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‘Indigenous people don’t have boundaries’: reborderings, fire management, and productions of authenticities in indigenous landscapes

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Participatory mapping has allowed indigenous groups to produce and to varying degrees distribute counter-representations of indigenous landscapes, including boundaries that delineate ‘their’ lands from those of the state and other indigenous groups. Through counter-mapping, indigenous groups thus continue to produce boundaries that are, in many ways, products of historical struggles and tensions within indigenous communities, and which also attempt to reconfigure relations with a plethora of state agencies and other external actors. Thus such cartographic representations must be understood as contested, formalized representations that to varying degrees reflect (re)constructions of boundaries that assume different symbolic meanings in different social and historical contexts. Similarly, the power of state boundaries is contingent on fractures in state power, including contestations and conflicts of interest between and within state agencies. As in the case of the Gran Sabana, Venezuela, more invisible boundaries often have greater potential to perpetuate state influence in indigenous landscapes. This paper draws on the literature in postmodern geopolitics and Gramscian perspectives on state power to grapple with the social production of boundaries and relations of power in indigenous landscapes, and to critique the traditional binary posited between state (hegemonic) and indigenous (‘counter’) maps.

Keywords: fire management • Gramsci • Gran Sabana • indigenous mapping • Venezuela

Introduction¹

Indigenous peoples are increasingly turning to participatory cartography and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to assert their claims to land rights, to seek more equal participation in the management of indigenous lands, and to press for state and international recognition of their cultural exceptionality.² However, such indigenous ‘counter-mappings’³ should not be seen simply as instrumentalist attempts to reconfigure formal, political relations with the state and other external actors. Instead, indigenous countermaps are complex cultural productions informed by contested processes of place-making and by tensions regarding the meanings of authenticity among indigenous actors. In the case of 21st century Latin America, politics of

commodification shape conflicting claims to indigeneity, leading to complex, sometimes contradictory reformulations of indigenous landscapes.⁴ Any interpretations which simplify indigenous maps as unproblematic expressions of territoriality do a disservice to the complexities of indigenous productions of space.⁵

In such cartographic contests between various state and indigenous representations of space, boundary-making assumes a particularly significant role as an arbiter of relations of power. I am speaking here not of the instrumentality of boundary-making, i.e. boundary-making as a material tool of nation-building and territoriality. Instead, I propose to examine the discursive processes that accompany, challenge, and legitimize the (re)productions of the often contradictory lines that traverse post-colonial landscapes. From this perspective, the demarcation lines that emerge from indigenous mapping projects can be understood as the results of processes of 'rebordering';⁶ i.e. such indigenous boundary-making are shaped in part by shifting narratives that discursively link people with space in complex and sometimes contradictory ways, resulting in the elimination of some boundaries and the production of others.

In this article, I aim to explore the complex articulations between the *visibility* and *functionality* of state and indigenous boundaries, specifically the ways in which these articulations shape meanings of indigeneity, histories, and landscapes. Of particular concern here is how the relative visibility and functionality of different state boundaries reflect 'fractures' or inconsistencies in state power,⁷ particularly in remote frontier where the enforcement of state boundaries is contingent on dysfunctional and sometimes contentious relations between state agencies. I examine here a set of state and indigenous maps of and from the Gran Sabana in southern Venezuela, and explore how the obscuring and foregrounding of different boundaries are contingent on and inform relations of power between the indigenous Pemon and various state agencies.

Perhaps the most visible state boundary in the Gran Sabana is that of Canaima National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which is the destination of both Venezuelan and international tourists, known for its waterfalls and *tepuyes*, massive sandstone mountains immortalized in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The lost world* (Figure 1). Despite the visibility of the park boundary, however, the lesser-known and hitherto unenforced *internal* boundaries established in Canaima's land-use plan may represent the most serious, legal obstacle to Pemon land rights. Another set of boundaries are those used by the state agency Electrificación del Caroní (EDELCA) in its fire management program. These spatial units are obscured in inaccessible, scientific representations, but are nevertheless integral to the narrative of western science and rationality, which is used to legitimize EDELCA's style of top-down conservation management and its efforts to effect social change in Pemon communities.

Such processes of making-visible/invisible also characterize indigenous boundary-making in the Gran Sabana. Here I explore the ways in which Pemon leaders chose to obscure certain functional, historical boundaries, and, conversely, to make other, non-functional but more instrumentalist boundaries more visible, during a participatory mapping project. While the mapping project was seen as a means of creating a formal, bounded space to assure their cultural survival, Pemon activists and elders also used the project to reproduce a narrative linking 'authentic' indigeneity with boundary-free space. This claim to an authentic, boundary-free indigeneity served important, instrumental ends: it defused disagreements about village boundaries, which would have undermined the united front necessary for the demarcation process, and it reproduced a narrative which holds that 'real' Pemon share their lands equitably, free from the grasping individualism of

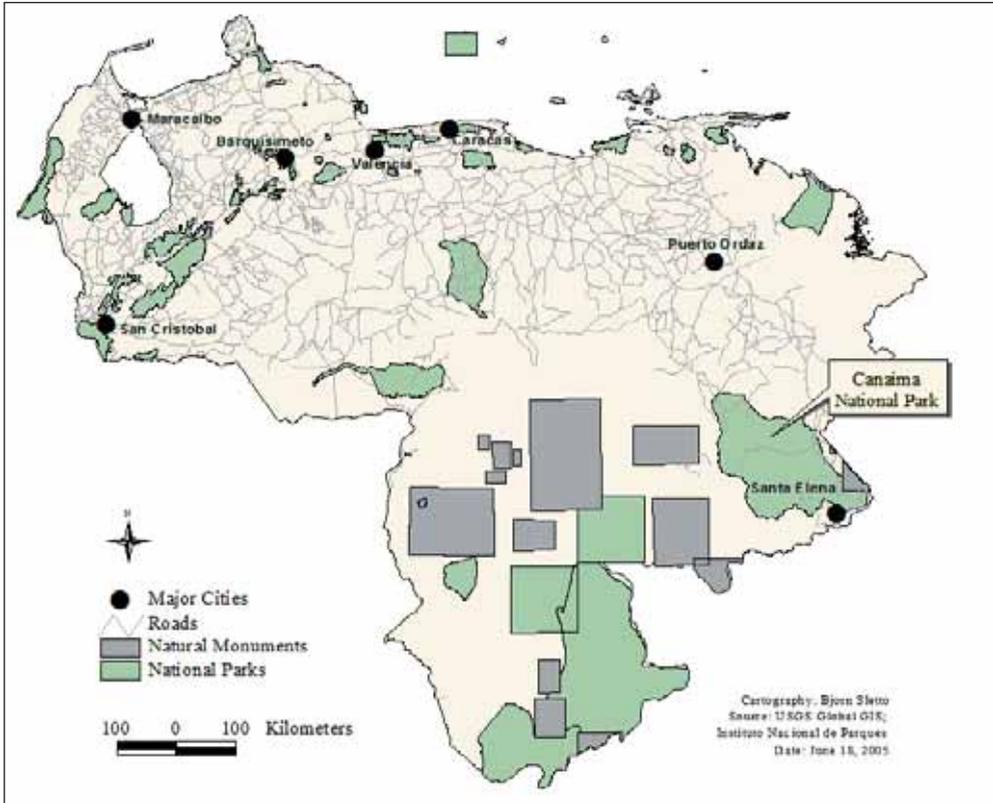


FIGURE 1 Map of Venezuela with Canaima National Park (Sletto, 2005).

non-natives. Thus the process of boundary-(re)making was contingent on contested narratives of indigeneity, landscape, and histories, which meant that the reborderings of Pemon space emerged only partly as a direct reaction to state boundaries.

I begin with an introduction to my theoretical framework, where I integrate the theoretical perspectives on boundary-making in postmodern geopolitics with a Gramscian approach to hegemony to unpack the complex roles of map-making in indigenous identity politics. I then present an analysis of indigenous and state maps of the Gran Sabana, along with reflections on the semiotics of boundary-making based on voice recordings of Pemon participants in a participatory mapping project from 2001–2004. These ‘hidden transcripts’⁸ reflect the sometimes conflicting meanings associated with different boundaries in indigenous communities. I conclude with a broader discussion of the role of reborderings in indigenous identity politics, suggesting that a greater attention to the relationships between the visibility and functionality of boundaries can contribute to our understanding of the unpredictable relations of power in indigenous landscapes. By revealing the less visible boundaries that facilitate state control in indigenous lands, activist scholars may be better positioned to engage productively in the struggle for indigenous land rights.⁹

Theorizing indigenous cartographies: hegemony, rebordering, and discipline

From a Gramscian perspective, boundary-making can be understood as a cultural project implicated in the reproduction of spatial inequalities based on class and ethnicity, and also serving the state's attempts to maintain territorial control. Boundary-making is an example of the state's attempt to achieve 'hegemony' through both cultural elements as well as economic power; i.e., internal state boundaries may be secured through 'political domination' or culture, but they are always attempts to keep people in their place.¹⁰ The production of bounded spatial units for environmental management, for instance, reflects state economic interests. But these conservation boundaries are simultaneously associated with complex, sometimes contradictory narratives of modernity and authenticity, as the state attempts to gain Pemon acceptance of the 'common-sensical' necessity of these state-imposed boundaries.¹¹

However, and this is a key element in a Gramscian approach to political-economic analysis, the state is not a hegemon but instead an alliance of 'fractions' with different interests. These fractures in state power provide a space for narratives that undermine what Gramsci calls the 'theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules.'¹² As indigenous boundaries are drawn and redrawn in symbolic contests over the meanings of indigeneity, traditionality, modernity, development, and so on, they become inextricably linked with the production of counter-narratives to state power. In the case of the Gran Sabana, different state agencies have failed to coordinate their strategies for environmental conservation and economic development, opening spaces for indigenous resistance, such as continued use of fire despite state pressure to halt these practices.

State projects of boundary-making are thus key to the cultural production of difference. In post-modern geopolitics, boundaries are assumed to be constructed through social processes that are contingent on narratives of nation, region, and identity.¹³ Thus from a Foucaultian perspective, *social* boundary-making is intimately implicated in power/knowledge and constitutes a form of disciplining, since it effects the removal of people into a space deemed proper for them: 'In the first instance, discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space ... each individual has his own space, and place its own individual.'¹⁴ That is, powerful institutions arrange people in space in order to ensure the efficient surveillance of individual conduct.¹⁵

In the Gran Sabana, state agencies have long attempted to arrange Pemon in circumscribed, settled and 'modern' communities, a process which has facilitated their surveillance and disciplining from what is typically considered 'traditional' indigenous people into 'modern' citizens of Venezuela.¹⁶ This racializing dualism is thus heavily implicated in the state's attempt to put the Pemon in their proper place, and is particularly common in narratives of 'risky' or otherwise inappropriate indigenous land-use practices. State agents typically refer to indigenous practices as 'traditional' if they have been constructed as risky in conservation narratives, such as certain forms of fire use and hunting.

Ironically, this disempowering dualism has also been incorporated in indigenous narratives to reproduce differences between communities: Pemon in acculturated villages argue that other Pemon are 'traditional' or 'primitive' if they have not adopted 'modern' ways; residents in less acculturated communities, meanwhile, say that others have 'lost' their indigenous ways. However,

from a Gramscian perspective, the presumed opposition between 'modern' and 'traditional' obscures the fact that the key dialectic in the global South is between 'oppressor and oppressed' (or 'dominant and dominated'),¹⁷ and state agents' use of these terms thus fuels a rift between 'traditionalists' and 'modernists' in Pemon communities. In reality, Pemon easily shift between self-representations as Venezuelans and Pemon, not as binary opposites, but rather as different, mutually constituted aspects of their fragmented selves. Through multiple forms of articulation between these two identity formations, they negotiate their 'place' within the nation, both through the indigenization of their physical place, but also through their self-representation as an 'indigenous culture' with special rights and needs in a 'pluri-nation.'¹⁸ (I use the terms 'traditional' and 'modern' with caution and hesitation in this article to reflect the ways in which they are implicated in rhetorical strategies to effect relations of domination and resistance; my use of these terms should not be taken as an endorsement of a reductionistic dualism between 'traditional' and 'modern' knowledges and practices.)

However, the Venezuelan state's attempt to discipline the Pemon through such discursive, social boundary-making is limited by fractures in state power. As states decline as the principal global actors, processes of 'deborderings' and 'reborderings' result in the production of new boundaries and the erasure of others in ways that are unpredictable and not simply reducible to the politics of indigenous territoriality. Indigenous spatialities that were once 'hidden' from the state may become foregrounded in narratives of authenticity, while relatively formalized, traditional boundaries may be semiotically erased – but nevertheless maintain their functionality. Similarly, relatively invisible state boundaries may have more significance for the state's attempts to establish hegemony than more celebrated boundaries, and the (re)production of different boundaries varies with shifting relations of power between state agencies. Thus the concept of rebordering allows us to better comprehend the contests surrounding place and indigeneity that take place in indigenous mapping projects, and specifically to unpack the ways in which boundary-making shape the complex 'entanglements of domination and resistance' in indigenous landscapes.¹⁹

Functionality and visibility of state boundaries in the Gran Sabana

The Gran Sabana, a sparsely populated mosaic of grasslands and gallery forests that extends across the borders with Brazil and Guyana, is marked by a number of often contradictory management boundaries, which are unequally and inconsistently enforced by various state agencies. Much of the Gran Sabana falls inside Canaima National Park and is thus under the jurisdiction of the notoriously ineffectual National Park Service (Instituto Nacional de Parques, INPARQUES). In 1991, a little-known land-use plan was approved for the eastern half of the park to provide 'guidelines for planning and the gradual and balanced development of the park.'²⁰ The plan fragments the park into conservation zones based on the perspective of state land managers and limits Pemon subsistence activities to small, 'special use' zones that makes traditional fishing and hunting virtually impossible. The land-use plan thus illustrates the links between social boundary-making and Power: the Pemon are put in their place by defining their land uses as inappropriate and creating exclusionary boundaries.

Because indigenous leaders are unfamiliar with the land-use plan and the legal implications for indigenous land rights, Pemon typically embrace the *external* national park boundaries as a means of protection from outside encroachment. Outside the park boundaries, Pemon lands are subject to intense development pressures. Along the Brazilian border, largely unregulated, artisanal mining by Venezuelan *mineros* and Brazilian *garimpeiros* has led to large-scale environmental destruction and to prostitution, alcoholism, and violence in indigenous communities. Thus the National Park affords a level of protection from such uncontrolled, extractive activities – however, the land-use plan remains a legally powerful tool that may complicate Pemon land rights claims, even though it is currently not strictly enforced.

Although Pemon are well aware of the external boundaries of Canaima National Park, another set of state boundaries is less well known but, failing enforcement of the Canaima land-use plan is still most important for state domination in the Gran Sabana. In the fluctuating mosaic of agencies that constitutes state presence in this area, INPARQUES is much weaker than the parastatal electricity agency Electrificación del Caroní (EDELCA), a subsidiary of the Corporación Venezolana de Guayana (CVG), a state development corporation which since the 1960s has been responsible for economic development in southern Venezuela. EDELCA is better funded, better staffed, and more visible than INPARQUES, and little effort has been made to coordinate their activities in the Gran Sabana. A case in point is fire management, which in other national parks falls under the jurisdiction of INPARQUES but which in Canaima is the purview of EDELCA.

The fire management program is not explicitly associated with the Canaima land-use plan, but instead intended to support the development priorities of the CVG. The Gran Sabana is located upstream from the Caroní, where EDELCA's hydroelectric dam complexes produce about 75 percent of the country's electricity, and fire management in the Caroní watershed aims to prevent loss of gallery forest and subsequent soil erosion. The agency's fire fighting operations are based on strictly bounded 'priority zones,' i.e. areas that because of a combination of factors (rugged topography, fire-prone vegetation, and the presence of gallery forests) are said to be more at risk from fires (Figure 2).²¹ EDELCA operates a seasonally staffed fire fighting center and counts on a helicopter, a small fleet of four-wheel drive vehicles, and professionally trained fire fighters for what mainly amounts to a fire suppression project. If a fire observed from any of the four watch towers is thought to be threatening gallery forests in a priority zone, the senior fire manager will dispatch a fire fighting squad via helicopter.

This system of surveillance and 'scientific' ordering of space figures prominently in agency representations, which define the Gran Sabana as a landscape threatened by Pemon burning. In their own mental maps, fire fighters paint a savanna pockmarked by brown fire scars, in stark contrast to the maps drawn by Pemon in the mapping workshops (Figure 3). In the fire fighting station, the walls are decorated with large, hand-drawn maps of the priority sectors and the views from the fire towers, reinforcing the desire for control and order on which the fire fighting program is predicated (Figures 4 and 5). In recent years, these maps have become integrated in the agency's GIS system (Figure 6), where the once hand-drawn boundaries now frame pointillist clusters of fires combated by EDELCA (Figure 7), leaving an erroneous impression of the Gran Sabana as a landscape under siege by fire.²² Thus the boundaries of priority zones have become further fixed in Cartesian space and assumed even greater rhetorical and hence institutional power. In one agency document, EDELCA fire managers state: '(the GIS) will allow

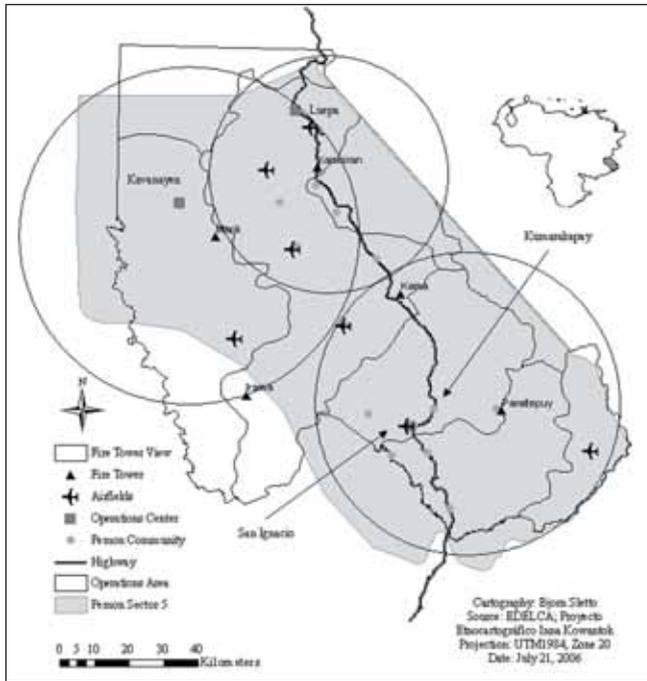


FIGURE 2 Pemon communities, Sector 5, and EDELCA priority zones (Sletto, 2005).



FIGURE 3 EDELCA fire fighters' mental map of the southeastern portion of Canaima National Park. Brown colors represent areas burned (CVG-EDELCA year unknown, reprinted with permission).

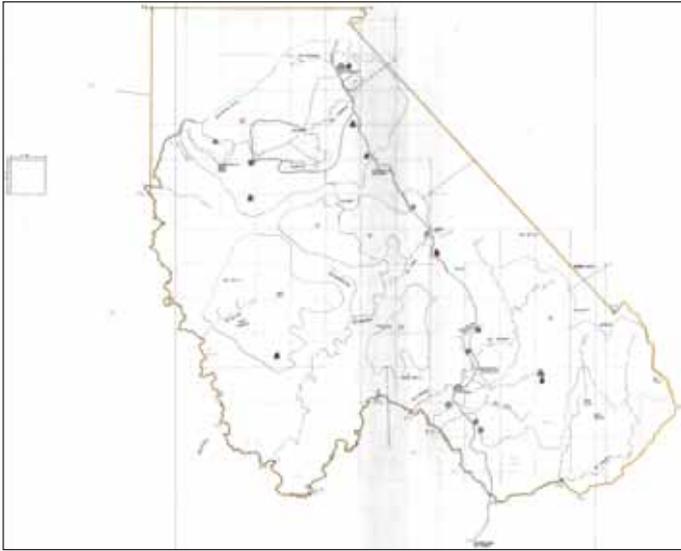


FIGURE 4 Hand-drawn map of priority zones for fire fighting (CVG-EDELCA year unknown, reprinted with permission).

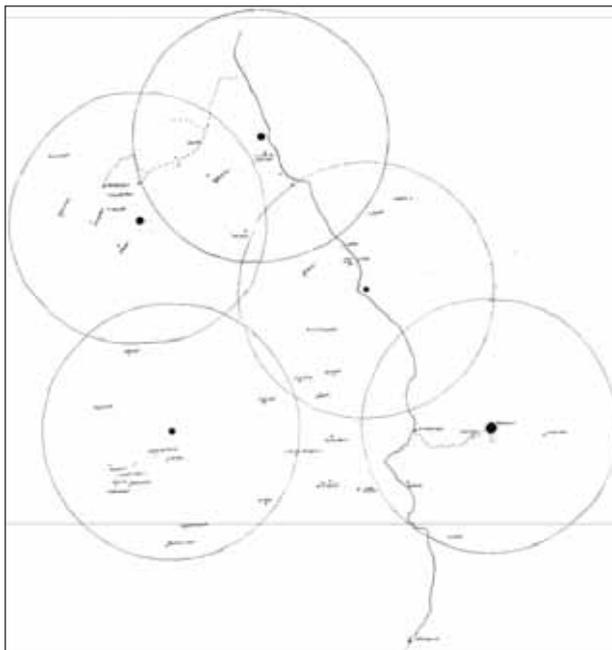


FIGURE 5 Hand-drawn map of views from fire watch towers (CVG-EDELCA year unknown, reprinted with permission).

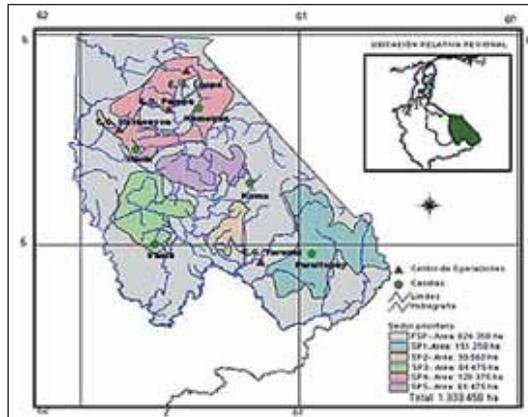


FIGURE 6 GIS-derived map of priority areas for fire management. From *Informe Final del Programa Control de Incendios de Vegetación, Temporada 2003* (Puerto Ordaz, July 2003, Reprinted with permission).

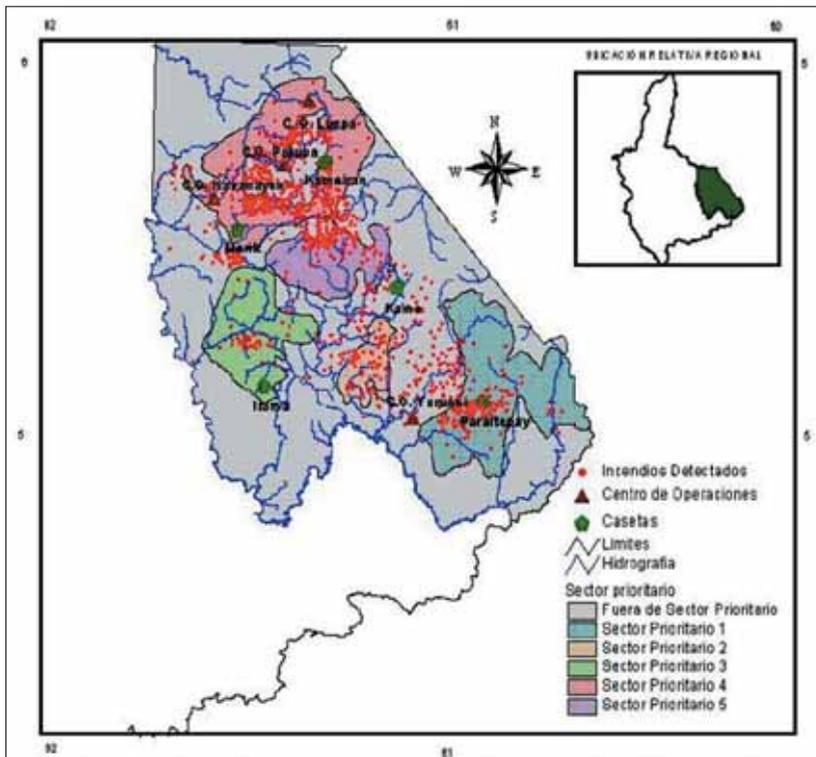


FIGURE 7 GIS-derived map of combated fires and priority areas. From *Informe Final del Programa Control de Incendios de Vegetación, Temporada 2003* (Puerto Ordaz, July 2003, Reprinted with permission).

for temporal and spatial statistical evaluation of fire events and will constitute a support tool for decision-making.²³

State cartography thus serves to scientize and depoliticize a development issue which, in fact, is thoroughly implicated in relations of domination and resistance.²⁴ From a Gramscian perspective, EDELCA's insistence on presenting fire management as a technical rather than a socio-political issue can be seen as part of state strategy to establish hegemony through consent rather than domination through direct coercion. By using 'science to kill a particular form of good sense, in order to create a 'new' good sense,²⁵ EDELCA presents its fire management program as a 'common-sensical' strategy, in part through the logic of western cartography. Although the boundaries maintained by EDELCA are largely obscured from indigenous view, they legitimize a state fire management project that is intimately implicated in the state's attempts to convert the 'traditional' (and hence destructive) Pemon into a 'modern' citizen. However, the 'fractures' between EDELCA and other state agencies provide spaces for Pemon resistance, which again is contingent on varying levels of social change the geographies of the Gran Sabana.

Pemon fire management, indigeneity, and resistance

The Pemon have inhabited the Gran Sabana since before the arrival of Europeans in the New World²⁶ and number today approximately 20,000. Although some live in southern Guyana and western Brazil, most reside within Canaima National Park (see Figure 1). The Pemon are undergoing uneven processes of social change, depending to a large degree on age, affiliation with the growing tourism industry, and their location within the savanna landscape. In communities such as Kumarakapay, located along the Pan-American highway between Puerto Ordaz and Boa Vista, the capital of the Brazilian state of Roraima, young people are more engaged in tourism, speak Pemon less fluently, and tend to avoid strenuous, traditional activities such as hunting, gardening, and fishing. They are also less likely to have been taught – or have wanted to learn – traditional knowledge some consider 'old-fashioned' or even environmental destructive, such as using fire to hunt deer or natural poisons to stun and catch fish.

Meanwhile, in communities and isolated family settlements scattered far from the highway, such as Monte Bello, four hours' walk west of Kumarakapay, such knowledge systems are more commonly transmitted to young people. Literally everyone in these remote villages depends on subsistence land-use activities; only rarely do men from these communities take jobs in gold mines or in construction in the border city of Santa Elena. In such remote communities, resistance rarely takes the form of oppositional activities. Overt displays of symbols of indigeneity are rare; there are few confrontations with state agents; legends (*pantons*) are remembered and spiritual beliefs are maintained, but not typically shared with outsiders. In more acculturated communities such as Kumarakapay, however, Pemon indigeneity is (re)produced through cultural displays and in the telling of traditional pantons; in singing and dancing for both villagers and tourists; through murals covering government-funded concrete buildings; and through the construction of communal buildings or market stalls in styles reminiscent of traditional *churuatas*.

These different, spatially contingent rates of social change lead to contested, complex and contradictory responses to EDELCA's fire management program. In Monte Bello, villagers largely ignore EDELCA and continue burning for purposes of subsistence and grasslands management, thus pursuing 'everyday'²⁷ rather than instrumental strategies of resistance. In Kumarakapay, however, the question of fire use is controversial and burning practices vary, depending in part on villagers' perspectives on indigeneity, modernity and tradition, which again is contingent in part on age. Many young villagers have ceased using fire, suggesting it is a risky aspect of 'primitive' culture, but others consider fire use integral to Pemon identity and will sometimes light fires because it is 'what Pemon do.' Elders, who use carefully controlled burning strategies, call this 'burning for the sake of burning.' They bemoan some young people's lack of 'traditional' knowledge, which leads them on occasion to light fires in areas with high fuel levels, or in periods of draught or during high winds.

Even more controversial among Pemon, and a practice that also pits elders against younger Pemon, is the so-called 'burning against EDELCA.' This means intentionally lighting fires in grasslands to frustrate state fire managers,²⁸ and, according to EDELCA fire managers, is a common practice among Pemon in modernizing villages. In the late 1990s, the residents of Kumarakapay led the Pemon's unsuccessful attempt to halt the construction of a high-voltage power line across the Gran Sabana to Boa Vista. Young Pemon from Kumarakapay and other modernizing villages burned large swaths of the savanna and tore down power masts, while residents in more remote settlements were less aware of and less engaged in this conflict with the state. Fire fighters told me they would fight a fire in one place, only to see another fire start a few hundred meters away. The battle over the power line still colors relations between the Pemon and EDELCA, but it has also led to a greater emphasis on participatory approaches in EDELCA and INPARQUES development and conservation policies.

Ultimately, the conflict over fire management suggests that different state boundaries are differently implicated in the state's project to effect hegemony. Relatively invisible state boundaries, exemplified by EDELCA's priority zones, are integral to EDELCA's project to produce the Gran Sabana as an orderly landscape and ensure proper conduct.²⁹ However, the attempts to contain the Pemon through the rigidly defined spatialities of fire management have been only partly successful: most Pemon still burn, but for different reasons, and only partly as instrumentalist means of resistance. This suggests that relations of domination and resistance in indigenous landscapes are complex and contingent, which again has important bearings on the emancipatory role of indigenous mapping. Indigenous reborderings must be understood in the context of a wider repertoire of indigenous resistance; i.e. indigenous boundary-makings are social processes implicated in discursive contests to produce spatialities and negotiate 'proper' indigeness. Next, I will discuss some of the ways in which narratives of indigeneity, history, and landscape informed the rebordering process in the Gran Sabana, and how the boundary-(re)makings that took place in this participatory mapping project articulated with state productions of bounded, spatial units.

Ethn cartography and 'traditional' indigenous boundary-making

The Pemon mapping project originated with an agreement reached in summer 2001 between myself and village *capitanes* (chiefs), allowing me to conduct my dissertation research on indigenous fire management while providing cartographic training and administering the mapping project. The purpose of the 'Proyecto Etnocartográfico Inna Kowantok,' so named by the then-capitan of Kumarakapay, Juvencio Gómez, was to map settlements, locations of indigenous land-uses, and places of cultural significance through a participatory research process. Ultimately, the map was intended to serve as documentation for the legalization of the boundaries of Sector 5, one of 8 self-designed sectors of the Pemon homeland, under the 'Ley de Demarcación y Garantía del Hábitat y Tierras de los Pueblos Indígenas.'³⁰ This legislation formalized the term 'habitat,' used in Venezuela to designate indigenous-controlled lands, and guided the selection of cultural, land-use and natural features to be mapped.

The project began with a series of community mapping workshops in spring 2002 and spring 2003 in the 12 villages in Sector 5, conducted by the trained 'ethn cartographers.'³¹ In these workshops, a day of mental mapping by all members of the community, organized in groups by age and gender, was followed by 3–5 days of sketch mapping with elder men. The ethn cartographers worked directly with these elders to systematically document the location of places of cultural and economic significance throughout the village's land-use area, in particular the most remote areas frequented principally by hunters. Although elder men served as the primary local experts, the group of 12 ethn cartographers included two women, one of whom, Cristina Rossi, became the de facto leader of the group, and several of the mapping workshops were organized and administered by women, including two female *capitanes*.³² The goal of the workshops was to eventually produce a GIS of Sector 5, using the sketch maps, GPS coordinates recorded in the field, remote sensing imagery, and existing maps produced by EDELCA as principal data sources.

During the mapping workshops, the contested meanings and roles of boundaries informed casual conversations among workshop participants, and occasionally became the subject of more formal discussions. Some villagers saw the workshops as a forum to voice concerns about larger villages' supposed encroachment on their traditional lands: Pemon from smaller communities often argued that owners of tourist facilities in Kumarakapay, the largest community in the southern half of Sector 5, had expanded their facilities into areas that traditionally did not 'belong to' Kumarakapay. Villagers would support their argument with references to traditional strategies for delineation of Pemon village lands.

I am very interested in this work, that's why I'm participating in this workshop. I came to say that this (demarcation process) actually began a long time ago, but we never had anyone like you (the ethn cartographers) who could do the work like you are doing today. Before, the elders would meet to divide their lands, saying that 'I am going to have the land up to this point.' They would say that 'up to this point should be our terrain, because our deer come here.' That's why I have come here to be with you. I have come here to say this so you know (Bartolomé Javier, pers. comm. 2003).

Javier is an elder from Monte Bello, where residents are conscious of the growing economic and political power of Kumarakapay, especially the supposed negative influence of Kumarakapay's

teenagers on young people in Monte Bello. Similarly, elders from Kumarakapay also saw the project as an opportunity to reproduce and cement the boundaries of their lands, which they maintained had been established through usufruct and verbal agreements, often reached decades ago. Antonio Pérez, elder of Kumarakapay, said the following as part of a speech during the elders' presentation of their mental map to the community during a mapping workshop held in February, 2002:

We have made our map to locate the lands that belong to Kumarakapay... To do that, we thought about where our grandfathers lived before... Our map is in accordance with the word of the grandfathers who lived in this area. Since the father of Raymundo Garcia had his settlement in Opoymota, and there were also his children, we begin there. And from there we draw the boundary to the waterfall Kak on the river Arapöpö, going to Aime Tüpü to the waterfall Arauta, Epoden, up to Patari Paru. From Patari Paru to Kuriwek Ken, following the river Chirimota, Manakaiprimo to Charan Tüpü, then going via Kawaiuta, Iworkarima, Wadaka, by Karaurin we turn towards Soroy Soroyden, continuing to Iwo Tüpü, Kerepikaden, Kurtana Tüpü, passing through San Ignacio to Kerereimu Tüpü to Kurun Tüpü. That's how far our land goes. At Paran Tupu begins the land of Monte Bello, based on where their grandfathers lived. This is all (Antonio Pérez, pers. comm. 2002).

The historical role of boundary-making echoed in Pérez' statement is more significant in some villages than others, and also generationally contingent. Teenagers from the small, traditional community of Mapauri, for instance, drew a map of their village territory that was strikingly similar in extent to that of elders' map (even though the maps were drawn in separate groups during the workshop) (Figures 8 and 9). This correlation could be traced to several days' training held

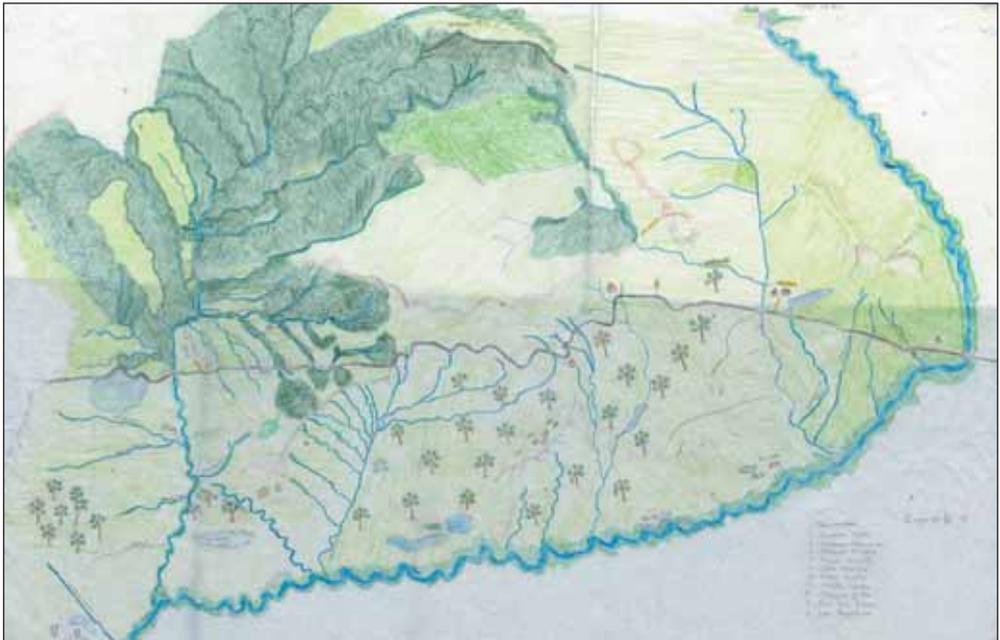


FIGURE 8 Elders' map of Mapauri territory (Proyecto Etnocartográfico Inna Kowantok 2002, reprinted with permission).

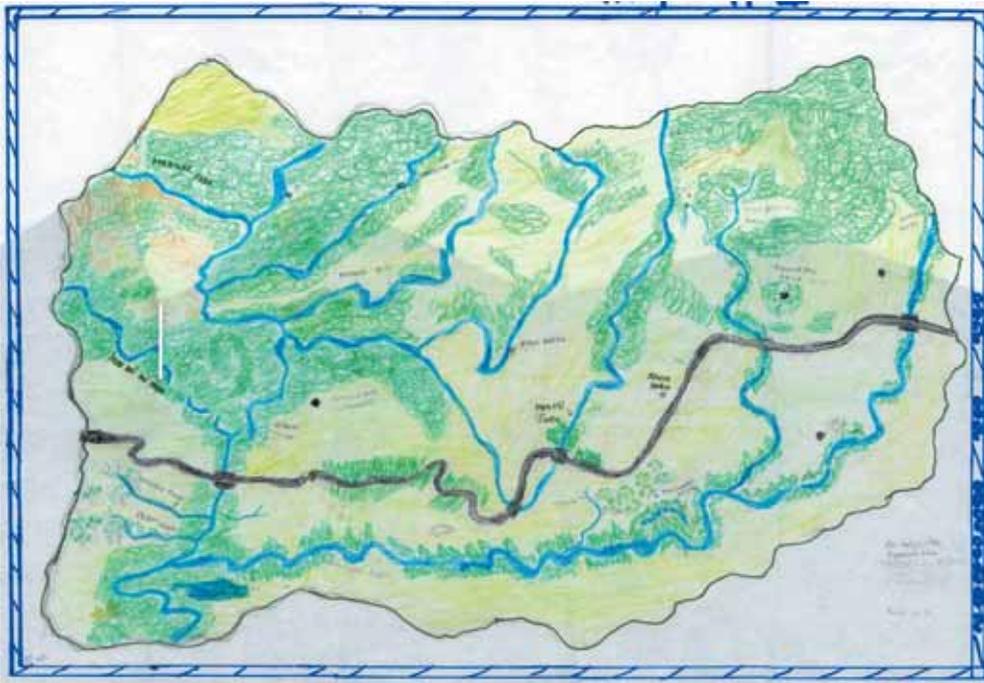


FIGURE 9 Teenagers' map of Mapauri territory (Proyecto Etnocartográfico Inna Kowantok 2002, reprinted with permission).

by elders in the week preceding the workshop: as the capitan explained, prior to the workshop teenagers did not know the extent of Mapauri's village lands. On the other hand, in Parai Tüpü, the teenagers' map differed greatly from elders' in its representation of village territory (Figures 10 and 11). Parai Tüpü is the launching point for expeditions to Roraima and virtually all young villagers work as porters and guides, instead of pursuing traditional hunting and fishing activities. Perhaps as a result of these differences in perspectives and knowledge of indigenous space, authenticities, and histories, the teenagers' map represents village territory as a relatively narrow corridor centered on the trail to Roraima, while elders' map covers an area approximately four times the size.

'Indigenous people don't have boundaries'

While elders saw boundaries as an instrumentalist tool for the separation and placement of things and people, the *concept* of boundaries also figured prominently in their narratives of indigeneity. While they sought to reproduce the logic of traditional boundary-making, they simultaneously portrayed boundaries as a non-indigenous phenomenon. These apparently contradictory narratives of a borderless indigenous space imply that boundaries carry a sense of ownership and exclusion that are antithetical to genuine indigenous values. In the words of the elder Antonio

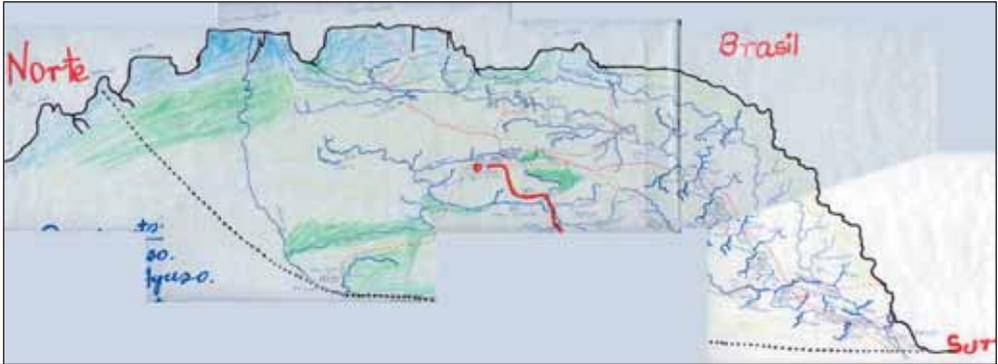


FIGURE 10 Elders' map of Parai Tüpü territory. Proyecto Etnocartográfico Inna Kowantok 2003, reprinted with permission).



FIGURE 11 Teenagers' map of Parai Tüpü territory (Proyecto Etnocartográfico Inna Kowantok 2002, reprinted with permission).

Pérez, the same Kumarakapay elder who, during the mapping workshops, recited the landmarks that defined the boundaries of his village:

We don't have boundaries like outsiders do. They make boundaries and no one is allowed to enter. But people from other communities can come here. Our brothers from Mapauri... and Chirikayen also have gardens here. Well, we can't say that they shouldn't come here. The land is for everyone. We are all Pemon (Antonio Pérez, pers. comm. 2002).

Although Pemon in fact do establish and maintain a variety of informal boundaries (between villages, between families' and individual usufruct, between hunting zones), this narrative of a borderless indigenous space serves important, rhetorical purposes. It is not boundaries *per se* that concerns Pérez, but the implications of western conceptions of boundaries for indigenous unity and land rights. Among traditional Pemon, boundaries are not seen as rigid and unchanging demarcation lines in the western sense, but rather as fluctuating, porous, and often relative wide zones that are commonly agreed-upon, semi-permanent, and contingent on changing social relations and geographies: entire villages move to new lands, forest patches are depleted and new gardens are established, remote patches of savanna are burned and the fire scar represents a bounded space temporarily reserved for hunting and gathering. New marriages lead to new alliances between families, leading to an informal redrawing of land-use zones and the inclusion into new bounded spaces for some Pemon, but not for others.

This fluid, socially contingent system of boundary-making is fundamentally different from the cartography of the Venezuelan state, which is based on Cartesian logics of fixity and western science, and which is intended to serve the purposes of rational ordering of state territory.³³ State agencies typically show indigenous lands as divided (and divisible) into small, circumscribed units, such as in the case of this CVG-EDELCA map (Figure 12). On this map, Pemon lands are represented as a mosaic dissected by geometric, bold boundary lines reminiscent of a modern land-use map, a rhetorical strategy which serves to rationalize and legitimize the long-standing practice of providing land titling to individual communities. This practice reflects a development approach driven by agrarian interests and fueled by an assimilationist discourse, which is rejected by indigenous activists because it introduces western values of individual land ownership.

The narratives of Pemon elders, then, appear to reflect a tension between 'traditional' and 'modern' boundaries. This tension mirrors another dualism, commonly reproduced by Pemon of all ages: the Pemon are becoming modern, and in so doing they are losing their traditions. This perceived dualism ultimately influenced relationships between participants in the mapping project. Elders lamented the loss of tradition and saw the workshops as a means to reproduce a 'traditional' indigeneity, while younger Pemon struggled with the consequences of social change, alternatively expressing a desire for modernity and a desire for 'genuine' indigeneity. However, just the fact that Pemon emphasize the opposition between 'modern' and 'traditional' does not necessarily mean that it is 'the best way of 'naming' what is going on.'³⁴ The Pemon are instead developing a modern indigeneity that incorporates traditional tropes and symbols as well as modern narratives, values and technologies, and the rebordering taking place in the mapping project by its very nature disturbed this dualistic narrative.

Ultimately, the necessity of boundary-making for territorial demarcation meant that the existence of 'traditional' boundaries between villages needed to be obscured. If any tensions arose in workshops about village boundaries, ethnocartographers routinely repeated the adage

The contestations, processes of identity-production and everyday decision-making which occurred in the mapping project were ultimately obscured behind a veneer of technical, cartographic authority in a final, comprehensive map of Sector 5. The formalization of Sector 5 occurred at the end of a week-long workshop in October 2003, attended by approximately 60 elders representing all 12 communities in Sector 5. The intent of the workshop was to revise a draft map and to negotiate and jointly draw the boundary of Sector 5 (Figures 13 and 14). To prepare for this moment, indigenous leaders had frequently explained the concept of ‘Sector 5’ to participants in the mapping workshops, since many other demarcation lines cross Pemon lands and villagers were unsure of the location and significance of this new spatial unit. As Rosa Emilia Romero de Kumarakapay said once: ‘It looks like we’re talking about two types of territories. Before, they used to say that this was national park. Now they say it’s Sector 5. I am confused.’

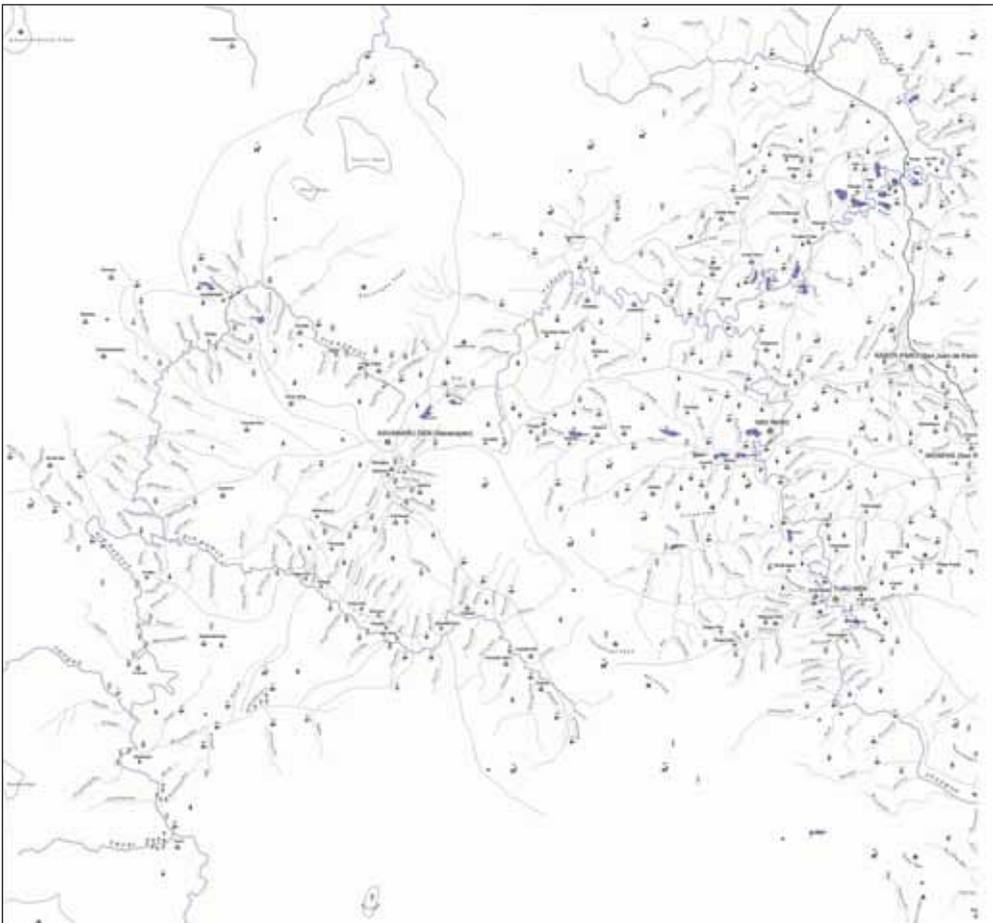


FIGURE 13 Draft map of the northwest quarter of Pemon Sector 5, used during the revision workshop. Note the absence of any boundaries (Sletto, 2003).



FIGURE 14 Final map of the northern half of Pemon Sector 5, including boundaries (Sletto, 2004).

This brought to an end the formal process of boundary-making; however, the broader 'rebordering' process and negotiations for land rights continue. The work of the government commission assigned the responsibility for demarcating indigenous lands has been stymied by procedural conflicts, and the requirements for adequate documentation of indigenous occupancy of traditional lands have been tightened. In January 2007, a new Ministerio de los Pueblos Indígenas was established and is now overseeing the demarcation process, but as of date, no land titles have been secured by Pemon leaders.³⁵

Discussion: reborderings, identities, and relations of power

Ultimately, the mapping workshops became a space not only for instrumentalist drawing of boundaries against external actors, nor simply a space for the reproduction of traditional indigenous boundary-making, but an arena for the ongoing production of a modern indigeneity. Elders used the workshops to reinforce the meaning of Pemon indigeneity to the young; they performed the narratives linking indigenous landscape and cultural survival; they foregrounded the meanings and production of traditional boundaries while simultaneously embracing the instrumentality of new boundary-making. 'Boundaries' was more than a symbol of indigenous territoriality: it became a trope filled with complex meanings, informed by a contested blending of narratives of modernity and traditionality. The socially and spatially contingent processes whereby traditional boundaries are (re)produced in Pemon culture were repeatedly retold, reinforced, and re-absorbed in the 'hidden transcripts' of Pemon villages,³⁶ and the stories of traditional boundary-making circulated alongside the stories of a borderless indigeneity.

Since the narratives that shape the construction of social categories and symbolic boundaries are always changing,³⁷ this means that the objectives of boundary-making among indigenous groups are also flexible and contingent. Indigenous cultural displays, such as the symbolic representations of boundaries, are in fact ‘complex, heterogeneous, and possibly even contested at the local level’ and the purposes of such displays ‘may not correspond neatly with anthropologists’ or other outsiders’ expectations.³⁸ An excessively narrow focus on boundary-making as instrumentalist means to political or economic ends, therefore, may overlook ‘the potential for a diversity of locally significant dimensions’³⁹ of such (re)productions of spatialities. As the case of the Gran Sabana suggests, the contested processes of boundary-making in participatory mapping projects can result in unpredictable reconceptualizations and recastings of indigeneity and authenticities, which may serve to further the counterhegemonic potentials of indigenous cartographies – but which might also lead to fundamental changes in how indigenous people (re)create or change traditional spatial structures.

Indigenous boundary-(re)makings must therefore be understood as cultural productions, performed as part of a complex repertoire of resistance, which in turn is informed by entangled, spatially contingent relations of domination and resistance. That is, in indigenous communities, the *concept* of boundaries is inherently fluid, and its appropriations and instrumental uses shift through space and time. This suggests that formalized boundary-making, occurring in participatory community-based mapping projects, often fails to reflect the complex and contingent meanings of boundaries within indigenous culture. In particular, the relationships between the *visibility* and *functionality* of boundaries have important bearing on their symbolic and material power – often the more invisible boundaries are the most functional, and hence the most influential in shaping relations of domination and resistance – which suggests that the production of boundaries in indigenous mapping projects have complex, sometimes contradictory bearings on indigenous identity politics, indigenous territoriality, and indigenous rights more broadly.

In the case of the Gran Sabana, the workshops became arenas for multiple reborderings, where the links between Pemon space and Pemon culture were contested, renegotiated, and redrawn, both through the veiling of old boundaries and through the simultaneous production of new boundaries. Pemon obscured traditional yet functional boundaries in hidden transcripts and created new, more visible boundaries for purposes of demarcation. The desired, thoroughly modern, yet still non-functional boundary of Sector 5 came to represent a defensive enclosure, framing a landscape filled to the very ‘corners’ with the marks of indigenous occupation. In the words of the elder Rafael Rodríguez: ‘We need to put down everything (up to the corners), because in the future, if we leave spaces open, others might take them from us.’

The contested, complex process of reimagining Pemon indigeneity, Pemon space and Pemon boundaries occurred in a frontier landscape marked by numerous, sometimes overlapping, sometimes contradictory state boundaries, and where state power is fractured and spatially contingent. While the Pemon foregrounded the more visible national park boundaries, the state plies its power most effectively through EDELCA’s fire management units and possibly through the Canaima land-use plan, which are bounded by functional boundaries that are largely hidden from view. The future of Pemon land rights claims may therefore depend to a large degree on revealing and negotiating these less visible state boundaries, in processes of reborderings that directly address the rationalities and narratives of indigenous ‘tradition’ and indigenous destructiveness that underpin state boundary-making and maintenance.

This situation is not unique to the Gran Sabana, or to Venezuela. The cartographies of post-colonial landscapes are typically unstable, contested, and contradictory, and the often arbitrary lines drawn on maps or on a computer screen come to symbolize competing desires for the Other, for belonging, for the rights to be modern, developed, traditional, indigenous, and so on. This means that indigenous boundary-making is inherently informed by inequalities in power, different levels of integration into capitalist economies, and the competing narratives of indigeneity, place and history that characterize indigenous communities. For indigenous people, then, a 'boundary' is something more than simply a legal dividing line between one spatial unit and the next, whether or not these boundary lines derive from state-driven or community-based cartography. Instead, a boundary is a symbolic rift in space, reflective and constitutive of social relations, forever altering the meanings and social ordering of indigenous landscapes.

Biographical note

Dr Bjørn Sletto is assistant professor in the Community and Regional Planning Program in the School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin. His research focuses on indigenous resource management, indigenous territoriality, and environmental planning in Latin America. He is particularly interested in the dichotomies and tensions between local knowledge and traditional environmental management systems, and formal planning and management approaches. He is currently engaged with projects in Colombia, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. He can be contacted at: School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin, 1 University Station B7500 Austin, TX 78712, USA; email: bjornsletto@mail.utexas.edu

Notes

- ¹ The mapping project discussed here was conducted during February–April 2002, October–December 2002, and April 2003–April 2004 with assistance provided by a Fulbright-Hays dissertation award; a Peace Studies Fellowship from the MacArthur Foundation (administered by the Peace Studies Program, Cornell University); an NSF Geography doctoral dissertation research award (no. 0221324); and funding from the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies and the Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University. I received logistical assistance and research permits from the elected representatives of the Comunidades Pemon, Sector 5, Gran Sabana; Instituto Nacional de Parques (INPARQUES); Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas (DAI); Electrificación del Caroni (EDELCA); Corporación Venezolana de Guayana (CVG); the Comisión Permanente de Pueblos Indígenas in the National Assembly; the Comisión Nacional de Autodemarcación de Tierras Indígenas; and the Instituto Geográfico de Venezuela Simón Bolívar. I was affiliated with the Department of Anthropology at the Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas (IVIC) during my stay in Venezuela. My special thanks to then-director of the Federación Indígena del Estado Bolívar, Juvencio Gómez; Héctor Fernández, capitán, Kumarakapay; my advisor at IVIC, Dr Stanford Zent; and the indigenous deputy in the national assembly, Noeli Pocatererra, for their assistance with the mapping project. The final map was printed courtesy of the Unidad de Información Geográfica of the Centro de Ecología (EcoSIG-IVIC) and the Centro Internacional de Ecología Tropical, both at the Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas. The map was presented to the chiefs of each of the 12 Pemon communities in Sector 5, Federación Indígena del Estado Bolívar, Municipality of the Gran Sabana, Instituto Nacional de Parques (INPARQUES), Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas (DAI), Comisión Nacional de Autodemarcación de Tierras Indígenas, and Instituto Geográfico de Venezuela Simón Bolívar.

- 2 See e.g. M. Chapin and B. Threlkeld, *Indigenous landscapes: a study in ethnocartography* (Washington, DC, Center for the Support of Native Lands, 2001); P. Herlihy, 'Participatory research mapping of indigenous lands in Darien, Panama', *Human organization* 62 (2003), pp. 315–31; P. Herlihy and A. Leake, 'Participatory research mapping of indigenous lands in the Honduran Mosquitia', in A. Pebley and L. Rosero-Bixby, eds, *Demographic diversity and change in the Central American Isthmus* (Santa Monica, CA, Rand, 1997), pp. 707–36; P. Knapp and G. Knapp, 'Maps of, by, and for the peoples of Latin America', *Human organization* 62 (2003), pp. 303–14; K. Kassam and S. Maher, *Indigenous, Cartesian, and cartographic: visual metaphors of knowledge in Arctic (Tundra) and sub-Arctic (Taiga) communities* (Cultures and Biodiversity Congress, Kunming, China, 2000); P. Poole, *Indigenous peoples, mapping, and biodiversity conservation: an analysis of current activities and opportunities for applying geomatics technologies* (Washington, DC, Biodiversity Support Program, 1995); R. Riewe, *Nunavut atlas* (Edmonton, The Canadian Circumpolar Institute and the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, 1992); A. Stocks, 'Mapping dreams in Nicaragua's Bosawas reserve', *Human organization* 62 (2003), pp. 344–56; and Toledo Maya Cultural Council, *Maya atlas: the struggle to preserve Maya land in southern Belize* (Berkeley, CA, North Atlantic Books, 1997).
- 3 N. Peluso, 'Whose woods are these? Counter-mapping forest territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia', *Antipode* 4 (1995), pp. 383–406.
- 4 B. Conklin and L. Graham, 'The shifting middle ground: Amazonian Indians and eco-politics', *American anthropologist* 97 (1995), pp. 695–710; L. Graham, 'Image and instrumentality in a Xavante politics of existential recognition: the public outreach work of Ete'nhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa', *American ethnologist* 32 (2005), pp. 622–41; S. Radcliffe and S. Westwood, *Remaking the nation: place, identity and politics in Latin America* (New York, Routledge, 1996).
- 5 More recent works on indigenous map-making have explored the limits of participation in such mapping projects, questioned the social implications of technology transfers to indigenous communities, discussed the implications of the fixing of fluid boundaries, uncovered the role of such projects in local conflicts, and critically analyzed issues of access and the reproduction of uneven gender relations or other inequalities of power in local communities. See e.g. J. Fox, 'Mapping the commons. The social context of spatial information technologies', *The common property resource digest* 45 (1998), pp. 1–4; J. Fox, K. Suryanata, P. Hershock and A. Pramono, 'Mapping power: ironic effects of spatial information technology', in J. Fox, K. Suryanata and P. Hershock, eds, *Mapping communities: ethics, values, practice* (Honolulu, East-West Center, 2005), pp. 1–10; E. Gordon, G. Gurdian and C. Hale, 'Rights, resources, and the social memory of struggle: reflections on a study of indigenous and black community land rights on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast', *Human organization* 62 (2003), pp. 369–81; K. Offen, 'Narrating place and identity, or mapping Miskitu land claims in Northeastern Nicaragua', *Human organization* 62 (2003), pp. 382–92; B. Orlove, 'The ethnography of maps: the cultural and social contexts of cartographic representation in Peru', *Cartographica* 30 (1993), pp. 29–46; B. Orlove, 'Mapping reeds and reading maps: the politics of representation in Lake Titicaca', *American ethnologist* 18 (1991), pp. 3–38; R. Schroeder and D. Hodgson, 'Dilemmas of counter-mapping community resources in Tanzania', *Development and change* 33 (2002), pp. 79–100; P. Walker and P. Peters, 'Maps, metaphors and meanings: boundary struggles and village forest use on private and state land in Malawi', *Society and natural resources* 14 (2001), pp. 411–24.
- 6 M. Albert, 'On boundaries, territory and postmodernity: an international relations perspective', in D. Newman, ed., *Boundaries, territory and postmodernity* (Portland, Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), pp. 53–68.
- 7 A. Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks* (Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, eds) (New York, International Publishers, 1999), p. 160; see also A. Gramsci, *Selections from cultural writings* (D. Forgacs and G. Nowell Smith, eds) (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1985).
- 8 J. Scott, *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1990).
- 9 I situate my work in the tradition of 'critical geographies,' where geographers seek to promote social change through activism as well as research and writing. The debate concerning whether, how, and to

what extent academically motivated research should also aim to be emancipatory has been covered extensively elsewhere (see e.g. R.M. Kitchin and P.J. Hubbardt, 'Research, action and "critical" geographies', *Area* 31 (1999), pp. 195–8; D. Fuller and R. Kitchin, eds, *Radical theory/critical praxis: making a difference beyond the academy?* (Vernon and Victoria, Canada, Praxis (c) Press, 2004). One risk of such activist scholarship is claiming the right to 'speak for the subaltern' and in so doing, further disempower marginalized groups. Although this critique is important and has informed my work, I approached this project not as a 'study' but rather as an attempt to 'study with' the Pemon to reveal unequal relations of power (D. Mato, 'Not "studying the subaltern"', but studying with 'subaltern' social groups, or, at least, studying the hegemonic articulations of power', *Nepantla: views from the south* 1 [2000], p. 481). My research in the Gran Sabana concerned indigenous and state fire management and I saw my mapping work with the Pemon primarily as activism.

- ¹⁰ K. Crehan, *Gramsci, culture and anthropology* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2002); A. Sassoon, *Gramsci's politics* (Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
- ¹¹ While 'hegemony' is often understood as domination that stems from a lack of self-awareness on the part of the subaltern – i.e. subalterns give their consent to being dominated because they are 'historically on the defensive' (Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, p. 273) – 'coersive power' is associated with 'political society,' often understood as the 'state' (Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, p. 160; see also Sassoon, *Gramsci's politics*). 'Hegemony' thus becomes a way 'of thinking about the complicated way consent and coercion are entangled with one another' (Crehan, *Gramsci, culture and anthropology*, p. 101). I use 'common-sense' to describe a 'specific mode of thought with a certain content of beliefs and opinions' (Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, p. 423).
- ¹² Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, p. 244.
- ¹³ Albert, 'On boundaries, territory and postmodernity', p. 59, S. Dalby, 'Globalization or global apartheid? Boundaries and knowledge in postmodern times', in D. Newman, ed., *Boundaries, territory and postmodernity* (Portland, Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), p. 134; see also S. Michaelson and D. Johnson, 'Border secrets: an introduction', in S. Michaelson and D. Johnson, eds, *Border theory: the limits of cultural politics* (Minneapolis, MD, University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 1–39; D. Newman, 'Geopolitics renaissance: territory, sovereignty and the world political map', in D. Newman, ed., *Boundaries, territory and postmodernity* (Portland, Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), pp. 1–16; D. Newman and A. Paasi, 'Fences and neighbours in the postmodern world: boundary narratives in political geography', *Progress in human geography* 22 (1998), pp. 186–207; G.Ó. Tuathail, 'De-territorialized threats and global dangers: geopolitics and risk society', in Y. Gradus and H. Lithwick, eds, *Frontiers in regional development* (London, Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), pp. 17–31; G.Ó. Tuathail, 'Thinking critically about geopolitics', in G. Tuathail, S. Dalby and P. Routledge, eds, *The geopolitics reader* (London, Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–12.; A. Paasi, 'Boundaries as social processes: territoriality in the world of flows', in D. Newman, ed., *Boundaries, territory and postmodernity* (Portland, Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), pp. 69–88; A. Paasi, *Territories, boundaries and consciousness: the changing geographies of the Finnish-Russian border* (New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1996); T. Wilson and H. Donnan, 'Nation, state and identity at international borders', in T. Wilson and H. Donnan, eds, *Border identities: nation and state at international frontiers* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1–30.
- ¹⁴ M. Foucault, *Discipline and punish* (A. Sheridan, trans. [1975]) (New York, Random House, 1977), p. 141.
- ¹⁵ F. Driver, 'Bodies in space: Foucault's account of disciplinary power', in C. Jones and R. Porter, eds, *Re-assessing Foucault* (London, Routledge, 1994).
- ¹⁶ An internal report from the Ministry of the Environment 20-odd years ago reflect this push for agglomeration of Pemon settlements: (The Pemon live dispersed in small settlements and) 'this is a negative factor for environmental conservation; because of this it is necessary to study methods to group them together... When they are united (in larger groups) it will be easier to keep them under constant control' (Urcinino Acuña Galletti, 'Proyecto de prevención de incendios y protección ecológica de la Gran Sabana.' Internal memo. Caracas, Instituto Nacional de Parques, 1980, p. 4). By constantly 'staying

in contact with (the Pemon) to determine what their needs are,' the Pemon would be 'influenced' to congregate in larger, nucleated settlements (Galletti, 'Proyecto de prevención de incendios y protección ecológica de la Gran Sabana', p. 7). The construction of permanent homes and provision of state services stems from a long-term policy to convert indigenous people into settled agriculturalists and to thus solve the 'indigenous problem,' characterized by in-migration to cities and subsequent 'marginalization, poverty, hunger, disease, alcoholism and conflict' (Consejo Nacional de Fronteras, Programa de Desarrollo y Consolidación de Ciudades Fronterizas en Venezuela (Caracas, Republica de Venezuela, 1994), p. 1; see also Scott, *Domination and the arts of resistance*.

- 17 Crehan and Gramsci, *Culture and anthropology*, pp. 6, 108.
- 18 Radcliffe and Westwood, *Remaking the nation: place, identity and politics in Latin America*, p. 1.
- 19 J. Sharp *et al.*, 'Entanglements of power: geographies of domination and resistance', in J. Sharp, P. Routledge, C. Philo and R. Paddison, eds, *Entanglements of power: geographies of domination and resistance* (New York, Routledge, 2000), pp. 1–42.
- 20 República de Venezuela Decreto 1640, 1991.
- 21 L. Fernández, *Determinación de las áreas prioritarias del sector suroriental de la cuenca alta del Río Yuruaní: memoria descriptiva. Tarenken, La Gran Sabana* (Puerto Ordaz, C.V.G. Electrificación del Caroní, Departamento de Protección y Mantenimiento de Cuencas, 1984).
- 22 Because Pemon follow traditional practices that emphasize fire prevention through prescriptive burning, fire fighters suggest that most fires die out on their own even when they are dispatched to 'combat' the fires. Recent research suggests that the fire suppression practiced by EDELCA might have contradictory and potentially negative consequences. In areas far from communities, or in priority zones where fires are more aggressively combated or Pemon avoid burning, fuel levels appear to be increasing. When fires eventually start in these areas, they tend to be more extensive and destructive (B. Sletto, 'Burn marks', Unpublished PhD Dissertation [Ithaca, Cornell University, 2006]; see also I. Rodríguez, 'Conocimiento indígena vs. científico: el conflicto por el uso del fuego en el Parque Nacional Canaima, Venezuela', *Interciencia* 29 [2004], pp. 121–9; I. Rodríguez, 'Pemon perspectives of fire management in Canaima National Park, southeastern Venezuela', *Human ecology* 35 (2007), pp. 331–43.
- 23 F. Zerpa *et al.*, SIPCIV: Un Sistema de Información Espacio-temporal para Caracterizar Areas Afectadas por Incendios (Report presented at CBCComp 2003, I Workshop de Tecnologia da Informaçao Aplicada ao Meio Ambiente–Sistema de Informações Geográficas, Universidade do Vale do Itajai, Itajai, Brazil, 2003). Online: <http://www.cbcomp.univali.br/anais/pdf/2003/wma061.pdf>. Accessed 30 April 2006, p. 2).
- 24 See J. Ferguson, *The anti-politics machine: 'development', depoliticization and bureaucratic power in Lesotho* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1995).
- 25 Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, p. 423.
- 26 A. Cousins, 'La frontera etnica Pemon y el impacto socio-economico de la mineria de oro', PhD Dissertation (Caracas, Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas, 1991); A. Mansutti, 'Penetración y cambio social entre los akawaio y Pemon', PhD Dissertation (Caracas, Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas, 1981); D. Thomas, *Order without government: the society of the Pemon Indians of Venezuela* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1982); L.A. Urbina, 'Adaptación ecológico-cultural de los Pemon-Arekuna: el caso de tauuken', PhD Dissertation (Caracas, Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas, 1979).
- 27 J. Scott, *Weapons of the weak* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1985).
- 28 Sletto, *Burn marks: the becoming and unbecoming of an indigenous landscape*, Rodríguez, *Pemon perspectives of fire management in Canaima National Park, southeastern Venezuela*.
- 29 Driver, *Bodies in space: Foucault's account of disciplinary power* (London, Routledge, 1994).
- 30 Gaceta Oficial No. 37.118, 12 January 2001.

- ³¹ M. Chapin and B. Threlkeld, *Indigenous Landscapes: A Study in Ethnocartography* (Washington, DC, Center for the Support of Native Lands, 2001).
- ³² The unfortunate foregrounding of elder men's 'expert' knowledge was seen as necessary both by the author, indigenous leaders, and women engaged in the project as a means to adequately, quickly and accurately document land-use in remote areas that are rarely, if ever, visited by women. However, critical attention to gender imbalances in indigenous mapping is crucial for a better understanding of the social implications of such projects. This gendered process excluded women's perspectives derived from occasional travels between communities, and elder women's memories of place names, hunting places, and were overlooked. Although elder women participated as experts in three of the 12 communities, in the remaining villages the process was dominated by elder men.
- ³³ See e.g. J.B. Harley, 'Maps, knowledge, and power', in D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels, eds, *The iconography of landscape: essays on the symbolic representation, design, and use of past environments* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 277–312; J.B. Harley, 'Cartography, ethics, and social theory', *Cartographica* 27 (1990), pp. 1–23; J.B. Harley, 'Deconstructing the map', in T. Barnes and J. Duncan, eds, *Writing worlds: discourse, text and metaphor in the representation of landscape* (London, Routledge, 1992), pp. 231–47; J. Scott, *Seeing like a state* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998).
- ³⁴ Crehan, *Gramsci, Culture and anthropology*, p. 7.
- ³⁵ Gazeta Oficial No. 38.599, 8 January 2007; see <http://www.asambleanacional.gov.ve/ns2/pdf/gacetas/38599%2020070108.pdf>
- ³⁶ Scott, *Domination and the arts of resistance*.
- ³⁷ H. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and narration* (London, Routledge, 1990).
- ³⁸ Graham, 'Image and instrumentality in a Xavante politics of existential recognition: the public outreach work of Ete'nhiritipa Pimentel Barbosa', p. 625.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*