REMAPPING THE WATERS:
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SEA TENURE-BASED PROTECTED AREAS

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I. Introduction

First, some history. In 1969 I went to Brazil to do fieldwork on the social and environmental impact of a government program to boost catches by introducing monofilament nylon nets in traditional coastal fishing communities in Bahia (Cordell 1973). However, I was totally unprepared for the scenario that emerged from studying how fishing spots are classified, where canoe fishing bosses decided to fish, and how competition and conflicts were precipitated on the fishing grounds between nylon net operators and traditional purse seiners. A pattern began to unfold of an intricate, locally sanctioned system of proprietary rights to fishing spots extending over nearshore and estuarine waters. At the time, for lack of a better term, I called this informal, 'homegrown' system of fishing claims which had clear-cut rules governing territorial access, but no formal, external legal status whatsoever to back it up, local 'sea tenure' (Cordell 1974;19

Subsequent fieldwork in Brazil (Diegues 1983, 1991) and in traditional fishing societies all around the world (Acheson 1981; Johannes 1978; McCay and Acheson 1987) has revealed

how communities frequently create their own tenure and use rights arrangements, with sophisticated inclusion-exclusion principles (sometimes deliberately at odds with official rules and policies for regulating fisheries). Sea tenure practices have been found to be far more pervasive and diverse, particularly in small-boat, inshore fishing traditions than previously (DeAlessi 1998; Ruddle and Akimichi 1984; Smyth 1992) This is both good and bad news for fisheries authorities, and has sparked many debates (still raging in some quarters) about whether local sea tenure customs, which may act to limit entry in fisheries, can truly can be said to have conservation benefits, and whether and how such customs could be profitably incorporated in modern-day fisheries management regimes (Christy 1982; Polunin 1990; Wright 1990.. A later section of this paper takes up threads of some of these controversies.

Purposes and actual functions of tenure customs range from intentionally managing access to resources and sea territory, to fend off incursions by outsiders or competitors, to manage the spacing of fishing craft and gear in order to reduce internal social conflict, and, in certain cases, to control fishing pressure itself (cf. Acheson 1981; Cordell 1977; Hviding 1988; Johannes 1978). In indigenous societies, sea tenure traditions tend to rest not on economic or even subsistence strategies, but on cultural and spiritual beliefs and values that have more to do with constructing and maintaining social identity and a 'sense of place.' (Cordell 1989; Nietschmann1989) . The analysis to follow makes a point of highlighting the cultural significance of local sea tenure which has many implications for future directions of marine conservation and fishery management work in the tropical areas. There is a pressing need for more extensive documentation and better comprehension of this complex dimension of communal property in the sea(Cordell 1993a) especially for indigenous peoples who today are discovering they are encompassed, if not 'geo-referenced' in a host of new, biodiversity and 'ecoregional'-driven, protected area frameworks, and GIS databases (Cordell 1996; Poole 1995).

In 1980, I began work on a cross-cultural study of sea tenure. This culminated *in Sea of Small Boat*s, a book that some of you may know (and that must hold the record in publication delays since it did not see the light of print until 1989. How times have changed! The decade of the 90's saw a veritable explosion of work on this topic and related resource and common

property management issues across disciplines, countries, and cultures. If there were a (son or daughter) of *Sea of Small Boats,* thankfully, I'm not writing it, as it would have to be listed as a work in progress indefinitely, and the bibliography alone would run to many pages. In any case, the point is not to attempt anything approaching a comprehensive review of sea tenure literature relevant to the themes of this conference.

Rather, I have selected a number of illustrative studies and recent conservation project reports to make the case for why more clearly defined property rights, in general, and sea tenure practices, in particular, have a critical role to play in designing and managing marine protected areas; and why the persistence of sea tenure-based fishing , though sometimes interpreted as a liability in the international crusade to inventory and save biodiversity, with more support from conservation groups and management agencies could be converted to a key asset.

Something to stress at the outset is that I think we are still very much in a process of discovery in documenting, understanding and reckoning with local sea tenure systems in managing fisheries and marine environments around the world (cf. Cordell 1991, 1993; Hviding 1988). Sea tenure, and it's close cousin, 'customary marine tenure' (CMT), coined by researchers in the South Pacific (see Johannes and MacFarlane 1991; Hviding and Baines 1992) is definitely not a 'been there, done that,' arcane sort of topic, perhaps best left now to 'armchair' anthropologists and historians. Nor are widely varying sea tenure customs reducible to cases of poorly defined "user rights" in fisheries or common property resources. This is far too simplistic. More than ever, a concerted effort needs to be made to extend the process of discovery, detailed ethnographic documentation, and applied research on sea tenure. Despite the extensive, multi-disciplinary, literature on fishing economies and societies, we still have a very fragmentary picture of the distribution and features of local marine tenure systems, especially on tropical coasts. For instance, in the Maluku Islands, Zerner's research (1994) indicates that traditional marine management and tenure institutions may in fact be considerably more widespread than was presumed to be the case in Indonesia, although apparently, in Indonesian coastal and island settings, tenure systems are culturally embedded and operate in a very different way than CMT does among Pacific Islanders (Polunin 1990; Zerner 1994).

Sea Tenure and The Shifting Politics and Scale of Marine Conservation Work

This is an opportune time to take another critical look at matters of sea tenure and CMT, as events are swiftly changing the scope of marine management--overfishing crises and increasing coastal aquatic degradation from land sources; moves to establish national representative systems of marine protected areas; a rush to endorse community-based perspectives without quite knowing what that means, especially where indigenous coastal peoples are concerned; integrated coastal zone management frameworks are evolving that encompass entire regions; the effects of catchments and adjacent landscapes; diverse, stratified, rural and urban populations, and ideals of certifiably sustainable fisheries. The need for a better understanding of sea tenure and a broad range of cultural interests in coastal areas also comes at a time when many fishing communities are unaware of the natural limits of their own economies and communal resources, while being drawn into development projects, or uncontrolled regional economies where their neighbors are polluting and overfishing is tied to distant markets.

There are not only techno-scientific management issues here, but fundamental resource rights and social justice questions at stake that seem to defy solution: can or should sea tenure customs of long established, territorially committed communities, and their underlying cultural and 'non-market' values and interests in coastal seas be accorded preferential treatment and special entitlements in national and regional marine initiatives? How would this be possible without privileging some groups and disadvantaging others, or jeopardizing 'freedom to fish' ethics? Can indigenous sea rights, protected areas, and biodiversity priorities co-exist, or even complement each other in coastal zone and multiple use protected areas that go well beyond fisheries and the local level?

Protected areas generally (judging from the Jan. 4, 2001 issue of *Science*) including marine sanctuaries, are clearly back in vogue, after falling out of fashion for awhile. In one of the first major studies of marine reserves around the world, there is compelling evidence that reserves are working, that the world's little known underwater parks and off-limits, ecological reserves contain bigger fish and a greater array of marine species than the waters open to fishing and

other human activities, even where these uses are restricted. Though less than 1 percent of U.S. and international waters are protected at this stage in so-called 'no-take' zones, setting aside acreage in the ocean, just as in parks on land, is clearly going to be the wave of the future in protecting marine biological diversity.
Likewise, as resources pour into international campaigns to save and restore the world's dwindling coral reefs, there will be numerous proposals and efforts to create new kinds of protected areas, such as biosphere reserves with exclusive, no-take zones.

Yet here is another statistic to ponder: about 40 percent of the world's 6,000 to 8,000 indigenous peoples have homelands, territories, and nations that encompass coastal ocean and island regions. As Nietschmann points out (1997:193): Within the land and sea territories of indigenous maritime peoples are located some of the most biologically diverse, productive and essential ecosystems--coastal wetlands, estuaries, and mangroves, and continental shelf and island-edge coral reefs, kelp forest, and seagrass pastures. Moreover, many of these tropical shores and coastal waters happen to lie within the 'hotspots' and megadiversity countries that are top priorities for biodiversity conservation.

Unfortunately, a good many international campaigns to save coral reef and associated habitats are naively setting out on a collision course with local fishing and indigenous peoples whose tropical shore homelands and coastal waters are increasingly being targeted for spatial and resource mapping, zoning or re-zoning, and other interventions —often without meaningful community consultation, or an adequate cultural baseline to work from, recognition of pre-existing local sea claims or cultural property, or plans to engage communities even minimally in protected area partnerships.

In the far western Caribbean, Miskito people occupy roughly 1,000 km of coastline and claim 30,000 square km of sea space (Nietschmann 194-199). Halfway around the world, a no less extensive area of sea space is demarcated, occupied, used, defended, and exclusively claimed by Torres Strait Islanders (Cordell 1991; Johannes and MacFarlane 1991). In these contexts, efforts to extend or re-zone existing protected areas or to establish new multi-use areas, or more restricted biosphere reserves, are encountering a

similar set of social constraints associated with longstanding customary sea tenure practices that have not been recognized, taken seriously, or accorded appropriate significance in official marine management plans.

The conference should not take the title of my presentation—"Remapping the Waters"--too literally (I was running out of nautical metaphors). Let's not be too quick to tear up our Admiralty or HO charts. As we know, merely drawing lines on maps usually accomplishes little for people or wildlife. The remapping I refer to is more along lines of 'cultural and social' mapping of the coastal domains of local fishing peoples, increasingly led by community experts themselves, as in the case of the Miskito (see Denniston 1994; Nietschmann 1997; Poole 1995). Similar territorial and social boundary mapping exercises are underway among Aboriginal communities in Australia and Torres Strait Islanders as an integral part of the cultural documentation processes and 'connection reports' which are the basis for indigenous land and sea claims under Australia's 1993 Native Title Act legislation (Cordell 1993b; Sharp 1996) Until recently, though, local sea tenure domains have rarely been officially mapped with precise spatial coordinates (see Scott and Mulrennan 1999). Part of the problem is that even the most discrete sea tenure systems have inherently fuzzy, flexible social boundaries (Cordell 1989; 1991).

II. Anthropological Perspectives and Research On Sea Tenure and Customary Marine Tenure

It seems that ownership and use of marine resources is one domain where traditional societies and Western concepts and laws stand in stark contrast, and seem forever destined to collide. In Northeastern Brazil, marginal fishermen, caught up in the economics of scarcity, and whose fishing practices are presumed to be 'unmanaged,' are often blamed for resource decline (Cordell 1989; Diegues 1994) Convenient scapegoats. However, in indigenous Central American and Melanesian coral reef settings, more ambiguity surrounds conservation problems with the added complexities and international politics of transborder sea areas to consider (Niietschmann 1997) These cases invite a much broader analysis to make sense of the meanings and uses of local sea tenure.

Thirty years ago, the ethnographic record contained little information about non-Western property traditions pertaining to the sea and fisheries. In fact, very little was known about the ways fishing communities, even those operating within European legal and resource management frameworks, develop customs like sea tenure which can affect territorial access and resource rights within coastal waters. It was widely assumed that "common property" conditions, in the sense of open-access, prevailed in most inshore seas, at least in Western countries, or in their present and former colonies (Christy 1982; McCay and Acheson 1987)

Indigenous fishing and maritime communities were thought to be analogous to hunter-gatherers. Such economies were not considered to be conducive to the formation of property rights and institutions. Hunters and fishers could not produce those magic pieces of paper which Western courts like to see verifying tiles, boundaries, transactions, improvements, exclusion of outsiders, i.e. proof of possession (Cordell 1991b) As the former Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Hawke, said as he opened the IUCN General Assembly in Australia in 1990: regarding Aborigines, "they are the world's first conservationists; they don't possess the land, it possesses them (Cordell 1993a). Nature's gentlemen, right?

The 17th century English philosopher John Locke gave powerful justification to the Enlightenment notion that the right of ownership arose from effort, not possession or occupancy. Land found in a natural state only became property when labor was invested in it to make it productive. As far as European colonists could see, Australia was wilderness, which they deemed *terra nullius*—a land void of people. Aboriginal people did nothing to add value to the land and so had no property rights in it. Few ever questioned the correctness of this belief; they took it for granted.

Something akin to the mentality which kept the doctrine of *terra nullius* afloat for so long in Australia, perpetuated a myth denying the possibility and practicality of establishing and defending property rights in the inshore sea. The nature of the sea as a continuous water column, and the living resources it contained were thought to be, by definition, 'common property,' an open-access domain not subject to appropriation and exclusive ownership. This

view was propped up by the legacy of 'freedom of the seas' and related doctrines which have a long history in European writing about laws of the sea and fishing rights (Cordell 1989; De Alessi 1998; Fenn 1974; Prescott 1978).

We now confront a very different inshore seas scenario: the 200 mile EEZ's of coastal states, far from being a property-less void, are known to contain a wide array of informal, exclusive, communal tenure arrangements for using resources. Fishing communities imbue seascapes with history, names, myths and legends and they partition and allocate group and individual rights to coastal waters, in much the same way that forests and other common property resources are collectively held and treated on land. These essentially de facto ownership practices--ways in which fishing groups perceive, name, partition, own, occupy and defend their local fishing grounds, are of a scale and diversity unanticipated in previous writings on the law of the sea and coastal fisheries (Acheson 1981; Christy 1982; Cordell 1984,1989; De Alessi 1998; Ruddle and Akimichi 1984).

This perspective to a large extent comes from anthropological fieldwork concerned with real-world property relations in fishing societies, ranging from the tropics to the arctic, by asking basic questions: how do groups establish rights to coastal waters? How do they draw and defend boundaries? What are their unwritten laws of the sea? CMT is the de facto communal form of property rights still practiced extensively by indigenous coastal groups and other traditional maritime communities. I stress the term 'communal,' as the collective rights, group membership, aspect of tenure is the distinguishing characteristic that unites a wide range of property systems which might otherwise appear dissimilar. It is important to note that communities with communal CMT have well-defined property rights. However, as customary rights governing property relations in non-western settings, they develop for many different reasons and have complex connotations--cultural, historical, economic, and religious--which may not easily be transcribed and translated into western statutory legal frameworks. CMT institutions are distinct from western property laws regarding private, public, or state ownership, and open-access commons or 'common pool' resources.

Most Melanesian societies operate according to a concept of land and sea tenure in which territory inherited from ancestors cannot be alienated (Eaton 1985). Some governments (PNG for example) in the region constitutionally recognize customary law, land and marine ownership, alongside the statutory laws inherited from colonial administrations (Eaton 1987) Variations on the theme of sea tenure in Melanesia include individual, family, clan, and community possession of things in the natural world which other societies would not think of trying to acquire or treat as property: octopus holes, winds and currents, star clusters, an area of beach, the rights to gather shells at certain times of year, rights of passage through reefs and between islands, landing places for canoes, mythical islands. The power of group identification with the sea, even in some areas where tenure customs are presumed to have lapsed or where knowledge of rights and boundaries has been lost, goes well beyond European laws of the sea and fishing rights.

Essential features and issues relating to CMT in Oceania and clarification of what these systems involve may be summarized as follows (cf. Cordell 1993a; Hviding 1988; Hviding and Baines 1992)

• **Communal CMT systems have clearly identifiable custodians who are regarded as traditional owners and who are responsible for caring for clan resources.** These are individuals who, in the case of Aboriginal communities for example, can 'speak for country.' They essentially act as trustees for land sea holdings of a group, assisted by elders and other traditional owners from core ancestral territories. These leaders may not regard themselves so much as property owners in a western sense, but are empowered to speak about territory they represent. They symbolize the fusion of group and territory. It is important to note, however, that the power to speak about resource and territorial ownership in decision-making is not necessarily equated with resource use rights. While the power to speak about rights to reefs, lagoons, fishing and hunting areas and species, may be vested in various elders and clan custodians, the power to enforce sea rights and access to resources in any given case will be conditioned by a host of age and gender considerations. Significant CMT-related rights and responsibilities are also distributed within women's and children's social, economic, and knowledge domains.

• **CMT systems have multiple uses and meanings.** The indigenous universe of 'sea rights' encompasses much more than 'fishing rights' in the sense of western legal and fisheries management regulations. Similarly, territory is only one dimension of CMT systems. CMT is closely bound up with kinship, traditional law and authority, and other structures that shape cultural identity. The criteria and contexts for assessing CMT need to be broadened because their significance does not lie just within spheres of western biology, economics, and law. CMT is rooted in issues of cultural identity and may have spiritual and other ritual uses which are not strictly economic (Nietschmann 1989; Smyth 1992; Cordell 1989).

• **Land and marine tenure may be divisible for the sake of analysis, but from indigenous coastal peoples' perspectives they are indivisible.** Tenured marine domains may be contiguous with land areas or geographically separate, but in most indigenous tenure perspectives the sea and seabed are extensions of the land. Dry land and land covered by freshwater or seawater in Aboriginal and Islander beliefs are one and undivided, linked by acts of creation--albeit with some form of seaward limit such as the outer edge of the outermost coral reef slope, the depth attainable by free diving, or a point on the horizon where sea and sky meet. In Torres Strait, for example, fisheries studies are making a distinction between 'home reef' vs. 'extended' fishing rights (Johannes and MacFarlane 1991) It is important to keep in mind that this dichotomy is introduced; these are the distinctions of outside observers, not the vernacular concepts of Torres Strait Islanders.

• **CMT traditions are dynamic, living customs; nowhere are they 'pure' traditions.** There is no question that colonial impacts on indigenous groups, including interaction with European legal institutions, and commodity markets have modified local customs. The point is, however, while CMTsystems may not be what they once were, and cannot live up to some idealized past, they should not be regarded as broken-down traditions, but living customs linked to basic livelihood and resource management tasks, which Islanders and Aborigines constantly relate to new conditions, incorporating new knowledge (Cordell 1991; Hviding and Baines 1992).

• **Contrary to popular belief, commercial fishing is not incompatible with the continuity of CMT.** In numerous cases, CMT has not only remained intact, but provided a vehicle for transition from subsistence to commercial fishing (Hviding 1989; Hviding and Baines 1992; Hopper 1990).

• **CMT systems often reflect quite innovative efforts by indigenous societies to cope with problems of allocating rights to resources, or scarce resources, by controlling and restricting access to territory and/or species**. It has been shown that many CMT systems embody 'limited entry' principles which tend to regulate access to fisheries and stabilize overall use and occupation of marine areas (Poggie and Pollnac 1991; Ruddle and Akimichi 1984; Johannes 1981). Modern fisheries and marine protected areas tend to be designed with similar concerns in mind; restricted access and quotas are necessary for fisheries to become biologically sustainable and yield positive economic rent. Under certain conditions CMT may enhance conservation; however, CMT systems do not usually contain provisions for regulating entrepreneurial activities (or environmentally harmful development) either within a community or surrounding areas.

IV. Interpreting CMT: Debates and Two schools of thought

In general, two schools of thought and differences of interpretation have emerged from studies in Australia, PNG and the wider South Pacific concerning the uses and significance of CMT systems. One camp maintains that traditional intervillage fishing rights and other indigenous forms of marine tenure do not guarantee sound management and conservation of fish stocks. They may be ineffective in relation to migratory stocks (Haines 1982) and in subsistence and cash economies in which needs or profit desires of "owners" may exceed the capacity for

sustained yield (Johannes 1982:243). Moreover, with commercialization their conservation functions may be overshadowed by boundary disputes (Johannes 1982: 243-44).

On the other hand, a number of observers (e.g. Wright 1990) feel there is still a great deal of optimism that, with further ethnographic and biological research on the nature of traditional marine tenure systems in Papua New Guinea and among Torres Strait Islanders, they will prove to offer the basis for local-level management and conservation.

The crux of this debate is not about the existence and continuing cultural importance of CMT. Skepticism concerns the claims that have been made about the intended and unintended fishery and other marine conservation functions of CMT which for some researchers (e.g. Carrier 1989; Polunin 1990) remain unsubstantiated.

Territorial and Sociocultural Analysis of CMT

Since the late 1970s, much of the literature on CMT is about social groups exercising exclusive rights to resources within defined marine boundaries. In the Pacific islands region the lateral boundaries of marine territories claimed by individuals, families, clans or villages were often seaward extensions of the borders of landholdings, but in some cases marine boundaries were influenced by the location of physical marine features, such as patch reefs, reef holes and reef passages, that could be used for demarcation purposes (cf. Cordell 1984)

The territorial aspect of customary marine tenure is of specific interest to scholars and government policy-makers because of the important role well-defined boundaries are thought to play in the creation or maintenance of local property institutions that encourage sustainable resource use (Christy 1982; Cordel 1991a; McCay and Acheson 1987). While this may be true, my work in Torres Strait indicates that the relationship between coastal communities and their marine environment may not necessarily be confined to clearly demarcated areas over which groups attempt to exercise exclusive fishing rights.

The feeling of connectedness that people have toward the marine realm is not limited to seaward extensions of village or clan estates, to home reefs or even distant fishing grounds. Peoples' attachments to the Torres Strait extend beyond clan- or village-held marine territories in part due to the sacred quality with which social groups imbue the entire seascape. The spiritual essence of ancestral figures is diffuse and dispersed over a much broader area that has indefinite boundaries. In effect, the power and personality of distant ancestors pervades the entire Torres Strait. As a resident of the PNG village of Mabudauan declared: "I became a Papua New Guinean by an act of international politics, but I still considered myself first and foremost to be a "Torres Strait man" (Cordell 1996).

Another facet of local residents' relations to the Torres Strait that encompasses an area greater than demarcated exclusively-held marine areas is the long tradition of extended voyages to outlying areas for fishing, both commercial and subsistence, and trade. These voyages have always had an importance apart from their utilitarian value (Beckett 1987; Ganter 1994) They present an opportunity for individuals to demonstrate their skill, courage and endurance as they roamed the length and breadth of the Torres Strait in double-outrigger canoes and luggers prior to the Second World War to wrest a living from the sea.

In summary, the interests of the indigenous inhabitants of Torres Strait in their marine environment extends far beyond the boundaries of "home reefs" or even distant fishing grounds (cf. Johannes and MacFarlane 1991) These cultural connections to the sea have been overlooked in previous research, as they are not something that can be easily delimited, mapped and displayed. Yet acknowledging these connections not only enriches documentation of customary marine tenure but provides a more complete, realistic portrayal of human-environment relations in the region (Cordel 1996)

VII. Closing Thoughts

These stepping stones bode well for greater appreciation and recovery of Torres Strait's Melanesian totemic landscape, whose unique meanings and associated culture sites have long remained hidden, ignored, stashed in anthropological file cabinets, or lost in

translation. The fact that not a single Torres Strait traditional culture site yet exists on the National Register of Historic Sites in Australia is a case in point.

CMT recording and cultural documentation within and beyond Oceania, however, takes on even greater significance with the rapid proliferation of liberally-endowed, coral reef conservation action groups and global campaigns, and as more and more marine biodiversity information is acquired, mapped, managed and controlled in central, meta-data bases of environmental organizations and agencies. Local sea tenure is widespread, yet largely confined to shallow coastal waters, but for all intents and purposes remains as invisible to marine management agencies, NGOs, and policy-makers as the deep blue sea. I have tried to show in this paper, that 'other culture' sea management concepts, property rights, and discourses exist, and why they deserve a hearing, too, alongside the 'master discourse' and the 'meta-narratives' of conservation science.

During the past decade, more conservationists have become convinced that working with indigenous peoples and instituting measures to protect local rights to resources may well be the key to achieving goals of biodiversity conservation, particularly in tropical ecoregions (Redford and Mansour 1996; Wells, Brandon, and Hannah 1992; Stevens 1997; Weber, Butler, and Larson 2000). For example, in Latin America, indigenous peoples have legal, communal rights and claims to land and sea areas that are easily ten times the size of all existing conservation areas combined (Clay 1996; Stevens 1997). Conservationists and indigenous peoples often share similar, deep concerns for nature, but have different perceptions of the environment and understandings of environmental processes and different ideas about what constitutes 'sustainable' resource use. For most indigenous groups, especially those whose cultural survival still depends on defending their territories against development, the priorities are naturally land and resource rights and the freedom to pursue basic livelihood activities; including subsistence areas located in national parks and protected areas.

If environmental groups and central governments resist compromise on contemporary marine resource use issues, assuming that protecting global biodiversity as 'universal patrimony' should take precedence over human needs, then they will likely be defeated. By the same

token, if indigenous groups assume they can remain indifferent to the environmental consequences of social and economic changes they are experiencing, land rights may become meaningless in the context of degradation of natural capital, and loss of biodiversity (Clay 1996).

Too much can be made of these distinctions. Yet in the future we may expect quests for greater tenure security by local, small-scale fishing communities, indigenous sea rights, and territorial claims to gain momentum. This is already happening in some areas (e.g. on the Miskito coast) with the formation of social resistance movements to what Nietischmann (1997) has identified as 'colonialist conservation.' The growing list of claimants to resources and territory within marine jurisdictions controlled by modern coastal states now includes, along with Torres Strait Islanders and Aborigines: Miskito Indians, Maoris, Kanaks of New Caledonia, Kanaka of Tahiti, native Hawaiians, the Treaty Tribes of the U.S. Northwest Coast, Tlingit and Haida peoples of Alaska, Inuit of Alaska and the Northwest Territories, Mapuche Indians of Chile, Seri Indians of the Midriff Island Region of the Gulf of California, among others.

In my view, future negotiations concerning traditional fishing rights, sea tenure, and especially indigenous community involvement in marine management should not take place only in techno-scientific resource management contexts in isolation from equally vital quests in many societies for greater self-determination and self-government. It is unlikely that vague appeals for more 'participatory' or more community-based conservation will succeed if they gloss over basic tenure issues. By the same token, indigenous groups and local fishing communities in developing countries are less and less inclined to entrust regulation of their ancestral domains to outside experts and management agencies. Communities have little desire to engage in perfunctory consultation, but they welcome projects that build local capacity and transfer cultural and scientific data and knowledge back hom (Cordell 1993b)

If we elicit local perspectives on strategic questions of tenure recognition, and power-sharing in regional conservation initiatives, we see that what people want is not to be relegated to community rangers in someone else's marine park. Instead groups want a place at the table; in

spheres of decision-making where they have seldom been included but which nonetheless affect their lives and livelihood (cf. Smyth 1992) The kind of voice people seek is not just being invited to speak at the odd international conference to impart ecological wisdom. A place at the table means redefining the parameters of community participation and 'conservation partnerships.' It means taking care not to reinvent social marginality and tokenism in large-scale marine and biodiversity conservation strategies.

Finally, it promises to be a long winding road to effectively integrate indigenous as well as non-indigenous small-scale traditional fishing domains in coastal marine strategies. As a Torres Strait Island council chairman put it not long ago: "Self-determination, self-government (it doesn't matter what you call it -- the anxieties are not going to go away) is going out and doing it, not waiting for the piece of paper that says these lands and seas are yours. Sovereignty is a state of mind. " To this I would just add that coastal communities increasingly realize the need to have in place strategic environmental plans upon which the successful exercise of self-determination and community-based management ultimately depend.