



MADR 598 Master's Project

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Toquaht Nation is a First Nations community with traditional territories East of Ucluelet on Barkley Sound, Vancouver Island. The purpose of this project is to assess the way that Toquaht citizens receive communications and relate to the community and Nation government, by engaging citizens around these issues. Specifically, the research question asks,

What strategies could the Toquaht Nation Executive use to more effectively communicate with citizens, share information and encourage civic participation?

Sub questions include:

- How do citizens currently receive Nation communications?
- What information do citizens require in order to effectively participate in civic activities?
- How do citizens want to participate in the community?

The client for this Masters of Dispute Resolution project is the Toquaht Nation Director of Operations. In addition to making recommendations, this project aims to increase citizen interest and participation in Toquaht affairs, and enrich citizen relations through community dialogue. For the research field, this study contributes much needed consideration of the particularities of First Nations citizen participation and disengagement.

Background

Toquaht Nation is a small coastal Nuu-chah-nulth community of 150 citizens. While the Nations' home village is in Macoah, their population is dispersed across the towns and urban centres of Vancouver Island and BC. This distance creates challenges to maintaining clear and open communication between government and citizens. Since 2011, Toquaht Nation has had restored self-governance powers under the *Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement*. The treaty defines Toquaht self-governance authority over their lands, resources and citizens. The implementation of self-governance has caused significant changes, including to the Nation's governance structure, leadership, and the roles of citizens. One of the main engagement methods used is the seasonally held People's Assemblies. The People's Assembly is intended to provide citizens a forum for direct participation in Nation governance, creating a parallel responsibility for citizens to be informed and involved in Nation activities.

Literature Review

Citizen political participation and community engagement refer to the process of better connecting citizens to their community and government. Citizen political participation is measured by the level of substantive decision-making power that citizens have in governance. Community engagement is defined as the connections between citizens and the whole community. It details a broader range of activities and is measured by accounting any instances of social or political activity by citizens. Participation and engagement are affected by citizens' individual capacity and perception of the political realm. Based on this review, a typology of citizen participation in Toquaht Nation was created, as well as a conceptual framework of factors that move Toquaht citizens to engage, or to disengage. Disengaging factors were estimated to be logistical issues, civic and social distrust, and lack of knowledge or understanding of politics. Engaging factors were estimated to be institutional forums for participation, social engagement and volunteerism, and civic education. This typology and conceptual framework were carried through the data collection, analysis and final discussion of the project.

Methodology

This project is grounded in interpretivist theory and is primarily qualitative. The site of the study was Toquaht Nation itself, and data collections coincided with the Nation's People's Assemblies. Targeted participants included all Nation citizens of voting age. Data collection and analysis for this project took place over four phases, with the analyzed information gleaned from the previous phase informing the structure of the subsequent phase. The four collection and analysis phases included,

1. Background and literature review,
2. Community survey,
3. Community engagement activity #1,
4. Community engagement activity #2.

Findings and Discussion

Findings included participant perspectives on the factors that contribute to disengagement, the factors that motivate Toquaht citizens to greater involvement, and the factors that are the most compelling aspects of community life for citizens. Keeping with the conceptual framework, the analyzed themes were organized among the concepts of disengagement, motivators, and Toquaht community life. Many of the challenges and proposed solutions described by participants were similar to those raised in the literature while still addressing the specific issues and resources of the Toquaht community.

When describing disengagement, participants discussed three primary causes, distance, uncertainty and communication gaps. Suggestions for overcoming distance included solutions for reaching citizens where they are, and bringing citizens home. Participants

suggested that effective communication mechanisms should be identified that could work for the range of Nation citizens, and agreed with the literature that ongoing civic education was important to empower citizens to participate in Nation politics.

When describing motivating factors, participants raised the positive side of themes discussed under disengagement. First, participants suggested civic education ought to be a priority for community development. Second, participants suggested effective communication between citizens and government could be achieved using a combination of general mass communication methods and targeted inter-personal communications. Roles for youth was a lesser discussed theme, but one that was highlighted in the literature as key to developing a sustainable civic culture in communities.

Finally, rather than distinguish between the social and political activities they engaged in, participants focused on the important qualities of their community, what made them feel connected and proud as a citizen. The original concepts of social and political participation were combined to create the concept of Toquaht community life. For participants, the most inspirational qualities of Toquaht community life were self-determination, culture, family and celebration. It was determined that the Nation should work to maximize these positive aspects in all community engagements.

Recommendations

This study resulted in 10 practical recommendations to the Nation Executive for making communications and citizen engagement efforts more effective. These included,

1. Create a Council committee on civic education and citizen outreach.
2. Designate regional hubs and representatives.
3. Create a Nation 'communication tree'.
4. Encourage outlets for citizens to facilitate carpooling and lodging.
5. Create a Nation youth council.
6. Train a pool of citizens and staff as informal civic educators
7. Make community gatherings fun, engaging and accessible for citizens.
8. Employ a diversity of general mass-communication methods.
9. Create a diversity of accessible civic education resources and materials.
10. Foster spaces for citizen dialogue.

Conclusion

It is hoped that as a result of this project citizens will have greater interest and confidence to engage in community dialogue, and be inspired to forge stronger community connections. For the research field, this project contributes needed consideration of the particularities of First Nations citizen participation and disengagement. Further study of Aboriginal peoples engagement with social capital and civic governance is needed to better understand the systematic and historical issues at play.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The struggle for greater citizen political involvement is a pain felt by democracies the world over. In the relatively new context of restored Aboriginal self-governance in Canada, First Nations governments are facing the challenge of how to engage citizens who have long suffered marginalization and political disempowerment from colonial institutions. While a socially engaged and politically active citizenry are heralds for any strong community, strong connection between citizens and government is especially important in First Nations communities. In addition to being weighty imperatives for ongoing programs of national and cultural renewal, this is also a matter of protecting and growing community assets. With the relatively small size and limited human and financial resources of First Nations communities, the absence of every citizen who moves away or disengages from community life is immediately felt and tangible. In a time when First Nations across Canada are undertaking projects in governance, education and economic development at an unprecedented rate, the people-power required to drive these projects needs to be better understood.

This project will consider the particular case of Toquaht Nation. Toquaht Nation is a First Nations community in Macoah, British Columbia (BC) on the West coast of Vancouver Island. The community has been undergoing significant political changes in recent years, including as a result of the signing of their modern treaty with the BC and federal governments (*Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement*). The transition away from *Indian Act* governance has created some uncertainty among citizens about how they should participate in the context of increased self-governance. Recently, the Executive has been challenged about how it can keep citizens effectively informed and engaged through the significant changes that are happening in the community.

1.1 Project Client and Deliverables

As this Master's project was designed to be conducted in service of an external client, the focus of this study has been on creating a final product that will be of value to the community and the official project client, Toquaht Director of Operations, Sarah Robinson. In analyzing the real-life circumstances of citizen participation and communication in Toquaht Nation and applying Dispute Resolution models for community engagement, this project will deliver both the analyzed data from the study, as well as recommendations for more effective communications and engagement with citizens. Effort will also be made to make this report and presentation available to the wider Toquaht citizenry, likely through its presentation at a later People's Assembly meeting.

1.2 Research Question and Sub Questions

The central research question for this project is:

What strategies could the Toquaht Nation Executive use to more effectively communicate with citizens, share information and encourage civic participation?

Sub questions include:

- How do citizens currently receive Nation communications?
- What information do citizens require in order to effectively participate in civic activities?
- How do Toquaht citizens want to participate in the community?

1.3 Project Objectives and Rationale

The purpose of this project is to assess the way that Toquaht citizens currently receive communications and relate to the Nation government, and then engage citizens to collaboratively devise strategies to improve communication and citizen participation.

I hope this project will help the Toquaht Executive and staff make informed policy decisions for their communications and citizen engagement strategies, including how they communicate with those living outside of Macoah. It aims to increase citizen understanding of and participation in Toquaht affairs, enriching the community and increasing community capacity.

More broadly, this project could serve as a resource for First Nations leaders looking to engage their citizens as they undertake major community projects, or go through similar transitions from *Indian Act* governance to self-governance. Indeed, much more work needs to be done around best practices for smooth transitions to self-governance and treaty implementation, of which citizen engagement is a crucial element.

1.4 Situating Myself

Research with Aboriginal peoples and communities has suffered from researchers who fail to self-reflect and situate themselves with regard to their own personal context, beliefs, and social and political agendas (Kenny et al., 2004, p. 16). In keeping with the views of qualitative research, my own understanding of this project, and information collected as part of this study is understood to be affected by my own worldview, past experiences, values and beliefs (Creswell, 2014, p. 187). It is on this principle, and with the desire to conduct respectful research with Toquaht Nation, that I situate myself within this project.

I am a Euro-Canadian settler woman of Scottish, Irish and English heritage. For me to refer to myself as a settler means that I am identifying my place in a long, complicated, often oppressive and important relationship that has characterized Canada since the beginning of European colonial incursions. It is an effort to acknowledge the far-reaching privileges that I have benefitted from as a result of the systematic dislocation of Aboriginal communities initiated by the European-settlers that came before me.

I am one of three daughters of an RCMP and nurse. My parents lived and worked in northern Aboriginal communities in the North West Territories before moving to suburban southern Ontario in search of better schools when my older sister and I were ready to start school.

Through my social, political and musical curiosities in my teens, I became increasingly interested in global social justice issues and learning about far away wars and wrongs. A major turning point in my personal passions came from reading an interview with the singer of a beloved punk rock band, who spoke of the need for youth to consider the injustices in their own backyard before turning their energies elsewhere. He spoke of pervasive racism that First Nations people face in this Canada and called “Native-bashing” the last socially acceptable frontier of overt racism in Canada. This caused me to pause and reflect on my own views and opinions on my country’s First People’s, and I had to admit at that time I had a complete dearth of knowledge on the subject.

As my personal interests turned, I undertook undergraduate studies in Peace and Conflict at the University of Toronto with a focus on Aboriginal issues. As I learned and reflected more, I became more curious about the First Nations-settler relationship and how it plays out today in policy, treaty negotiations, in the media, and the courts. While there is rarely a shortage of bad news in this area, I was optimistic about the potential for negotiated Aboriginal self-government to transform the First Nations-settler relationship and the social conditions on many First Nations reserves.

What attracted me to working with Toquaht Nation for my Masters project was the question of what comes after the accomplishment of treaty and self-government, to consider what complexities might be waiting on the other side. While the measured restoration of self-government through the *Maa-nulth Final Agreement*, and ending the domain of the *Indian Act* has been instrumental in restoring the voice of Toquaht Nation, imagining how all citizens might now find their voices in this new space is another piece of the reconciliation puzzle that I am honored to take part in.

1.5 Organization of this Project Report

Chapter 2 will provide necessary background information on Toquaht Nation governance, history, and Nuu-chah-nulth worldview and culture. Chapter 3 will present relevant literature on the topics of citizen participation and community engagement in both Western and First Nations contexts. Further, this chapter will conclude with a conceptual framework outlining factors I consider to be applicable to this project, and which informed later data collections. Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the qualitative research methodology chosen for this project, which used several sequential phases of data collection (including background and literature review, community survey, and two community engagement activities) to gather, analyze and validate data. Chapter 5 will present the findings from the survey and community engagement activities and will discuss the major themes established in the data analysis, and then compare these themes to the relevant literature. Chapter 6 will provide recommendations for promoting efficient communications between Toquaht citizens and the Nation government, and promoting greater citizen participation in political activities and community life.

2. BACKGROUND

The Toquaht people of Western Barkley Sound, Toquaht Bay and Mayne Bay belong to the Nuu-chah-nulth linguistic and cultural group of First Nations that have lived along the northwest coast of Vancouver Island for perpetuity. Toquaht Nation is a small community. After many years of working to rebuild and reconnect citizens to the community, Toquaht Nation now has a population of 150 citizens (www.gov.bc.ca/arr/firstnation/maa-nulth/). Roughly 9-25 (fluctuates seasonally) of those citizens live in the main community of Macoah, while the majority live in the neighboring towns and urban centers on Vancouver Island: Ucluelet, Port Alberni, Nanaimo, Victoria, and elsewhere in the northwest.

2.1 Evolution of the Project Partnership

The opportunity to partner with Toquaht Nation for the completion of my Master's project evolved from a meeting with Toquaht's Director of Operations, Sarah Robinson, to discuss the possibility of working with Toquaht as a coop term. While discussing areas where Sarah saw need for more research work done, the conversation turned to some of the frustrations she and the Toquaht Executive had been experiencing in trying to boost attendance at People's Assemblies and feeling they were constantly having to clarify what is and is not the role of the Toquaht Executive and staff.

After our conversation, this issue stuck with me because I thought it the interesting by-product of the Nation's recent transition to self-government. After over a decade of negotiations, the Nation's political institutions had flipped with the stroke of a pen. While the structural changes were obvious, it seemed the political culture of the citizens themselves had lagged in the transition and many were failing to connect with how their own role as Toquaht citizens had changed as a result of the treaty. Eventually I approached Sarah again, this time to propose pursuing this topic as my Masters of Dispute Resolution project, and over a matter of months, I developed a project proposal for presentation to the Toquaht Executive.

My first proposal to the Executive differed in terms of its research design and methods. In consideration of ethical principles of how research with Aboriginal communities ought to be conducted, in this first effort I tried to craft a project that would put the community (in the form of a community research committee) in control of determining research directions and procedures, and ultimately in charge of developing community-based solutions (Kenny et al., 2004, pp. 10-11). Unfortunately, without a research team or funding, such community-based participatory research process put a significant burden of voluntary work on community members. The already overstretched Executive feared that the proposed project would be too time consuming. At this junction, one of my professors

offered me a valuable insight when I expressed my fear that the project could not go forward without commitment to a collaborative design process, saying, “It is not for you to say how the community ought to participate.” With this advice and the feedback of the Executive in mind, I submitted a new proposal for the Executive’s consideration that shifted much of the planning and data collection back to myself as researcher. Based on these changes, the Toquaht Executive approved the project. The final amendment had replaced the proposed semi-structured interviews with a community survey so that administrators could have the benefit of the resultant demographic data from citizens. Additionally, the duration of the data collection activities were tightened in order to respect the time of participating citizens.

2.2 Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview and History

The Toquaht people are traditionally a marine people, long depending on intimate knowledge and relations with the sea to sustain their community and economy. Pre-contact, Macoah was a major center for whaling, though families would migrate to several village sites throughout the year to support a livelihood based on seasonal fishing, hunting and gathering (Arima & Hoover, 2011, p. 20, 95; <http://www.toquaht.ca/toquahtculture/>).

Toquaht and Nuu-chah-nulth worldview hinges on this traditional reliance on the riches of their coastal environment. The foundation of Nuu-chah-nulth worldview is the concept of *Tsawalk*, meaning, “all is one.” This considers that all creation is united at a fundamental level (Atleo, 2004, p. xi). This is significant because the traditional Nuu-chah-nulth conception of the universe is in contrast to dominant Western concepts of individuality and silos of existence.

The cultural orientation towards unity is reflected in traditional Nuu-chah-nulth political order. The traditional territories of each Nuu-chah-nulth Nation are known as the Ha’houlthee. The Ha’houlthee is not a simple measure of geographic boundaries, but rather all life within that territory, past and present. That could include people, animals, plants minerals and spirits. Each of the things composing this rich ancestral endowment is understood to be intimately connected (Mack, 2009, p. 66; Castleden, 2007, p. 5). Nuu-chah-nulth Nations, including Toquaht, have organized politically according to a hierarchical social class system and hereditary chieftain and known as the Ha’wiih. All the responsibilities of the Ta’yii Ha’wiih (hereditary head chief) hinge on maintaining the balance and wellbeing of the Ha’houlthee (Arima & Hoover, 2011, pg. 105-107; Atleo, 2004, p. 77, 81). As will be explored, it was the primary responsibility of the Ha’wiih to engage in practices of listening and balancing all the voices and concerns of life and community in the Ha’holthee (Mack, 2009, p. 66).

Many of Nuu-chah-nulth teachings focus on the meaning and importance of community as a natural expression of “unity of creation” (Atleo, 2004, pp. 12-14, 23). Life depended on community, and the purpose of life was to support wholeness of community (Atleo, 2004, p. 12). Nuu-chah-nulth teachings encourage interdependence by placing value on social ethics of friendliness and asking for help when in need (Atleo, 2004, p. 12). As hereditary Nuu-chah-nulth chief of the Ahousaht Nation, Atleo (2004) writes, “In the Nuu-chah-nulth worldview, it is unnatural, and equivalent to death and destruction for any person to be isolated from community. Nuu-chah-nulth life therefore is founded by creating and maintaining relationships.” (p. 27).

Decision-making in this socio-political context was often a consensus-based dialogic process between the chiefs and a council of knowledgeable Elders (Arima & Hoover, 2011, p. 109; Atleo, 2004, p. 88). As Atleo (2004) describes, this would commonly involve the Ta’yii Ha’wiih and their councilors sitting in circle with all agenda items represented in the center. All present were acknowledged and given equal opportunity to speak on any item. These meetings prioritized education and the acknowledgement and respect of all participants. Circular discussion would continue until each individual understood the issue and some agreement could be reached. While effort was made to reach unanimous decisions, final decision rested with the chiefs. Where agreement could not be reached, it was typical for the conflict to be openly admitted (Atleo, 2004, p. 89).

Nuu-chah-nulth political structures and social, economic and spiritual relations were expressed through complex ceremonies, such as potlatches. Potlatches mark and create a record of important social occasions and recognize political and economic relations. Ceremonies such as these would have taken place over several days, and were striking for extreme gift giving by the host chief, feasting and song and dance performances (Arima & Hoover, 2011, pp. 112-120; Castleden, 2007, p. 5). Like many aspects of Nuu-chah-nulth society, potlatching practices would be disrupted by the settlement of Europeans in their territory.

2.3 Colonial Incursion

European settlers first arrived to Vancouver Island in the late 1700s. Similar to the experience of Aboriginal people across Canada, Nuu-chah-nulth social, economic, political, cultural, educational and health institutions suffered significantly from settler colonial practices and policies. These incursions have been demonstrated to have long-term effects on the health of First Nations communities (Arima & Hoover, 2011, pp. 186-187; Castleden, 2007, p. 3; Yates, 2004, p. 12). For Toquaht Nation and other Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, the introduction of European diseases, the imposition of the *Indian Act* and Residential Schools, and the ban on potlatching were traumatic disruptions to their communities (Castleden, 2007, p. 3).

Throughout the 19th century, Toquaht Nation was devastated by disease and warfare, nearly decimating their population and making it the smallest of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations (Arima & Hoover, 2011, p. 20). In 1876 the federal government imposed its legal system on First Nations through the enactment of the *Indian Act*. In Toquaht Nation, community control was removed from the Ha'wiihs, as were Toquaht people removed from their familial seasonally-based homes and relocated to small reserves established in the village of Macoah and other sites (Arima & Hoover, 2011, p. 181; Castleden, 2007, p. 4). In the last decade of the 19th century, Residential schools came to the West coast, removing children from their homes for education in Port Alberni in an effort to assimilate youth to the dominant Canadian society (Arima & Hoover, 2011, p. 188). In 1884, the *Indian Act* was amended to further federal control of First Nations communities by outlawing potlatching (Arima & Hoover, 2011, p. 186; *Potlatch: A strict law bids us dance*, 1975).

Despite significant suffering from these colonial incursions, Toquaht Nation, along with other Nuu-chah-nulth Nations did manage to maintain many elements of their traditional governance structure. Toquaht Nation continued their system of passing down leadership from haw'iih to offspring, typically to the eldest male offspring (whose control over attendant territories and resources was significantly diminished). In this way some measure of traditional political organization was maintained, though much of their hierarchical social class structure was eroded in the campaigns of Christian missionaries (Arima & Hoover, p. 186). In 1944 Bert Mack was named Toquaht Ta'yii Ha'wiih after his father Cecil Mack, and served as chief continually for over half a century until 2009 (Wiwchar, 2012).

2.4 Maa-nulth Final Agreement

Unlike elsewhere in Canada, for the most part, First Nations in British Columbia (BC) never ceded title to their territories, nor were they engaged in any historical treaty processes. Since the time of contact, Toquaht and other Nuu-chah-nulth Nations maintained their claim to sovereignty over traditional lands and resources, and actively campaigned for decades to recover control over their Ha'houlthee.

In 1994, together with the 14 Nations of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Toquaht Nation entered treaty negotiations with the BC and federal governments (Arima & Hoover, 2011, p. 192). The goal of these negotiations was to seek a just settlement of the 'land and sea question' within all of their respective territories. By 2001, the table had reached an Agreement in Principle (AIP), although when this agreement was taken to the citizens of the respective member Nations, only Toquaht and five other Nations of the original 14 voted in support of the AIP (Castleden, 2007, p. 4). After already having invested seven years and millions of dollars to get to that point, the Nuu-chah-nulth treaty table splintered,

and five of the Nations that had voted to approve the AIP resolved to continue with negotiations as the newly formed Maa-nulth Treaty Society (Arima & Hoover, 2011, p. 192)

The *Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement* was collectively reached by the five participating Nations (Ucluelet First Nation, Huu-ay-aht First Nation, Toquaht Nation, Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations, and Uchucklesaht Tribe), the federal government and the province of BC, under the BC Treaty Commission process. In April 2011, Toquaht Nation joined a very select group of BC First Nations to implement a modern treaty (Arima & Hoover, 2011, p. 193). This treaty represented the achievement of the long stranding goal for many Toquaht citizens, none more so than Ta'yii Ha'wiih Bert Mack, who served as lead negotiator for the Maa-nulth negotiations team well into his eighties (Wiwchar, 2012).

The final referendum on the treaty passed with a significant majority of support, with 78% of the participating Toquaht electorate voting to approve the treaty (Toquaht Nation, 2007). Toquaht Nation received a total settlement land package of nearly 1,500 hectares of their traditional land as well as financial agreements for capital transfers, resource revenue sharing payments and lump sum payments (Maa-nulth First Nations). As a result of the self-governance provisions of the treaty, the *Toquaht Nation Constitution* and other pieces of Nation legislation replaced the *Indian Act*. This returned many significant elements of self-determination that had previously been lost in the colonial experience. The *Toquaht Nation Constitution* (2007) describes the values that underpin all Nation actions, and place reverence for history, spiritual belief, traditional systems and the Ha'holthee at the center of Toquaht life (p. 1). The Constitution further describes the Nation's new governance structure and decision-making processes. The three main branches of government are the Legislative branch, the Executive branch, and the People's Assembly.

The Legislative branch is vested in the Toquaht Council. The Toquaht Council is composed of two Ha'wiih (head hereditary chief and secondary hereditary chief) and three democratically elected councilors with terms of four-years (Toquaht Nation Constitution, 2007). No law can have force or effect until it has been passed by a majority of the Toquaht Council and is certified by the Ta'yii Ha'wilth (Head Chief)(Toquaht Nation Constitution, 2007).

The Executive branch is also composed of members of the Nation Council. The Nation Executive has the greatest day-to-day responsibilities and authority, including for the enforcement of Nation laws, management of Nation affairs, maintenance of intergovernmental relations, as well as the financial administration and operations of the Nation. For this reason, my main point of contact with the Toquaht government leadership

has been with the Executive, and I will continually refer to the Toquaht Executive throughout this report.

Each councilor on the Executive is assigned a specific portfolio (e.g., Finance; Community Services; Lands, Public Works and Environmental Protection; and Resource Harvesting). In this way, authority and enforcement of Nation laws, finances, and management and operations of the Nation is dispersed across a number of community leaders (Toquaht Nation Executive Branch, 2013).

The People's Assembly is an important component of the Nation's contemporary governance structure, and is intended to keep all citizens engaged in decision-making. The Assembly consists of all Toquaht Nation citizens of voting age (over 18 years of age) and meets a minimum of four-times annually. The Toquaht Constitution (2007) states that all recommendations passed by the Assembly must be considered and voted on by the Toquaht Nation Executive (p. 7). While this creates a great opportunity for citizens to have voice in Nation affairs, it also creates a parallel responsibility for citizens to be informed and involved in support of Nation activities.

Under the *Indian Act*, Toquaht Nation had maintained key elements of its hereditary chief system, although other traditional elements relating to both the role of counselors in decision-making and the people's ability to vote with their feet (or weapons) had long fallen out of practice, giving the Ta'yii Ha'wiih near exclusive powers in decision-making. As a result, this contemporary governance structure represents a return to traditional principles of more inclusive decision-making. Now, just as pre-colonialism, the Ta'yii Ha'wiih makes decisions with trusted councilors and Nation leaders, but those decisions need to be supported by the broader community in order to have effect. Despite the historic and cultural connection, this political transition, including new acts of citizenship like voting for councilors and participating in People's Assemblies is a new experience for citizens and it is taking time for the community to become accustomed to these changes (J. Mack, personal communication, April 7, 2014)

2.5 Leadership Change

Further compounding the changes of recent years, in June 2012, former Tyee Ha'wiih Bert Mack passed away at the age of 89. Just three years previous, he had passed down chieftainship to his daughter Anne Mack after leading Toquaht Nation continuously for 65 years. Having led the Nation for well over half a century and providing key leadership through treaty negotiations, Bert Mack's passing marked the loss of a wealth of knowledge on Nation leadership, the territory, its history and protocols. His decision to pass the chieftainship to his daughter Anne also represented a significant change, as traditionally the Nation's chief is male, though Chief Mack himself asserted that at least three women

had held the position in the last 150 years

(<http://www.canada.com/story.html?id=1098e54c-a96a-422d-b9d3-420b6e9328b1>).

This background has provided a short study of Nuu-chah-nulth worldview, pre and post contact history including the impact of colonial incursions, as well as contemporary governance developments in the Nation. Nuu-chah-nulth culture honors history, as evidenced by the high place of tradition, Elders, ancestors and centuries-old stories in their communities. For this reason, and especially as an outside researcher, it was important for me to begin understand what cultural, historical and political systems and events have brought the community to today, in the hopes that this understanding would allow me to conduct more appropriate and collaborative work with the community. The section to follow considers the relevant subject literature instrumental in the design and implementation of this project

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a significant volume of writing on the subject of citizen participation, community engagement and both civil and civic participation within the fields of political science, sociology, philosophy and community development. The motivations within each field vary from the strengthening of democratic institutions, and the enrichment of interpersonal connections and society, to better decision-making in local governments. Indeed, the question of how to better connect citizens to their government is one that has confounded scholars and practitioners going back to the political philosophers of Aristotle's time (Walsh, 1999, p. 5). As the body of efforts on this question has demonstrated, the issue of citizen participation is not unique to any community, and is not one that is likely to ever be definitively solved. As has been suggested, the question of how to connect and engage citizens in the affairs of the government and community at large is one that ought to be raised continually to address changing social and political contexts, as well as the changing expectations of the citizens (Walsh, 1999, p. 5).

Many authors point to citizen apathy, distrust of government and alienation from community as primary symptoms of governments' connection problem. This is seen to be a trend throughout North America and the established democracies of the Western world, if not the world over (Bennett, 2003, p. 60; Cole, 1974, p. 2; Ekman & Amna, 2012, p. 283; Innes & Booher, 2010, p. 197; Putnam, 2000, p. 35, 136-37; Walsh, 1999, p. 1). Voting is regarded as the most common form of political activity and most fundamental democratic activity of citizens. Low voter turnout in local and national elections is often pointed out to illustrate the disconnection between individual citizens and government (Ekman & Amna, 2012, p. 283; Putnam, 2000, pp. 35-46; Walsh, 1999, p. 1). For many political scientists and sociologists, citizen trust and interest in government affairs has been in rapid decline since the end of WWII (Cole, 1974, p. 2; Putnam, 2000, pp. 183-184). Changes in social life, such as an increased value placed on the individual and individual rights, as well as shifts in how citizens are spending their leisure time are commonly offered as explanations for this decline (Cole, 1974, p. 2; Walsh, 1999, p. 53). Robert Putnam noted in his well-known 2000 book "Bowling Alone" that American citizens are spending less and less time engaged in the institutions that make up civic life (e.g., family, church, community and volunteer organizations); the institutions through which individuals have traditionally formed alliances and undertaken social and community initiatives (p. 115). Across all these discussions and myriad warnings the echo remains the same; governments must work to create more direct channels for citizens to get involved (Cole, 1974, p. 2).

Much of the large body of literature on civic engagement is written from a Western-democratic (often American) perspective, which considers the experience of individuals living in predominantly Western urban environments. There has been much less consideration given to how civic engagement and citizen participation might be different in the context of First Nations communities. In her thesis on engaging First Nations in the development of local child welfare policy, Bennett (2003) writes that the extent of alienation and distrust between citizens and their government is much more significant in First Nations communities than among the general population. This is the consequence of generations of colonial programs intended to systematically disassociate Aboriginal people from community life, and the unilateral imposition of legislation, such as the 1876 *Indian Act*, that removed decision-making powers from First Nations individuals and the community as a whole (p. 89). Still today Bennett (2003) notes that First Nations are consistently excluded from government discussions on issues that affect their rights (p. 89).

Despite these unique impediments resulting from the toll of colonization, Bennett (2003) makes the connection that citizen engagement is the key to successful Aboriginal self-governance. Admitting that connecting First Nations people to the affairs of their community government necessitates a patient process of healing and empowerment she explains, "Participation is about the will of the people but because First Nations people have lived through long periods of dependency, most have forgotten their true strength." (p. 173). The necessary task is for First Nations' governments to find ways to motivate their citizens to become fully engaged and involved in the development, implementation and maintenance of their own governments. Namely, they need to find ways to instill a sense of ownership in these institutions.

This review will reflect on (1) the lexicon used to describe both citizen participation and community engagement, as well as tools for typifying levels of participation and engagement, (2) common challenges for effective participation and engagement, (3) the keys to effective participation and engagement, and finally, (5) issues of community engagement in a First Nations context.

3.1 Citizen Participation Defined

There are a number of different terms used by scholars and practitioners to describe how citizens are involved in the spheres of community and government. These include but are not limited to, citizen/public participation, civic participation and community engagement. Some of this variance in terminology is part of a shift in thinking on the subject, while in other instances terminologies are actually considered part of a spectrum of participation.

One of the early preeminent works on the subject is Arnstein (1971) who defines citizen participation by equating it with citizen power or decision-making power. Citizen participation she says, is essentially the redistribution of power that enables citizens normally excluded from the political and economic process (have-not citizens) to be deliberately included in government decision-making. Other writers have echoed this characterization, Graham and Phillips (1999) similarly define public participation as the decided and active engagement of citizens by their elected representatives outside of elections in order to involve them in strategic decision-making (p. 4). Walsh (1999) defines citizen participation as the “process by which citizens take a leadership role along with their local government administrators and elected officials in making decisions and developing policies that affect their daily lives.” (p. 4). Notably, scholars on the subject increasingly insist that citizen participation cannot be thought of as a single activity or event, or citizen involvement on a piecemeal basis, rather they say, citizen participation much be a consistent approach to how business in government is done (Graham & Phillips, 1999, p. 4).

Figure 1. Arnstein’s Hierarchical Ladder of Citizen Participation (1971)

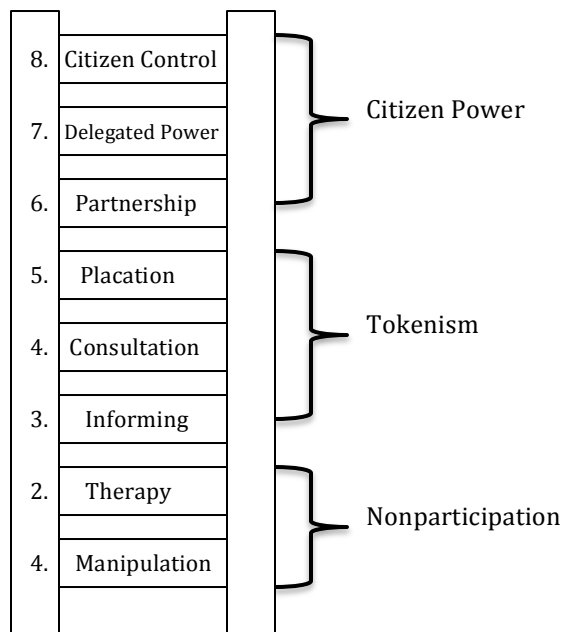


Figure 1. Eight Rungs on the Ladder of Citizen Participation (Source: Sherry R. Arnstein, “Eight Rungs on the Ladder of Citizen Participation” in Edgar S. Cahn and Barry A. Passett, eds. “Citizen Participation: Effecting Community Change,” New York; Praeger, 1971, p 70)

The crux of Arnstein’s (1971) typology of citizen participation is a visual representation of a citizen participation hierarchy. This hierarchy is illustrated by a ladder that walks upward from ‘non-participation’ actions, characterized by one-way communication

between government and citizens with no opportunities for dialogue or public voice. The middle rungs on the ladder are termed “tokenism”. While these rungs represent an improvement from “non participation”- as some space has been opened up for public voice and forums for dialogue, citizens lack authentic power since decision-making power still rests exclusively with the government. The top rungs of the citizen participation ladder are labeled “citizen power,” and are used by Arnstein (1971) to describe processes of open two-way communication between citizens and government, where citizens themselves hold ultimate decision-making power (p. 70). This illustration proposes that the depth of citizen participation in a community hinges on communication and decision-making. In assuming any method of communication, government officials or community engagement practitioners must carefully consider what type of communication the method provides (one-way, two-way, dialogic, etc.) Furthermore, any communications or participation received from citizens will have little meaning or effect if it is not reflected in future policy choices.

Building on Arnstein’s (1971) illustration of the continuum of citizen participation, Graham and Phillips (1999) argue that in addition to information sharing and public education, the objectives of a government’s citizen participation process must be about community empowerment and actual power sharing in order to be authentic. This, they argue will in turn bolster the legitimacy of government, and make it more accountable to its constituents (p. 8).

While true citizen participation may seem like a lot of extra work for government, scholars and practitioners agree that it is in the interest of governments to promote active and engaged citizenship across the spectrum (Packman, 2008, p. 37). When passive recipients of government services are invited to become politically active citizens, the result is a reciprocal relationship between government and citizens. While governments must cede some of their control, citizens in turn must assume a much greater responsibility of shaping the community they want to live in (Graham & Phillips, 1999, p. 13).

3.2 Community Engagement Defined

While the terms citizen and civic participation have been more narrowly used to describe the participation of constituents in the sphere of politics, government and the delivery of its services, in recent years scholars and practitioners have begun instead referring to community and civic engagement (Packman, 2008, pp. 28-29). The term community engagement has emerged from the awareness of the need to expand the conception of what kinds of relationships and activities can support governance. Putnam’s (2000) work has made the most significant contribution to this discussion. Putnam puts forward that interested parties are wrong to focus singularly on manifest forms of citizen participation (eg. voting, protest, attending public meetings), and offers instead that that our conception

of what drives civic (political) life should be expanded to include latent forms of participation (e.g. volunteering, helping a neighbor, joining a sports league). All such forms of social involvement, what he terms ‘social capital,’ build social relations, supports community, and ultimately, healthy civic life (Ekman & Amna, 2012, pp. 243-248; Putnam, 2000, pp. 19-21). While some have criticized this work for exaggerating the link between all social activities and civic affairs, the holistic approach that community engagement offers has largely stuck with scholars and practitioners alike. (Ekman & Amna, 2012, 283-284)

One of the criticisms of Putnam’s work is that it invites too broad a definition of community engagement. Reviewing existing definitions of the community engagement, Adler and Goggin (2005) concluded that there was no single agreed upon understanding of the term (pp. 238-240). In their own efforts to propose a useful definition, they define civic engagement as “how an active citizen participates in the life of the community in order to improve life for others or help shape their community’s future (Adler & Goggin, 2005, p. 241).

How individual citizens engage with their communities, and the strategies governments use to encourage citizen engagement can differ, however the benefits for government and the wider community remain the same; the generation of social capital. Social capital refers to the horizontal networks and relations that citizens form organically through involvement in both manifest and latent civic activities, which has been empirically shown to build social trust, cooperation among citizens, bolster the effectiveness of government services and their delivery, and generally contribute to a more efficient government and a stronger economy.” (Graham & Phillips, 1999, p. 6; Putnam, 2000, pp. 27-28).

In their 2012 article, “Political Participation and Civic Engagement: Towards a new Typology,” Ekman & Amna attempt to clarify the relationship between latent and manifest participation. They build on ideas from Adler and Goggin (2005) that civic engagement should be considered a continuum spanning from the private sphere to the formal public sphere (p. 241).

Figure 2. Alder and Goggin’s Continuum of Civic Engagement (2005)



Figure 2. Chart represents the sequential relationship between the concepts of non-participation, civil participation and political participation in Alder and Goggin’s continuum of civic engagement (Adapted from: R. P. Adler, & J. Goggin. (2005) What Do You Mean By “Civic Engagement”? *Journal of Transformative Education*, 3(3), 236–253.

Ekman and Amna reconfigure this continuum to represent how individuals and groups participate in political life, where they conceive that at any given time citizens fall between non-participation and political participation (manifest political engagement.) Civil participation (latent participation) makes up the mid-point of the scale between disengagement and manifest political engagement (for the Ekman & Amna (2012) table “Typology of different forms of disengagement, involvement, civic engagement and political participation” see Appendix 1).

Like Putnam, Ekman and Amna (2012) view latent participation as crucial to our understanding of citizen participation in political activities. They draw the connection between manifest and latent participation by typifying latent activities pre-political (p. 287). They argue that while a lot of citizen engagement activities might appear on the surface to be non-political because they are not directly aimed at affecting political change, (e.g., reading the newspaper, volunteering at your local school) they nevertheless establish connection to society, community and current affairs (p. 288). These connections enable and encourage citizens to participate politically.

Contemporary scholars of the subject are further interested in how latent (or “pre-political”) forms of participation might be channeled into formal political engagement like voting, sitting on a citizen board, or elected council, attending community meetings, or opposingly what factors might influence citizens to move down the continuum towards non participation (Berger, 2009, p. 345; Ekman & Amna, 2012, p. 295). The following sections will address the literature on factors known to hinder and encourage civic engagement.

3.3 Common Challenges for Participation and Engagement

Despite the efforts of practitioners, and an expanse of research on ways to meaningfully bring citizens into the fold, government officials regularly complain of citizen apathy. The literature designates several factors that cause citizens to shun participation and engagement that will be described here. These include, (1) financial stress, (2) dearth of social trust among citizens, (3) leaders and decision makers not being active in engagement activities, and finally (4) lack of transparency in the participation process.

3.3.1. Financial stress

As Walsh (1999) notes, this kind of citizen malaise is often correlated with a negative economic climate (p. 9). Both large-scale economic downturns and individual financial stress have a serious depressing effect on political involvement, both manifest and latent As an individual’s financial situation becomes more dire, their focus shifts away from community to personal and family survival (Putnam, 2000, pp. 192-193).

In addition to withdrawal of political interest, a citizen's financial challenges will also affect their available leisure time to engage in social or civic activities. Scholars note a persistent struggle in engaging economically marginalized people.

3.3.2. Dearth of social trust

Associated with financial issues, Putnam (2000) also shows that have-not citizens tend to be less trusting than citizens from comfortable financial situations, likely because society tends to treat wealthier individuals with more respect and honesty (p. 138). Whereas people who trust others tend to be good, active citizens, people who lack trust are socially and politically disengaged. While a primary goal of citizen participation and community engagement activities is to build social trust, many scholars have noted, such processes require a requisite level of social trust even to begin.

Lemont (2006) names distrust as a central obstacle to citizen political participation in Aboriginal communities. Distrust, he says, stems from citizen fears rightly or wrongly held that their input will not matter, or will be held against them, and that government officials are not genuine in their calls for widespread citizen participation. In this way, participation is a kind of vulnerability. If citizens do not feel safe and confident in the process, he says, they will not share their voices (p. 246). In planning and outreach for engagement activities, leaders must look for ways to build transparency and citizen buy-in into the process.

3.3.3. Leaders and decision makers not active in engagement activities

A related best practice for bolstering citizen trust in engagement activities is making political leaders the face of the engagement activity. Just as citizens are being asked to make themselves vulnerable, political leaders must be seen as putting their name and credibility on the line to ensure the success of the activity, often regarded as the implementation of citizen input. To their detriment, engagement activities are often led by outside practitioners who report their findings to leadership with no pressure for leaders to act on them (Graham & Phillips, 1999, pp. 7-8; Sewell, 1999, p. 89; Lemont, 2006, p. 15). Graham and Phillips (1999) conclude that when the sponsoring government is perceived as unprepared to commit the time and resources to make the process work, and citizens feel the process is unlikely to affect relevant policy decisions, savvy citizens are unlikely to participate (p. 7). Engagement activities without the full participation of leaders with decision-making clout are regarded as an insincere; a waste of participant's time and goodwill, and of government resources.

3.3.4. Process not transparent

While the involvement and commitment of government leaders in engagement initiatives is key, the specific goals of engagement activities can vary. Problems arise when the goals and intention of the activity are not clear and objective to participants. When the structure or

rules of the game are not explicitly addressed from the outset, or else are inconsistent, citizen trust and buy-in in the process are negatively affected. Goals and expectations of the process must be made explicit from the outset and treated with the reverence of a signed contract. Graham and Phillips (1999) warn there is significant potential for conflict and ill-feelings developing when citizens believe they are participating in power-sharing and decision-making process, while government officials merely intend to gather information and perspectives (p. 8). Part of any responsible and conscientious engagement process ought to be educating participants about where the process might fall on a spectrum such as the Arstein Ladder of Participation (1971), thus establishing what level of power and control participants can expect in the process.

With the challenges and common pitfalls of community engagement having been addressed here, the necessary structural components of successful community engagement identified in the literature will be the subject of the proceeding section to provide greater insight into how a successful system might actually be built.

3.4 Key Elements for Effective Participation and Engagement

The task for leaders becomes overcoming these barriers to trust and participation both by minimizing the aforementioned impediments to participation and engagement, and working to maximize the factors shown to support and bolster community engagement. The literature reveals several themes that prime citizens for participation and engagement and creates the institutions for citizens to raise their voices. The key pieces that will be discussed here include, (1) education, (2) volunteerism, and (3) forums for dialogue.

3.4.1. Education

Citizens' understanding of governmental institutions is essential to their empowerment as civic actors, and increases their capacity to participate fully in political affairs. Lack of education or understanding of the structures that govern them contribute to citizen alienation and non-participation. Putnam (2000) calls political knowledge a critical precondition for active involvement in public affairs. As he says, "If you don't know the rules of the game and the players don't care about the outcome, you are unlikely to try playing yourself." (p. 35). In Lemont's (2006) study on constitutional reform efforts in American Indian communities, he found that many, if not most Aboriginal citizens did not have enough detailed understanding of their nation's history, government or constitutional structure to make confident and informed decisions about these matters; citizens were neither prepared, nor comfortable participating politically, and as result they continued to lack a sense of ownership over their government (p. 244).

Lemont also makes the connection between what he sees as a dearth of civic knowledge among Aboriginal citizens, and historic programs by colonial governments. Colonial

programs have “broken the generational links that traditionally served as a channel for communicating and teaching important cultural knowledge, including civic knowledge.” (2002, p. 17). For this reason, ongoing, and targeted programs of civic education must be the centerpiece of any effective citizen participation program. Like other ‘chicken-egg’ scenarios in citizen participation, by taking part in the affairs of their community and government, citizens will deepen their understanding of these spheres, although scholars point out that most citizens will not feel comfortable or interested in engaging until they have a strong base of knowledge on civic institutions. Lemont (2002) maintains that by enhancing citizens’ understanding of traditional governance, the historical origins of their Nation’s contemporary government, and the impact of federal law on First Nations, First Nations can increase the level of interest and participation by their citizens in government (p. 17).

The task for leaders is to find ways to insert educational mechanisms into their everyday affairs. Some of the successful examples provided from Lemont’s case study research on constitutional reform include, investing in accessible educational resources for citizens in various forms (e.g., pamphlets, videos, children’s books, presentations, posters etc.) and introducing civic education and nation history curriculum in schools (2002, pp. 4-5; 2006, p. 245). Lemont found the use of youth councils for civic education programs to be especially effective. Young citizens were given informational presentations during their regular meetings and invited to regularly attend council meetings to learn about local governance first hand. They were then tasked through their own community engagement projects with educating their parents and families about the functions of government and any proposed changes (2006, p. 245). Finally, other communities had success by mandating all government employees to take intensive courses on nation history, so that they could then better educate the citizens of their community (2006, p. 245). Like citizen participation and community engagement itself, education programs must be ongoing in order to be effective. In an era of ever-tightening budgets and competition for limited budget resources, government leaders must fight to make investment in civic education a priority.

3.4.2. Volunteerism

As has already been noted in this review, scholars draw a strong connection between civic engagement and volunteerism. Putnam (2000) calls volunteerism part of the “syndrome of good citizenship and political involvement” (p. 132) that demonstrates their positive engagement with politics. The key in this regard is that volunteerism provides an outlet for citizens to become involved in their community in a multitude of ways, which may or may not directly correspond to community governance. As an outlet for citizens to participate and contribute to community life, volunteerism is essential to a healthy government and

engaged citizenry (Bennett, 2003; Packman, 2008; Plumtree & Graham, 1999; Walsh, 1999).

Volunteerism has several positive offshoots for citizens and government. In her book on the role of volunteerism in community development, Packman (2008) makes the case for why citizens ought to get involved in voluntary activities and groups, and why governments are increasingly paying attention to this sector (p. 3). When individuals get involved in voluntary activities intended to improve the lives of others and the future of their community, they are positively contributing to their individual social well-being, as well as tightening the links of social cohesion and trust across citizens. Taking on new roles in the community through volunteer activities can empower individuals by building their individual capacity and confidence through their contributions to community improvement. Importantly for government leaders, social or civil involvement often creates links to civic involvement as individuals gain confidence, passion for their community, and an interest and understanding of how government affects the aspects of their community (Packman, 2008, p. 2).

Government leaders in turn have been picking up on this academic consensus, and have begun institutionalizing volunteer organizations by putting resources into neighborhood associations, youth councils, citizen boards and more (Walsh, 1999, p. 2). In her writing on community engagement in First Nations contexts, Bennett (2003) argues that renewed volunteerism in First Nations communities is seen by leaders as a tool to reconstitute communities and move towards resilient self-government institutions (pp. 67-68). She writes, "Underlying every sound governance system is the ethic that 'we all need one another' as each person contributes a little and then receives the vast benefits of society's achievements." (Bennett, 2003, p. 67). Any activity that draws citizens out of their individual frames and gets them to turn their attention and efforts to the collective, and connect them with their individual responsibilities as citizens, will build citizen participation and community engagement. Encouraging or even institutionalizing volunteerism is not the only way to do so, but is a lauded strategy for using individuals' personal passions and motivations to draw them in.

3.4.3. Forums for dialogue

Similar to the need for civic education to support community engagement, governments need to champion forums for dialogue in their communities so that information learned can be shared, and debated among constituents of diverse views to improve government decision-making. This requires forums for the dissemination, understanding and discussion of complex issues from the perspective of different corners of the community (Gattinger, 1999, p. 210). Once community leaders and citizens themselves have done the work of drawing in citizens and connecting them to key issues of their interest, effective citizen

participation necessitates a space for individuals to interact with one another and with local government. While governments are well versed in how to create and disseminate one-way communications with carefully crafted messaging through speeches, newsletters, community listservs etc., dialogue is about ceding some of the tightly held control that government has over the proverbial soapbox, and opening up to citizen voices.

Forums for community dialogue can take a number of forms, such as citizen study groups, citizen testimony opportunities at public meetings, and increasingly, online discussion forums. Scholars and dialogic practitioners note that in order to be effective such forums must meet certain criteria, they must be interactive, citizens must feel safe to participate in them, and they must be accessible to the full diversity of the community (Gattinger, 1999, pp. 211-214; Graham & Phillips, 1999, p. 9; HPAIED Report, 2002, p. 5; Lemont, 2006, p. 246). Ensuring that government institutions and programs create space for this top tier citizen-government interaction is essential to creating a healthy climate for citizen participation and community engagement.

Just as attention must be given to the form that dialogue forums take to ensure that they create space for interactive communication in the community, care must also be taken to make that space feel safe so that that all citizens can entrust the process with their voices. Trust is a major theme in citizen participation and community engagement and must be continually considered and nurtured. Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (HPAIED) scholars say that without a guaranteed safe space to do so, Aboriginal citizens will not share their aspirations and ideas for better government. As a starting point, they suggest process leaders must practice deep listening rather than advocacy and work to create an environment free of ridicule and bullying (p. 5). Setting and strictly enforcing ground rules in community dialogue forums is offered as an important way of building safety into the process for making citizens feel comfortable. Ground rules protect participants and support the maintenance of a positive and open process (HPAIED Report, 2002, p. 5). Procedural rules need not be complicated, and often citizens themselves can be tasked with generating them, as they are the experts on what they need to feel comfortable participating.

The literature further notes the importance of government leaders taking on a central role in building a hospitable climate for citizen dialogue and making the goals of the process explicit. In this way citizens know the rules of the game and what to expect going in; thus empowering their decisions to participate. Without genuine invitations from their leaders Lemont (2006) warns that citizens will not have faith in the process and will not participate. He adds that citizens need to feel ownership over the process and trust that their opinions will matter and not simply be dominated by the interests of elected officials or experts (p. 246). Citizen attitudes can be slow to change, so attention to crafting the right

climate for community dialogue requires a consistent and patient effort from leaders committed to hearing from citizens.

The final characteristic associated with successful community dialogue is ensuring that the forum is accessible, and the participants are representative of the full diversity of the community (Graham and Phillips, 1999, p. 9). This can be achieved by employing a variety of different dialogic forms. These should cover different ways of interacting to account for such diversities as individuals' preferred way of communicating (e.g., public speaking, discussion in small groups discussions), different levels of education (e.g., verbal communication, materials written in accessible language vs. high-level expert/ legal language), geographic or time difference (in-person meetings, online forums) etc. Rather than making citizens fit with government processes, government leaders need to find creative ways to draw out those difficult to engage citizens whose voices are often missing from community dialogue. Graham and Phillips (1999) contend that most governments fail to seriously consider and address the inclusion of traditionally underrepresented citizens, such as low-income or uneducated citizens, and rely on communication and engagement strategies that simply target the low-lying fruit; those citizens who are already interested and politically engaged. Governments, they argue, wrongly attribute low participation rates to citizen apathy, when it is more appropriately credited to their own ill-suited, inappropriate and vague communication and engagement strategies (p. 9).

To build a culture of collaboration, leaders must make investments in citizen learning and empowerment, support citizen action and grassroots initiatives, forging links between government and the civil sector, and create accessible institutions that make citizen expression easy and risk free. These are the key steps believed to empower and inspire citizens across communities. The final section of this review will address the particularities of participation and engagement in First Nations communities.

3.5 Participation and Engagement in a First Nations Context

This final section of the review will raise the points of scholars and practitioners who have considered the unique challenges of leaders trying to undertake community engagement in First Nations communities. This takes into consideration the multitude of factors that set First Nations and Aboriginal communities apart from Western communities, and the unique challenges that these raise. These issues range from logistical, to socio-cultural, and normative historical impediments.

As part of her research on community engagement Bennett (2003) interviewed community leaders across Manitoba to ask what keeps First Nations citizens from participating in civic engagement activities. Participants largely agreed that civic engagement in their communities was inhibited by three factors: Firstly that citizens are too busy and

geographically dispersed to participate; Secondly, that political and legal matters often failed to be explained in ways that they understood and that connected with their immediate needs and interests; and finally, the small and tight-knit familial nature of many First Nations communities made it difficult to motivate individuals to raise dissenting views in public forums (p. 143).

HPAIED scholars raise many of the same points in their own case study research. Anonymity, they found, largely does not exist in First Nations communities, and citizens often feel that there could be real social or political repercussions for them participating in ways that are seen as opposing government leaders, powerful families etc. They suggests that in small Aboriginal communities ensuring equal family representation in stakeholder groups and engagement events (if not in government leadership itself) is important to secure a climate of safety in dialogic forums (HPAIED Report, 2002, p. 2).

In addition to having the usual personal and professional priorities and time constraints that might make it difficult to attend meetings and otherwise participate, Lemont (2006) describes how logistical constraints can be much more complicated in Aboriginal communities. Most Aboriginal communities are in rural areas, making physical and wired access more difficult and expensive. Further, many Aboriginal citizens move away from their home communities and relocate in urban areas for education and work opportunities they cannot get at home, making the population disparate. He argues that in such complex logistical circumstances typical citizen outreach communications, like community message boards and nation newspapers, simply do not work (p. 248).

As possible solutions to these challenges, Lemont (2002) suggests that Aboriginal governments must commit to both short and long term programs of civic education to build citizens' knowledge and confidence to participate (p. 4). Furthermore, he suggests that aforementioned logistical constraints paired with common Aboriginal cultural preferences require that Aboriginal governments reach people where they live and work, holding community meetings in out-of-community centers where citizens may live, and going door to door to speak to people one-on-one in their homes. "From utilizing native languages as a tool to explain proposed reforms to reaching out to people where they live and work, reform leaders have consistently stressed the need to supplement typical methods for engaging and educating the public about reform issues (i.e., public meetings and surveys) with more intensive and personalized approaches"(Lemont, 2002, p. 4).

The differences between First Nations communities and the average urban North American community provides unique opportunities and challenges that leaders and engagement planners must respond to. The small population size and strong cultural link typical of First Nations communities provides natural and persistent glue between citizens that often

keeps citizens connected to their home community regardless of where in the world they might currently reside. For this reason, First Nations people have an emotional drive towards community engagement that is not common among the general population. However, the same characteristics that can strengthen community engagement, can also present challenges in crafting citizen participation processes. It is imperative that every First Nations government begin the work of navigating these challenges to make engagement programs work in their communities. Lemont (2006) eloquently describes the critical importance of this work when he writes,

“Clearly [Aboriginal] nations are not alone in their struggles over citizen political involvement. One need only pick up a newspaper or book to read of America’s declining voting rates and participation in civic life. But for [Aboriginal] nations, with their relatively small size and limited human resources, the loss of every citizen who withdraws because she doesn’t trust the process, doesn’t view the constitution as her own, or doesn’t feel the process warrants her concern, is more immediate and tangible.” (p. 249).

While the importance of this work for First Nations communities cannot be understated, leaders and practitioners are in the more difficult position of designing solutions and tactics to these issues without the aid of research on how this might be done effectively in First Nation and small community contexts. As more work is consciously done in this area, it is hoped that the understanding of these differences and nuance will become more developed to support the important work of First Nations leaders in their communities.

3.6 Summary and Conceptual Framework

The process of better connecting citizens to their community and government are primarily termed citizen participation and community engagement. In the literature, citizen participation is defined as citizen political participation in governance and is measured by the level of substantive decision-making power that citizens hold. Likewise, community engagement is defined as the connections between citizens and the broader community including informal social connections or social capital, and political participation. It is measured by accounting for instances of social and political activity by citizens.

Understood together, participation and engagement can equally be supported or derailed by factors that influence citizens’ perceptions including, civic education, volunteerism and community dialogue on the one hand, and poverty, distrust, poor leadership and lack of transparency on the other hand. Furthermore, factors such as community dislocation owing from colonialism, and the small, tight-knit, familial nature of First Nations communities have been defined as affecting participation and engagement in the First Nations and Aboriginal community context, although more work is needed in this area.

A key question to this project is how to keep the full diversity of Toquaht citizens informed and engaged in the changes that are happening in the community as self-government is implemented, and a new political culture develops. In order to answer the question of how the Toquaht Nation Executive can more effectively communicate with citizens, share information and encourage civic participation, the literature indicates that this project should focus on the key factors that are shown to negatively, and positively impact citizen engagement. From the findings of this literature review, I have designed a model based on the themes and constructs I believe will give structure to the enquiry on the state of participation and engagement in the Toquaht Nation and support the development of recommendations for the Nation Executive.



To assess the current level of engagement of Toquaht citizens, this project will employ a typology adapted from Ekman and Amna’s “Typology of different forms of disengagement, involvement, civic engagement and political participation.” (2012, 295) The scale (shown below) identifies some of the characteristics and activities that might be typical of disengaged, socially engaged and politically engaged citizens in Toquaht Nation. Most citizens will likely find characteristics that represent themselves in each of these categories. Acknowledging that none these individual characteristics sufficient on their own to effectively characterize the level of participation of citizens, it will serve as a starting measure in which to situate the analysis.

Table 1. Scale of Toquaht Nation Citizen Engagement

Disengaged Toquaht Citizen	Socially Engaged Toquaht Citizen	Politically Engaged Toquaht Citizen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rarely attends People’s Assemblies. ▪ Disinterested in politics, rarely engages in political discussions. ▪ Lives away from Macoah & visits infrequently. ▪ Rarely reads Nation communications (newsletters, emails, Facebook page or website). ▪ Doesn’t stay in touch with family and friends from the Nation. ▪ Doesn’t know/understand the Toquaht Constitution, Treaty, Toquaht’s new governance structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Often visits with friends and family in the community. ▪ Engages in political discussions with friends and family. ▪ Finds ways to help fellow Toquaht citizens (e.g., help with yard work, offering rides, looking after children etc.). ▪ Mentors others in the community. ▪ Reads Nation communications (newsletters, emails, Facebook page, website). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regularly votes. ▪ Regularly attends People’s Assemblies. ▪ Speaks/ raises opinions and issues for discussion at People’s Assemblies or writes letters to the Nation Executive. ▪ Knows & understands the Toquaht Constitution, Treaty, Toquaht’s new governance structure. ▪ Encourages other citizens to get politically engaged.

The aim of this project is thus to identify the specific factors that move Toquaht citizens up or down this scale. This investigation will seek to identify the presence, opportunities and interest in implementing factors that are outlined in the literature to positively impact citizen participation and move citizens further towards political participation. At the same time, effort will be made to treat the factors shown to move citizens away from politics and community and leading them to disengage.

Table 2. Factors that Move Citizens Along the “Scale of Toquaht Nation Citizen Engagement”

 Factors that move citizens towards disengagement	Factors that move citizens towards engagement 
<p>(1) Logistical Issues: The literature on citizen participation in First Nations’ contexts points to logistical challenges as a major barrier to participation. Unlike municipalities, if a Toquaht citizen moves away from the community they continue to hold citizenship rights and responsibilities to the Nation. This matter is exacerbated by the fact that many citizens must move to find work, attend school etc. Logistical barriers that will be of particular interest to this project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Population geographically dispersed across Vancouver Island & BC. ▪ Citizens lacking leisure time to participate- too busy with work/school/family to attend engagements or otherwise participate. ▪ Issues of physical access- access to transportation to travel to engagements is limited or cost prohibitive. ▪ Limited access or working knowledge of the internet or other modern communication technologies. ▪ Other ways that existing participatory institutions might be inconvenient for citizens. 	<p>(1) Institutional Forums for Participation: The literature suggests that governments can improve levels of political engagement among citizens by institutionalizing spaces that make it easy for citizens to stay informed on political activities, and further, have the opportunities to engage with decision makers and share their ideas. Ensuring effective forums for the dissemination of information, and sharing and discussion of complex political issues requires a diversity of one-way communication tools (government-to-citizens) to reach citizens, as well as two-way and dialogic forums that provide opportunities for citizens to have their voices heard in ways that are most comfortable for them. Such positive institutional factors that will be of interest to this project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective methods for one-way communication using a diversity of methods (online, in-person, etc.). ▪ Effective methods for drawing citizens into two-way and dialogic forums for interaction with one another and elected leaders (including in-person and online). ▪ Citizens know where to go to share their ideas and how to participate. ▪ Forums for citizen input cover a broad diversity of preferred communication methods (e.g., written, verbal, anonymous). ▪ Citizens feeling safe and encouraged to share their opinions.

(2) Civic & Social Distrust:

Trust is a major theme in the literature on citizen participation. In the absence of social trust, citizens will not feel comfortable engaging, either socially or politically in their community. Scholars suggest achieving civic trust can be especially challenging in First Nations communities where citizens have had negative experiences with political institutions and have long felt shut out of political power, or might have complex personal ties with individuals in political power. Factors that negatively impact social and civic trust that will be of interest for this project include:

- Lack of pride or feeling of personal connection to the Nation.
- Little face-time with fellow citizens and government officials.
- Little participation in non-political social activities.
- Unequal family representation in positions of power and engagement activities.
- Discomfort or fear of raising dissenting political views.
- Citizens not feeling invited to participate and share in political power.



(3) Social Engagement & Volunteerism:

As a means of building social trust in the community, the literature suggests promoting social engagement and volunteerism. Unlike much of the informal volunteerism and community engagement in communities (eg. helping a neighbor with yard work), governments do well to create formal opportunities to make it easy for citizens to connect and contribute in decidedly non-political ways. Such activities draw citizens out of their individual frames (disengaged citizens) and turn them towards the collective. This is shown to build citizens' capacity and confidence, and encourage them to engage in political activity. Factors that support community engagement and volunteerism that will be of interest to this project include:

- Citizen's having pride and feelings of personal connection to the community.
- Citizens having diverse opportunities for face-time with fellow citizens.
- Citizens that live away having formal volunteer opportunities and opportunities for social connection.
- All citizens having formal volunteering opportunities with the Nation government and community that provide a diverse number of ways for citizens to get involved in accordance with their skills and passions.
- Participation in citizen's councils or youth councils.

<p>(3) Lack of Knowledge & Understanding of Political Structures & Institutions:</p> <p>The literature has indicated that when citizens have a dearth of background understanding of their Nation history, and the rules that govern their political institutions, they lack the confidence and interest in engaging with those structures. The challenge of educating citizens in traditional governance models, Nation history, and new self-governance institutions has been complicated by colonial programs that disrupted the transmission of civic knowledge between generations, as well as recent major changes that have created uncertainly among citizens about the new “rules of the game.” Factors that negatively impact citizen understanding of local political institutions that will be of interest to this project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizens having a lack of understanding of major tenants of the Maa-nulth treaty and Toquaht Constitution. ▪ Citizens lacking knowledge of Nation history and traditional governance models. ▪ Citizens unsure of what to expect from People’s Assembly meetings. ▪ Uncertainty over voting and other political mechanisms. ▪ Accessibility of political information and communications. ▪ Elected leaders and staff lacking detailed understanding of Maa-nulth treaty and Toquaht Constitution. 		<p>(3) Civic Education:</p> <p>The literature has indicated that civic education is essential to empower citizens to participate in political activities. Civic education must be ongoing and accessible to the full diversity of citizens to effectively inspire interest and confidence among otherwise apolitical citizens. Factors related to the positive impact of civic education that will be of interest to this project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizens’ confidence in their understanding of the Maa-nulth treaty and Toquaht Constitution. ▪ Strong understanding of procedures of People’s Assembly meetings. ▪ Elected officials and staff have detailed understanding of Nation history, Treaty, Constitution and other political institutions and are able to educate citizens. ▪ Ongoing civic education efforts in place. ▪ Involvement of youth/ youth council in civic education. ▪ Educational resources for citizens available in a wide variety of formats (presentations, posters, videos, citizen study groups, personal discussions, pamphlets, online resources etc.). ▪ Language of educational resources/ presentations is accessible and easily understood by all education levels. ▪ High attendance at People’s Assembly meetings. ▪ People’s Assembly meetings used as opportunities for civic education.
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This conceptual framework is carried throughout the sequential methods of this enquiry. Methodological considerations and design for this project will be addressed in the following section.

4. METHODOLOGY

The current research on citizen participation demonstrates some methodological division between researchers studying citizen participation in Western political contexts, and those engaged in research with Aboriginal communities. In particular, political scientists who have conducted major investigations of citizen participation rates in Western countries like the United States have largely relied on case study research and public opinion survey data to structure their investigations (Ekman and Amna, 2012, p. 297). Researchers studying citizen engagement in Aboriginal contexts have tended to employ qualitative methods, including observation and semi-structured interviews (Bennett, 2003; Lemont, 2002, 2006). These methodological differences can be accounted for by several reasons. First, the major longitudinal studies that Ekman and Amna (2012) discuss vary significantly in scale from the small, local community or regional studies of citizen participation in First Nations and Aboriginal communities. Their goals and resources vary, and then so do their methodological devices. Second, conducting research with Aboriginal communities necessitates sensitivity to the growing field of Indigenous Research; a fluid collection of principles and approaches intended to decolonize academic work (Kenny et al., 2004, p. 19).

4.1 Research Paradigm

This project is grounded in interpretivist theory. As the philosophical approach of this project, interpretivism espouses the subjectivity of knowledge and reality, and suggests that reality is socially constructed and fluid. Interpretivist research is particularly interested in the meaning social phenomena have for the particular actors in a setting, such as the meaning that political participation has for the citizens of Toquaht Nation (Schensul, 2012, p. 76). Just like citizens have long come together to build and support community throughout the history of the Nation, interpretivism believes that the value and meaning of these institutions are understood to be constructed by the citizens themselves. While I have worked to understand the perspectives of citizens within their particular context, interpretivism also assumes that research is influenced by the background of the researchers themselves. In my effort to interpret the meaning that Toquaht citizens hold in social and political participation in their community, it has been a continual focus to question how my interpretation naturally flows from my own personal, cultural and historical experiences (Creswell, 2013, pp. 24-25). My role as researcher in this interpretivist project has been to mine and begin to piece together the complexity of views of the participants within their cultural and historical context through immersion with the setting and subject, and in social interaction with citizens to create a snap shot of the social phenomena (Creswell, 2013, pp. 24-25; Schensul, 2012, p. 76).

In keeping with the interpretivist paradigm, and the values of Dispute Resolution and Indigenous Research, this project has been primarily qualitative. Qualitative research relies on dialogic processes in data collection and is process focused, as well as being focused on the meaning participants bring to the subject of investigation (Kenny et al., 2004, pp. 19-20). It has the flexibility to emerge organically and shift as more is learned along the way (Creswell, 2014, pp. 185-186). In addition to influencing the kind of methods employed, the qualitative focus also influences the relationships between the participants, researcher and the project itself, as well as the way the collected data is analyzed.

4.2 Design and Data Collection Overview

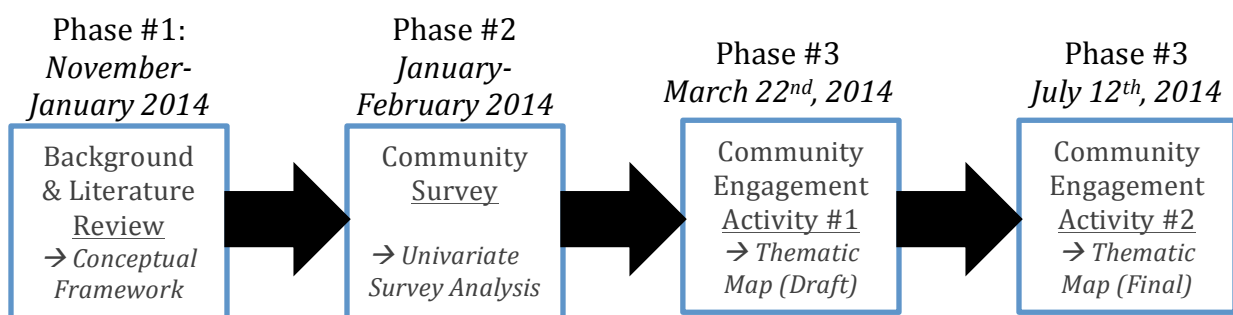
In designing and explicating my research choices for this project, the tension between Indigenous and Western worldviews and research practices was forefront in my mind. Having a fluid and dynamic nature, many Indigenous scholars argue that Indigenous research cannot be succinctly defined because there is no consistent or generalized framework from which an Indigenous research process could be organized (Kutz, 2013, p. 222) Instead, Indigenous research can be understood as principles for research conducted with Aboriginal people and communities which is grounded in the socio-historical conditions of Aboriginal communities, and the relationship between the researcher and community (Lockard, 2010). While consciously drawing on and articulating Aboriginal knowledge systems, Indigenous researchers seek to conduct their work in a way that honors, respects and works within the existing cultural ethics and approaches of the participants. In practice, this often results in the inclusion of methods selected to honor the oral traditions and worldview of Aboriginal peoples, resulting in more qualitative and interpretivist studies (Kenny et al., 2004, p. 19). While Western and Indigenous research principles are important influences in this design, there are other perspectives that influenced the design and process choices made in this project. These include, the client Sarah Robinson and Toquaht Nation preferences for methods and deliverables, and my own ideas of appropriate process design and facilitation from my training in the Dispute Resolution field.

In my effort to undertake this research with integrity, I have attempted to find an appropriate balance between these important process influences. There are inevitably instances where decisions were made that privileged one perspective over another. My intention was to be as transparent as possible in demonstrating what influenced my decisions, and where my decisions might conflict with the other guiding perspectives. Conversely, I also wish to show where there is a natural congruence between the perspectives. In doing so, I hope that this project and my own research contributions will be seen as ethically sound by Toquaht Nation, as well as others in the field, and that the result will be a project which is an honest reflection of myself, Toquaht Nation, the field of Dispute Resolution, and the Indigenous and other qualitative methods of the academy.

Data collection and analysis for this project took place over several phases, with the analyzed information gleaned from the previous phase informing the structure of the subsequent phase.

- **Phase one** involved a background and literature review, whose analysis resulted in the creation of this study's conceptual framework.
- **Phase two**, relevant factors from the conceptual framework informed the development of questions for a community survey intended to collect broad information on the character of communications and citizen participation in the community.
- **Phase three**, the results of the community survey were used to develop three discussion questions for a community engagement activity used to determine what citizens saw as important in their relationship with the Nation, how they characterized their role as citizen, as well as providing feedback on the validity of the survey results. Graphics of the survey results were presented during this engagement activity, and served as a jumping off point for discussions.
- **Phase four (final)**, themes generated from the analysis of the initial engagement activity's discussion points informed the final three discussion questions used to propose solutions to the communications and participation issues described by citizens. A thematic map of the points raised in the previous engagement activity was presented to participants receive feedback on its validity and again, to serve as a jumping off point for a problem solving discussion. The analysis of data from this final data collection resulted in the finalization of the thematic map.

Figure 3. Sequence of Data Collection Phases



An important aspect of this design is that from the outset of each phase, the analyzed data from the previous phase is taken back to the community for their comment. Participants were asked whether they thought the representation was accurate. If they felt anything was missing adjustments were made where necessary. In this way, participants were actively involved in bolstering the validity of the results, and were provided some measure of control over how their community and issues were being represented.

4.3 Project Site, Participants and Timing

To discover how Toquaht citizens relate to their Nation government and its new political institutions and how that relationship might be strengthened, the site of the investigation was determined to be Toquaht Nation itself. This project has focused on the experiences of Toquaht citizens, and the meaning that citizens have of their social and political roles in the community (Creswell, 2014, pp. 185-186). The targeted participants were all citizens of voting age who are eligible for political participation. I was particularly interested in reaching those whose voices are not often heard in Nation affairs, because they might live away, or do not attend People's Assembly meetings. The timing of the study and data collection was determined to be naturally oriented around Toquaht's seasonal People's Assembly meetings when citizens most often gather together. Data collection began during the first People's Assembly of the year in January 2014, following the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) approval.

4.4 Approach and Process

4.4.1 Background and Literature Review

I initiated this study of citizen engagement and communication in Toquaht Nation by conducting a literature review and background study. The background study is a review of the relatively uncontested contextual information that might be important for both reader and researcher to proceed effectively with the research (Creswell, 2013, pp. 100-101). Particularly as an outside researcher working with a cultural community outside of my own, the background study was an important part for me to consider what cultural, historical and political systems and events had brought the Toquaht Nation to this moment in time. As Kenny (2004) notes of the importance of this research stage, researchers who have a clear understanding of the culture, history, values and beliefs at work on the ground will be better oriented to work collaboratively with the community (p. 11). The background study involved reading the available literature on Nuuchahnulth worldview, culture and traditional governance systems, the history of European colonial incursion in the area, the dynamics of past and recent political institutions such as the *Indian Act*, the *Maa-nulth Final Agreement*, *The Toquaht Nation Constitution*, as well as relevant news articles. Personal conversations with citizens and staff were especially helpful in this stage to fill in gaps in my understanding.

With the necessary information with which to contextualize the Toquaht case, I conducted an interdisciplinary survey of the recent literature on the subjects of citizen participation, citizen engagement, community engagement and political participation. Efforts were made to find sources that particularly focused on the dynamics of these subjects in First Nations/Aboriginal or small community contexts, although research in these areas was found to be largely underrepresented. The vast body of the literature was from the fields of political

science and community development and provided case study and theoretical development work that focused primarily on the larger picture of citizen social and political participation in Western democracies. Where similar work taking place in Aboriginal communities was found, effort was taken to highlight the unique illuminations from these studies.

Conceptual framework.

A conceptual framework was developed from the literature review to situate the enquiry and organize all subsequent data collection around the key concepts raised. A conceptual framework is often the theoretical starting point for a study; like a hypothesis of what specific theories, viewpoints or ideas might be influential to a particular social issue or phenomena (Schensul, 2012, p. 80). The framework included typifying what a disengaged Toquaht citizen, socially engaged Toquaht citizen, and politically engaged Toquaht citizen might look like based on common characteristics identified in the literature, and then adapted for the Toquaht context. From there, in a diagram, I collated the major influential qualities considered to either frustrate citizens, causing them to disengage, or empower citizens and motivate them to further their social or political participation in the community.

4.4.2 Community Survey

I started the data collection by conducting a survey. This community survey was used as the first interaction with citizens. It was completed before the community engagement activities in order to have the broadest information base to start with, so that the enquiry in the later engagement activities would be more focused. The survey questionnaire was employed because it was of particular interest to the project client, Sarah Robinson and the Toquaht Executive. For them, it provides an opportunity to support their own operations by receiving key demographic data on their population.

The intention of the survey was to capture an inclusive picture of the preferences, interests and practical concerns that Toquaht citizens deal with in their everyday lives that impact the way they participate in the community. In keeping with the emergent, sequential character of the research design, the survey questions focused on the themes and issues of citizen participation that were raised in the conceptual framework. Negative influences on citizen participation, that is, factors shown to move citizen's to disengage socially and politically, included logistical concerns, civic and social distrust and lack of knowledge/ understanding of political institutions. Positive factors shown to motivate citizens to become more socially and politically engaged in the community included, institutional forums for participation; social engagement and volunteerism; and strong civic education.

Instrument design.

In designing the survey, there were a number of practical considerations that influenced its format, particularly considerations around maximizing participant responses. In the

interest of combatting generally low response rates for survey questionnaires, I tried to make the questionnaire as simple and convenient as possible. The survey was limited to ten multiple-choice, and check all that apply questions to make it quick, easy and accessible for any eligible citizen to complete. Room was created at the end of each question for participants to provide written responses if they wished to provide detail, or if they found the options provided to be insufficient. Particular attention was paid to making the language of the questions and survey information sheet as accessible as possible in the event that English reading comprehension was an issue. In the question drafting process, I consulted and collaborated with Sarah Robinson to ensure the inclusion of questions that would be useful for the Nation’s administrative purposes, and she proved an invaluable support in fine-tuning the language. Draft survey questions were shared with the Toquaht Executive for their consideration, but this did not result in any recommendations or changes to the instrument (To view a copy of this survey instrument please refer to Appendix II).

Table 3. Connections between Conceptual Framework and Survey Questions

<i>1. Where do you live right now?</i>	These first introductory questions provide some basic demographic information about participants, and answered the important question: Who are the respondents? This information was critical for identifying gaps and biases in the sample to ensure the integrity of the final analysis. It also created the possibility for bivariate data analysis, especially for comparing participant responses to their self-reported attendance at People’s Assemblies (used here as a marker for political participation).
<i>2. How old are you?</i>	
<i>3. How many Toquaht Nation People’s Assembly meetings do you usually attend in a year?</i>	

<p><i>4. Why do you attend People’s Assembly meetings?</i></p>	<p>This question asked citizens to select or describe their motivations for attending People’s Assemblies. Attendance at Toquaht Nation People’s Assemblies is an important marker of citizen participation as they are the most regular community-wide gatherings, and aside from voting, are the most prominent institutional forum for citizen political participation. By focusing on motivations for participating in this forum, the applicability of the three motivating factors from the conceptual framework (forums for participation, social engagement and volunteerism/social engagement) can be assessed. From the perspective of a Dispute Resolution practitioner, asking citizens about their personal motivations is instrumental in unearthing interests. Even at this early stage, this served to build a pool of ideas to draw from in the latter recommendations phase of the project. (Innes & Bohher, 2010, 54)</p>
<p><i>5. What prevents you from attending People’s Assembly meetings?</i></p>	<p>While breaching the Dispute Resolution ethic of maintaining a largely positive line of enquiry, this question provided an important link to the conceptual framework by having participants describe the relevant factors that influence them to disengage from social and political activities. By comparing participant responses to the three deterrent factors identified in the conceptual framework (logistical issues, lack of civic and social trust, and lack of political structures and institutions), the applicability of these factors in the Toquaht case could be assessed.</p>
<p><i>6. Which of these communication tools do you use the most?</i></p>	<p>These questions more specifically targeted the practical communication issues that are of interest to the client and will provide immediately useful information for the Toquaht administration. In keeping with the conceptual framework, this question addresses existing opportunities and preferences for forums of participation. From the pattern of participant responses, the ideal opportunities of one-way, two-way and dialogic communications between citizens and the Nation government can be identified. Further contributing to the “pool of ideas,” the information collected from these responses provided a picture of technological access among different segments of the community.</p>
<p><i>7. How do want to receive Toquaht Nation information / updates?</i></p>	<p>From the pattern of participant responses, the ideal opportunities of one-way, two-way and dialogic communications between citizens and the Nation government can be identified. Further contributing to the “pool of ideas,” the information collected from these responses provided a picture of technological access among different segments of the community.</p>

<p><i>8. How much do you feel you understand about the Maa-nulth treaty and Toquaht's new governance structure?</i></p>	<p>This question related to Toquaht citizen's self-reported knowledge and level of comfort with the community's foundational political institutions. This considers one of the most important factors in the conceptual framework; the negative influence of citizen's having a dearth of knowledge or understanding of the Nation's new political institutions, compared against the noted positive effect of citizen's feeling confident and empowered by their firm grasp of political operations. While both strong and weak levels of civic education have a noted influence for a population's level of participation, this question considers in what ways this is a relevant factor in this case.</p>
<p><i>9. How are you currently involved in the community?</i></p>	<p>These questions provided another marker of citizen participation, but unlike the previous questions regarding People's Assembly attendance, these enquiries were intended to mine the social and other informal ways that citizens might participate in community life. The literature suggests that social engagement and volunteerism are instrumental in building social and civic trust among participants.</p>
<p><i>9(b). How do you want to be more involved?</i></p>	<p>The sequence of questions #9 and #9b was intended to prompt citizens to reflect on any gaps or discrepancies that might exist between their current and preferred levels of engagement and participation in the community. Again, the framing of question #9b was in keeping with Dispute Resolution questioning principles by being positive, future-focused and aspirational towards a shared solution.</p>
<p><i>10. Would you be interested in participating a Citizens Advisory Council or Youth Council (13-29 years)?</i></p>	<p>While this question was included to gauge interest in proposed citizen participation initiatives of the project client, the question also supports a more grounded enquiry of a major premise of the conceptual framework, namely that citizen participation in the social and political aspects of community leads to increased political participation among all citizens.</p>

Data collection.

Toquaht citizens had two opportunities to complete the survey. The first was at the first People's Assembly of the year in January. As this was my first introduction to the community, Sarah gave me the opportunity to make a short presentation introducing myself, the project, and to discuss the reason for the survey collection. I invited all citizens 18 years of age or older to complete a survey in-person at a table I had set up in the

meeting hall. As an added incentive to encourage participation, with their completed survey citizens received a draw ballot for a \$25 gift certificate. Similar draws or door prizes are commonly used by the Nation administration to encourage attendance at the People's Assemblies. While attendance at the meeting was somewhat low (20 citizens in attendance including those who are Nation staff and elected officials), I was pleased that all citizens in attendance took the time to complete the survey.

The second opportunity to complete the survey came two weeks later. I prepared an email with an embedded link to the online version of questionnaire hosted on fluidsurveys.com, as well as an information sheet about the project. Sarah sent the email to all Toquaht citizens with email addresses of those who had not attended the January People's Assembly. It was necessary to have Sarah administer the distribution of the online survey instrument since, as a Nation employee, she is bound to protect the personal information of citizens. This online opportunity also included the incentive of being entered in a gift certificate draw. When participants completed their survey, they had the opportunity to click a second link that led them to a second form where they could fill out their contact information for the draw. This separation was necessary to maintain the anonymity of the surveys, so that no link could be drawn between a participant's contact information and their responses. In both survey collections, this assurance of anonymity was important for giving participants the confidence to be honest and forthcoming in their responses. Citizens were given ten days to complete the survey. From this email distribution another six completed surveys were collected, bringing the total from both collections to 26 out of a possible 86, making the sample just under one third of the targeted participants (the complete results of the community survey can be found in the appendices).

Analysis.

The results from the survey were displayed in frequency tables, pie charts and bar graphs. This was an easy and straightforward form of analysis that supplied much of the basic information needed to understand the results, and was helpful for sharing the survey results with Toquaht citizens during subsequent community engagement activities (University of Reading Statistical Services Centre, 2001, p. 18). At the first community engagement activity these results were presented to participants to get feedback on and check validity of the results, as well as to serve as a jumping-off point for further discussion.

4.4.3 Community Engagement Activities: Conversation Café Process

The method employed for the final phase of the research design sequence was two separate community engagement activities based on the conversation café group dialogue model. Conversation café is a process where small groups of diverse participants engage in conversation around central questions and regularly move through the room to different

tables with different participants and questions, evoking a large scale sharing of ideas (Holman, P., et al., 2007, p. 179-191). Conversation café style community engagement activities worked well for this project because of how such a method inclusively compliments traditional qualitative methods, Indigenous research practices and Dispute Resolution practices.

Rationale and process design.

The goals of interpretive inquiry are to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation, making it important that I employ methods that connect with the full complexity of citizen views in a way that only open face-to-face conversation can achieve. The meanings that people hold are often not individually held, but rather are co-constructed through social interactions with others. This kind of data collection is often achieved through a focus group, where preselected participants are brought together to answer questions and engage in discussion around issues that the researcher might raise.

I sought qualitative methods that could incorporate oral tradition, personal interaction and group consensus (Kenny et al., 2004, p. 12). The reasons for this are threefold; Firstly conversational qualitative methods are congruent with both the ways of knowing common in Indigenous worldviews and preferred communication methods in First Nations communities when questions are open-ended enough to incorporate the principles of oral tradition and narrative (Kovach, 2009, pp. 123-124) Secondly, dialogic processes adhere to Indigenous research principles of research as praxis, where the actual process of conducting the research also serves to benefit the community (Kovach, 2009, p. 93). Finally, methods such as sharing are considered a more appropriate way of conducting research because they honour the local knowledge of the participants, and treat the people who live the topic being studied as the experts (Kenny et al., 2004, p. 19).

In Dispute Resolution practice, group processes that achieve authentic dialogue between all participants are a preferred method of both collective problem solving and building and maintaining cooperative relationships. Dispute Resolution principles are congruent with Indigenous research principles in that the discipline privileges local knowledge and on the ground experiences. As is described by scholar/practitioners Innes and Booher (2010) local knowledge is crucial to the success of any project for its ability to fill the gaps left by narrowly defined research. It provides necessary contextual and pragmatic experienced-based insights that can make research relevant and workable (p. 170-171).

Dispute Resolution and Indigenous research approach further share similar principles on the centrality and importance of sound process, and the need for the research process itself (and not just the outcome) to benefit the participants. Smith (1999) asserts that in Indigenous research, methodology and methods are expected to enable, heal and educate

participants and indeed, “to lead one small step further towards self-determination.” (pp. 127-128). Innes and Booher (2010) argue that collaborative processes not only lead to better one-off solutions, but also leave individual participants and the collective better off. Participants learn, build competencies and confidence through the process that they then transfer to other networks and collaborations, making the whole community more adaptive and resilient (pp. 9-10). In this way, this method has a slightly different intention than the focus group model. Participants are not simply speaking for the benefit of the researcher collecting information. The real importance of the process is that by speaking and hearing one another, citizens are strengthening their relationships and community.

A best practice incorporated into this conversation café method that differentiates it from focus groups or sharing circles is the employment of skilled facilitators. As Innes and Booher (2010) describe, the role of facilitators in a collaborative dialogue are to manage interactions among participants so free inquiry is not stifled. This includes, upholding collaboratively established ground rules, working to equalize power imbalances, and restating, reframing and recording participant contributions so that all are understood and chronicled (p. 111). As will be described in the following section, how I and the process facilitators perceived power among participants of the engagement activities had important implications for the process and product.

While the procedures for the conversation café are quite simple, they are typically used for their ability to evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of the group by dynamically linking small group conversations on important questions (Brown et al., 2007, p. 180). In this process, small groupings of participants sit in small conversation clusters to discuss an issue of relevance to their lives and community. Other participants seated at nearby conversation clusters explore similar questions at the same time. As they talk, participants or the facilitator can write down or sketch key ideas from the conversation on large pieces of paper at the table.

Following an initial round of conversation (typically 20-30 minutes), participants are invited to change tables, taking the ideas and insights from their previous conversations to their newly formed groups. The facilitators at each table are there to promote the successful unfolding of the dialogue; reframing questions to reinvigorate a stalled discussion, asking other probing questions, asking for clarification, ensuring all participants have the opportunity to speak etc. They are also tasked with listening intently for patterns, insights, deeper questions and opportunities to link ideas (Brown et al., 2007, p. 180).

This process is repeated for several rounds and is followed by the harvesting of the dialogue, in which the facilitators summarize the points recorded around their

conversation cluster, and participants are given a final opportunity to add to the record, or raise issue with how a point has been recorded. Through the harvest, all participants are able to more fully grasp the perspectives and ideas shared in the room. As one of the original innovators of this approach, Brown (2007) suggests that the model enables a cross pollination of ideas, that people and ideas become more connected through successive rounds, and that the collective knowledge of the group is made visible. Indeed he says that café conversations are based on the assumption that people already have all the needed wisdom and creativity among them to address their most difficult challenges (p. 181). Important for its applicability here, this dynamic has the potential to transform citizen understandings around their roles as citizens within the new Toquaht governance structure and help generate many of the solutions to the community's challenges around communication and citizen engagement.

In practice, the conversation cafes required some flexibility to execute in accordance both with Toquaht Executive preferences and circumstances on the ground. These engagement activities coincided with Toquaht Nation People's Assembly meetings where citizens were already gathered. While the hope was to have these sessions include the full diversity of the Toquaht citizenry, in practice the samples for these sessions were composed of Toquaht citizens that were already significantly engaged in Toquaht government affairs, because they are elected officials, Nation staff or otherwise. The sessions were limited to one-hour in an effort to respect participant's time and so the activity might fit comfortably within the People's Assembly agenda.

To set the context for the activity, I made a short presentation on the analysis of the previous data collection. At the first community engagement activity this was the community survey results, at the second community engagement activity this was the thematic map from the previous session. The three questions and two guest facilitators were introduced, and citizens were invited to gather around the question that they were most interested in discussing, and then circulate around the room freely to other conversation clusters. This was intended to give participants as much freedom as possible in determining how they wanted to participate by scaling back some of the structure of the activity.

The conversation café model advocates for the equal representation of all stakeholder groups, including community leaders. As a Dispute Resolution specialist, my decision to include elected leaders and staff in the sessions hinged on my interpretation of power dynamics in the community. In my view, the assumption that elected officials and Toquaht Nation staff are more powerful than other citizen participants is an overly simplistic view of where power comes from. While holding an elected seat in government is a significant source of structural power or formal authority that is easily recognizable, there are

numerous sources of personal power, which in a small community can be more influential than formal institutions. These include social legitimacy, information, moral power, resources, and personal characteristics, like charisma. (Mayer, 2012, p. 72). One such example in an Aboriginal community context is the power and reverence held for community Elders, whose views can hold greater weight than the Chief's. Given the complexity of personal power relations in small communities like Toquaht, there was no way that as an outsider I could fully grasp these dynamics and adequately account for how they might affect participant responses in the engagement activities.

I counseled the facilitators to stay attuned to power dynamics at work in their conversation cluster and where possible, work to balance power among participants. This was realized through the setting and enforcement of procedural ground rules to ensure equal speaking time, discourage intimidation and browbeating, (Mayer, 2012, p. 72) and to create space for disempowered participants to share in a way which is comfortable for them.

All adult Toquaht citizens were invited to participate in the engagement sessions with the understanding that some citizens might self-censor their contributions. It was hoped that with this design the resultant ideas in the conversation clusters and harvest would include ideas that were tenable and could be immediately acted upon, and which are inclusive to all perspectives, including of those in positions of political power.

The six community engagement questions (three posed at each of the two sessions) were developed in consideration of both the body of themes and concepts that had emerged to that point in the project. Other important influences were the desire to task Toquaht citizens with determining the major issues around communication and citizen engagement in their community, as well as Dispute Resolution principles of effective question formation. (Innes & Booher, 2010, p. 185)

Table 4. Community Engagement Activity #1 Questions, March 22nd, 2014

1. What conclusions do you draw from the survey results?
2. Tell me about a time you felt proud most proud to be a Toquaht citizen.
3. How have your own roles and responsibilities as a citizen changed as a result of self-governance?

Table 5. Community Engagement Activity #2 Questions, July 12th, 2014

4. Is the thematic map accurate? What motivates/ enables you to participate in Nation activities and politics?
5. How can we connect with Toquaht citizens that live away?
6. How can we ensure all Toquaht citizens have the information they need to feel comfortable participating in Nation politics?

4.4.3.2 Data collection.

Data from the community engagement activities was recorded by the facilitators and participants on the large sheets provided at each conversation cluster. At the conclusion of the session during the harvest, facilitators presented the major points they recorded back to the entire group and asked for confirmation that these points had been correctly recorded, and no important points had been omitted. After the sessions, the points on these sheets were digitally transcribed together irrespective of the question they came from. This information was then reviewed and coded to draw out the major ideas, themes and topics in the discussions.

Challenges.

The first community engagement activity at the March 2014 People's Assembly was held in Macoah. Because the community does not yet have a community meeting hall, the event was held outdoors under tents. It rained most of the day and became quite cold, with many citizens huddling around a few outdoor heaters to stay comfortable. The community engagement activity was scheduled to take place in the last hour of the Assembly after several Executive portfolio descriptions, including a detailed presentation on the 2014 Toquaht budget. When it came time for the activity to begin, the energy among citizens was quite low, and people were eager to get out of the cold. As a result I made the decision to invite citizens to move around the space freely, getting warm and engaging with whatever questions interested them. This was effective in getting participants more energized, but also had effects for the kind of information collected. I noted that because participants were moving around individually, and typically only staying at each question for a couple minutes, there was much less cross-pollination and building of ideas that might have occurred if participants had been seated at each table for a set about of time, and had the benefit of hearing each other's contributions to the discussion as planned.

At the second and final engagement activity at the July People's Assembly, a different problem affected the process of that activity with implications for the resultant information. Again, the community engagement activity was scheduled as the last item of the Assembly after a full morning and afternoon that had included Treaty celebrations,

lunch and the official opening of the Nation's new campground. While Sarah had warned me that time would be much tighter for this Assembly as a result of all the other celebrations and ceremonies, when it came time for the community engagement activity, the meeting was already well over time. Sarah asked that I cut the length of the conversation café rounds to get participants home on time. The conversation rounds were cut from ten minutes to six minutes to accommodate this request. Facilitators noted that they felt the session was rushed and that they were not able always reach the depth of discussion that they might have had they had more time.

Limitations.

Similar to issues that arose from the community survey, holding the community engagement activities at the Toquaht Nation People's Assemblies was a convenient way to reach citizens where they were already gathered, but failed to reach disinterested and other difficult to reach citizens of interest to this project. As a result, there is a bias in the sample and resultant data collected from these engagement activities, with an overrepresentation of engaged citizens who regularly attend People's Assemblies, and no representation of disengaged citizen voices. Similarly, Toquaht Nation elected leaders and staff were proportionally over-represented relative to other citizens. I was cognizant of these missing voices in the data collection itself, and made effort to get as much information as possible on these missing citizens as possible from their family and relations who did participate.

Analysis.

The data from the community engagement activities was analyzed using thematic analysis, a process for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns of meaning (themes) within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This process began after each community engagement activity with the transcription and repeated reading of all discussion points from that activity. These points were organized on a table with one column for the transcribed points, and another for initial codes that used to suggest what each point was about. Once this table was populated with initial codes, I organized data points with like codes into groups. From these code groupings I suggested themes (words or phrases) that could describe the overarching meaning of the group. These were reread and reorganized several times until I felt that the themes adequately represented the meaning of all the individual data points in the group.

While analysis to this point was largely inductive as the themes were generated from the data, in visually mapping these themes, I decided to employ the basic model from the conceptual framework (Disengagement + Motivations → Social Engagement → Political Engagement). This model was altered slightly based on comments from the first engagement session to better reflect how citizens described the relationship between

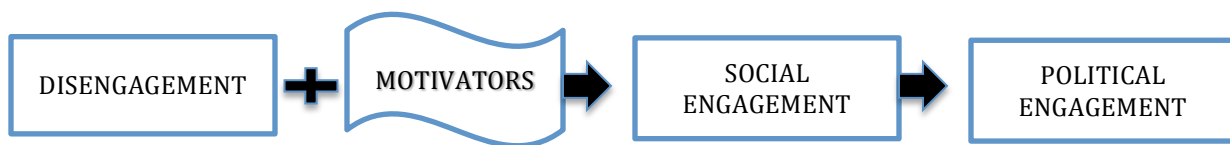
social and political life in Toquaht Nation. I determined that themes with fewer than three data points were not strong enough, and these were excluded from the final thematic map. Data from the two community engagement activities were coded and mapped separately, and afterwards collated into a single visual representation of the sessions (see Findings and Discussion section for this figure). These visual thematic maps proved effective tools for sharing my analysis with participants and ensuring that my interpretations were valid to them.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to devise strategies that the Nation Executive might employ to maximize citizen participation and develop efficiencies in their communications with citizens, this research project has attempted to understand how these functions interact with factors that motivate citizens to greater community involvement. This findings and discussion section reports on the views and perspectives shared by participating Toquaht citizens in the community survey and two community engagement activities. Views and perspectives are grouped according to themes and discussed in relation to the conceptual framework and other elements of the literature review.

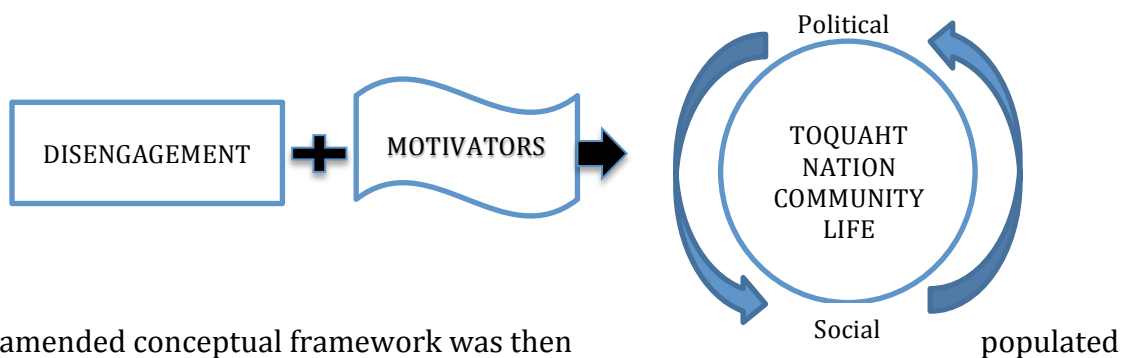
This section is organized according to concepts found in the data collection and adapted from the conceptual framework. Over the two community engagement activities I found that my conceptual framework designed from the literature did not entirely fit with how citizens described community life.

Figure 4. Original Conceptual Framework



Participating citizens did not distinguish between social engagement and political engagement and did not consider these concepts in a hierarchy placing political participation above social participation. Participating Toquaht citizens made little to no distinction between social and political activities. For them, cultural expression, family life, national pride and self-determination are all part of the holistic experience of Toquaht community life. For this reason, I amended the conceptual framework to represent the integration of these concepts.

Figure 5. Amended Conceptual Framework



The amended conceptual framework was then

with relevant themes developed from the analysis of community engagement activity discussion points.

Figure 6. Community Engagement Activity Thematic Map

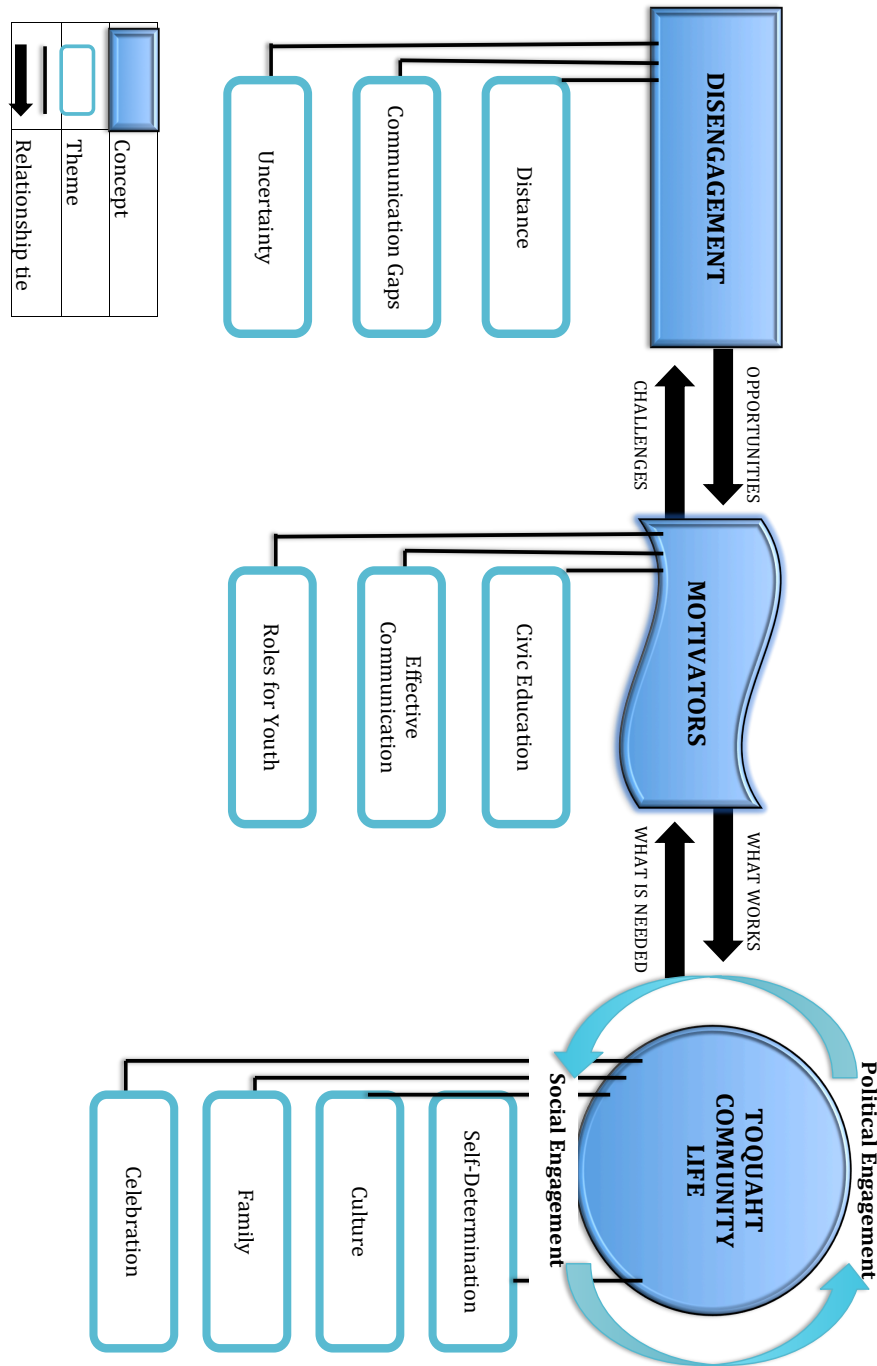


Figure 6. This map represents the central concepts and themes to this project organized in accordance with the conceptual framework. The key concepts from the literature and engagement activities are in the solid blue shapes above. The themes connected with these concepts are in the blue outlined shapes below.

This findings and discussion section is divided into three sub-sections according to the key concepts of disengagement, motivators, and Toquaht Nation community life, and is divided further according to the themes participants discussed as being related to each of these concepts.

5.1 Disengagement

In the conceptual framework I estimated that a disengaged Toquaht citizen would be one who is disinterested in Nation politics and rarely attends People’s Assemblies, lives away from Macoah and rarely visits. This would be someone who does not stay up to date with Nation communications, does not stay in touch with family and friends from the community, and has very limited knowledge of Toquaht Nation’s governing institutions. I defined disengaged Toquaht citizens largely by what they do not do. I estimated that the major factors likely causing citizens to be disengaged were logistical concerns, civic and social distrust and lack of knowledge and understanding of political structures and institutions.

What I found in discussions with many of Toquaht’s engaged citizens was that the single most defining characteristic of the community’s disengaged citizens is that they live away. While there are many technologies and communication methods that could make it possible for Toquaht citizens to stay connected and involved in community affairs, participating citizens reported that it was this physical distance and absence that predominantly defined the missing voices in this project. This factor was noticeable in the community survey results, where respondents were either disinclined to say what prevents them from attending People’s Assemblies, or offered logistical constraints like travel and time as major hurdles to their attendance.

In the community engagement activities, participants brought up other factors that deterred them from participating more readily in People’s Assemblies and other aspects the community, including; uncertainty about how they are to participate in government institutions, and gaps in communication that cause citizens to sometimes not receive advance notice of meetings and events.

Figure 7. Disengagement Thematic Mini-Map

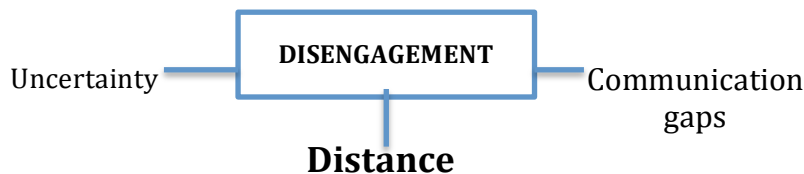


Figure 7. Figure showing the four key themes related to the concept of disengagement. The varying size of the text of the themes represents the relative prominence of the theme in the data.

Thi

s section will now turn to the description, reasoning, and proposed solutions offered by participating citizens on these four themes of citizen disengagement. The perspectives of participating citizens on each theme will further be compared to relevant discussions in the literature.

5.1.1 Distance

Distance was the most prevalent and most oft cited reason for citizen disengagement from Toquaht community life. I define distance here as Toquaht citizens living away from the home community of Macoah. When Toquaht citizens and families move for employment, schooling, housing and other opportunities, the travel to return to the community for events will be anywhere between one to six hours each way. Like the logistical issues described in the conceptual framework, distance raises complex logistical circumstances as well as other relational issues that will be described here.

Roughly 6% of Toquaht citizens live in Macoah, with the vast majority living in the neighboring towns and cities. This spread was somewhat reflected in the survey results, although, according to Nation statistics, Macoah residents were significantly overrepresented in the survey responses.

Figure 8. Community Survey Question: Where do you live right now?

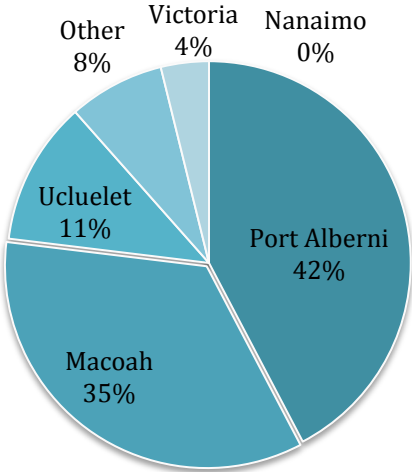


Figure 8. Pie chart representing the geographic dispersal of respondents to the community survey.

Most of the community survey responses came from individuals who completed the survey in person at the People’s Assembly (a total of 20 surveys were completed at the People’s Assembly). When citizens who had not attended the January People’s Assembly were given the opportunity to submit responses via an online instrument, this only resulted in six

more completed surveys, demonstrating the important relationship between physical presence and participation.

During discussions in the community engagement activities, presence and proximity as a condition for engagement was identified in comments from participants who said that it is challenging to connect with citizens who live out of the village, that citizens from the mainland are unrepresented in Nation events and the survey, and further, that the location of meetings is often the single greatest determinate of whether citizens will attend or not.

While survey respondents suggested a greater diversity of logistical concerns that constrained their attendance at meetings (e.g., busy with work/school), community engagement participants specifically focused on the issue of travel as a barrier to participation. Participating citizens noted transportation, especially access to vehicles and the funds needed for gas, as significant barriers to attendance and participation. The Toquaht Executive has already recognized this as an issue and has implemented initiatives such as the *People's Assembly Travel Policy* and hosting People's Assemblies in neighboring towns to try and address this issue. However, as one participant noted, offers to reimburse travel costs and hold meetings closer to their home do not help them if they still do not have access to a car or reliable public transportation.

As was explained by participants, distance not only necessitates time, financial resources and access to transportation, but also requires lodging in the community to enable out-of-town citizens to spend the night or weekend. One participant noted, and other group members agreed that there are few places to stay in Macoah, making it more difficult for out-of-towners to visit. There are only a dozen homes in the village, few spare rooms, and no formal lodging options like a motel. For citizens that have spent a lot of time away and may not have close connections to people in the village, this makes returning all the more difficult.

Participating citizens at the community engagement activities were very active in suggesting ways of bridging the challenges of distance. These solutions fell into two initiatives, reaching citizens where they are, and bringing citizens home:

Solutions with the principle of reaching citizens where they are were proposing to broaden the reach of the community to establish a presence in the towns and cities that citizens currently live. Some participants noted the effectiveness of the existing strategy of hosting People's Assembly meetings remotely in cities where there is a large Toquaht population. This is often done in Port Alberni, and has been done in the past in Victoria. The two suggestions that were offered three times from different individuals suggested regional hubs, and/ or regional representatives or contact persons for each area. While all Nation

organization currently flows from Macoah, the creation of regional hubs would recognize the dispersion of Toquaht citizens, and would provide a platform for greater organization, easier coordination of out-of-towners, and enable more convenient communication between the Nation and citizens. Most powerfully, officially recognizing and giving greater structure to Toquaht's diaspora where they live has the potential to strengthen the relationships between Toquaht citizens living in the same cities and towns. In this way, a Toquaht's ability to connect with his or her home community need not rest exclusively on the ability to travel to Macoah.

The majority of proposed solutions to the issue of distance concerned ways of bringing citizens home. The value of physical presence in the village and on the ancestral lands to maintaining and reconstituting connection were paramount in these comments. In the short term such solutions endeavor to bring citizens home for weekends or special meeting, events and otherwise. It is a long-term goal of the community and Chief Anne Mack that future development will enable Toquaht citizens to begin moving back to Macoah permanently. Identifying herself in the comment section of her submitted survey she shared, "[As Chief] my vision is to provide a means to bring people home; Build our Nation together" (January 11, 2014). The suggestions from participants about ways to facilitate this return focused on three key issues; transportation solutions, lodging solutions, and Macoah-based events.

When participants discussed ways of overcoming distance nearly all proposed solutions imagined that leaving transportation up to individuals was ineffective, and that some form of coordinated transportation program was needed to encourage more citizens to make the trip. Suggestions for collective transportation ranged in formality, from informal carpooling, ride sharing or shuttles organized through the Nation website, or even having a Nation school bus to provide rides for citizens..

In concert with proposals to add a new measure of organization and coordination to transportation solutions, two comments suggested means of attending to the lodging needs of out-of-town citizens to make it easier for them to travel home for weekends and longer periods. One participant noted, and others in the group agreed, that the recent opening of Toquaht's public campground on the territory would provide new lodging options for citizens in the summer months, and already several out-of-town Toquaht families had taken advantage of the campground as a lodging option over the weekend of the July People's Assembly and community celebration.¹ While it is hoped that recent and long

¹ In the coming years the Toquaht Executive is planning to construct a number of rental vacation cottages. Like the campground, these would be open to the public as a revenue source for the Nation, but would likewise provide year-round lodging options for out-of-towners (A. Mack, personal communication, July 12, 2014).

² In addition to the fact that these political discussions on village development and services are less

term development projects will create more formal lodging options for citizens, in the interim period one participant suggested that like carpooling, there ought to be a forum for citizens with lodging needs to connect with those with homes and extra rooms, beds and couches in Macoah. This comment was likely inspired by a presentation made earlier in the People's Assembly asking Macoah households to volunteer as host families to assist Toquaht children in outside foster care situations to return for visits to the community. Hosting already takes place informally among close family members and friends, but creating other means for this sharing to be coordinated could provide greater options for those citizens who are most disengaged to return and reconnect with the community.

The final group of solutions proposed to bridge the gap between the community and out-of-town citizens and bring more citizens home was hosting a greater number and diversity of Macoah-based events. Currently, the bulk of events in Macoah revolve around the seasonal People's Assemblies. People's Assemblies are mostly formal meetings to discuss Nation political decisions and actions, such as finances, resource development, and social services.² For citizens who are so far disengaged that they do not see any of their interests reflected in the People's Assemblies, it may be important to create other kinds of social and cultural events to draw them back. This sentiment was reflected in engagement activity comments on the need to create different kinds of events, more focused on fun, culture and celebration that would draw a different crowd. Similarly, one participant suggested having weekend events themed for different activities (e.g., berry picking, fishing, carving), or groups (e.g., Toquaht youth) to engage those uninspired by the People's Assembly meetings. The desire to have more opportunities to come together for celebration and cultural expression with family and community was also discussed under the theme of Toquaht community life, and will be further described in that section.

The reviewed literature on citizen engagement in Aboriginal contexts also emphasizes distance as a cause of disengagement. In Bennett's (2003) work with Manitoba First Nations, she found from interviews with community members that citizen participation was inhibited by the geographic dispersal of the population (p. 143). Similarly, Lemont (2006) describes the phenomenon of citizens moving away from their home communities and relocating in urban areas, resulting in complex logistical circumstances that make typical citizen outreach ineffective (p. 248).

The literature shares other similarities with the comments of participants, echoing comments on the importance of physical presence for First Nations community building.

² In addition to the fact that these political discussions on village development and services are less applicable to out-of-towners, for some Toquaht citizens whose families have lived away from the village for several generations might not consider themselves citizens of the Toquaht Nation government, even though they would consider themselves Toquaht people (J. Mack, personal communication, July 28 2014)

Bennett (2003) describes the importance of community gathering for purposes other than official business. She argues that community gatherings that are purely social, cultural or fun in nature are an important means enhancing citizen participation simply by getting disengaged citizens out of their individual frames to begin considering the collective. Lemont (2002) also highlights the importance of in-person meetings and gatherings for Aboriginal cultural preferences, and suggests strategies for overcoming distance and logistical concerns that were similar to what came up for participants in this project. These included holding meetings and gatherings in out-of-community centers where citizens may live, and going door-to-door to speak to citizens directly. In this way, Lemont advocates not only for the importance of convenient, in-person gatherings where citizens already are, but for creating opportunities for what he calls “intensive and personal approaches,” (p. 4) that is face-to-face dialogue between citizens, and especially between out-of-town citizens, and Nation leaders and staff.

Distance and population dispersal are a significant cause of citizen disengagement as reflected in both the contributions of Toquaht citizens, and the literature. Solutions from both Toquaht participants and the literature highlight the importance of bringing citizens together to build mutual understanding and connection by reaching citizens where they live and work, and enabling them to return home.

5.1.2 Communication gaps

After distance, the second most prevalent theme was communication gaps, that is, persistent issues of citizens not receiving Nation communications. This is a frustration for all parties and was in large part the inspiration for this project. During one community engagement activity, a participant relayed the story of not having learned of the recent constitutional referendum until the night before the vote. This was surprising to me as I was aware that an extensive effort had gone into contacting citizens about this referendum as the previous vote had failed for not meeting the quorum of voters, at significant expense to the Nation. I have termed these ‘communication gaps’ to mean that despite the best efforts of Nation staff, Toquaht citizens are still not consistently and reliably receiving the information they need to participate.

One of the keys to understanding these gaps is in the responses to community survey questions on citizens preferred methods of communication. When asked which communication methods they used most, participants enlisted a wide variety of methods with, telephone, email, texting, Facebook, and in-person conversation all ranking highly.

Figure 9. Community Survey Question: Which of these communication methods do you use most?

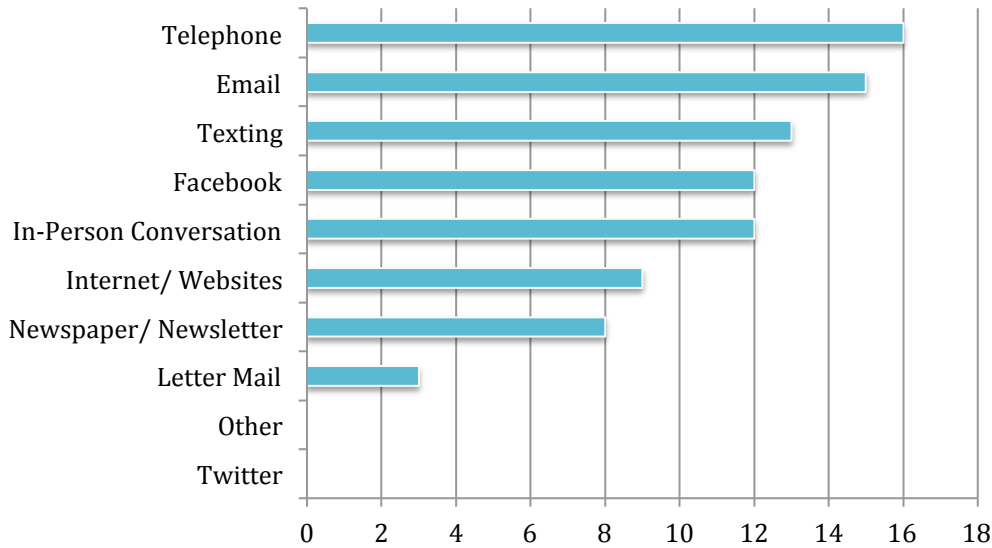


Figure 9. Bar graph representing the most commonly used communication methods by Toquaht citizens, based on self-reporting.

Adding even more complexity to the question of citizens preferred methods of communication, when asked the similar question of “How do you want to receive Toquaht Nation information and updates?” a very different hierarchy of preferences were provided, with Facebook, Nation newsletter, email and telephone rounding out the top four.

Figure 10. Community Survey Question: How do you want to receive Toquaht Nation information and updates?

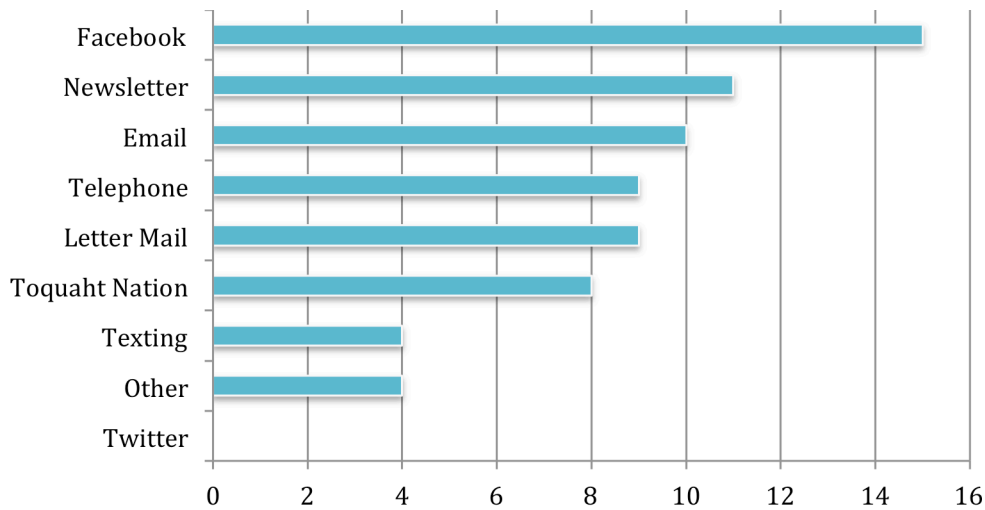


Figure 10. Bar graph representing Toquaht citizens' preferred communication methods with the Nation, based on self-reporting.

It was difficult to find any meaningful consistency in the responses to these two survey questions. I estimated from this initial data that as a diverse and geographically disparate group, it was important for Nation communications to employ an equal diversity of methods in order to effectively reach all citizens.

When participants in the community engagement sessions offered their own estimates of what causes citizens to miss or not receive Nation communications, two participants raised the issue of diversity, noting that reliable internet connections were inconsistent across the whole population, and that while younger citizens were most comfortable with online and social media communications, older citizens still needed face-to-face communications.

Another issue that was broached by a participant and agreed to by other group members, was that there was the need to identify where these communication gaps are. As one participant noted, "Sometimes people don't even know that they aren't getting the information." In private conversations some citizens and Nation staff bemoaned citizens who they feel do not take personal responsibility to stay informed and up to date on Nation announcements (i.e., reading emails, newsletters etc.) and then complain that they were never informed.

There was wide agreement to one participant's assertion that using effective channels of communication would motivate and enable citizens to participate in Nation activities and politics. Proposals to define what effective channels of communication might look like, fell into two primary camps; using a diversity of efficient methods, and employing more personal communications to connect with older or disengaged citizens to ensure messages are received.

Brought on by a discussion on the significance of the survey responses regarding preferred communication methods, participating citizens clarified which mass communication methods are most effective in getting information to them. A multiplicity of suggestions were offered that largely reflected the communication methods that Toquaht Nation is already using to reach citizens (newsletters, mail-outs, website, Facebook page etc.). There was most agreement on the efficiency of telephone calls, Facebook notifications and messages, and text messaging at reaching citizens. This conversation was best summed up by one participant, who in response to the question, "How can we best reach Toquaht citizens that live away?" responded, "Every way possible". This acknowledges the wide range of ages, locations, levels of technological proficiency and access among citizens, and tasks the Nation administrators with bridging that gap with an equally wide array of communication methods.

The second set of proposals takes the opposing position that Nation to citizen communication requires communication methods that are specific and targeted, but also, which are personal. Receiving a mass message about an upcoming event might provide the key information an individual needs to attend the event; citizens who have long been disengaged may need a personal contact and invitation to feel motivated to attend. Two new proposals met this criterion, including the suggestion of creating a Nation phone tree, so that all citizens would receive a personal call ahead of significant events. Another participant suggested designating representatives for each family and tasking these individuals with ensuring all family members have the information they need to participate. The communication proposals were unique for how they take advantage of small and familial nature of the community and work to promote and reconstitute community relations.

Lemont (2002) similarly asserts that the disengaged are unresponsive to the generalized mass communications that governments typically use to inform their population, and that such citizens require intensive personal approaches, like in-person communication or a personal phone call (p. 4). The gap between who generalized mass communications work for, and for whom they do not is further addressed by Graham and Phillips (1999) who contend that governments often fail to undertake targeted communications with habitually disengaged citizens. They argue that governments target only the low-lying fruit; those citizens who are already interested and engaged, and for whom the generalized mass communications system works (p. 9). Graham and Phillips go further to say that as a result of these ill-suited, inappropriate and vague communication and engagement strategies that disengaged citizens stay on the margins and are dismissed as apathetic (p. 9). For these individuals, the extra effort of personal connection is needed.

Efforts from the survey, the community engagement activities and the literature review to identify mass communication methods that could effectively engage the whole Toquaht population, and overcome existing gaps in communication proved to be ineffective. What did become clear from these was the need for a two-tier communication strategy: a mass communication strategy employing a diversity of widely accessible technological tools and social media, and personal communications specifically targeting disengaged citizens. While effort should be made to ensure that the implementation of such a strategy would not unduly burden the Nation's staff and leaders, Toquaht Nation is a sufficiently small community that creative solutions for personal communications are possible and ought to be explored.

5.1.3 Uncertainty

Uncertainty was another significant theme that came up in the survey and community engagement activities. Participants described uncertainty as compromising their readiness

to participate in political affairs. This is closely related to the issue of lack of knowledge and understanding of political structures and institutions described in the conceptual framework. I have defined uncertainty here as a lack of knowledge or comfort with Nation political institutions and processes.

In the community survey, this lagging confidence was demonstrated in responses to the question, “How much do you feel you understand about the Maa-nulth treaty and Toquaht’s new governance structure?” where only 46% of participating citizens responded that they felt they understood enough about the treaty and the resultant changes to the Nation’s governing structures. While the question itself could have been more clearly expressed by providing a simpler either-or option (39% responded that they did not feel they knew enough, and 15% responded that they wanted to know more), this is still a meaningful result given that a significant proportion of respondents were themselves Nation staff and administrators.

Further remarks on confusion over the new procedures were made in the community engagement activities, where participating citizens made statements like, “A lot of people still don’t know what’s going on.” When questioned directly about the above survey result, one participant added that “some people don’t know where to start; don’t know the right questions to ask.” Included in the comments section of one of the surveys, one participant wrote, “Not all the members have adequate education, or understanding of the importance of being involved with the Nation’s business” What comes across in these comments is the feeling that citizens are lost in the scale and complexity of recent governance changes, resulting in their withdrawal from political participation.

In discussing the causes of this uncertainty, participants listed the processes that have changed and are new since the treaty. How they are expected to participate in People’s Assemblies is new, as are Nation elections, voting for councilors, and being consulted for Nation laws and projects. Many Nation leaders themselves expressed that the last few years have been a big learning curve for them, and many are still trying to get comfortable with their new roles and duties. Many agreed that the treaty was an extensive legal document that is difficult to understand, and even after having voted to approve it, most are not confident in their knowledge of its content and intricacies.

While most of the participants’ comments about uncertainty revolved around the recent political transition, two participants described citizen disengagement as a historic and even normative experience. After one stated that citizens were unmotivated to attend People’s Assemblies, another participant reasoned that, “Residential Schools put a damper on [our pride] somewhat.” Such comments characterized pre-treaty (*Indian Act*) Toquaht Nation as one where there was little space and little reason for citizens to participate in political

affairs. Speaking of their feeling of empowerment as a result of the treaty and self-government, one participating citizen made the remark, “we are moving away from being too uncomfortable to say anything.”

When considering ways to overcome citizen uncertainty and discomfort in political participation, the solutions turned primarily to civic education and how best to explain political institutions and processes to citizens. Like the communications proposals, participants suggested employing a variety of education mechanisms to bolster understanding and the accessibility of political and legal documents. These included making frequently asked questions (FAQ) documents or “cliff notes” summaries available on significant legislation. Other suggestions included making briefing notes available so that citizens could better understand Toquaht Nation governance processes. One participant suggested that open weekend workshops could be set up, so that citizens could study different questions based on their own curiosities. Finally, just as was proposed as a means of maximizing Nation communications, it was suggested that family representatives could be designated, trained, and charged with educating their family members in a way that would be most comfortable for them.

The most agreed upon comment in this regard was that civic education initiatives should employ a diversity of teaching methods for different learning styles (e.g., visual, kinesthetic, storytelling), and that when explaining complex subjects, presenters should work to these different learning styles. The underlying principle was that civic education ought to be a priority for the Nation, and that a variety of initiatives and teaching instruments should be employed to overcome citizen uncertainty. While the treaty has been in effect for three years, that is pittance for political institutions and the societal norms that develop around them. Toquaht citizens need continued support for participatory practices to take root.

Although described differently, citizen uncertainty is also a significant theme in the literature on citizen participation. Lemont (2006) describes uncertainty as an issue of citizen trust and vulnerability, explaining that people will not participate in a process that they do not feel safe and confident in. To overcome this vulnerability he says, the structure and rules of the game must be explicit and continually addressed to build citizen buy-in and trust. Other authors addressed this theme from a different angle, discussing lack of understanding and civic education as the cause of citizen alienation. To explain this cause-effect relationship, Putnam (2000) likens politics and community life to a game, positing that when people do not know the rules, they are unlikely to be interested and start playing it themselves (p. 35). This dearth of understanding is described by Lemont’s (2006) study on constitutional reform efforts in Aboriginal communities, where he found a majority of citizens did not have enough detailed understanding of their Nation’s history, government

or constitutional structure to make confident and informed decisions about these matters, and as a result they were uncomfortable participating (p. 244).

There was some agreement between participants and the literature on the impact of colonialism on First Nations political participation. On the smaller theme of historic and normative disengagement, Lemont (2000) posits that the colonial experience was responsible for severing inter-generational communication channels used for the transmission of important cultural and civic knowledge, depriving Aboriginal citizens of a natural sense of their role in the community (p. 17). As such, part of the work of citizen engagement ought to be anti-colonial work to continue reconstituting and reestablishing Aboriginal traditions and communities.

Further, as a solution to begin addressing uncertainty, Lemont (2002) recommends that government's commit to ongoing programs of civic education to build citizen's knowledge and confidence to participate (p. 4). In her work on community engagement in First Nations communities, Bennett (2003) also makes the connection between citizen disengagement and lack of understanding. While participating citizens and the literature agree that civic education is the key to overcoming many of the root causes of citizen alienation and disengagement, in Bennett's study participants found that the failure of government leadership and staff to explain political and legal matters in a way that they understood, and that connected with their immediate needs and interests was a major inhibitor on their engagement. While civic education might be the clear answer for citizen uncertainty, it is not always easily achieved.

The themes discussed here, distance, communication gaps and uncertainty represent both issues unique to small, rural and Aboriginal communities, and universal challenges to citizen engagement. In considering these challenges, participating citizens posed a number of solutions that were commensurate with the best advice from academics and practitioners in the field. By following the principles of reaching citizens where they are, finding ways to bring citizens home, using a diversity of mass communication methods, personally reaching out to disengaged citizens and making civic education an immediate and long term priority, disengaged Toquaht citizens are apt to return to community life; enriching Toquaht community life and government decision-making in the process.

5.2 Motivators

In the original conceptual framework I did not have a specific category for motivators. Instead I said that motivators were the 'movers,' the specific factors that move a citizen up the scale of citizen engagement, out of disengagement towards social and subsequently political engagement; the things that inspire and enable citizens to become more involved in their community. In discussions with participating citizens, I found that a large

proportion of the experiences and issues being described fell into this movers' category, and so it was necessary to represent this concept in the thematic map.

There is a strong connection between the factors or themes described under disengagement and those described as motivators. There was a great deal of overlap in themes, each often representing the inverse of the other. The distinction between the factors that cause disengagement and the factors that motivate citizens to greater participation hinges on attitude, where motivators were regarded as the positive themes that continually came up in discussions with participating citizens.

In the community engagement activities participating citizens brought up issues of civic education and communication both in the negative (included under disengagement) and the positive (included as motivators). The three themes discussed here were grouped from points brought up as factors that motivated citizens to attend community events and People's Assemblies, and participate more readily in Nation affairs. These included civic education, effective communication and roles for youth.

Figure 11. Motivators Thematic Mini-Map

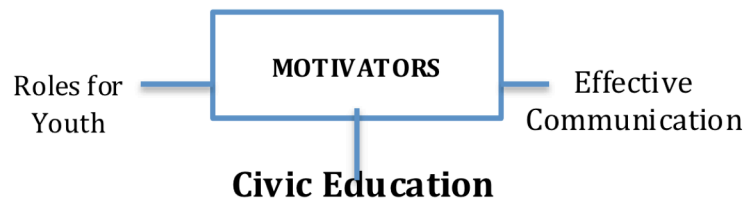


Figure 11. Figure showing the three key themes related to the concept of disengagement. The varying size of the text of the themes represents the relative prominence of the theme in the data.

This section will now turn to the description, reasoning, and solutions offered by participants on these three themes for community engagement and participation motivators. The perspectives of participants on each theme will further be compared to relevant discussions in the literature.

5.2.1 Civic Education

The first significant theme that came up during the two community engagement activities was civic education. This is a more positive take on the uncertainty described in the subsection on disengagement. A dearth of knowledge and comfort with political institutions can cause citizens to disengage. Inversely, a citizen who is educated on the political processes and institutions that govern them, and on their own roles and responsibilities within those institutions, will more readily participate in community social and political life.

Participating citizens described how education would help them to better connect with their responsibilities. As one participant stated, “[I attend People’s Assemblies because] I am interested in the information and wanting to know more.” Participants generally agreed that civic education was an important means of becoming comfortable with the recent self-governance changes and motivating and empowering Toquaht citizens to get involved.

Participants explained the relationship between recent political changes, citizen uncertainty and civic education. They speculated that major political changes, in combination with a previous record of historic and normative disengagement in the population have put many Toquaht citizens in a position of not understanding the processes that govern them. Participants reasoned that because of this not knowing, citizens are uncomfortable engaging with the Nation’s political institutions. As one participant offered, “once they understand it, they will want to be engaged.”

Solutions offered by participants on how to maximize civic education as a motivator for participation were similar to those on how to overcome uncertainty. These solutions centered on employing a variety of education and teaching mechanisms that can be consistently applied to government documents and presentations to make these communications more accessible.

As with the theme of uncertainty, participants suggested designating family representatives and charging them with educating their family members in the most appropriate way, while being inclusive of a diversity of views and perspectives on the issues. Participating citizens suggested providing more time and resources to community learning, making it dynamic, participatory, and maybe a little less boring. This requires that Toquaht leaders and staff take up the role of educators and regard every interaction with Toquaht citizens as a teaching moment. Participants suggest that prioritizing these activities will result in a more motivated and engaged citizenry.

Similarly, the literature advocates for strong civic education programs as a means of encouraging and bolstering the capacity and levels of citizen participation. Describing the relationship between civic education and motivation, Lemont (2002) suggests that if Aboriginal governments can enhance citizens’ understanding of traditional governance, the historical origins of their Nation’s contemporary government, and other governance matters, this will increase levels of interest and participation in government (p. 17). In this way, civic education not only affects citizens’ capacity and willingness to participate (moving them away from disengagement,) but will continue to inspire, and motivate greater integration and empowerment as civic actors. To generate this kind of energy among citizens, participant responses and the literature similarly assert that the Nation

leadership must commit to short and long term education programs to consistently build citizens' knowledge.

In proposing strategies and mechanisms for successful civic education, Lemont's case studies on constitutional reform (2002; 2006) suggest that Nation leaders and staff need to consider civic education a crucial part of their job description, and find ways to insert educational mechanisms into their everyday affairs. Some of the mechanisms Lemont found to be particularly effective at increasing knowledge and shifting interest in community affairs was early civic education for youth. This was implemented both in the form of youth council programming and a specific Nation governance curriculum in community schools. Participating citizens in this case did not suggest the latter as Toquaht does not have a community school (2002, p. 4-5).

Scholars of citizen engagement encourage governments to create greater space for citizen voices and dialogue in their institutions to create the kind of active, collective learning that participating citizens are saying they want. Forums for community dialogue and learning can take a number of forms including citizen study groups, citizen testimony at public meetings or online forums as simple as a Facebook page. The most important elements for effective learning and discussion are that they are interactive, that citizens feel safe and unintimidated participating, and that they are accessible to the full diversity of the community (Gattinger, 1999, pp. 211-214; Graham & Phillips, 1999, p.9; HPAIED Report, 2002, p.5; Lemont, 2006, p. 246).

The key point from the literature is that successful civic engagement that enables and inspires citizens to become better civic actors requires investments of time and money. Lemont (2006) suggests that the most effective way of disseminating civic knowledge is for local government staff and leaders to study and increase their own confidence with the material so that they can better educate citizens, whether it be in personal conversations, official Nation education materials, youth group meetings or Facebook communications (p. 245). Investments in this regard are paid back in the increased connectivity of the community, capacity of citizens, and better decision-making of government.

5.2.2 Effective Communication

Effective communication was found to be the next significant motivating theme and had a strong relation with its disengagement counterpart. As a theme of disengagement, participants discussed how communication gaps prevent them from participating more readily in community life; they might not see their interests reflected in government activities, or simply not be aware of when meetings and events are taking place. Discussing many of the same issues in a positive light, participating citizens described how effective

channels of communication inspire them to participate in Nation activities and politics and can facilitate dynamic dialogue inclusive of all Toquaht citizens.

For many of the participants who spoke on this subject, it seemed they were using communication as a euphemism for connection, describing messaging as a means of strengthening the relational bonds between citizens and the Nation. As one participant reasoned, “we all have the responsibility to reach out and approach other citizens who might be having a hard time. Reach out to other citizens, be personable with other citizens, connect with other citizens, go to their door.” This quote accords transformative power to interpersonal communication and charges community-minded citizens with engaging and motivating their marginalized community members. This point is reflected in the literature on citizen engagement in Aboriginal contexts. Lemont (2002) relates the effectiveness of community leaders taking up more intensive and personalized communication approaches during times of change and transition. This, he says, should be used to supplement existing strategies for mass communication and engagement, which continue to be necessary (p. 4).

Similar to the solutions proposed to overcome communication gaps, the suggestions offered by participants for making Nation communications more efficient centered on two views; maximizing the use of efficient forms of mass communication and employing more inter-personal communications to invite and encourage citizens to attend events and participate. The related literature suggests how communities can set the stage for rich two-way communications dialogues on subjects that matter. One anonymous survey participant submitted in the additional comments section that he or she was not always sure how to begin conversations with other citizens, writing, “I want to interact with members but I find there is distance, awkwardness at times.” To be successful, Graham and Phillips (1999) contend that the dialogic forum must be accessible and that dialogue participants ought to reflect the full diversity of perspectives in the community (p. 9). In practice this means that communities must employ an equal variety of dialogic forms to cover diversities such as citizens preferred way of communicating, different levels of education and geographic distance. One survey participant made the point that public meetings like People’s Assemblies should be based more on the needs and interests of citizens, rather than the Executive. Rather than make citizens fit with standardized processes for public meetings and events, leaders need to find ways to tailor the forums to the interests of citizens so that marginalized and disengaged voices will speak up and enrich the process.

The findings on positive and effective communication echo those for overcoming communication gaps; that a variety of easy mass communication methods ought to be employed to cast a wide net, and that those generalized communication methods need to be bolstered by regular inter-personal communications to connect with disengaged citizens. Further, though not readily discussed by participants, the literature suggests that

maximizing efficient community communication requires scrutinizing existing communication and meeting structures to make them more inviting for two-way and dialogic communications

5.2.3 Roles for youth

A lesser theme described by participants as motivating themselves and other citizens to participate and engage was having space and roles for youth in Nation affairs. This was described by one participant who said that Toquaht citizens are encouraged by the fact that the Nation currently has a large youth demographic, after years of fearing that the community was shrinking out of existence. These participants regarded the Nation's young population as a source of great potential for the community, but warned that in order to reach that potential there is a need to get those youth involved. When asked during one of the engagement activities what motivated them to participate in Nation events and politics, two participants spoke about the motivation and empowerment that result when young people have an outlet to express themselves and contribute to the community. Having a Toquaht Youth Council was suggested as one way that young people could get involved. What came across from participants who discussed the positive effect of having roles for youth was that parents especially believe it is important that their children be involved in community life, learn about the Nation's governing institutions, and are groomed as the Nation's future leaders.

These participants were advocating for learning and leadership-building activities for the Nation's young people that might build this group's capacity as civic actors. The literature often ascribes these outcomes to volunteerism. Volunteerism, it is argued, provides an outlet for citizens to become involved in their community in a multitude of ways, and serves as an outlet for citizens to participate and contribute to community life (Bennett, 2003; Packman, 2008; Plumtree & Graham, 1999; Walsh, 1999). The literature says that taking on new roles in support of community through volunteer activities can empower individuals by building their individual capacity and confidence. Packman (2008) writes that when done right, volunteerism acts as a bridge to civic involvement as individuals gain confidence, passion for their community, knowledge and interest in how government affects the aspects of their community (p. 2). It is for these benefits that Walsh (1999) says that governments have begun institutionalizing and resourcing volunteer organizations like youth councils (p. 2).

Lemont (2006) found that youth councils were a particularly astute tool for disseminating civic education lessons. In one of his case studies, youth council members were given interactive presentations during their regular meetings and invited to attend council meetings to learn about local governance and community issues first hand. They were then

tasked with educating their parents and families about the functions of government and any proposed changes (p. 245).

Both the literature and these few participants contend that having roles for youth, such as a community youth council, is an important means of motivating young people to become engaged civic actors as young adults. Despite the smaller number of participant insights on this topic, roles for youth is an important theme for how the proposed solutions intersect with issues and solutions from the other themes discussed in these findings; Lemont's (2006) suggestion of using youth council members as civic educators would provide roles for youth, but could also advance goals for civic education and inter-personal communication.

While many of the reasons for disengagement were unique to Aboriginal and small, rural community circumstances, the factors that were described as motivating greater participation were well established in the civic engagement literature. These included civic education, effective communication and roles for youth. The proposed solutions from participants and the literature complement one another both within and across themes. Civic education requires greater attention and resources. Interpersonal communication and forums for dialogue are needed to maximize effective communication. Youth need roles that will contribute to their education and growth as civic actors. There is significant potential for strategies that can maximize all these key motivators in a manner that is low cost, and which involve citizens in the work.

5.3 Toquaht Community Life

The final concept of Toquaht community life is defined as the experience of factors that draw people together and build connection and communal action in the Nation. These factors are the elements of community life that have the most magnetic draw for citizens; the aspects that citizens regard as being the most important for their own personal, and social well-being, that keep them coming back for Nation meetings and activities. In the words of one participating citizen, these are the things that make up the "strong desire to be engaged and connected to the Nation."

The ties of culture and family are so strong in Toquaht Nation that it would have been a misrepresentation of the community's character to place political activities above cultural and family activities. The intertwining of social and political concepts to make the meta-concept of Toquaht community life better reflects the Nuu-chah-nulth worldview, that 'all is one.' This project's movement towards a holistic concept of engagement mirrors the evolution in the literature from discussions of political participation to discussion of community engagement. The themes that make up the concept of Toquaht community life that I present here bare resemblance to Adler and Goggin's (2005) conception of social

capital, which they said was the ways active citizens participate in the life of the community in order to improve life for others and help shape their community's future (p. 241).

As a starting point for emerging the themes of Toquaht community life, the survey posed a series of questions asking citizens what it was about their community that they found most engaging. These included: Why do you attend People's Assemblies? How are you currently involved in the community? And how do you want to be more involved? Popular responses across all three questions included family, socialization and political participation.

Clarifying the points raised in the survey, participants in the engagement activities articulated several factors that made them feel proud and connected to the Nation. These were, self-determination, culture, celebration and family. These points are more distinctive than the themes discussed in relation to citizen disengagement or motivators. They represent what participating citizens described as being some of the most rewarding and attractive parts of being active Toquaht citizens.

Figure 12. Toquaht Community Life Thematic Mini-Map

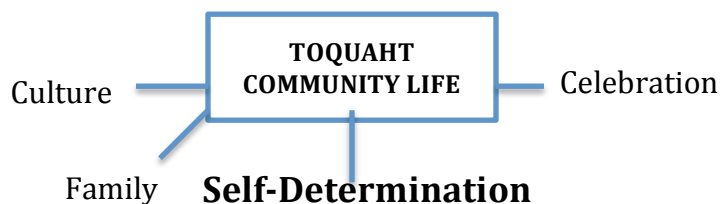


Figure 12. Figure showing the four key themes related to the concept of Toquaht Community Life. The varying size of the text of the themes represents the relative prominence of the theme in the data.

This section will now turn to the descriptions and next steps offered by participating citizens on these four themes of Toquaht community life. The perspectives of participating citizens on each theme will further be compared to relevant discussions in the literature.

5.3.1 Self-determination

The theme that came up most often for participating citizens when discussing community life was self-determination. When describing Toquaht Nation's renewed autonomy and the opportunity they perceived self-governance would bring, the participants I spoke to visibly beamed with optimism and pride.

When questioned about the changes heralded by self-government, participants remarked, "There is so much potential for my people," and, "[there is] a lot of power here."

Participants drew strong connections between their levels of pride as Toquaht citizens and the achievement of treaty, self-government, and the exercise of the Nation's new

governance powers. One participant shared, “I am more proud now,” while another added, “Pride is growing more and more among Toquaht people.” This feeling of optimism and National pride was explained as being caused by the knowledge of all the “hard work and accomplishments of past leaders to get [the community there],” and the feeling that that as a community they now have the space and opportunities to create a future all their own.

Another sub-theme was the opinion that the treaty had been a positive change and had empowered community governance. Participating Nation leaders and staff described feeling they had real decision-making power now, and their work had more substance. This reflects how self-governance had changed the way leaders, staff and citizens related to their community and government. While these positive associations were most marked in those directly affiliated with the Nation government, one citizen commented, “the yards look a lot better now,” suggesting that the sense of control over their lands had had a discernable effect on how the citizens related to their homes and community.

Participants reported having a greater interest in Nation politics since self-government. As one participant offered, there is greater motivation to volunteer and to learn about the Nation and government as a result of new opportunities and potential. Another participant relished how exciting and empowering it was to elect their own government for the first time. Participating citizens said that they are more energized to participate in decision-making than ever before because they now feel that their contributions and attention have real effect and substance.

The literature contends that citizens perceive their government as more legitimate and accountable when decision-making powers are located closer to the grassroots (Graham and Phillips, 1999, p. 8) Thusly, Toquaht citizens’ perception of governance has been improved by the devolution of governance powers from bureaucrats in Ottawa to Toquaht leaders themselves. Citizens that were previously excluded from the political process now see real space for them in the governance of their community and are inspired to participate because their efforts have potential to make a difference.

5.3.2 Culture

The second theme that participants said made them feel engaged and connected to the Nation was cultural activities, and cultural expression. When asked to describe the time they felt most proud to be a Toquaht citizen, many participants recalled moments of cultural significance; watching Bert Mack pass chieftainship to Chief Anne in a traditional ceremony, singing, dancing, or hearing the performance of the victory song on the Treaty celebration date. As one participant communicated, the ability to connect with spiritual and ancestral roots is a large part of why citizens are involved in community life. This suggests that creating opportunities for citizens and their families to connect with their cultural

roots is an important means of advancing the factors that keep citizens engaged in Toquaht community life. Indeed, when participants were asked how best to connect with citizens that live away, one of the most resonant points was, “bring culture into everything.” While government services and social connections could be satiated elsewhere, Toquaht Nation is the only place citizens can communally engage in their unique culture.

In his description of community bonds in Aboriginal communities, Lemont (2006) agrees that having a unique culture shared among a relatively small number of people provides natural and persistent glue between citizens that keeps citizens connected to their home community regardless of where they live. Future planning for meetings, community events and gatherings should consider citizens’ strong desire for cultural content.

5.3.3 Family

Similarly, as a small community primarily composed of four extended families, Nation gatherings are an occasion for citizens to reconnect with family members. When community engagement activity participants were asked what brought them out to People’s Assemblies, five participants raised the value of familial connection in Nation gatherings. Social engagement and seeing and visiting with family were other noted responses. Many of the citizens in one of the groups that I facilitated said that having the opportunity to see family and community was the primary reason they attended People’s Assemblies. To encourage this outlet for community connection it is necessary for Nation leaders and staff to recognize the importance and legitimacy of social and family visiting at community gatherings, as well as the important function catching-up plays in strengthening community bonds.

Even relative to other rural First Nations communities, Toquaht Nation is an exceptionally small community. Much of the popular literature on citizen engagement and community bonds deals with larger populations where anonymity is a challenge to building community-wide social capital. In this regard, Toquaht’s small size and familial character should be seen as an advantage. Participants did not offer any specific strategies for supporting, or capitalizing on family connections, although it is estimated that these existing connections could be an effective way of implementing other strategies for education and information sharing discussed to this point. Further, when planning Nation activities, events and meetings, leaders and Nation staff should devise ways to make the events family-friendly, by building in activities for children and youth so that all Toquaht citizens can attend.

5.3.4 Celebration

Celebration was the final theme that participating citizens identified as drawing them and their fellow citizens together; building connection and communal action. Citizens described

having an occasion to come together and celebrate Nation successes as an impetus for attending People's Assemblies and other events. Three more participants were particularly enthusiastic of the great prizes and food offered at gatherings. What became clear was that it was meaningful to citizens to have space for lighthearted celebration with fellow members of the community. Participants noted that doing more activities as a community would inspire attendance and build community, as well as providing a greater variety of events and activities for citizens to engage in outside of community governance and the People's Assemblies.

Social capital thrives in moments of shared joy. While it can be easy in times of transition when there is significant work to be done to regard parties are superfluous, Bennett (2003) recalls the importance of community gathering for purposes other than official government business. Community gathering that are purely social, cultural or fun in character serve an essential function by drawing out disengaged citizens. Any activity that pulls citizens out of their individual frames and gets them to turn their attention and efforts the collective will support citizen participation and community engagement.

The concept of Toquaht community life that came out the survey and community engagement activities was distinctive from the concepts of disengagement and motivators for the positivity, pride, and confidence associated with it. These feelings were palpable when speaking with citizens in the activity groups, and were highly contagious. Both my activity facilitators and myself left feeling excited for the community's future. While the themes of self-determination, culture, family and celebration reflect the things that are already going well for the community, the undertaking for this concept is to capitalize on these strengths by tying Nation events and initiatives to these key inspirational qualities of community life.

5.4 Findings and Discussion Summary

Findings taken from a community survey and two community engagement activities with participating Toquaht citizens provide a diverse representation of the issues that contribute to citizen disengagement, that motivate citizens to greater involvement, and that are the most compelling aspects of community life for citizens. The issues that came up in the data collection fit well with the framework developed from the literature, and themes were divided among the relevant concepts of disengagement, motivators, and Toquaht community life. The concept of Toquaht community life was generated from discussions with citizens to represent a holistic experience of community participation, which includes activities where social and political activities are entwined. Participants described many similar challenges to citizen participation and Nation communications discussed in the literature. Also discussed were solutions and initiatives that in many cases were similar to

those in the literature, while also addressing the specific issues and resources available to the Nation at this juncture.

When defining the issues that caused them and their fellow citizens to disengage, participants discussed three central issues, distance, uncertainty and communication gaps. Of these themes, the issue of distance generated the most discussion. Participants described logistical challenges such as of not having access to vehicles, public transportation or upfront funds for gas as the most significant impediments to greater engagement. Participants suggested that actually returning to the traditional territory or being in Macoah for meetings and events was the most significant determinate of citizen engagement in broader community life.

Suggestions on how the significant proportion of citizens that live away from Macoah can be connected with hinged on two principles, reaching citizens where they are through greater organization and representation in the regions of the Toquaht diaspora, and bringing citizens home by overcoming the logistical issues of transportation and lodging that keep citizens away. Participants said that missing important messages about Nation meetings, events and actions, (termed here communication gaps), was a major impediment to engagement. It was suggested that effective mechanisms of communication needed to be identified that would work for the full diversity of the Nation citizens. Finally, uncertainty was identified as a major impediment to citizen participation, especially in People's Assemblies and other explicitly political activities. Participants noted that the significant political changes in recent years, as well as a record of normative disengagement among the population has left many citizens unclear on the workings of the new political order, and their role within that order. Participants agreed with the literature that targeted and ongoing civic education would be important for empowering citizens to participate in Nation politics.

When describing factors that motivated them to become more involved in the community, participants explained the opposing side of themes raised under disengagement: civic education and effective communication. Participating citizens advanced the principle that civic education ought to be a priority for community development, and greater attention and resources should be committed towards this. One suggestion on how to educate the population was to create a diversity of new civic education resources and materials, such as frequently asked question sheets, or legislation summaries, to make these institutions more accessible. Other participants suggested tasking politically engaged family members with educating citizens. This method has the advantage of being informal and flexible to different learning styles, and is similar to strategies successfully employed in the literature. Discussions on how to ensure effective communication between the Nation government and citizens suggested employing a diversity of general mass communication methods (e.g., Facebook, email, Nation website, text) to reach as many people as easily as possible.

Targeted inter-personal communications (face-to-face conversations, visits and phone calls) were also raised as a means of connecting with hard to reach and disengaged citizens. The point was made in the literature and by some participants that in order to achieve real understanding on complex topics, citizens need to discuss the issues and hear different perspectives on them. Spaces for citizen dialogue need to be cultivated to encourage these kinds of dynamic conversations to emerge. Finally, roles for youth was a lesser discussed theme by participating citizens, but one that was highlighted in the literature as key to developing a sustainable civic culture in communities. Many participants who were parents indicated it was important for Nation youth to have opportunities to learn about their history and culture. Solutions to this effect suggested creating a Nation youth council. A related solution from the literature proposed training youth council members in civic education and tasking them with educating their family members; utilizing youth empowerment initiatives and interpersonal communications as tools for citizen education.

During the community engagement activities, rather than distinguishing between the social and political activities they engaged in, participants tended to focus on what was important to them about their community, and what made them feel connected and proud. Comments of this character revealed four themes of Toquaht community life; self-determination, culture, family and celebration. Many participants cited new opportunities and self-governance powers resulting from the *Maa-nulth Final Agreement* as being a tremendous source of inspiration and pride. The literature indicates that citizens become more engaged when governance powers are devolved to bring decision-making closer to citizens. To boost self-determination the Toquaht government would need to continually engage citizens in strategic decision-making. In both the survey and community engagement activities, participants described culture as an essential and grounding aspect of community life for them. Participants determined that culture ought to be present in all Nation activities, meetings and events. Family was also raised as a significant source of community connection. Toquaht Nation is a small community, and participants notably cherished the small, familial nature of their community. Increasing the practice of interpersonal communications and making Nation events and meetings more family-friendly would capitalize on this intimate character. Finally, participating citizens often cited the fun, celebratory aspects of Nation meetings and events as reasons for their participation. These comments illustrate the principle that community gatherings should be fun, social and cultural, and should celebrate togetherness.

Through its evolution in this project, the conceptual framework has been a useful tool to simply represent a linear relationship between major themes and concepts in this investigation. Lost in this illustration are the relationships between themes. These connections are especially missed when the framework is populated with the proposed solutions and the collective principles underlying those themes and solutions. Many of the solutions raised by participants are especially rich because they touch multiple themes and

issues. Like the theme of Toquaht community life, interconnections abound in discussions with participants, and any effort to separate out and tidy these themes, principles and solutions for more ready consumption risks overlooking these linkages. The below map is intended to more fully illustrate the character of the findings, the relationship between the ten themes, proposed solutions, and the principles that underlie them.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Academic discourse by itself will not support the life of the individual, the family, or the community. As we integrate new knowledge, it is we who give it life that it may sustain life....This meaningful integration of new knowledge happens in the day to day events sitting around the table with people whose lives are being affected in concrete ways. (Weber-Pillwax, 2001, p. 169)

The purpose of this project was to assess the way that Toquaht citizens currently receive Nation communications and relate to the Nation government, and then engage citizens to collaboratively devise strategies to improve communications and citizen participation. This section provides a set of recommendations for the Toquaht Executive to make communications and information sharing with citizens more efficient, and to encourage greater civic participation among all Toquaht citizens. These recommendations stem from the literature review and participating citizen-based recommendations from the community engagement activities that took place on March 22nd and July 12th 2014 in Macoah, BC.

Section 6.1 contains 10 recommendations for making communications and citizen engagement efforts more effective. The listed recommendations are organized to reflect the logical sequence of their implementation, with recommendations with the greatest potential for immediate impact and structural benefit being listed first.

Recommendations one through three are intended to provide a base of organization and coordination, making it constructive for these pieces to be put in place first (within the first six-months). These first three points will provide support to make the implementation of subsequent recommendations more successful.

Recommendations four through eight build on the base of organization and coordination to provide specific solutions to communication and engagement issues raised in the findings (these recommendations to be implemented within the first year). Once implemented, it is estimated that these changes would have a strong immediate effect, which could increase with continued attention after their initial launch.

Finally, recommendations nine and ten are matters that require long term and consistent attention. These are goals that require small, gradual and consistent changes to begin to transform patterns of behavior among citizens and Nation leaders. While measured implementation efforts of these recommendations could begin immediately, it is suggested that these matters be given substantial attention once the significant bulk of these other recommendations are in place (within 18- months).

My findings from this project suggest that these recommendations could address the components of the Toquaht citizen experience that have the most significant impact on citizen participation and communications in the community. They have been designed with consideration to the principles, suggestions and goals of participating citizens, as well as the resource capacity of the Toquaht Nation Executive and staff, and Nation budget.

6.1 Recommendations

1. Create a Council Committee on Civic Education and Citizen Outreach

To ensure that greater levels of organization, resources and attention are applied to the topics of civic education and citizen engagement, it is recommended that the Toquaht Nation Council create a committee whose mandate would include regular meetings to plan and discuss the execution of short and long-term projects for citizen education and participation. Initial projects might include the review and implementation of the recommendations of this report.

2. Designate Regional Hubs and Representatives

To lend greater organization and coordination to the significant Toquaht population that lives outside of Macoah, it is recommended that the core diasporatic centres, Ucluelet, Port Alberni, Nanaimo, Victoria and possibly Vancouver, be designated as Toquaht Regional Hubs with an ongoing record kept of all the Toquaht citizens living within those centres. This would be of use to the Toquaht government when devising how to best make inter-personal connections with citizens, but could also be useful for Toquaht citizens to make connections with fellow citizens living in their area. Regional representatives could be appointed for each of these hubs to serve as an intermediary between the Toquaht government and the citizens in that area. Toquaht regions will serve as an organizational structure to coordinate remote Nation events and assist in problem solving logistical issues like travel. The representatives themselves would serve as a closer communication channel between Toquaht's most disengaged citizens and the Nation.

3. Create Nation 'Communication Tree'

To establish an organized structure that facilitates quick and easy inter-personal communications with citizens the Nation should create a 'communication tree' or phone tree to employ for notifications. This will enable Toquaht citizens to learn about important Nation details through direct conversation with a fellow citizen to ensure that messages are received and understood. This also serves to disperse some of the communication burden from the Nation staff to citizens. This method is useful because the inter-personal character of the communication allows space for conversations to emerge and for connections and problem solving to occur. Steps in creating a communication tree:

- Gather current contact information for all citizens (home phone number, cell phone number, email, home address).
- Find a workable structure for the communication tree (templates available online) in which Nation staff directly contacts a small number of people (e.g. each of the designated regional representatives) who will in turn contact three to five citizens in their region, who in turn contact three to five more.
- Train citizens on the function and process of the communication tree during a Nation gathering. If citizens are absent from these gatherings, communication tree messaging itself can be used to walk citizens through the process.
- Widely disperse copies of the communication to citizens.
- When delivering messages, prepare a short, precise script so that the key details can be repeated without error and provide clear instructions to the individual about whom they are to contact next.
- Encourage citizens to pursue conversation outside of the script. Additionally, citizens should be asked to relay any questions or concerns that come up in these conversations to the communication tree coordinator

4. Encourage Outlets for Citizens to Facilitate Carpooling and Lodging

Citizens should be directed to the recommended and existing communication forums to problem solve the logistical issues around transportation and lodging that prevent citizens from attending Nation gatherings.

- When the communication tree is established, it and the Nation Facebook page should be used by citizens to offer and request carpooling and Macoah lodging, like an informal rideshare forum.
- To encourage this activity on Facebook, Nation staff and leaders should make posts to the Nation Facebook page encouraging those in need of, or offering rides or lodging to post those details online.
- Nation leaders, regional representatives and others can support this informal sharing by posting their own ride and lodging offers to the Facebook page.
- To encourage this activity through the communication tree, Nation staff should include in their communication scripts regarding upcoming events the questions, “Do you have a ride?”, “Will you need a place to stay over?”. When these questions raise logistical issues, it is intended that citizens will problem-solve together to fulfill each other’s needs.
- Regional representatives should be counseled to report any persistent logistical concerns among citizens to Nation staff or the Civic Education and Citizen Outreach Committee.

5. Create Youth Council

Toquaht Nation has been eager to develop a Youth Council for some time and included it in their 2014-2015 budget. To motivate sustainable citizen engagement a Toquaht Youth Council will serve as an opportunity for Nation youth who are geographically dispersed to get to know one another, learn about Nation history and culture, and contribute to the community in ways that interest them. This also serves to spread the workload by getting Youth to apply their energies to community development projects such as civic education and planning fun Nation gatherings. Key to the implementation of this recommendation are the following steps,

- Identify charismatic adult mentors and youth leaders to champion the Youth Council.
- Extend personal invitations to all Toquaht youth to participate.
- Devise creative ways to enable geographically dispersed youth to have equal opportunities to participate (e.g. tying Youth Council meetings to People's Assembly meetings).
- Encourage youth members to take the lead in defining what the goals of the Youth Council will be.

6. Train a Pool of Citizens and Staff as Informal Civic Educators

To educate Toquaht citizens in ways that are informal and comfortable, and that serve to build connection and dialogue between citizens, Toquaht Nation should train a diverse group of Toquaht citizens to act as informal civic educators. This could be achieved by,

- Host a series of workshops or study groups on the topics of Nation history, governance and institutions and invite interested citizens, Youth Council members, regional representatives as well as Nation leaders and staff to participate.
- Coach participants how to best pass their learning onto their family and friends by studying different learning styles and teaching mechanisms that they could practically apply in their everyday roles in the community.

7. Employ Diversity of General Mass Communication Methods

As part of a complete communication framework, Toquaht Nation could employ a multiplicity of mass communication tools consistently for all Nation notifications. This will help create a standard course to easily and inexpensively reach the greatest number of citizens with important one-way communications. It is recommended that for all messages this blitz should include,

- Facebook
 - Updates on the Toquaht Nation page
 - Event pages for People's Assemblies and community gatherings
- Email

- Notices on the Toquaht Nation website
- Mass text messaging

8. Create Diversity of Accessible Civic Education Resources and Materials

In addition to the other civic education initiatives the Toquaht Nation, or the Toquaht Civic Education and Citizen Outreach committee when created, could undertake the design of resources to educate citizens about foundational Nation institutions and documents. These learning resources could be used by Nation staff and leaders in citizen outreach, and should be consistently employed in interactions between members of the Toquaht Nation government and citizens. One important application would be ensuring that People’s Assembly presentations are accompanied by relevant resources, like videos and other visuals, to support citizens’ understanding. Important considerations for these civic education resources include,

- Resources should cover a variety of relevant topics including,
 - How to participate in a People’s Assembly.
 - How to run for Council.
 - The structure of Toquaht Nation government.
- Resources should employ a diversity of formats to appeal to different learning styles. These might include,
 - FAQ sheets.
 - Legislative Cliff Notes.
 - Instructional pamphlets.
 - Videos.
 - Stories.

9. Make Community Gatherings Fun, Engaging and Accessible for Citizens

Toquaht Nation staff and leaders could capitalize on the aspects of community gatherings that citizens noted as being most meaningful for them. Ensuring that meetings and gatherings are citizen focused would encourage attendance and participation in such events. This would include:

- Striking a balance between Macoah-based events and gatherings held remotely in the regional hubs.
- Include more cultural activities and opportunities for cultural expression at meetings and events.
- Make meetings and events more family-friendly by encouraging parents to bring children and youth to the People’s Assemblies and provide activities inclusive of all ages.
- Continue to cover the four F’s at all Nation gatherings: Fun, Friends, Food, and Freebies.

10. Foster Spaces for Citizen Dialogue

To make participation and civic engagement more meaningful for citizens, Toquaht Nation could promote their existing institutions and communication channels as forums for discussion and dialogue between government officials and citizens. People's Assemblies in particular are a critical opportunity for face-to-face dialogue on topics that matter to the community, where a full range of perspectives can be raised. To be meaningful, the dialogue should be interactive, relevant to citizen interests, accessible to citizens of diverse perspectives, and be unthreatening. Steps to achieve this objective would include:

- Prime citizens for participation and open discussion in People's Assemblies by adopting aspects of an engagement activity structure.
 - Begin the meeting with an icebreaker activity or game to encourage citizens to share and learn more about one another.
 - Describe the rules of the game at the beginning of every meeting, consistently reiterating to citizens the purpose of the Assemblies, their structure, how citizens should get involved in the meetings, and their powers as citizens, including how their submissions will be used.
- Consider adopting an open-discussion model like Talking Circles at the beginning or conclusion of all People's Assemblies to draw out comments and feedback from reserved citizens, and provide a clear time and procedure for citizens to raise the issues that are of concern to them.

7. CONCLUSION

This project was completed to find strategies Toquaht Nation could use to communicate with citizens more effectively, and inspire greater political participation among Toquaht citizens. Themes from the data suggest that in addition to continuing to receive information and Nation communications through a variety of online and mass communication methods, citizens want direct and more frequent interpersonal communications with fellow citizens and leaders. Further to needing specific information about meetings and events, citizens need more civic education on Toquaht political institutions and policies to feel confident participating in Nation politics. Other themes included the negative impact of distance and population dispersal on citizens' participation, as well as the importance of having roles for youth and inviting spaces for citizen dialogue. Participants brilliantly described the key inspirational qualities of Toquaht community life, that is, how citizens most want to be involved. These included, self-determination, culture, family and celebration. These challenges, motivators and strengths described largely echoed the major literature on citizen participation and engagement, while participant proposed solutions better aligned with literature specifically reflecting on Aboriginal contexts. While challenges of citizen participation and communication are universal, small, rural and Aboriginal communities have opportunities for community connectivity that Western urban communities do not. These findings and the specific proposals of participants resulted in 10 recommendations. These are intended to serve as practical proposals focused on the principles of increasing inter-personal communications, maintaining diversity in communication methods, supporting civic education, and supporting the key inspirational qualities of Toquaht community life.

Generalization of this study is limited by its focus on Toquaht Nation, with the community's particular cultural and historic context having brought it to this point. This study is further limited by the missing voices of Toquaht Nation's most disengaged citizens. While it is regrettable that creative ways of reaching these citizens within existing constraints were not discovered in time for this project, I am confident in how participants have relayed the concerns of these citizens. This has resulted in a project which is complete and which appropriately strategizes ways of bolstering Nation communications and citizen participation. For the research field, this study contributes much needed consideration of the particularities of First Nations citizen participation and disengagement, though more comprehensive studies of Aboriginal peoples engagement with social capital and civic governance is needed. Most importantly, I hope that participating citizens were activated by this project; Having greater interest and confidence to engage in community dialogue, and being inspired to forge stronger community connections.

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Appendices

7.2.1 Appendix I Typology of different forms of disengagement, involvement, civic engagement and political participation

	Non-participation (disengagement)		Civil participation (latent – political)		Political participation (manifest)		
	Active forms (antipolitical)	Passive forms (apolitical)	Social involvement (attention)	Civic engagement (action)	Formal political participation	Activism (extra-parliamentary political participation)	Illegal protests or actions
Individual forms	Non-voting Actively avoiding reading newspapers or watching TV when it comes to political issues Avoid talking about politics Perceiving politics as disgusting Political disaffection	Non-voting Perceiving politics as uninteresting and unimportant Political passivity	Taking interest in politics and socially Perceiving politics as important	Writing to an editor Giving money to charity Discussing politics and social issues, with friends or on the Internet Reading newspapers and watching TV when it comes to political issues Recycling	Voting in elections and referenda Deliberate acts of non-voting or blank voting Contacting political representatives or civil servants Running for or holding public office Donating money to political parties or organizations	Boycotting - political consumption Signing petitions Handing out political leaflets	Civil disobedience Politically motivated attacks on property
Collective forms	Deliberate non-political lifestyles, e.g. vegetarianism, consumerism In extreme cases: random acts of non-political violence (hate), reflecting frustration, alienation or social exclusion	"Non-reflected" non-political lifestyles	Belonging to a group with societal focus Identifying with a certain ideology and/or party Life-style related involvement: music, group identity, clothes, etcetera For example: -wing vegetarian, right-wing Skinhead scene, or left-wing anarcho-punk scene	Volunteering in social work, e.g. to support women's shelter or to help homeless people Charity work or faith-based community work Activity within community based organizations	Being a member of a political party, an organization, or a trade union Activity within a party, an organization or a trade union (voluntary work or silent meetings)	Involvement in new social movements or forums Demonstrating, participating in strikes, protests and other actions (e.g. street festivals with a distinct political agenda)	Civil disobedience actions Squatting or obstructing roads and railways Squatting buildings Participating in violent demonstrations or animal rights actions Violence confrontations with political opponents or the police

(Source: Joakim Ekman & Erik Amna, "Political Participation and Civic Engagement: Towards a New Typology." *Human Affairs*, 22, 285, 2012)

7.2.2 Appendix II Community Survey Instrument



TOQUAHT NATION COMMUNICATION SURVEY

1. Where do you live right now? (Please check one that applies)

- Macoah
- Ucluelet
- Port Alberni
- Nanaimo
- Victoria
- Other: Please specify _____.

2. How old are you? (Please check one applies)

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- 76+

3. How many Toquaht Nation People's Assembly meetings do you usually attend in a year? (Please check one that applies)

- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1
- 0

4. Why do you attend People's Assembly meetings? (Please check all that apply)

- I want to know more about what the Toquaht government is doing
- I want to participate in Nation discussion and votes
- I like to see friends and family from the community
- It is important for me to participate in community activities
- Other: Please describe _____.

5. What prevents you from attending People's Assembly meetings? (Please check all that apply)

- Travel takes too long
- Travel is too expensive
- No one tells me when/where they are
- Busy with work/school
- Busy with family
- People's Assembly meetings do not interest me
- People's Assembly meetings are not relevant to me
- I do not feel comfortable attending
- I don't know where to start
- Other: Please describe _____.

6. Which of these communication tools do you use the most? (Please check the 3 options you use most.)

- Email
- Texting
- In-person conversation
- Telephone
- Internet/Websites
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Letter Mail
- Newspaper/ Newsletter
- Other: Please specify _____.

7. How do you want to receive Toquaht Nation information / updates? (Please check the 3 options you use most.)

- Email
- Texting
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Toquaht Nation website
- Letter Mail
- Telephone
- Newsletter
- Other: Please specify all _____.

8. How much do you feel you understand about the Maa-nulth treaty and Toquaht's new governance structure? (Please check one that applies)

- Enough
- Not enough
- I want to know more

9. How are you currently involved in the community? (Please check all that apply)

- I vote
- I work for the Nation
- I attend Toquaht Nation feasts/ meetings / events / ceremonies etc.
- I visit family or do activities with other citizens
- I am a mentor/ teacher to other citizens
- Other: Please specify _____.

10(a). How do you want to be more involved? (Please check all that apply)

- I want to have my opinion heard more
- I want to work for the Nation
- I want to attend more Nation feasts/ meetings / events / ceremonies etc.
- I want more opportunity to visit family or do activities with other citizens
- I want to mentor/ teach others
- I want to volunteer to help the community
- Other: Please specify _____.

10(b). Would you be interested in participating a Citizens Advisory Council or Youth Council (13-29 years)?

- YES
- NO

Please write any other comments or suggestions you have here:

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!



TOQUAHT NATION COMMUNITY SURVEY - UNIVARIATE RESULTS

Total Respondants: 26

1. Where do you live right now?

Response Mode	Macoah	Ucluelet	Port Alberni	Nanaimo	Victoria	Other
In-Person	8	1	10	0	0	1
Online	1	2	1	0	1	1
TOTAL	34%	11%	42%	0%	3%	7%

2. How old are you?

Response Mode	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	76+
In-Person	4	3	4	5	3	1	0
Online	1	2	2	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	5	5	6	6	3	1	0
	19%	19%	23%	23%	11%	3%	0%

3. How many Toquah Nation People's Assembly meetings do you usually attend in a year?

Response Mode	4	3	2	1	None
In-Person	6	7	7	0	0
Online	1	1	1	2	1
TOTAL	7	8	8	2	1
	26%	30%	30%	7%	3%

4. Why do you attend People's Assembly meetings?

Response Mode	I want to know more about what the Toquahat Government is doing	I want to participate in Nation discussion and votes	I like to see friends and family from the community	It is important for me to participate in community activities	OTHER
In-Person	11	12	10	10	2
Online	4	2	2	2	2
TOTAL	15	14	12	12	4
	57%	53%	46%	46%	15%

5. What prevents you from attending People's Assembly meetings?

Response Mode	Travel takes too long	Travel is too expensive	No one tells me when/where they are	Busy with work/school	Busy with family	People's Assembly meetings do not interest me	People's Assembly meetings are not relevant to me
In-Person	4	3	1	3	1	0	0
Online	0	2	0	3	2	2	0
TOTAL	4	5	1	6	3	2	0
	15%	19%	3%	23%	11%	7%	0%
I do not feel comfortable attending	I don't know where to start		OTHER		NOTHING		
	4	1					
	0	1					
	0	2					
	0%	15%	7%		34%		

6. Which of these communication tools do you use the most?

Response Mode	Email	Texting	In-person conversation	Telephone	Internet/ Websites	Facebook	Twitter
In-Person	9	9	10	12	5	10	0
Online	6	4	2	3	4	2	0
TOTAL	15	13	12	15	9	12	0
Letter Mail	Newspaper/ Newsletter	OTHER					
	2	8	0				
	1	0	2				
	3	8	2				

7. How do you want to receive Toquah Nation information / updates?

Response Mode	Email	Texting	Facebook	Twitter	Toquah Nation Website	Letter Mail	Telephone
In-Person	7	3	11	0	5	9	7
Online	3	1	2	0	2	1	2
TOTAL	10	4	13	0	7	10	9
	38%	15%	50%	0%	26%	38%	34%
Newsletter	OTHER						
	10	2					
	1	2					
	11	4					
	42%	15%					

8. How much do you feel you understand about the Maa-nulth treaty and Toquah't's new governance structure?

Response Mode	Enough	Not Enough	I want to know more
In-Person	11	3	8
Online	2	2	3
TOTAL	13	5	11
	50%	19%	42%

9. How are you currently involved in the community?

Response Mode	I vote	I work for the Nation	I attend Toquah't Nation feasts/ meetings / events / ceremonies etc.	I visit family or do activities with other citizens	I am a mentor / teacher to other citizens	OTHER
In-Person	8	8	17	9	4	2
Online	3	2	3	3	0	0
TOTAL	11	10	20	12	4	2
	42%	28%	76%	46%	15%	7%

10(a). How do you want to be more involved?

Response Mode	I want to have my opinion heard more	I want to work for the Nation	I want to attend more Nation feasts/ meetings / events / ceremonies etc.	I want more opportunity to visit family or do activities with other citizens	I want to mentor / teach others	I want to volunteer to help the community	OTHER
In-Person	4	4	11	8	6	9	1
Online	2	1	3	3	1	1	0
TOTAL	6 23%	5 19%	14 53%	12 46%	7 26%	10 38%	1 3%

10(b). Would you be interested in participating a Citizens Advisory Council or Youth Council?

Response Mode	YES	NO	Too Old :(
In-Person	4	2	14
Online	2	4	0
TOTAL	6 23%	6 23%	14 53%