

# Place-based pursuit of economic self-determination by the Toquaht Nation in Canada

Matthew Murphy, Johnny Mack, Lorenzo Magzul, Astrid V. Pérez Piñán, Cloy-e-iis Judith Sayers, and Hadley Friedland

2023

Faculty of Human and Social Development

Faculty Publications

© 2023 Murphy et al. This is an open access book chapter distributed under the terms of the license Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives license CC BY-NC-ND: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Original citation:

Murphy, M., Mack, J., Magzul, L., Pérez Piñán, A.V., Sayers, C. J., & Friedland, H. (2023). Place-based pursuit of economic self-determination by the Toquaht Nation in Canada. In N. Slawinski, B. Lowery, A. Seto, M. C. J. Stoddart, & K. Vodden (Eds.), *Revitalizing PLACE through social enterprise* (pp. 185–207). Memorial University Press. <https://doi.org/10.48336/6a9p-gc57>

---

Downloaded from UVicSpace Research & Learning Repository

dspace.library.uvic.ca



University  
of Victoria

Libraries

## CHAPTER 7

# Place-Based Pursuit of Economic Self-Determination by the Toquaht Nation in Canada

*Matthew Murphy, Johnny Mack, Lorenzo Magzul,  
Astrid Pérez Piñan, Cloy-e-iis Judith Sayers, and Hadley Friedland*

---

### Introduction

The people of Toquaht Nation (approx. 160 citizens), one of the 16 tribes of Nuu-chah-nulth people, reside on the west coast of the land today known as Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. The Toquaht have an intimate relationship to place, having lived in harmony with their Hahoulthee (traditional territory) for at least 10,000 years (Toquaht Nation 2021). After more than 150 years of European colonization and 135 years of subjugation under the Canadian Indian Act, in 2011 Toquaht Nation implemented a modern treaty, the Maa-nulth First Nations' Final Agreement (a.k.a. Maa-nulth Treaty), with the province of British Columbia and the federal government of Canada that re-established self-governance and control over a portion of its Hahoulthee. Toquaht Nation is party to the Maa-nulth Treaty along with four other First Nations communities: Huu-ay-aht First Nation, Uchucklesaht First Nation, Ucluelet First Nation, and Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k:tles7et'h' First Nation.

As a governing authority, Toquaht Nation created and ratified a constitution and accompanying laws, regulations, and policies. Text from the preamble of Toquaht Nation's constitution illustrates how the Toquaht People's connection to place and vision of sustainable development have been enshrined into the Nation's newly formed institutions.

<https://doi.org/10.48336/6a9p-gc57>

We have existed from time immemorial and have occupied and used the lands, waters and resources of our traditional territory . . . throughout history.

We draw our identity from our relationship to our land and from our rich heritage, culture, language and our stories, myths and oral traditions.

Through the act of governing, we assume the power to preserve our natural world and enhance our identity. (Toquaht Nation 2014)

Like many First Nations in Canada, the Toquaht People are working to become economically self-sufficient through processes of economic development (Anderson, Dana, and Dana 2006; Hilton 2021). In order to pursue economic development that is not only economically viable, but also preserves and strengthens Toquaht culture and traditions and the natural environment to which Toquaht identity is strongly tied, the nation required a system for evaluating economic opportunities and measuring the impacts of economic development that was based on, and aligned with, Toquaht values that have been preserved and passed on through stories over millennia.

This chapter describes Toquaht Nation's development and use of a socio-culturally sensitive evaluation and monitoring system, called the Toquaht Project Assessment System (TPAS). The TPAS is used to estimate the potential impacts of economic development projects prior to implementation, and to monitor the actual impacts of projects that are implemented. The co-authors of this chapter worked in close collaboration with the Toquaht Nation Government and Toquaht people to develop and implement the TPAS. Johnny Mack, a University of Victoria (UVic) PhD student at the commencement of this project, and now an assistant professor in the Peter A. Allard School of Law at the University of British Columbia, is a Toquaht citizen and initiated the relationship between Toquaht Nation and the research team — in particular, the relationship

with lead author, Matthew Murphy. Murphy is a settler of Irish, English, and Scottish ancestry from the United States and an associate professor of sustainability and strategy in the Gustavson School of Business at UVic, who secured a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Partnership Development Grant that funded this research. Cloy-e-iis Judith Sayers is a prominent Nuu-chah-nulth leader, a cousin to Johnny Mack and many other Toquaht people, and was a trusted advisor to former Toquaht Chief Burt Mack. She is also a former elected chief of Hupačasath First Nation, and at the time of writing is the president of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. Along with Murphy, Sayers, who is also an adjunct professor at the Gustavson School of Business, served as the co-principal investigator for this research. As Nuu-chah-nulth people with strong ties to Toquaht Nation, both Mack and Sayers served the research team as essential guides for all issues related to Toquaht culture, governance, protocols, and history. Lorenzo Magzul, originally from Guatemala and of Kaqchikel Mayan heritage, joined the research team as a post-doctoral fellow and was integral to the overall project and to community engagement activities in particular. Astrid Pérez Piñán, originally from Puerto Rico, is a scholar of gender and international development and professor in the School of Public Administration at UVic. Her work on the research team was primarily focused on ensuring that the methods and analysis employed included a strong gender dimension. Together with Sayers and Hadley Friedland, a Canadian settler and associate professor of Indigenous law in the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta, Pérez Piñán co-designed and co-facilitated a series of “Women’s Circles,” which served to ensure that Toquaht women’s voices were heard and integrated into this research.

Ancient stories that inform the Toquaht world view reveal not only historical events, but physical, genealogical, and spiritual relationships as well as ontological and epistemological perspectives that guide individual and communal behaviour (E.R. Atleo 2004; Neville and Coulthard 2019). Coulthard and Simpson (2016, 254) refer to the ethical frameworks drawn from Indigenous place-based practices and associated

forms of knowledge as “grounded normativity,” pointing out that “grounded normativity houses and reproduces the practices and procedures, based on deep reciprocity, that are inherently informed by an intimate relationship to place.”

Still embedded within the larger Canadian political, social, and economic context — a context in which the neo-liberal economic paradigm is prevalent — Toquaht leaders, after implementation of the Maa-nulth Treaty in 2011, sought ways to thoroughly and consistently evaluate not only the financial and employment implications of various business opportunities, but also the impacts on the environment and their culture and community. In 2013, Toquaht Tyee Ha’wilth (First Chief), Wii-tsuts-koom, Anne Mack invited our university-based research team to collaborate in the development of a system that would be used to assess the impact of economic development projects on Toquaht Nation’s culture, community, natural environment, and economy. The collaborative work described here provides an example of grounded normativity and connects to the PLACE Framework underpinning this book.

The Framework’s principle of *promoting community leaders* is inherent in this Indigenous, community-based research collaboration, as the project originated at the behest of the Toquaht Chief and Council and was guided by Toquaht people in both government and academic roles from start to finish. *Linking divergent perspectives* was also a regular feature of the collaboration, as Toquaht Nation sought to link its own vision of sustainable economic development to the broader Canadian and global market economic systems within which it is embedded. Likewise, the use of the assessment system developed through this project requires individuals with different roles, responsibilities, and perspectives to come together in dialogue to develop a shared understanding of each particular project’s impact on well-being. Use of the TPAS relates specifically to *amplify local capacities and assets* associated with carrying out economic development projects on Toquaht territory. Meanwhile, non-Toquaht members of the research team learned about the traditional and contemporary values and visions of sustainable development held by the Toquaht

People by listening to their *compelling stories*, and the research team also used the story form in an animated video created to communicate the purpose and functionality of the TPAS to Toquaht community members. Finally, by combining methods of modern decision support science with place-based Indigenous knowledge, the TPAS itself is a model of *engaging with both/and thinking*. Moreover, use of the TPAS implies the integration of concepts and knowledge related to assessing the impacts of economic development efforts across four dimensions of well-being.

In the remainder of this chapter, we describe the origins of and approach to the project in terms of the community-based, Indigenous, feminist, and participatory action research methodologies used (Hesse-Biber 2013; Kemmis and McTaggart 2005; Kovach 2009; Smith 2012; Susman and Evered 1978). We then explain the outcomes of the project, which culminated in the development and implementation of the Toquaht Project Assessment System. This system follows the concept of grounded normativity by incorporating Toquaht Nation's place-based knowledge, values, and vision in order to assess and monitor the impacts of economic development projects.

## **Project Origins and Approach**

This research was designed to prioritize and value First Nation interests, perspectives, and knowledge (Smith 2012). The design is consistent with a community-based approach and can reveal novel perspectives on economic development that are not often considered in the academic discourse, which is commonly embedded in and constrained by the liberal economic paradigm. The methodological approach was also guided by an ethical imperative, expressed in Canadian national guidelines for research with Indigenous communities, which calls for explicitly acknowledging and emphasizing the important role of communities “in planning and decision making, from the earliest stages of conception and design of projects through to the analysis and dissemination of results” (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC 2014, 110–11).

<https://doi.org/10.48336/6a9p-gc57>

Guided by the ethical imperative that Indigenous Peoples control all research conducted within their territories — including ownership, control, access, and possession of all data and information obtained from the research (Ermine, Sinclair, and Browne 2005) — the project also employed a Participatory Action Research (PAR) method through a five-phase process that emphasized iterative cycles of co-creation and social learning (Susman and Evered 1978). The five phases include (1) diagnosing, (2) action planning, (3) action taking, (4) evaluating, and (5) specifying learning. The composition of the transdisciplinary research team, which consisted of scholars from nine different academic disciplines, reflects the diverse and participatory nature of the project itself, with half of the team consisting of Indigenous collaborators, including five members from the Toquaht community itself (Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1. Research team composition.**

<b>Community-Based</b>	<b>University-Based</b>
Toquaht Chief (female)	Professor — Business/Sustainability and Social
Toquaht Economic Development Officer (male)*	Entrepreneurship (male)*
Toquaht Director of Operations 1 (female)*	Professor and Former Elected First Nations Chief — Law and Business (female)
Toquaht Director of Operations 2 (female)	Professor — Indigenous Law (male)
Toquaht Council Member 1 (male)	Professor — Business/Entrepreneurship (male)*
Toquaht Council Member 2 (female)	Professor — Public Admin./Gender and Development (female)*
Toquaht Council Member 3 (female)	Professor — Indigenous Law (female)*
Tribal Resource Investment Corporation (TRICORP) CEO (male)	Post-Doctoral Fellow — Indigenous Food Systems (male)
TRICORP Business Development Officer (male)	Research Assistant — Dispute Resolution (female)*
	Research Assistant — Sociology (female)*
	Research Assistant — Engineering (female)
	Research Assistant — Computer Science (male)*

\* Denotes non-Indigenous individuals.

Complementing the PAR approach, this research also incorporated literature reviews and the other qualitative methods. Building on research that has analyzed oral histories to establish key principles of Indigenous law, sustainable communities, and political thought (Borrows 2010; E.R. Atleo 2004; Friedland 2012; Harkin 1998; Napoleon 2013), this research employed a combination of oral histories, community engagement, and recently created Toquaht laws, policies, and reports to derive the guiding principles of Toquaht economic development. Contemporary Toquaht views on a range of issues related to economic development were collected through a variety of community engagement activities between July 2014 and August 2015. These included participant observation, 28 semi-structured interviews, two community-wide workshops including 56 participants, and three Women's Circles with a total of 15 participants. Approximately 43 per cent of Toquaht Nation's adult population participated in one or more of the engagement activities.

After all data were collected, analyzed, and organized, the results were presented to the Toquaht Council and government administration, who confirmed that the findings accurately reflected the values and vision of the community. Then discussions and planning began in relation to the design of an evaluation and measurement system that would ultimately be developed for use by the Toquaht Nation. Development of the assessment and monitoring system was completed in the summer of 2018.

In the sections that follow, we describe the findings of this research and the evaluation and monitoring system created for use by the Toquaht Nation and then discuss the implications of this work for economic self-determination.

### **Project Outcomes: Toquaht Project Assessment System**

Findings from the research activities that focused on identifying Toquaht economic development principles revealed a high degree of consistency between texts related to Toquaht history and culture, laws, and regulations created by the Toquaht government and the contemporary views of

Toquaht citizens who were engaged in workshops and interviews. A description of key concepts that are pervasive throughout historical as well as contemporary Toquaht and broader Nuuchahnulth culture and society is provided below.

Several Nuuchahnulth words and concepts are accepted as indicative of the Nuuchahnulth world view and value system. A common phrase reflecting the Nuuchahnulth world view is *heshook-ish tsawalk*, which means “everything is one” or “everything is connected” (C.G. Atleo 2008). Nuuchahnulth scholar Umeek (Richard Atleo) stresses that this term is inclusive of all reality, including the physical and metaphysical (E.R. Atleo 2004). Moreover, Clifford Atleo explains, “*Heshookish tsa’walk* is a fundamental concept to the Nuuchahnulth people constantly reminding us that all life, animate and inanimate, is connected and that none of our decisions are isolated” (C.G. Atleo 2008, 11–12).

The concept of *heshook-ish tsawalk* is closely related to a second core concept in the Nuuchahnulth world view, *iisaak*, or “respect with caring” (Mack 2009). Personal and communal security, freedom, and happiness may be found through interconnectedness and balance (Mack 2009). Because *heshook-ish tsawalk* makes balance imperative, it is “the maintenance of balance that is the general life project” (Mack 2009, 19). *Iisaak* provides a technique to restore and maintain balance. As Umeek explains, “*Iisaak* is predicated on the notion that every life form has intrinsic value and that this should be recognized through appropriate protocols and interaction . . . *iisaak*, as another law of life, promotes balance and harmony within creation” (E.R. Atleo 2004, 130). *Iisaak* was and is understood by Nuuchahnulth people to be a defining characteristic for human beings. To act disrespectfully implies a betrayal of one’s humanity and risks disruption of the balance (Mack 2009).

Nuuchahnulth political and economic institutions traditionally were, and still are, designed to facilitate *iisaak*. This includes the system of governance within which leaders, or chiefs, called *Hawiih*, have been raised to embody the normative principle of generosity. *Hawiih* were tested throughout their upbringing to ensure they knew how to listen to

the people, the land, and the spiritual world (Mack 2009). Another example of the *iisaak* ideal is found in “potlatching,” a central feature of the traditional Nuu-chah-nulth economic system based on a combination of accumulation and depletion of wealth. “There was an imperative for wealth accumulation, not for personal enjoyment or luxury, but for giving away. Most of our items would be given away at our potlatches. . . . A chief left with absolutely nothing after a potlatch was a chief worthy of the utmost respect” (Mack 2009, 22). Umeek adds that Nuu-chah-nulth conceptions of generosity imply that receiving is as important as giving; therefore, “reciprocity and balance are central tenets of Nuu-chah-nulth life” (C.G. Atleo 2008, 13).

The guiding principles of interconnectedness, respect, and reciprocity are reflected in official Toquaht government laws and documents. Two examples of how present-day Toquaht values align with these concepts are shown below, in the preambles of the Toquaht Nation Environmental Protection Act (2011) and the Toquaht Nation Constitution (2007):

The Toquaht Nation asserts that we have occupied, benefited from and governed our Hahoulthee (traditional territory) since time immemorial.

The Toquaht traditional territory has in the past provided the resources necessary to sustain us and provide for our physical and spiritual needs.

We value and honour our past and present connection to the lands, waters and resources of our Toquaht traditional territory and recognize that all life forms are *Hish-uk-ist-sawalk* (interconnected) and that all humanity must have *iisaak* (respect for the earth and all life forms on it). (Toquaht Nation 2011, 6)

. . . These values include:  
a belief in, and reverence for, the Creator,  
honouring our ancestors,

respecting our elders,  
 abiding by an internal order based on our Ha'wiih and our  
 Hahoulthee  
 respecting our family and kinship systems,  
 our unique language, and  
 a respect for the land, air, water and environment which  
 encompasses the Hahoulthee of our Ha'wiih. (Toquaht  
 Nation 2007, 1)

Reflecting these values in the context of economic development, the Toquaht Nation Government Economic Development Act (2015) affirms that:

Toquaht businesses will engage in economic development that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable and that respects our history and the heritage, culture and traditions of our people, our Hahoulthee (traditional territory) and the environment within which we live. (Toquaht Nation 2015, 9)

The guiding principles of interconnectedness, respect, and reciprocity represent the foundation of contemporary views about what sustainability entails for Toquaht people and provide a sharp contrast to the Western European world view that perceives objectives of environmental, social, and economic well-being to be in tension with one another. Rather than viewing these dimensions of well-being as being in tension, from a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective, tension arises when there is imbalance between these dimensions.

In community-wide workshops, focus groups, and individual interviews, when people were asked what types of businesses they would or would not like to see established on Toquaht territory, acceptable businesses were frequently related to ecotourism and tended to be of small scale with low impact on the environment. Key reasons cited for proposing such types of businesses were creating employment for Toquaht

citizens, generating income for the Toquaht Nation Government, and maintaining Toquaht culture and language. By contrast, large businesses and those focused on resource extraction were commonly viewed as unacceptable. Reasons cited for opposing such businesses were that they are destructive, too big, polluting, and disrespectful.

In focus groups attended solely by women, which are both a traditional and contemporary practice that the Toquaht refer to as “Women’s Circles,” participant reflections on the topic of economic development related to the foundational Toquaht principle of *heshook-ish tsawalk* (interconnectedness). One participant’s comment exemplifies this recurring theme: “For me, I usually think of economic development as making money, but really it is about how we take care of one another, how we preserve our language, culture, etc.” Responding to this comment, another woman stated, “I feel the same way. It’s not about making money; it’s about becoming whole. We need to redefine what we mean by economic



Figure 7.1. Indigenous social enterprise operates based on the guiding sustainability principles: interconnectedness, respect, and reciprocity. (Photo credit: Matthew Murphy, 2022)

<https://doi.org/10.48336/6a9p-gc57>

development.” Similarly, in another women’s focus group, a participant remarked, “This isn’t going to be about having development that makes us lots of money — it’s about having healthy businesses in the community that allow us to be sustainable.”

Based on analysis of Nuu-chah-nulth literature, the Toquaht Nation’s laws and official documents, and the outcomes from community engagement exercises, six recurring themes related to the Toquaht people’s vision for sustainable economic development were identified:

- Holistic understanding of sustainability — all is one (*heshook-ish tsawalk*)
- Emphasis on environmental sustainability and protection
- Desire for fair and transparent political processes
- Necessity of economic health and viability
- Support for a vibrant home community and healthy citizens
- Practice and renewal of Toquaht culture and language

The evaluation and monitoring system that the Toquaht Nation would eventually use to assess and monitor business ventures was carefully designed to incorporate these themes (Murphy et al. 2020).

## Assessment and Monitoring Mechanisms

A database of indicators of well-being was created to evaluate potential and actual impacts of business activity with attention to issues important to the Toquaht Nation. Many indicators emerged from the community engagement process and a review of existing Toquaht laws and government reports (e.g., Toquaht Nation 2011, 2014, 2015). Combined, these sources resulted in the identification and definition of 102 Toquaht indicators of well-being that could potentially be useful. Other factors were identified in literature on indicators of well-being used in Indigenous communities (e.g., Lewis and Lockhart 2002; Orr, Weir, and Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program 2013; Stankovitch 2008;

<https://doi.org/10.48336/6a9p-gc57>

Tauli-Corpus 2008). With the close involvement of Toquaht project members, including Toquaht Nation Government staff and elected council members, a set of 79 indicators was selected for inclusion in the TPAS based on their relevance to the Toquaht context and people (see examples in Table 7.2). For the purpose of evaluating economic development projects, each indicator was associated with the various types of economic activities that the Nation considered, such as forestry, aquaculture, and tourism.

**Table 7.2. Illustrative examples of indicators of well-being.**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Indicator Scale</b>	<b>Indicator Description</b>	<b>Dimension</b>
Beach spawning areas	Percentage impact	Effect on beach spawning areas — per cent of impact	Environmental
Fauna biodiversity	Percentage or number of species impacted	Effect on diversity of fauna per unit area per hectare	Environmental
Inclusion of local knowledge	Number or percentage	Inclusion of local knowledge in decision-making and/or monitoring and evaluation	Cultural
Language learning	Number of people	Number of Toquaht citizens provided with the opportunity to learn the Nuu-chah-nulth language — disaggregated by gender	Cultural
Toquaht citizens employed	Number of people	Number of Toquaht citizens employed — disaggregated by gender and sector	Community
Improved infrastructure	Percentage efficiency	Maximally efficient use of all infrastructure to service Toquaht citizens currently living or returning to live on Toquaht territory	Community
Net Income	Dollar amount per accounting period	Income minus cost of goods sold, expenses, and taxes	Economic
Person years of employment	Number of person years	Person years of employment generated by the business — disaggregated by gender	Economic

In addition to identifying relevant indicators of well-being, the Māori Model Decision Making Framework (MMDMF) (Morgan 2006) was selected as a practical and adaptable framework that closely adheres to principles of sound, sustainability-based decision-making (Pintér et al. 2012) as well as the Toquaht's own guiding principles of interconnectedness, respect, and reciprocity. The MMDMF is a system created by a Māori (Indigenous) scholar, Dr. Kepa Morgan, in collaboration with Māori communities in New Zealand/Aotearoa. Similar to the Toquaht, the Māori People's identity and knowledge systems are grounded in specific landscapes (Keenan 2012). At the project team's request, Dr. Morgan travelled to Vancouver Island to meet with the entire community- and university-based team to share how the MMDMF works and discuss how it could be customized for use by Toquaht Nation.

The MMDMF provides an overall assessment of well-being through a combination of assessments related to the environmental, cultural, social, and economic dimensions of well-being (Morgan 2006). The economic dimension relates to the financial impact of a project, measuring the extent to which the project will generate economic wealth and jobs while also taking into consideration any risk to the nation's financial base. For the Toquaht, the environmental dimension of well-being is best understood through the Nuu-chah-nulth concept of Ha'hoolthlii, meaning "the land" or "Chiefly territories." The term embraces more than just land, however. It includes the lands, waters, air, animals, plants, people — in short, everything within the territory. The health of the Ha'hoolthlii is seen as foundational to all other dimensions of well-being.

The community dimension of well-being is concerned with the Toquaht people and their quality of life in Macoah, the only currently occupied village on Toquaht territory. Considerations for community well-being include questions such as, "Will this project bring Toquaht people home to the territory?", "Will this project improve infrastructure or housing in Macoah?", and "How will this project affect the health and safety of the people of Macoah?"

Finally, cultural well-being is related to the vitality and resurgence of Toquaht culture, including the use of the Nuu-chah-nulth language. Considerations for the cultural dimension include questions about a proposed project's effect on traditional sites, food-gathering, or cultural ceremonies. The cultural dimension also considers ways in which an economic development project might have positive effects on Toquaht cultural practices, such as funding language or cultural programs, using Nuu-chah-nulth language in signage and naming, and including traditional knowledge in the project itself.

The assessment of projects works in two stages. The first involves determining the relative weight placed on each dimension of well-being through a procedure known as Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), a technique for analyzing complex problems that uses pair-wise comparisons to establish the relative importance of each dimension (Saaty 1980, 2008). The resultant priority scale of well-being dimensions is referred to as a "world view setting." World view settings can be created from the perspective of any particular group or individual, thus allowing projects to be assessed and compared based on a variety of different world views.

The second stage involves selecting indicators related to each of the four dimensions of well-being and assessing them on a five-point scale, where the values selected represent the expected impacts of the project on well-being for the relevant indicators, ranging from extreme harm to extreme improvement.

The MDMF approach allows a project with identified indicators and related impact evaluations to be viewed comparatively from the perspectives of various world views. For example, a project assessment that results in a positive score for overall well-being based on a world view that places high priority on the economic dimension may be determined to have a negative score for overall well-being when assessed with a world view setting that places a lower priority on the economic dimension.

After completion of a piloting phase, the TPAS was used to evaluate five projects included in the Toquaht Nation's *Five-year Economic Development Plan: 2018–2022*. All projects were assessed to estimate impacts

during each year covered by the five-year plan. Monitoring and evaluation of the actual impacts of these projects began in 2019.

In 2018, a short, animated video was produced to explain and demonstrate how the TPAS works. The video is set on Toquaht territory and narrated by a Toquaht community member, with the Toquaht people as its intended audience. Two fictional business opportunities — a large hotel-casino project and a small development of cabins — are compared using the TPAS. Taking into account the Toquaht's objectives related to the development of a healthy and sustainable community and the revitalization of Toquaht culture, the small development of cabins is favoured over the hotel-casino development, although the latter would have created more jobs and economic profit.

While it is premature to evaluate the long-term outcomes of using the TPAS for the Toquaht Nation, in the section below we offer observations regarding how this project and the resultant TPAS relates to Toquaht Nation's pursuit of economic self-determination.

## Reflections and Conclusion

Reflecting the Indigenous, place-based concept of grounded normativity (Coulthard and Simpson 2016), developing the TPAS through community-based action research involved community, organizational, and individual reflection, dialogue, and learning about what sustainable development means to the Toquaht people and what sustainability looks like in practice (Murphy et al. 2020; Pérez Piñán et al. 2022). Through collaboration among the Toquaht community, university-based researchers in British Columbia, and Dr. Kepa Morgan, the TPAS represents the collaborative integration and co-creation of place-based knowledge across multiple Indigenous and academic communities, and across Indigenous and Western knowledge systems.

At the organizational level, the Toquaht government and Toquaht-owned businesses have used the TPAS to evaluate business opportunities related to aquaculture, forestry, clean energy production, and tourism.

The use of the TPAS implies both organizational and individual-level dialogue, learning, and planning. The Toquaht government and businesses brought their plans, resources, and knowledge into their work with the TPAS. Together, these representatives in their various roles engaged in what we refer to as a “learning dialogue” to select indicators of well-being relevant to specific projects and to evaluate how each project would affect the associated indicators at particular points in time.

The conversations that took place throughout this dialogic process led to learning that informed the evaluation and (re)design of projects. Along the way, individual participants developed a more holistic and balanced understanding of the possible impacts and various design possibilities for the projects evaluated, and by extension so did the involved organizations. For example, in one conversation about selecting indicators of cultural well-being for a renewable energy project, a representative of the Toquaht government commented, “I never imagined how cultural practices could be related to a renewable energy project.” However, upon discussion with the cross-functional group assessing the project, it was recognized that the location of the energy project would create opportunities for Toquaht community members to get back out on the land to engage in gathering traditional foods from areas that were otherwise difficult to reach. Likewise, supporting the Toquaht’s objective of cultural revitalization, the project would create opportunities to hold cultural ceremonies at key project milestones. Had they not been discussed and incorporated into the TPAS and project plans, it is possible that these opportunities would have been overlooked, neither planned for nor managed to ensure their realization, and not monitored or accounted for as benefits arising from the project.

Another example relates to the gender-sensitive nature of indicators used in the TPAS. From the outset, Toquaht leaders and the university-based research team aimed for the community engagement process and resultant assessment system to be gender-sensitive. Workshops and individual interviews addressed how sustainability and economic development were perceived and embodied from women’s perspectives (Pérez

Piñán et al. 2022). Subsequently, for all indicators within the TPAS related to the number or percentage of people affected by a particular activity, it was decided that this information would be disaggregated by gender. Later, when assessing a project for the five-year plan using the TPAS, a business manager who predicted the creation of five jobs was asked, “How many of those positions will be filled by men and how many by women?” The manager reflected for a moment and realized that he had not considered this question or its importance before. He asked the group: “Should I create job descriptions that would make it more likely that both men and women would apply?” Heads nodded affirmatively and the answer came back from the group, “Yes.” The manager then said, “I haven’t thought about that before. I’m not sure how I would do it.” Others in the group offered to convene a separate meeting, including individuals with human resources and social services responsibilities, to work on development of job descriptions with the manager. Meanwhile, a target was set and recorded in the TPAS for hiring a gender-balanced group of employees for this project and, when monitoring the actual impacts for this project, the manager will be asked to report on how many men and women were hired. Later, this information will be shared with the community when progress updates are provided about Toquaht Nation’s business activities. Both successes and setbacks will be noted and discussed among community members and organizational representatives, leading to further opportunities for learning and adaptation.

Insights drawn from the development and use of the TPAS may be useful to both advance and challenge thinking about the PLACE Framework. Critically, for Indigenous Peoples whose very identities are closely tied to their traditional territories and whose self-determination is bounded within settler-colonial contexts, the PLACE Framework includes key principles that support self-determination and contribute to sustainable community development. In particular, the PLACE Framework’s principles of *promoting community leaders* and *amplifying local capacities and assets* are closely aligned with the concept of self-determination.

This research also highlights elements that the PLACE Framework does not explicitly encompass, but that might be integrated into some of its principles. For example, early community engagement activities undertaken in this research revealed that the voices of women were not being heard, so a concerted effort was required to design and facilitate activities that would directly engage Toquaht women and elicit their perspectives. This explicit approach to ensuring that women's voices were integrated into development of the TPAS could be considered an integral part of the PLACE Framework's *engaging both/and thinking* principle. Meanwhile, creating spaces and opportunities for women's participation also provoked *compelling stories* that contributed to *amplifying local capacities and assets*.

Finally, while the PLACE Framework offers a set of guiding principles, it does not offer a way of operationalizing them or assessing the potential or actual impacts of development efforts. While we do not propose that a system such as the TPAS provides a one-size-fits-all approach, it is a highly adaptable system that offers a concrete framework for strategically deciding among different potential development pathways and evaluating the impacts of development efforts that are undertaken. Systems such as this are important complements to the guiding principles offered by the PLACE Framework.

Despite its usefulness, the TPAS has important limitations. Foremost among these is that Toquaht Nation's pursuit of self-determination occurs within a context where the Toquaht are embedded within the wider Canadian and global capitalist political-economic system. As such, most of the economic activities in which the Toquaht might engage — including aquaculture, forestry, and tourism — are connected to global industries and shaped by market forces as well as state-based and multilateral institutions. In particular, these industries are heavily regulated by the Canadian government. Therefore, although Toquaht Nation has implemented a modern treaty and developed laws, regulations, and management systems to enact the community's vision and objectives, the extent of self-determination and place-based community development is bounded. Beyond the Indigenous

context, this important limitation highlights the need for further exploration of how communities can successfully navigate the tensions between more local processes of planning, assessment, and evaluation for community development and the more macro-scale structures of settler colonialism, federal government bureaucracies, and global flows of capital, resources, and people associated with industry.

In summary, the collaborative project that resulted in the creation and implementation of the TPAS illustrates how place-based values and objectives identified at the community level can become operationalized at the organizational level and then lead to learning, through dialogue, at the individual and team levels. Over time, this process works iteratively, so that the Toquaht government, its businesses, and the staff involved throughout these organizations continue the work of learning, planning, and evaluation in a holistic manner. As Toquaht people engage with the TPAS as leaders, staff members, managers, or simply as citizens, dialogue triggered through use of the TPAS positively reinforces learning related to Toquaht Nation's pursuit and enactment of economic development. Use of the TPAS, therefore, represents action taken by the Toquaht Nation to determine and pursue its own place-based vision of sustainable economic development.

## Acknowledgements

This research was funded by a Partnership Development Grant, File Number 890-2013-0077, awarded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). We are grateful to the government of Toquaht Nation and to the Toquaht people who collaborated in this research.

## References

- Atleo, Clifford G. 2008. "Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development and the Changing Nature of Our Relationships within the *Ha'hoolthlii* of Our *Ha'wiih*." Master's thesis, University of Victoria.

<https://doi.org/10.48336/6a9p-gc57>

- Atleo, E. Richard/Umeek. 2004. *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Anderson, Robert B., Léo-Paul Dana, and Teresa E. Dana. 2006. "Indigenous Land Rights, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Development in Canada: 'Opting-in' to the Global Economy." *Journal of World Business* 41, no. 1: 45–55.
- Borrows, John. 2010. *Canada's Indigenous Constitution*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. 2014. *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. Ottawa: Government of Canada.
- Coulthard, Glenn, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. 2016. "Grounded Normativity/Place-Based Solidarity." *American Quarterly* 68, no. 2: 249–55.
- Ermine, Willie, Raven Sinclair, and Madisun Browne. 2005. *Kwayask itôtamowin: Indigenous Research Ethics*. Saskatoon: Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre.
- Friedland, Hadley. 2012. "Reflective Frameworks: Methods for Accessing, Understanding, and Applying Indigenous Laws." *Indigenous Law Journal* 11, no. 1: 1–40.
- Harkin, Michael. 1998. "Whales, Chiefs, and Giants: An Exploration into Nuu-chah-nulth Political Thought." *Ethnology* 37, no. 4 (Autumn): 317–32.
- Hesse-Biber, Sharlene N., ed. 2013. *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hilton, Carol A. 2021. *Indigenomics: Taking a Seat at the Economic Table*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society.
- Keenan, Danny, ed. 2012. *Huia Histories of Māori: Ngā Tāhuhu Kōrero*. Wellington, NZ: Huia.
- Kemmis, Stephen, and Robin McTaggart. 2005. *Participatory Action Research: Communicative Action and the Public Sphere*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kovach, Margaret. 2009. *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Lewis, Mike, and R.A. Lockhart. 2002. *Performance Measurement, Development Indicators and Aboriginal Economic Development*. Port Alberni, BC: Centre for Community Enterprise.

- Mack, Johnny. 2014. "Turn Sideways: Intimate Critique and the Regeneration of Tradition." Unpublished manuscript.
- Morgan, Te Kipa Kipa Brian. 2006. "Decision-Support Tools and the Indigenous Paradigm." *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers: Engineering Sustainability* 159, no. 4 (December): 169–77.
- Murphy, Matthew, Wade M. Danis, Johnny Mack, and Judith Sayers. 2020. "From Principles to Action: Community-based Entrepreneurship in the Toquaht Nation." *Journal of Business Venturing* 35, no. 6.
- Napoleon, Val. 2013. "Thinking about Indigenous Legal Orders." In *Dialogues on Human Rights and Legal Pluralism*, edited by René Provost and Colleen Sheppard, 229–45. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Neville, Kate J., and Glenn Coulthard. 2019. "Transformative Water Relations: Indigenous Interventions in Global Political Economies." *Global Environmental Politics* 19, no. 3: 1–15.
- Orr, Jeff, Warren Weir, and Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program. 2013. *Aboriginal Measures for Economic Development*. Halifax: Fernwood.
- Pérez Piñán, Astrid V., Hadley Friedland, Judith Sayers, and Matthew Murphy. 2022. "Reclaiming Indigenous Economic Development through Participatory Action Research." *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 23, no. 1: 30–49.
- Pintér, László, Peter Hardi, André Martinuzzi, and Jon Hall. 2012. "Bellagio STAMP: Principles for Sustainability Assessment and Measurement." *Ecological Indicators* 17: 20–28.
- Saaty, Thomas L. 1980. *Analytical Hierarchy Process: Planning, Priority Setting, Resource Allocation*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Saaty, Thomas L. 2008. "Decision Making with the Analytic Hierarchy Process." *International Journal of Services Sciences* 1: 83–98.
- Smith, Linda T. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. London and Dunedin, NZ: Zed Books and University of Otago Press.
- Stankovitch, Mara, ed. 2008. *Indicators Relevant for Indigenous Communities: A Resource Book*. Baguio City, Philippines: TEBTEBBA Foundation, Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education.
- Susman, Gerald I., and Roger D. Evered. 1978. "An Assessment of the Scientific

Merits of Action Research.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 23, no. 4: 582–603.

Tauli-Corpuz, Victoria. 2008. *Indicators of Well-Being, Poverty and Sustainability Relevant to Indigenous Peoples*. United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. E/C.19/2008/9.

Toquaht Nation. 2011. *Environmental Protection Act*. TNS 15/2011. <http://www.toquaht.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/TNS-15-2011-Environmental-Protection-Act-OC.pdf>

Toquaht Nation. 2014. *Toquaht Nation Constitution*. <http://www.toquaht.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/TN-Constitution-as-amended-2014-01-27-00848419.pdf>

Toquaht Nation. 2015. *Economic Development Act*. TNS 3/2012. <http://www.toquaht.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/TNS-3-2012-Economic-Development-Act-Official-Consolidation-01119384.pdf>

Toquaht Nation. 2021. “Our Culture.” Accessed October 11, 2021. <http://www.toquaht.ca/our-culture/>