Aleck, unofficially adopted a child, who has since laid claim to a traditional name held by Joe Aleck’s family. The name was given at a small gathering where only a few people were present and not, as is Stó:lō custom, at a large naming ceremony where it could be witnessed by Elders and other attendees. Joe Aleck stated that he was concerned that the name was not being treated with the proper amount of respect and responsibility, as it had been handed down in a manner that does not reflect the traditions and cultures of the Stó:lō people.²¹⁸ He also voiced his concern that the accountability and responsibility to maintain the family history and kinship connections that the name attributes would not be upheld.²¹⁹ While these concerns are justifiable, underlying these expressions are unarticulated dynamics of power and authority, and questions of the legitimacy of the right of an adoptee to assume this name. As past traditions are adapted to suit new circumstances, the internal power systems must also adjust to accommodate these new situations, at times resulting in conflict amongst families.

As Stó:lō people apply their traditions to current circumstances, they are not limited or constrained by singular definitions of normative cultural practices. In other words, traditions are constantly being revisited in light of changes among social conditions, making them dynamic in

²¹⁷ Aletta Biersack, introduction to *Clio in Oceania: Toward a Historical Anthropology*, edited by Aletta Biersack, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 9.

²¹⁸ Joe Aleck, May 11, 2009, interview.

²¹⁹ Julie Cruikshank reflects on the social implications that names still carry, and states that “...oral tradition anchors the present in the past. This remains especially important in Indigenous societies where genealogical knowledge plays a significant role in explicating rules governing social organization.” Julie Cruikshank, “Oral Tradition and Oral History: Reviewing Some Issues,” *Canadian Historical Review*, LXXV, 3, (1999), 407.

both meaning and application. Stó:lō elder Frank Malloway from the community of Yakwekwioose, for example, was very clear in distinguishing current practices from those of the past. When questioned on the roots of the practice of taking in children, Stó:lō elder Frank Malloway said, “That’s just the way it has always been, the door’s always been open.”²²⁰ He clarified that, in the past, Stó:lō people “didn’t bother with the courts, they did it the traditional way.” Although the practice of taking in children has built on concepts from the past, current applications of these concepts differ from those in the past. As Malloway explained, family networks no longer operate in the same ways. He spoke of changes that accompanied restricted movements among communities, such as the fixing of band lists and restrictions with regards to residency, which Keith Carlson has referred to as the atomizing of Indigenous societies.²²¹ Still, the Malloways’ experience makes it clear that these practices are not limited to static ideas of the extended family, or to defined notions of membership to the Stó:lō community. As the aforementioned case of Delvis Morrison attests, the Malloways were not averse to taking in children from outside of their family, tribal or cultural groups. Frank and Mary Malloway have taken in approximately twenty individuals over the years, and he explained that “usually, the kids would bring them home.”²²² Today, Frank and Mary Malloway’s daughter takes in children, and it is often his granddaughter who brings them home. It is not just adults who are extending family bonds to those outside of their immediate family network, but children as well. As an actively defined process, the application of traditions to changing social circumstances speaks to the equally dynamic ways that Stó:lō family networks are actively and flexibly defined. And yet, these actions are not without connection to status that the cultural knowledge affords. Often, Malloway would let older individuals stay in his longhouse, where they would trade their labour in exchange for accommodations.²²³ In this case, Malloway’s actions are more than just reminiscent of a high status leader who would provide less fortunate members of the community shelter and resources in exchange for work. Asserting his status as a *siyá:m*, or as a high status leader of the Stó:lō community both through the continuation of cultural practices and by showing that he is able to maintain an expansive social network, Malloway’s actions demonstrate continuity with past internal systems that helped to care for families.

²²⁰ Frank Malloway, July 2, 2010, interview.

²²¹ Carlson, “Familial Cohesion.”

²²² Frank Malloway, July 2, 2010 interview.

²²³ Ibid.

The ways that internal systems operate to care for families may have changed as result of colonial forces, but expectations and social obligations continue to guide these practices. The practice of taking in children is an expression of the cumulative experiences and perspectives that contribute to local knowledge on families. Although Ralph George, an elder in the Sxwohamel community, linked his practice of taking in children to the attempt to overcome colonial restrictions, his approach demonstrates his understanding of the social obligations that motivate these practices. Throughout their married life in Sxwohamel, Ralph and Lorraine George have taken in countless children, some for long periods of time, and others more intermittently. As one example, Ralph George explained that following his marriage to Lorraine, they returned to Sxwohamel from working in the United States. Upon their return, he and his wife took in the children from Ralph’s previous marriage, even though none of them were Ralph’s biological children. They never officially adopted them, but the children remained with them in Sxwohamel. As another example, they took in a girl who would come stay with them on the weekends, and who Lorraine George referred to as her “Friday to Sunday Girl.” Although they are now in their seventies, the Georges continue to take in children. At the time of our interview, they had two teenagers staying with them—one being the son of one of the children the Georges took in from Ralph’s previous marriage. After questioning Ralph George why he took in children he said:

That way they didn’t get adopted out...[We] kept them within our own people [...] Our Elders brought it up years ago that we weren’t allowed to have our children moved to somewhere else. [We] wanted them with our First Nations people at all times. If they were moved somewhere out, then they had to confront our people first before they took them out of our territory. And today it’s still the same way.²²⁴

Here, George defines his practice of taking in children in relation to colonial interference with Indigenous families, but he also links it to an obligation formulated by high status Stó:lō Elders. Ralph George followed this statement with a description of his inclusive approach to taking in children, explaining that, usually, they just showed up: “They just showed up and we just took them in. They just more or less moved in and we just took them in. We didn’t question them or anything—If they wanted to stay, we just let them stay.” George’s expressions and actions point

²²⁴ Ralph George, July 5, 2010 interview.

to a definition of family that extends beyond biological relatedness, or even the concept of “fictive kin,” in that the individuals they take in simply become members of their extended family.²²⁵ His words and experience suggest that he is filtering his actions and understandings through a specific cultural framework. Indeed, his memories sit interestingly alongside Bruce Miller’s observations that, among the Coast Salish, seemingly ambiguous definitions of family are an indication of the complexity of attempting to fixedly define Coast Salish families.²²⁶ Although the complex and multivalent cultural dynamics that exist within these practices means that the ways people speak of these practices may, at times, seem ambiguous, they are linked to a shared body of cultural knowledge.

Certainly, expanding these family networks acts counter to the previous colonial policies that attempted to restrict families. But it also extends familial obligations beyond customary family networks, and integrates individuals into a support network that has roots in traditions of the past. As Ralph George continued to speak, he made it clear that these actions are reflective of more than just resisting or remedying colonial restrictions. George revealed some of the most striking revelations from these interviews in that, while these practices may be viewed by outsiders as “informal” or as a type of emergency response network responding to colonial restrictions, they remain linked to long-standing practices and social obligations of Stó:lō families. To the many Stó:lō who take people into their homes, familial obligations expand beyond child-parent types of relationships, as they are also extended to older adults and entire families. As one example, Ralph George and Lorraine have taken in Leona Kelly and her two sons, who are also members of the Sxwohamel community. Following the death of Leona Kelly’s mother and father, Ralph and Lorraine George took in Leona Kelly and her two children, assuming the roles of parents and Elders. While they did not bring Kelly and her sons into their

²²⁵ Kinship studies, and the application of terminology of this kind, has been criticized for its “Areocentric” focus on biological relatedness. As David Schneider argued in his book, *A Critique of the Study of Kinship* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1984), the concept of kinship depicts a biological and therefore Areocentric concept. While recent anthropological studies on the topic of kinship have moved the definitions of this term beyond describing familial relationships that extend beyond blood relatives as “kith” or “fictive kin,” even the idea of “fictive kin” implies a type of falsity of feeling within the relationship. Recently, anthropologists have also pointed to the need for culturally specific approach in ascertaining what these meanings are and how they work among people operating within a certain cultural framework. See Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon, eds., *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

²²⁶ Miller, 161.

home, they did bring them into their family network. To Ralph George, taking in children, adults, or families also acts as a way to pass on traditional knowledge. Ralph George described families without Elders as “orphans.” As he explained, “Most of the bands you go around to down in the valley here—pretty well most of them are orphans. You know, the majority of the First Nations people—they’re all orphans. Their parents have gone over to the other side.”²²⁷ George associated taking in Leona Kelly and her sons with an older system of guidance that was traditionally filled by Elders of the family.²²⁸ He stressed that taking in children was connected to older philosophies of reciprocity, where “everybody shared.”²²⁹ “It’s the same principle,” he asserted. As an example, George explained that as many as eight families used to go up to drying racks in the Fraser canyon in the summer. Here, they would fish, and wind-dry the salmon for winter storage. It was a time and place where “everything was all shared.” But here, George is not simply referring to sharing resources, but also to cultural knowledge that underlies this yearly practice.²³⁰ By extension, this suggests that when he speaks about the principle of sharing and the connection to taking in children, he refers to sharing the work of raising children among the community, and the cultural knowledge that accompanies this. To Ralph George, taking in children, adults, or families is a social obligation—but one that allows for the sharing and expansion of Stó:lō cultural knowledge. Individuals like George are drawing on past traditions and cultural knowledge to facilitate these practices, ensuing that these communities have private networks in place to care for families.

As familial obligations are shaped and reshaped among the Stó:lō, these shifting networks ensure that help for families can be found internally. In addition to taking in many other children over the years, Leona Kelly recently took in four children. Although her household was overwhelmed to the point that she and her two sons were sleeping on the basement floor, Kelly stated that she preferred to take in children without aid from outside sources, like Xyolhemeylh Child and Family Services.²³¹ She said she did not approach Child and Family Services out of fear of the long and restrictive processes involved with the program.

²²⁷ Ralph George, July 5, 2010 interview.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Keith Carlson demonstrates that the fishing sites in the Fraser Canyon were a place where cultural knowledge was exchanged among families and leaders. See Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism, and Indigenous Fishing Conflicts”, 162-168.

²³¹ Ralph George, July 5, 2010 interview.

Instead, she felt that she was fulfilling an immediate need by taking in children outside of the legislated foster care program. However, Kelly also voiced her belief that people receiving support from Child and Family Services for taking in children are motivated by money, rather than a desire to help. Linking the practice of taking in children to family obligations of the past, she also expressed that “families don’t take care of each other the way they used to.”²³² She pointed to segregation between certain families as one reason for this change, and disclosed that there are also “individuals who just help themselves and not everybody.” She indicated that internal politics among families and the desire for some families to assert power over others was one reason for this, suggesting that those families are somehow disconnected from Stó:lō cultural practices and values. Leona Kelly asserted that, in the past, there were individuals and families who were responsible for specific roles in the community.²³³ According to Kelly, certain families in each community fulfill these responsibilities today, of which caring for children or families who are in need is one. She feels that her family is fulfilling that role for Swxohamel—and here, she is speaking of her extended family, which includes her brother Mike Kelly, and also Ralph and Lorraine George—who all take in children or struggling families.²³⁴ Her assertions confirm Keith Carlson’s observation that “mentoring was a central feature of older Stó:lō governance practices.”²³⁵ As Kelly declared, “in time there’s going to be turnover—to nieces, nephews or children—It will be their turn in time.” She went on to explain: “[It’s a] Matter of being ready. [You] see it, are shown it, and then have to take it on.” Referring to taking in children as “a way of life,” her expressions evoke Albert (Sonny) McHalsie’s explanation of a term that is significant to a key Stó:lō teaching: “*S’ólh Téméxw te ikw’elo. Xolhmet te mekw’stam it kwelat*,” which means, “This is our land and we have to take care of everything that belongs to us”²³⁶ As elder Tillie Gutierrez explained to McHalsie, this was a statement that Stó:lō leaders would share before they would start their meetings in the Fraser canyon during the

²³² Leona Kelly, July 5, 2010 interview.

²³³ As anthropologist Wayne Suttles explains, the distinction between classes indicates a correlation between private knowledge and status, as “high class people preserved the knowledge of their own heritage and valued it, and possessed a knowledge of good conduct,” while “low-class people were people who had ‘lost their history,’ or who ‘had no advice.’” Suttles, “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish”, *Coast Salish Essays*, 11.

²³⁴ Leona Kelly, July 5, 2010 interview.

²³⁵ Carlson, “Familial Cohesion,” 7.

²³⁶ See Naxaxalhts’i, Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, “We Have to Take Care of Everything that Belongs to Us,” in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 85.

fishing season.²³⁷ Like community leaders of the past, Kelly's family provides for those to whom she extends the appellation "extended family." She affirmed: "when people need a home if they're not even extended family, but... we let them be our extended family."²³⁸ Extending family networks in this way involves sharing of valuable family resources. As explained in the first chapter, sharing was important to the maintenance and survival of the Stó:lō people, but it was also a way that you showed that you were worthy and could provide leadership. Suttles makes it clear that the term *siyá:m* was not necessarily used to distinguish among those who shared. As he states, "if there was a *si'ém* [*siyá:m*], he was probably the wealthiest man, the leader in the potlatch. Leadership in other matters was apt to be in the hands of others, depending upon their special abilities."²³⁹ As Kelly sets her practices in opposition to those who receive support for taking in children rather than use their own resources, she asserts her family's status as community leaders. So while familial obligations contribute to the internal care of family networks, these are not unconnected to claims to status and authority among Stó:lō families. As the Alecks, the Malloways, the Georges, Leonna Kelly, and other families provide this type of care, they are grounding their approach in the private knowledge and distinguishes her family as "high class" people. But they are also ensuring that these networks are maintained internally, as Kelly insists they have for countless generations. When I questioned Leona Kelly about the roots of this practice, she pointed to their "open-door policy with Canada."²⁴⁰

What this chapter has looked to provide are some examples of ways that Stó:lō families draw from traditions while never rejecting innovation in order to facilitate these changes along lines that are meaningful to them. The practice of taking in children is ubiquitous among the Stó:lō community, and there is only room to name a fraction of the cases here.²⁴¹ The people I interviewed were those who were pointed out to me by other community members for taking in children. However, this is not meant to suggest that everyone does this, or everyone necessarily links it back to traditions or private cultural knowledge of their ancestors. Some may take in children out of necessity, some may choose not to take in any children at all, and others may act

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Leona Kelly, July 5, 2010 interview.

²³⁹ Suttles, "Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish", 6.

²⁴⁰ Leona Kelly, July 5, 2010 interview.

²⁴¹ Other individuals who have taken in a number of children include Archie Charles, who took in 18 children, (Archie Charles, July 1, 2010 interview) and Elizabeth Herling, who took in over 30 children.

in participation with government programs or services. There are many ways that the Stó:lō approach taking in children, and all have unique understandings and reasons for doing so. Individual experience combines with the collective cultural memory of the Stó:lō to define, on an individual level, how each family approaches adoption and fostering. Their complex associations with their traditions and culture reveal that, while the Stó:lō have been the subjects of domination and discrimination, their very complexity of their family forms means that these families have not been assimilated. In his analysis of the connections between tradition and modernity in the context of Coast Salish economies, John Lutz declares: “the state has achieved dominance without hegemony,” as “that there has been no subjugation, no capitulation, is clear in the artistic, political, and spiritual expressions that are widespread in Indigenous communities across Canada today.”²⁴² Thus, these cultural traditions have taken on new meaning and acquired new significance over time in order to fulfill new objectives. My interviews with Stó:lō individuals reveal that these practices have roots in something different than what we call “child welfare,” or “adoption” and “fostering”. They demonstrate that an expansive understanding of Stó:lō families persists today.

²⁴² John Lutz, *Mamúk: A New History of Indigenous-White Relations* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2008), 308.

CONCLUSION

Moving from narrative renderings of families, to the analysis of interactions between Stó:lō families and colonial powers, to an examination of families today, this thesis has demonstrated that Stó:lō families and traditions, at the most basic level, can be described by one word: flexible. Defining kinship on behalf of Indigenous people has resulted in a long history of problems since contact with newcomers in North America. Within British Columbia, the first interactions among fur traders and Coast Salish people indicate that, not only were these newcomers misguided in their understandings of how the Salish extended family networks were defined and operated, but they also tried to overlay their own definitions of family over these established networks. But, like today, these newcomers were often unsuccessful at forcing change among the Coast Salish in ways that they wanted and expected. Too much credit has been given to colonial powers in the historiography on Canadian Indigenous families. While changes did occur within and among Coast Salish families, they were largely filtered through local Indigenous knowledge and expectations.

The documented history of Indigenous families has paid scant attention to differences among them, often focusing on similarities in relation to kinship, tradition and culture. Scholars have done much to prove that concepts like kinship, tradition, and culture are a process that cannot be categorically defined. I have attempted to draw together the ways that each of these processes have intersected among the histories of the Stó:lō, at times in reaction to colonial policies and practices, at times working within and among them, and at other times, completely independent of colonial power. This thesis contributes to the historiographies of families, tradition and culture in ways that transcends a colonial lens, and engage the perspectives and understandings of those individuals who put their cultural knowledge into practice as they encounter outside limitations and expectations.

Placing Stó:lō Sxwóxwiyám, historical documents, anthropological studies, and Stó:lō oral testimony in dialogue with one another goes far to reveal that, contrary to much of the documented evidence and written scholarship on the topic, Indigenous families have ways to

take care of families internally. While the observations of newcomers such as fur traders, Church officials, and social workers, indicate a preoccupation with (what they saw as) the “crisis of the family,” these observers failed to recognize that there is not a singular or normative definition of families. Rather, the expansive approaches to Stó:lō families are shaped by precedent and culturally normative assumptions, allowing them to remain meaningful as they change over time. The records of these observers are important for what they show us of change that occurred as a result of colonial forces, and the rapid change that Indigenous people learned to accommodate, at the same time maintaining the local knowledge that allowed them to respond to colonial expectations. Perhaps what is most significant about these observations is their lack of understanding of the very people that they purported to be shaping, controlling, and “authorizing” versions of their families. They show us that Indigenous people continue to be different, and their cultures and traditions continue to retain meaning. With this in mind, this thesis pulls apart the observations of these cultural outsiders, placing Stó:lō perspectives and understandings of family at the heart of inquiry.

Specifically, the fur trade records from Fort Langley indicate that while Stó:lō families were building relationships among the traders, they were filtering these connections through different understandings of families. And while Church and government records do show that families changed as a result of these interactions, recorded moments of—at times, puzzling—interactions between Church and government officials reveals the expansive and innovative approaches to Stó:lō families remained. Delving into an analysis of recent practices of adoption and fostering among the Stó:lō signals that local cultural knowledge continues to inform these families, and this knowledge is dynamically and distinctively applied among members of the Stó:lō communities. Attesting to this fact are the examples of interviews with contemporary Stó:lō community members, who clearly demonstrate that Stó:lō families retain their cultural knowledge as they modify traditions to realize their intentions.

As we seek to further incorporate Indigenous perspectives into the canon of Canadian history, we need to filter the noise generated by colonial authorities and engage with history as it was experienced by Indigenous people themselves. Alexandra Harmon has argued that Coast Salish people “continued to associate with each other in ways that hinged more on notions of

kinship and respect for local customs than on government edicts.”²⁴³ Coast Salish families continue to transcend colonial restrictions, and this study considers the complex ways that families relate to one another, as well as the diverse ways that they relate to cultural beliefs and traditions. As Harmon points out, it is not enough to examine Indigenous families as they were defined by outside systems of power. As this thesis asserts, there is also value in investigating how families were variously defined by internal systems of power, how these definitions and applications of local customs varied among individuals, and how this shapes the reactions to outside systems of power.

Exploring the multiple and complex ways that extended families helped to facilitate change, chapter one demonstrated that there were many different networks available to individual family members, although the extent to which they could operationalize them was dependent on internal power dynamics, such as class and gender. As chapter two showed, the knowledge and expectations within Stó:lō families at the time of contact certainly shaped reactions to newcomers and colonial powers, but from these cross-cultural interactions also emerged new circumstances and, at times, new opportunities for families to extend their social networks. As examples cited in this chapter prove, although colonial control increased throughout into the mid-twentieth century, Stó:lō families reacted to these outside forces in ways that were shaped by their local knowledge and collective culture. And, as chapter three asserts, as Stó:lō people put their definitions of families today, they show conclusively that these families retain the flexibility to facilitates change at the same time as retain the meaning that they attribute to their family networks.

Although Indigenous families have changed in line with some aspects of colonial pressures, this was not always indicative of colonial oppression. At times, Stó:lō families have adopted outside ideas, and placed these new ideas alongside their perspectives on local knowledge, tradition, and innovation. Through thesis, I hope to have demonstrated that families are not static or defined entities struck by historical forces. Relationships between people are never static; nor are they independent of history. Rather, they shape and are shaped by history,

²⁴³ Alexandra Harmon, “Coast Salish History,” *Be of Good Mind*, edited by Bruce Miller, (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2007), 39.

building on the understandings of previous generations, all the while moving forward as they encounter new circumstances. As the example of the Stó:lō shows, families provide us with another way of thinking about how local knowledge, tradition, and innovation are defined and applied. These families have changed over time, and the families of the past continue to influence Stó:lō families presently. But the Stó:lō have been careful to ensure that the relationships they create enable them to retain their cultural significance and distinctiveness.

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