



From principles to action: Community-based entrepreneurship in the Toquaht Nation

Matthew Murphy^{a,*}, Wade M. Danis^a, Johnny Mack^b, (Kekinusuqs) Judith Sayers^a

^a Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, University of Victoria, P.O. BOX 1700 STN CSC, Victoria V8W 2Y2, BC, Canada

^b Peter A. Allard School of Law, University of British Columbia, Allard Hall, 1822 East Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1, Canada

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ABSTRACT

This article draws upon research undertaken in partnership with the Toquaht Nation, a Canadian First Nations community, which reveals how guiding principles that reflect Indigenous values, knowledge and heritage shape community-based entrepreneurial opportunity identification. Using a community-based participatory research approach, we leveraged insights across a range of methods, participants and points in time to co-create a decision support and impact evaluation system – grounded in the Toquaht people's vision of well-being and development – that is used by the Toquaht Nation to evaluate the potential and actual impacts of community-based entrepreneurial opportunities across multiple dimensions of well-being. By elaborating a notion of collective effectuation, the research demonstrates how a more explicit consideration of the social and cultural context of entrepreneurship can provide novel insights that enrich existing theories and paradigms, and highlights the complexities of the phenomena we collectively aim to study.

Executive summary

This article draws upon research undertaken in partnership with the Toquaht Nation, a Canadian First Nations community, which reveals how guiding principles that reflect Indigenous values, knowledge and heritage shape community-based entrepreneurial opportunity identification.

Entrepreneurship has often been touted as a potential solution for rebuilding Indigenous communities, many of which have been decimated by colonization and the subsequent erosion of traditional philosophical, social, ecological, linguistic and cultural resources and identities. However, many initiatives developed for the benefit of Indigenous peoples lack contextualized strategies that reflect the distinctive Indigenous realities that exist around the globe (United Nations, 2009). Likewise, efforts to spur entrepreneurship based on opportunities and approaches originating outside of Indigenous communities are often disconnected from Indigenous values, traditional knowledge and practices, bringing into question their ability to deliver long-term value for the communities they are intended to support and empower (Cahn, 2008; Peredo, 2003). For entrepreneurship to play an important role in the revitalization of Indigenous communities, it should be aligned with Indigenous worldviews and values, but a gap remains in our understanding of these characteristics, as well as other Indigenous resources, both tangible and intangible, that may influence the process of community-based entrepreneurial opportunity identification. This provides the main impetus for this article, which aims to illustrate how Indigenous values can influence community-based entrepreneurial opportunity identification, and demonstrate how a deeper understanding of Indigenous worldviews can broaden and contextualize our understanding of entrepreneurship and enrich entrepreneurship theory.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: mmurph@uvic.ca (M. Murphy).

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To contextualize our work we link it to a growing stream of literature in Indigenous entrepreneurship, where an emphasis on Indigenous values, ownership and benefit distinguish this stream of research from the mainstream entrepreneurship literature (Croce, 2017; Hindle and Lansdowne, 2005; Hindle and Moroz, 2010; Peredo et al., 2004). Because our empirical context relates to Indigenous community-based entrepreneurship (CBE), we draw upon the CBE literature which, like much of the Indigenous entrepreneurship literature, emphasizes the collective and community-oriented nature of entrepreneurial efforts while also offering insight into how CBEs generate holistic forms of value for the communities in which they are embedded (Hertel et al., 2019; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006). Finally, we leverage and extend the literature on entrepreneurial effectuation (Read et al., 2016; Sarasvathy, 2001, 2008) to understand the process by which entrepreneurial opportunities are identified and evaluated in a specific Indigenous context, and how Indigenous resources and values may be both leveraged and reclaimed during this process.

Given the invitation of the Toquaht Chief and Council to create a collaborative community-university research project, a community-based participatory research approach was utilized (Hacker, 2013; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). This allowed the research team to leverage insights across a range of methods, participants and points in time to co-create a decision support and impact evaluation system – grounded in the Toquaht people's vision of well-being and development – that would be of practical use to the Toquaht Nation as it determined what CBEs to establish and develop.

Our study contributes to entrepreneurship theory in at least three ways. First, our examination of how Indigenous worldviews shape entrepreneurial activity responds directly to repeated calls for broadening the focus of entrepreneurship research and examining a wider range of entrepreneurial phenomena in more diverse empirical contexts (Shepherd, 2015; Welter, 2011). In particular, we answer calls to enrich entrepreneurship research by drawing attention to its emancipatory and social change aspects (Calas et al., 2009; Rindova et al., 2009). Second, we demonstrate how a more explicit consideration of the social and cultural context of entrepreneurship can provide novel insights that can enrich existing theories and paradigms, and highlight the complexities of the phenomena we collectively aim to study. Specifically, we show how contextual factors within a community, and the way the community leverages its resources through partnerships, shape the process by which potential community-based entrepreneurial opportunities are identified, evaluated and pursued. We also enhance effectuation theory by elaborating the notion of collective effectuation – showing how effectuation can usefully be extended to community settings as a way of understanding not only how existing community-based resources and capabilities may be leveraged toward multiple ends, but how dispossessed or dormant resources might be reclaimed and revitalized in pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities. Third, we provide a methodological contribution by describing how a socio-culturally sensitive decision support and monitoring system may be co-developed to evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities and to assess their economic, environmental, cultural and community impacts. Finally, from a practitioner's standpoint, the online system used for the evaluation of entrepreneurial opportunities that was developed as a result of this community-university collaboration is highly adaptable and offers Indigenous communities and other organizations a template for infusing their own traditional knowledge, values and worldviews into impact evaluation processes that consider multiple dimensions of well-being.

1. Introduction

“I see so much potential here, but there is a balance. You don't want this place to become just a tourist attraction. It takes away from the beauty when you have people crawling over it like ants. So, there is going to have to be a balance. I don't see us creating some big resort out there. I see small community-based businesses.”

(Toquaht Community Member)

In this paper, we draw upon research undertaken in partnership with the Toquaht Nation, a Canadian First Nations community, which reveals how guiding principles that reflect Indigenous values, knowledge and heritage shape community-based entrepreneurial opportunity identification. Nestled in a spectacularly beautiful setting on the west coast of British Columbia, where steep mountains descend to beaches and seas frequented by bears, bald eagles, whales and wolves, the Toquaht Nation seeks opportunities to establish successful community-based enterprises (CBEs). While a large resort hotel and casino might bring a great deal of profit and employment to the economically poor community that, until recently, was dispossessed of its territory and governing authority, the Toquaht people are not primarily concerned with financial gain. Smaller, sustainable, businesses that will exist in balance with the natural environment and the healthy community that the Toquaht Nation is re-establishing are preferred.

Entrepreneurship has often been touted as a potential solution for rebuilding Indigenous communities, many of which have been decimated by colonization and the subsequent erosion of traditional philosophical, social, ecological, linguistic and cultural resources and identities. However, many initiatives developed for the benefit of Indigenous peoples lack contextualized strategies that reflect the distinctive Indigenous realities that exist around the globe (United Nations, 2009). Likewise, efforts to spur entrepreneurship based on opportunities and approaches originating outside of Indigenous communities are often disconnected from Indigenous values, traditional knowledge and practices, bringing into question their ability to deliver long-term value for the communities they are intended to support and empower (Cahn, 2008; Peredo, 2003). For entrepreneurship to play an important role in the revitalization of Indigenous communities, it should be aligned with Indigenous worldviews and values, but a gap remains in our understanding of these characteristics, as well as other Indigenous resources, both tangible and intangible, that may influence the process of community-based entrepreneurial opportunity identification. This provides the main impetus for this article, which aims to illustrate how Indigenous values influence community-based entrepreneurial opportunity identification, and demonstrate how a deeper understanding of Indigenous worldviews can broaden and contextualize our understanding of entrepreneurship and enrich entrepreneurship theory.

In framing our study, we draw upon and integrate three complimentary streams of research. We first contextualize our work by linking it to a growing stream of literature in Indigenous entrepreneurship, where an emphasis on Indigenous values, ownership and benefit distinguish this stream of research from the mainstream entrepreneurship literature (Croce, 2017; Hindle and Lansdowne, 2005; Hindle and Moroz, 2010; Peredo et al., 2004). Because our empirical context relates to Indigenous community-based entrepreneurship, we draw upon the CBE literature which, like much of the Indigenous entrepreneurship literature, emphasizes the collective and community-oriented nature of entrepreneurial efforts while also offering insight into how CBEs generate holistic forms of value for the communities in which they are embedded (Hertel et al., 2019; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006). Finally, we leverage and extend the literature on entrepreneurial effectuation (Read et al., 2016; Sarasvathy, 2001, 2008) to understand the process by which entrepreneurial opportunities are identified and evaluated in a specific Indigenous context, and how Indigenous resources and values may be both leveraged and reclaimed during this process.

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Our paper proceeds as follows: we first situate our paper in the literature by summarizing pertinent themes and findings from research on Indigenous entrepreneurship and CBEs in Indigenous contexts. We next provide a briefing on effectuation theory and highlight its relevance for explaining entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in Indigenous communities. We then describe the community-based participatory methodology adopted in this collaborative research project, and discuss our key findings. We conclude with a discussion of our findings and their implications for theory, practice and future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. Indigenous entrepreneurship

We follow Hindle and Lansdowne (2005, 132) in defining Indigenous entrepreneurship as “the creation, management and development of new ventures by Indigenous peoples for the benefit of Indigenous peoples.” A defining feature of Indigenous entrepreneurship is the values-driven nature of entrepreneurial activities in Indigenous contexts, particularly the importance of heritage, tradition and community (Hindle and Lansdowne, 2005) and the need to work collaboratively for cultural revitalization and social change (Henry and Dana, 2019).

Much of the research in the field has been driven by an overarching agenda focused on redressing multiple aspects of disadvantage that stem from structural subordination, cultural genocide, oppression, discrimination and other current and historic injustices. Such research recognizes the need to build the economic capacity and independence required to regain the social control needed to ensure self-determination and “the ability to respect the past while embracing the future” (Hindle and Moroz, 2010: 371; Peredo et al., 2004). A related feature of the Indigenous entrepreneurship literature is its emphasis on what Hindle and Moroz (2010: 371) describe as “degree of indigeneity” – i.e., the challenge Indigenous entrepreneurial actors face in reconciling Indigenous values and practices with modernity, and the reality of pursuing economic development and self-determination while embedded within (or subjugated by) the hegemonic post-colonial political-economic systems within which Indigenous communities are embedded nationally and globally. Within this setting, entrepreneurship is viewed as holding the potential to empower communities, enhance socioeconomic development, and redress current and historical injustices when it is carried out through endogenous means (Anderson and Giberson, 2003; Peredo et al., 2004).

Recent work on Indigenous entrepreneurship has focused on understanding the diversity of Indigenous contexts and how this may differentially shape entrepreneurial processes and outcomes (Croce, 2017; De Bruin and Mataira, 2018; Hindle, 2010). Indeed, Indigenous entrepreneurs belong to diverse realities with respect to their geographical position, history and political status (United Nations, 2009). These realities are influenced by the social, legal, political and economic contexts within which Indigenous peoples are embedded at regional, national and global levels, adding further complexity. For example, Croce's (2017) systematic review of Indigenous entrepreneurship literature from 1995 to 2016 identifies three “models” of Indigenous entrepreneurship – urban, rural, and remote – which are distinguished by the sociocultural context of the communities in which they take place, and their degree of urbanization. In rural areas, such as that of the Toquaht Nation, Indigenous entrepreneurship is characterized by communities whose way of life combines tradition and modernity (Dana, 2008; Lee-Ross and Mitchell, 2007).

Hindle (2010) also highlights the diversity of Indigenous entrepreneurship contexts and develops a framework for diagnosing how the nature and structure of any community differentially shapes the entrepreneurial processes contemplated within it. The framework depicts two pillars that undergird potential entrepreneurial “pathways” within any given community. One pillar comprises *structural* factors that encompass physical resources (e.g., land and infrastructure), governance mechanisms and institutions, and property rights and capital management regimes. A second pillar comprises *human* factors including human resources (demographics and capabilities), worldviews (i.e., ideas and beliefs through which humans interpret, and interact with, the world), social capital/networks, and boundary spanning capacity (i.e., the ability of human agents to overcome obstacles both within and between communities). Defining the elements of these two pillars provides a way to evaluate the impact of community context on entrepreneurial processes. Similarly, Peredo et al. (2004) advocated a contingency approach for analyzing and illuminating the diversity of Indigenous entrepreneurship contexts and models.

In summary, while certain core themes have emerged in the literature, the relationship between Indigenous entrepreneurs, Indigenous communities, and the broader contexts within which they are situated, is highly complex and not yet well understood, requiring further exploration. As noted by Hindle (2010: 639), entrepreneurship scholars “need to define and approach entrepreneurship in a manner capable of dealing theoretically and practically with the influence upon entrepreneurial process of the human and physical contextual factors prevalent in the community where the entrepreneurial process actually or potentially takes place.” In view of this astute observation, we turn to the literature on CBE, particularly in Indigenous contexts, to provide further insights into how community context may shape entrepreneurial processes.

2.2. Community-based enterprise

CBEs are commercially oriented organizations that are established, owned and governed to generate economic, social and/or ecological benefits primarily for members of the communities in which they are embedded (Hertel et al., 2019; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006). CBEs take a variety of legal forms and may bear similarities with cooperatives and/or social enterprises due to the collective nature of their founding and management as well as the variety of benefits that they seek to create. However, CBEs are distinct from conventional cooperatives that are not community-based and that pursue exclusively economic benefits and/or deliver benefits among their members rather than the broader community (Hertel et al., 2019). Meanwhile, social enterprises are not necessarily CBEs, because, although they may pursue multiple forms of benefits for the broader community, most social enterprises are not collectively established, owned or governed (ibid).

Thus far, research has focused primarily on describing CBEs (e.g. Handy et al., 2011), exploring the conditions that lead to their emergence (e.g. Johnstone and Lionais, 2004; Kleinhans, 2017), and studying the potential of CBEs to tackle local problems (e.g. Daskalaki et al., 2015; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006). Meanwhile, a handful of studies have focused on the creation process of CBEs (e.g. Haugh, 2007; Hertel et al., 2019; Valchovska and Watts, 2016), including nascence and processes of legitimacy building (Vestrum et al., 2017), embedding (Vestrum, 2014a) and resource mobilization (Vestrum, 2014b, 2016). However, although Peredo and Chrisman (2006) acknowledge that CBE success may benefit from the integration of specific cultural values and norms, the roles played by values and norms, as well as other community characteristics, in the process of opportunity identification has received little attention. Moreover, although Vestrum et al. (2017) explore how nascent CBEs build legitimacy, much remains to be understood about how they leverage their own resources, acquire external resources, and co-create new resources that are necessary to achieve their desired outcomes.

2.3. Indigenous community-based enterprise

While generally reflecting themes within the broader literature on CBEs, research on Indigenous CBE (ICBE) also comprises a number of topics unique to Indigenous contexts. For instance, research on ICBEs examines Indigenous approaches to CBE (Cahn, 2008; McCormack and Barclay, 2013; Peredo, 2003), relationships and boundaries between ICBEs and settler society (Banerjee and Tedmanson, 2010; Stewart et al., 2017), and commercialization of Indigenous knowledge (Torri, 2011). Perhaps most common across the ICBE literature, is the focus on capacity development (Fuller et al., 2005; Spencer et al., 2017; Vega and Keenan, 2016).

As in the broader CBE literature, research on ICBEs also explores entrepreneurial creation processes, with studies delving into opportunities and constraints for ICBEs (Collins and Norman, 2018), the planning process for new ICBEs (Fuller et al., 2005), and the assets and values that inform the creation of ICBEs (Cahn, 2008; McCormack and Barclay, 2013; Peredo, 2003; Vega and Keenan, 2016). Related to the notion of the variety and array of assets that may have a bearing on opportunity identification in ICBEs, Collins and Norman (2018) outline the concept of the Indigenous Estate. The Indigenous Estate consists of both tangible assets, such as the lands and waters of the Estate, including the resources located on or within it, as well intangible assets such as culture and intellectual property rights and other forms of traditional knowledge. The concept of the Indigenous Estate, therefore, closely approximates Hindle's (2010) notion of the *structural* and *human* factors that together comprise the Indigenous entrepreneurial context. Collins and Norman (2018: 158-159) assert that, in regard to ICBEs, “the challenge is how to grow the Indigenous Estate and fully utilise its assets.”

Other research also emphasizes the importance of tangible and intangible assets within the Indigenous Estate for the success of ICBEs. For example, Fuller et al. (2005) point out that ICBEs have certain advantages in the eco-tourism industry due to both their rights to, and intimate knowledge of, territories that are of interest to tourists. However, rather than delving into issues related to opportunity identification, their research focuses on the importance of planning processes to the operation of ICBEs. The research of Vega and Keenan (2016) also recognizes the importance of particular assets, in this case, forests, to the success of ICBEs. However,

they focus on the role of capacity building in reducing transaction costs, rather than on opportunity recognition.

In summary, while the body of work described above explores important aspects of ICBEs, and while there is broad recognition that Indigenous culture and values play a significant role in shaping contemporary forms of ICBEs (Altman, 2004), as with the broader CBE literature, a gap remains in our understanding of how tangible and intangible assets (e.g. values, knowledge and culture) within the Indigenous Estate play a role in the process of entrepreneurial opportunity identification and the emergence of nascent ICBEs.

2.4. Effectuation theory

Our review of the literature on CBEs, and ICBEs in particular, suggests that there is an opportunity to explore in more depth how Indigenous values and resources shape entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. Consequently, we frame our study theoretically within the broader entrepreneurial opportunity recognition literature and use effectuation theory as our primary theoretical lens for understanding how opportunities are recognized and evaluated in the Toquaht context.

Some scholars suggest that opportunity identification and evaluation decisions tend to be highly systematic and organized, with individuals drawing clear causal links between the opportunity identified, its expected value, and courses of action needed to exploit it profitably (e.g., Kirzner, 1997) thus implying a logic of causation (Read et al., 2016; Sarasvathy, 2001, 2008). A logic of causation takes a particular end goal as a given and focuses on choosing among means to achieve that particular goal. In contrast, an effectual logic takes a set of means as given and focuses on choosing among many possible end goals using that particular set of means (ibid). An entrepreneur employing this logic would look to the resources they currently control as a means of achieving any number of alternative future outcomes. Entrepreneurs employing an effectual logic tend to avoid prediction-based strategies and employ heuristics that embody five interrelated principles¹ (Sarasvathy, 2008). Our review of the Indigenous entrepreneurship and ICBE literatures suggests that identification and evaluation of entrepreneurial opportunities in Indigenous contexts is more often akin to an effectual logic than a causal one. That is, the viability of entrepreneurial opportunities in Indigenous communities is typically assessed in terms of the material resources, human capabilities, and cultural heritage and identity that might be collectively leveraged in pursuit of such opportunities.

In sum, effectuation theory provides an apt lens for understanding Indigenous community-based entrepreneurship as it envisions entrepreneurship not as a causal linear process whereby objective opportunities in preexisting markets are identified a priori (Fisher, 2012), but rather a socially constructed process whereby a particular set of means (who we are, what we know, whom we know, what can we do) are brought to bear on a generalized aspiration or set of goals, which may be shaped or constructed over time leveraging contingencies as they arise (Read et al., 2016; Sarasvathy, 2001, 2008). Likewise, effectuation theory emphasizes the local transformation of extant realities into new possibilities and encompasses the leveraging and expansion of both resources and the ends to which they may be put (Sarasvathy and Dew, 2005). This approach is highly aligned with the overarching themes we see in the Indigenous entrepreneurship and ICBE literatures, where community-based resources, capabilities and values shape entrepreneurial efforts, and where transformation, revitalization and emancipation feature prominently. However, whereas effectuation theory has typically focused on individual entrepreneurial actors and their means, we believe the theory may be usefully extended to ICBEs as a way of understanding not only how existing communal resources may be leveraged toward multiple ends, but how dispossessed resources may be reclaimed and revitalized in pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities and social change. In doing this, we hope to enrich effectuation theory by broadening its contextual locus to more fully incorporate collective and place-based conceptions of entrepreneurial means and how they may shape the ways in which nascent opportunities are identified, assessed and pursued.

3. Methods

3.1. A prefatory note on the Toquaht context

The Toquaht Nation, with approximately 150 members, is one of fourteen Nuu-chah-nulth communities who reside mostly along the west coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Due to policies and practices of colonization that resulted in the dispossession of Toquaht territory and governing authority, by the late 1980's, almost no Toquaht people lived on the Toquaht traditional territory, which lacked energy, sanitation, health and educational infrastructure.

With the beginning of the modern treaty process, in 1992, Toquaht people sought to establish a sustainable economy based on the values and traditions that sustained their community and surrounding ecosystem for at least 10,000 years (Arima and Hoover, 2011). After ratification and implementation of the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement (a.k.a. Maa-nulth Treaty) on April 1, 2011 – a treaty between five First Nations communities (Maa-nulth, 2009), the Province of British Columbia (BC) and the government of Canada – the Toquaht Nation re-established self-governance and control over 1489 ha of land (~ 4% of its traditional territory) and was positioned to determine its future development path. Consequently, the Toquaht created and ratified a constitution and accompanying laws, regulations and policies, which enshrined a Toquaht vision of sustainable development into the nation's newly

¹ 1) they take a means-based approach and focus on their abilities (i.e. bird-in-hand approach), 2) they focus on what they can afford to lose rather than on prediction of possible gains (i.e. affordable loss), 3) they rely on partnerships (i.e. crazy quilt) to expand their existing resources, 4) they treat surprises as opportunities and harness serendipity and unintended discovery to leverage emergent possibilities (i.e. turn “lemons to lemonade”), and 5) they aim to shape, with others, their environments (i.e. pilot-in-the-plane) rather than adapt to them (Sarasvathy, 2008).

formed institutions.

3.2. A community-based participatory research approach

Recognizing the need for a system to evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities that would take into account broader socio-cultural and environmental considerations, the Toquaht Nation established a research collaboration with an interdisciplinary team of university-based scholars. Wii-tsuts-koom, Chief Anne Mack, the Chief of the Toquaht Nation (hereafter, Chief Anne), and the elected Toquaht Council initially met with a Toquaht member (one of the authors of this paper) who was engaged in doctoral studies at a Canadian university, along with a professor there (another of the authors), to discuss the Nation's need for an evaluation system that accounted for potential impacts on the Toquaht community and culture, as well as the environment and economy. The Chief and Council then invited the two researchers to form a team to carry out this work. Given the invitation of the Toquaht Chief and Council to create a collaborative community-university research project, a community-based participatory research approach was utilized (Hacker, 2013; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). This allowed the research team to leverage insights across a range of methods, participants and points in time to co-create a decision support and impact evaluation system – grounded in the Toquaht people's vision of well-being and development – that would be of practical use to the Toquaht Nation as it determined what CBEs to establish and develop.

Community-based participatory research is distinguished from conventional research methods by shared ownership of research projects, community-based analysis, identifying and creating local and appropriate solutions, and an orientation toward community action (Hacker, 2013; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). To engage in this work, a transdisciplinary, gender balanced, and multi-cultural research team was formed, consisting of scholars from nine different academic disciplines. Consistent with a community-based participatory approach, our research methods prioritize and value Indigenous interests, perspectives and knowledge (Smith, 2013). Reflecting this, half of the research team was Indigenous, including five members from the Toquaht community itself. Moreover, in alignment with the request of Chief Anne to enable gender perspectives in the project, specifically those of women, just over half of the research team was made up of women, including a scholar specialized in the area of gender and development.

Research was carried out in three distinct, but overlapping, phases focused on (1) studying relevant literature, (2) direct community engagement, and (3) development and implementation of a decision support and impact assessment system. The initial phase involved reviewing literature related to the Toquaht context as well as literature about how other communities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, sought to evaluate the impact of, and make decisions related to, economic development efforts (e.g. Lewis and Lockhart, 2002; Orr and Weir, 2013; Stankovitch, 2008; Tauli-Corpuz, 2008). The review included ethnographic texts describing Toquaht and Nuuchah-nulth oral histories and traditional stories (e.g. Arima and Hoover, 2011; Bridge and Neary, 2013), publications by Toquaht and Nuuchah-nulth scholars (e.g. Atleo, 2010; Atleo, 2007; Mack, 2009), and texts produced by the Toquaht Nation government itself (e.g. treaty documents, community plans, Toquaht Nation legislation). This literature was summarized to aid the entire team in its understanding of the context. It was also inductively analyzed to identify key themes, important cultural concepts and values. This information was shared with and validated by members of the Toquaht government and Council and was later used in the development of an interview guide (discussed below) for use with Toquaht community members.

Following the review of relevant literature, the project entered a phase of intense community engagement with the purpose of gathering and understanding contemporary Toquaht values and views related to economic development and business. This work was carried out over 14 months from July 2014 through August 2015. The perspectives of Toquaht community members were sought through a variety of community engagement processes, including participant observation, 28 semi-structured interviews, two focus groups made up of a broad cross-section of community members, including 56 participants, and three focus groups with Toquaht women, which had a total of 15 participants. A total of 37 adult Toquaht citizens – 18 men and 19 women – representing approximately 43% of the adult population provided their consent to participate in one or more of the engagement activities.

3.2.1. Focus groups

Seasonal People's Assembly meetings represent the largest regular gatherings of Toquaht citizens. Therefore, at two Assemblies, 'World Café' dialogue processes were used to engage citizens in small group conversations about their perspectives, hopes and concerns related to well-being and economic development in the Toquaht Nation. World Café is a dialogic model where small groups of participants engage in conversation on central questions and cycle through the room to different tables with different participants and questions, thereby invoking a larger scale sharing of ideas (Brown et al., 2007). Dialogic processes adhere to Indigenous principles of research as praxis, where the actual process of conducting the research also serves to benefit the community (Kovach, 2009).

Values and perspectives related to various types of industries and CBEs that might be established by the Toquaht Nation, or that might operate on Toquaht territory, were discussed in the first World Café dialogue. A general desire for sustainable businesses was the most prominent theme that emerged,² so the second dialogue focused on what represented sustainable or unsustainable forms of businesses across various industries that Toquaht could potentially engage in. Detailed notes and summaries from these dialogues were shared with participants to verify their accuracy and completeness.

3.2.2. Women's circles

The rationale underpinning the women's focus groups, or 'women's circles' as the Toquaht community and research team called

² A more specific discussion of findings is discussed in the following section.

them, resulted from two important developments. The first was Chief Anne's request to enable gender perspectives, specifically those of women, in the research project. According to Chief Anne, women's circles were historically an important aspect of traditional governance practices in the Toquaht Nation, but this practice had become dormant due to colonization. The second motivating factor emerged from the observation that, overall, women were not as vocal as men in the two World Café dialogues described above. The purpose of the women's circles in this project was, therefore, to provide an opportunity for women to explore and share their perspectives and visions related to economic development and potential business activities in a safe environment.

Adapting a dialogue facilitation method known as the “Tully Wheel”, through which acts of active citizenship are contextualized in the realities of Indigenous peoples and understood as *negotiated practices of freedom* (Tully, 2000), female members of the research team (including one of the authors) designed and facilitated the women's circles. Data from each of the three circles, held in different locations convenient for Toquaht women living in different areas, was recorded by dedicated note-takers (i.e. research assistants) and, together with participants and members of the research team, common themes from the three sessions were used to derive a Toquaht understanding of wellness and well-being as it relates to economic development. This information was later used in the process of identifying and evaluating relevant indicators of well-being that might be impacted by different business activities.

3.2.3. Semi-structured interviews

To recruit interview participants, the community liaison contacted Toquaht community members and invited them to participate in the interview process. An Indigenous member of the research team with prior experience in community-engaged Indigenous research interviewed all participants in person in interviews lasting between 30 and 75 min. A semi-structured interview method was utilized to allow conversation to flow more naturally, with the interviewer taking cues from the participant's own interests. Interview questions were related to general information about the participants' lives, perceptions of short and long-term opportunities and challenges concerning business and economic development activities, both for themselves and the Toquaht Nation, and what support and coping strategies they used to bring wellness to their lives.

With the participants' permission, interviews were recorded and later transcribed before thematic analysis and coding was carried out using Atlas.ti software. Three project team members coded independently then compared, discussed and agreed on codes in iterative cycles until a threshold of 90% inter-coder reliability was reached. From this process, a master code list was created and organized to include definitions of codes, theme names, and examples. Once inter-rater reliability was established, two research assistants completed coding of the remainder of the transcripts. Thematic summaries of interview data were then created and provided to the Toquaht government, Council and People's Assembly, both as a means to share the information gathered as well as to provide an opportunity for discussion and clarification.

After data from the literature review and community engagement processes were collected, analyzed and organized, summaries of the data and key findings were presented to the Toquaht Council and government administration who confirmed that the findings accurately reflected the values and vision of the community. Following completion of the first two phases of the project, an online decision support and impact monitoring and evaluation system was developed and implemented. It was then used in the co-development of a Five-Year Economic Development Plan. Fig. 1, below, depicts the co-creation and emergence that took place in this community-university research collaboration. In the sections that follow, we describe the findings of this research and the system that was implemented before discussing implications for the literature and theory related to Indigenous and community-based entrepreneurship.

4. Findings

4.1. Sustainability based on principles of interconnectedness, respect and reciprocity

Findings from the first two phases of research – focused primarily on identifying Toquaht principles that would guide the community's entrepreneurial efforts – revealed a high degree of consistency between texts related to Toquaht history and culture, present-day laws and regulations created by the Toquaht government, and the contemporary views of Toquaht citizens who 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. Through a process of community-based analysis, the research team identified key themes related to Toquaht principles of economic development. The themes arising from the data were grouped into four broad and interconnected categories – environment, culture, community and economy. The categories represent dimensions related to Toquaht values and well-being that emerged at the outset of the project, when the Toquaht Chief and Council described their need for an evaluation system, and were reflected in all the data gathered in relation to the Toquaht people.

Several Nuuchahnulth words and concepts, described by Toquaht and Nuuchahnulth scholars referenced below, are indicative of the Toquaht, and broader Nuuchahnulth, worldview and value system. A common phrase reflecting this worldview is *heshookish tsa'walk*, which means “everything is one” or “everything is connected” (Atleo, 2010). Nuuchahnulth scholar Umeek, Richard Atleo, stresses that this term is inclusive of all reality including the physical and metaphysical (Atleo, 2007). 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” (Atleo, 2008, p. 11–12).

The principle of *heshookish tsa'walk* is closely related to a second core concept in the Nuuchahnulth worldview, *iisaak*, translated as “respect with caring” (Mack, 2009). Through respecting the interconnectedness of all life and establishing or maintaining an appropriate balance between its elements, personal and communal security, freedom, and happiness may be found (ibid). Because *heshookish tsa'walk* makes balance imperative, it is “the maintenance of balance that is the general life project” (Mack, 2009, p. 19). As

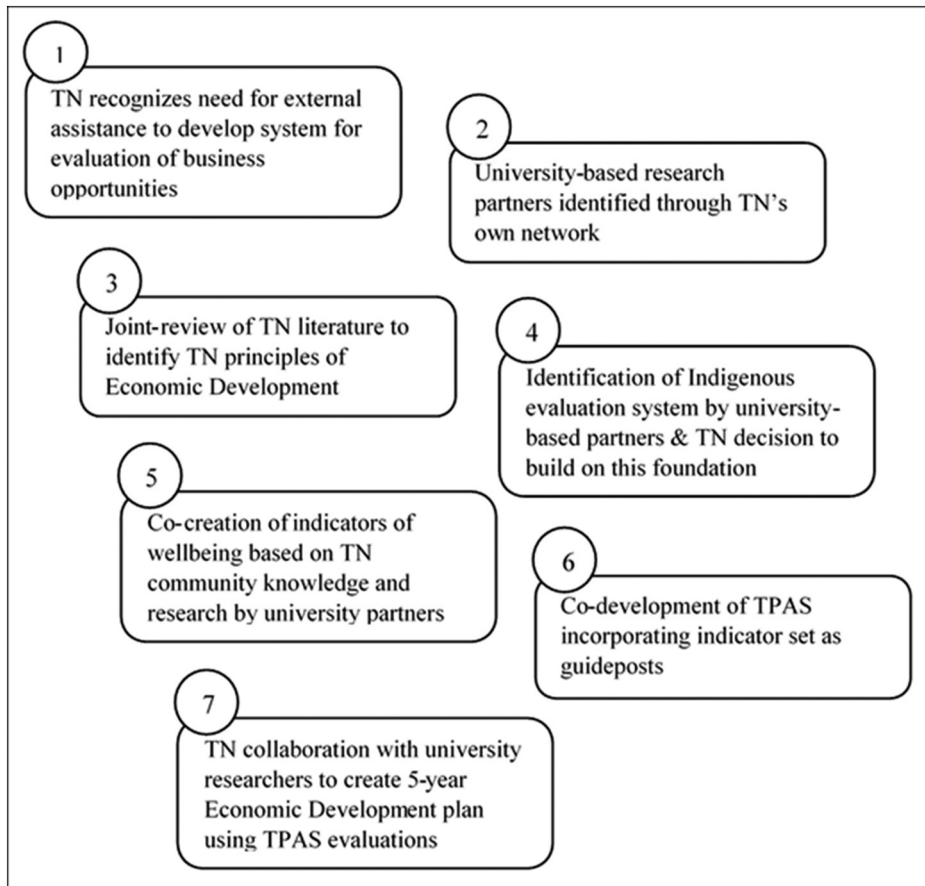


Fig. 1. Co-creation and emergence in community-university research collaboration.

a means to restore and maintain balance, the concept of *Iisaak* also involves the practice of reciprocity. 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” (Atleo, 2007, p. 130). *Iisaak* was and is understood by Nuuchah-nulth people to be a defining characteristic of human beings. To act disrespectfully, toward anyone or anything, implies a betrayal of one's humanity and risks disruption of the balance (Mack, 2009).

Nuuchah-nulth political and economic institutions traditionally were, and still are, designed to facilitate *iisaak*; including the system of governance within which leaders, or chiefs, called *Hawiih*, are raised to embody the normative principle of generosity. *Hawiih* are tested throughout their upbringing to ensure they know how to listen to the people, the land, and the spiritual world (Mack, 2009). Another example of the principle of *iisaak* is found in potlatching, a central feature of the traditional Nuuchah-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, p. 22). Umeek adds that Nuuchah-nulth conceptions of generosity imply that receiving is as important as giving. Therefore, “reciprocity and balance are central tenets of Nuuchah-nulth life” (Atleo, 2008, p. 13).

The guiding principles of interconnectedness, respect and reciprocity (i.e. actions that maintain balance) are reflected in the Toquaht Nation's laws and official documents. Two examples of how present-day Toquaht laws align with these concepts are found 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, p. 6)

“These [Toquaht] values include:

- (a) a belief in, and reverence for, the Creator,
- (b) honouring our ancestors,
- (c) respecting our elders,
- (d) abiding by an internal order based on our Ha'wiih and our Hahoulthee
- (e) respecting our family and kinship systems,
- (f) our unique language, and
- (g) a respect for the land, air, water and environment which encompasses the Hahoulthee of our Ha'wiih”

(Toquaht Nation, 2007, p. 1)

The ancient guiding principles of interconnectedness, respect and reciprocity represent the foundation for contemporary views about what sustainability entails for Toquaht people and provides a sharp contrast to the Eurocentric worldview that perceives objectives of environmental, social and economic well-being to be in tension with one another (Hahn et al., 2015). Rather than viewing these dimensions of well-being as being in tension, from a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective, tension arises when there is imbalance among them.

In focus groups and interviews, when people referred to the types of businesses they would or would not like to see established on Toquaht territory, acceptable ones were frequently related to sustainability and ecotourism and tended to be of small scale with low impact on the environment. Key reasons cited for proposing such business types were creating employment for Toquaht citizens, generating income for the Toquaht Government, and maintaining Toquaht culture and language. By contrast, large and/or resource extraction focused businesses were commonly viewed as being unacceptable. Reasons cited for opposing such businesses were that they are destructive, too big, polluting, and disrespectful.

In the focus groups attended solely by women, participant reflections on the topic of economic development related to the foundational Toquaht principles of *Heshook-ish tsalwalk* (interconnectedness) and *iisak* (respect and reciprocity). 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 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 government's laws and official documents, and the outcomes from community engagement exercises, six recurring themes related to the Toquaht people's vision for sustainable business and

Table 1

Toquaht vision for sustainable business & economic development: illustrative examples.

Themes	Illustrative data
Holistic understanding of sustainability – all is one (Heshook-ish tsalwalk)	<p>“Heshook-ish tsalwalk is a matter of the first principles laid out in the original design of creation. The Creator and creation are one. Within this meta-framework of existence are the contemporary universe of quantum mechanics, superstring theory, philosophies and political ideologies, biodiversity, and every expression of life known and unknown.” (Atleo, 2007, p. 117)</p> <p>“Heshook-ish tsalwalk is a fundamental concept to the Nuu-chah-nulth people constantly reminding us that all life, animate and inanimate, is connected and that none of our decisions are isolated.” (Atleo, 2008, p. 12)</p>
Emphasis on environmental sustainability & protection	<p>“Toquaht businesses will engage in economic development that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable...” (Toquaht Nation, 2012: p. 9)</p> <p>“I think other things should be looked at that may not be big money makers, but they also help to fix what the past has done wrong to our environment, like stream restoration type of projects, because the logging has clobbered a lot of the springs here and fish bearing streams.” (Interview, P13)</p>
Desire for fair and transparent political processes	<p>“Toquaht businesses will operate transparently and be held accountable to their owners, the Toquaht Nation.” (Toquaht Nation, 2012: p. 9)</p> <p>“When decisions about projects or businesses are to be implemented I would recommend that Chief and Council get input, voting by the citizens, on this decision. I want to be informed about these projects well in advance before voting on them.” (Interview, Toquaht 19).</p>
Necessity of economic health and viability	<p>“Development of a strong economic base is a top priority.” (Toquaht Nation, 2016: p. 44)</p> <p>“Toquaht businesses should operate profitably to provide a reasonable return on the investment of the Toquaht Nation...” (Toquaht Nation, 2012: p. 9)</p>
Support for a vibrant home community and healthy citizens	<p>“We will design our community in ways that promote a ‘sense of community’ and belonging.” (Toquaht Nation, 2016: p. 24)</p> <p>“Healthy community – where people look after one another as before - people value each person for who they are and what they can do.” (Women's circle, Sept. 12, 2015)</p>
Practice and renewal of Toquaht culture and language	<p>“Actively living within our culture and language is of utmost importance. We are Citizens of the Toquaht Nation and all actions taken will work toward preserving, reinforcing, and being present within our culture.” (Toquaht Nation, 2016: p. 16)</p> <p>“We are trying to get a cultural centre in our community, because we want to have a potlatch...but the whole idea of the cultural centre is to help bring people home and to re-learn their history and culture and their songs and dances.” (Interview, P3)</p>

Table 2
Illustrative examples of indicators of well-being.

Indicator	Indicator scale	Indicator description	Dimension
“Green” certified buildings	Type of green design, e.g. LEED	Type of green design utilized (e.g. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED))	Environmental
Eelgrass beds	% of impact	Effect on eelgrass beds - % of impact	Environmental
Cultural ceremonies & activities	Number and percentage	Number and percentage of cultural ceremonies - affected or enhanced	Cultural
Food gathering	Number of people	Annual number of Toquaht citizens who gather traditional foods on the land – disaggregated by gender	Cultural
Toquaht citizens return to live in territory	Number of people	Number of Toquaht citizens who return to live in territory - disaggregated by gender	Community
Training opportunities	Number of people	Number of training opportunities provided to Toquaht citizens - disaggregated by gender	Community
Return on investment	Percent	Rate of return on investment-percent	Economic
Risk to financial base	Ratio	Volatility or systemic risk relative to the financial base of the Toquaht Nation (e.g. what percent of the financial base was spent/risked on this project)	Economic

economic development were identified (see [Table 1](#) for themes and illustrative examples).

The system developed for the assessment of potential business ventures by the Toquaht Nation, eventually named the Toquaht Project Assessment System (TPAS), was carefully designed to incorporate these themes by embedding them in dimensions and indicators of well-being that are evaluated for each potential and actual enterprise.

4.2. Evaluation and monitoring mechanisms

Given the need to evaluate both the potential and actual impacts of businesses based on issues important to the Toquaht Nation, a database of indicators of well-being was co-created through the community-university research collaboration. Many indicators emerged from Toquaht community members themselves through the community engagement process. Others were identified through the review of existing Toquaht laws and government reports (e.g. [Toquaht Nation, 2007](#); [Toquaht Nation, 2011, 2012, 2013](#)). In total, 102 potentially useful indicators of well-being were identified and defined based solely on Toquaht government texts or direct community engagement. In parallel, other indicators were identified through a review of literature on indicators of well-being used in other Indigenous communities (e.g. [Lewis and Lockhart, 2002](#); [Orr and Weir, 2013](#); [Stankovitch, 2008](#); [Tauli-Corpuz, 2008](#)). Ultimately, and with the close involvement of Toquaht project members (e.g. government staff and elected Council), a set of 79 indicators was selected for inclusion in the TPAS (see [Table 2](#)) based on their relevance to the Toquaht context and people. Indicators were then associated with the various types of economic activities that the Nation considered (e.g. forestry, aquaculture, tourism).

In addition to identification of relevant indicators of well-being for the assessment of entrepreneurial opportunities, university-based members of the research team searched literature to determine if any pre-existing frameworks for the assessment of economic/development projects would serve the Toquaht Nation's objectives. Ultimately, the Mauri Model Decision Making Framework (MMDMF) ([Morgan, 2006](#)) was identified as a potentially useful framework for assessing projects. In comparison to a range of other systems used to develop measures that comprehend and determine a community's progress toward sustainability ([Challenger, 2013](#)), the MMDMF was the most practical and adaptable, and could be used to incorporate indicators of well-being relevant to the Toquaht Nation while also ensuring balanced consideration of multiple dimensions of well-being. Furthermore, the MMDMF is recognized as adhering to principles of sound sustainability-based decision-making ([Pintér et al., 2012](#)) and, fitting with this project's prioritization of the use of Indigenous knowledge, it is a system created by a Māori (Indigenous) scholar, Dr. Kepa Morgan, in collaboration with Māori communities. At the invitation of the research team, Dr. Morgan traveled to Vancouver Island to conduct a workshop for the entire project team on the rationale behind, and functioning of, the MMDMF. Following his visit, the Toquaht Chief and Council were convinced that the MMDMF could be adapted to meet the Nation's need for a system that would evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities across multiple dimensions of well-being.

The MMDMF provides an overall assessment of well-being through a combination of assessments related to environmental, cultural, social, and economic dimensions ([Morgan, 2006](#)). The assessment works in two stages. The first involves determining the relative weight placed on each dimension of well-being ([Saaty, 1980, 2008](#)). The resultant priority distributed across all dimensions of well-being is referred to as a “worldview setting” (see [Table 3](#) with illustrative worldview settings). Worldview settings can be

Table 3
Illustrative examples of worldview settings.

Worldview name	Economic weight (%)	Community weight (%)	Cultural weight (%)	Environmental weight (%)
Default	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Community A	20.0	25.0	25.0	30.0
Community B	30.0	20.0	20.0	30.0
Community C	40.0	25.0	15.0	20.0

The screenshot displays two sections of the TPAS interface: 'Economic Well-being Scores' and 'Environmental Well-being Scores'.

Economic Well-being Scores:

- Indicators chosen: 3
- Indicators: Net income, Person years of employment, Return on investment.
- For each indicator, there are two rows of ratings (Hotel & Casino and Eco Cabins) with a 5-point scale (-2 to 2) and a 'Notes' button.

Environmental Well-being Scores:

- Indicators chosen: 4
- Indicators: "Green" certified buildings, Eelgrass beds, Solid waste produced, Water consumption.
- For each indicator, there are two rows of ratings (Hotel & Casino and Eco Cabins) with a 5-point scale (-2 to 2) and a 'Notes' button.

Fig. 2. Example of indicators and ratings for comparison of economic & environmental impacts of Hotel & Casino and Eco Cabins projects.

created from the perspective of any particular group or individual, thus allowing projects to be assessed and compared based on a variety of different worldviews.

The second stage of assessment involves selecting indicators of well-being related to each of the dimensions of well-being, then assessing the expected impact of the project on those indicators using a 5-point scale (−2, −1, 0, 1, 2), where the value selected represents a range from extreme harm (−2) to extreme improvement (2) of well-being. This evaluation can be made for an individual project or for projects being compared (see Fig. 2).

When all indicators have been rated, a report can be created providing a visual and numerical gauge of the venture's overall impact as well as its impact on each dimension of well-being (see Fig. 3).

Using the MMDMF as a foundation, the community-university research team co-created the TPAS as a web-based tool customized for use by the Toquaht Nation for the assessment of potential and actual business opportunities. As enhancements to the MMDMF, in addition to comprising an adaptable and user-friendly online platform, the TPAS was designed to evaluate projects at multiple points in time and to monitor the actual and ongoing impacts of businesses after they are established. To summarize, the TPAS is used for:

- Evaluation of projects at single, or over multiple, points in time (e.g. when a project is deemed to be complete, or on an annual basis over the lifetime of the project)
- Comparisons of different projects or of the same project based on different worldviews
- Project monitoring, where actual impacts on indicators of well-being are assessed and recorded for enterprises that are established
- Facilitating transparency and communication by providing information, including reporting with graphs and bar-charts, to illustrate estimated and actual impacts

After a period of piloting and fine-tuning the system, the Toquaht government decided to use the TPAS to evaluate business opportunities related to the Toquaht Nation's Five Year Economic Development Plan (2018–2022). Additional university-based resources, in the form of a small team of MBA students, were leveraged to support development of the “Five Year Plan.” Supervised by the first author, the students collaborated with the Toquaht government's staff, Economic Development Committee, and the managers of Toquaht businesses to complete the plan. Five nascent CBEs related to eco-tourism, shellfish farming and different aspects of the forestry industry were assessed with the TPAS to estimate potential impacts during each year covered by the Five Year Plan. Of these five, one was pre-existing and four were nascent CBEs that were established during the course of this collaborative research project. The assessment process provided a real-time opportunity for members of the Toquaht government and elected council to engage in using the TPAS in a collaborative process facilitated by the lead university-based researcher. Meanwhile, the team of MBA students assisted by compiling data to inform the TPAS assessments (e.g. specific financial information related to business plans) and synthesizing the business plans and TPAS assessments into a single Five Year Plan document. Ultimately, the Five Year Plan, illustrating and explaining how each CBE was expected to impact each dimension of well-being as well as overall Toquaht well-being over time, was finalized and presented to the Toquaht community in an assembly meeting.

The vignette in Exhibit 1 provides a concrete example of how one specific ICBE, including campground, kayak launch and eco-cabins, was conceived, evaluated (with TPAS), and implemented, and how the Toquaht community made key decisions and resolved specific challenges encountered along the way. The vignette also highlights [in brackets] several effectual principles that were illustrated during the process. Fig. 4 shows a process diagram that summarizes in more general terms how nascent entrepreneurial opportunities were collectively effectuated in the Toquaht context.

We note that the collective effectuation process we observed is iterative and cyclical rather than linear. The initial steps comprised



Fig. 3. Example of scores comparing Hotel & Casino and Eco Cabins projects.

a community assessment of the collective means that might be leveraged to effectuate entrepreneurial opportunities (bird in hand principle). The assessment was led by a diverse group comprising members of the Toquaht EDC, elected and hereditary community leaders, and Toquaht's business managers and external advisors, including those from other Indigenous nations. Discussions at this stage focused on defining the potential of the Toquaht people to create holistic value for their community based on their community- and often place-based means (e.g., natural resources, traditional knowledge, the community's collective relationships). Concurrently, the Toquaht worked to achieve consensus around the collective goals and aspirations that would guide them in their endeavor (e.g., creating holistic value for the community, cultural revitalization, environmental stewardship; empowerment and self-determination). Through this iterative process, the Toquaht community came to better understand their collective capacity and how it might be used to pursue entrepreneurship and development initiatives aligned with their vision. As their vision coalesced the Toquaht engaged intensively with key internal and external stakeholders (patchwork quilt principle) to garner their commitment as part of a co-creation process. Results of this process included the creation and adaptation, by a community-university research team, of robust metrics (MMDMF, TPAS) for assessing community well-being and values-driven entrepreneurial initiatives, as well as the creation of a Five Year Plan, which detailed nascent entrepreneurial initiatives and how they would be linked to previously developed goals and aspirations. The Toquaht also secured commitments from the Provincial government via the Maa-Nulth treaty (Maa-Nulth, 2009), which entailed the re-establishment of self-governance and control over some unceded territories, as well as providing funding for economic development. Having secured the necessary commitments from key stakeholders, the Toquaht are currently in the process of implementing their vision and have established a number of nascent CBEs. In doing this, they have begun the process of reclaiming dispossessed means as well as acquiring new means that will better enable them to control their destiny, and to develop new goals and aspirations aligned with their vision (pilot in the plane principle). While it is premature to evaluate all of the impacts

Secret Beach Campground and Kayak Launch:

When the Toquaht Nation implemented the Maa-nulth Treaty in 2011, the Nation recovered lands including a campground and marina business, formerly called Toquaht Bay Campground and Marina, that were popular with campers, kayakers and fishermen. It was expected to become one of the Nation's economic cornerstones and generator of jobs, making it possible for Toquaht citizens to return to live on their own territory. However, because the beach and campground were built on the tailings of a nearby iron ore mine, it was stipulated in the treaty (see section 2.9) that before modifications to the property were made, the soil would be tested for contaminants. If the area was contaminated, the BC government would pay for necessary environmental remediation work. [Effectual principle: bird in hand]

Soon after implementation of the treaty, the soil was tested as the Toquaht Nation's Economic Development Committee (EDC) considered different development opportunities for the property (e.g. a resort hotel, cabins, etc.). Results of testing showed that the soil of the shoreline and beach area contained levels of iron and arsenic that exceeded provincial regulatory limits. Consequently, the Toquaht Nation, BC provincial government and Vancouver Island Health Authority mutually agreed to close the site to protect public safety and allow additional research to be completed, meaning the campground business would be closed indefinitely with a resultant loss of job and profit generating opportunities for the Toquaht Nation.

The Toquaht government pressed the provincial government of British Columbia to provide financial assistance to construct an alternative campground at Secret Beach, which they did. As the EDC considered business alternatives to replace lost revenue and employment that the campground business would have provided, the collaborative research project described in this article was also ongoing, and development and piloting of the Toquaht Project Assessment System (TPAS) was underway. The EDC experimented with how the TPAS could be used to evaluate different business opportunities, taking into account impacts on multiple dimensions of wellbeing. [Effectual principles: patchwork quilt; leverage surprises]

When using the TPAS to evaluate alternatives for the campground business, the Toquaht's approach to finding balance in their economic activities became clearer. While a resort, potentially even with a casino, could potentially create many jobs and large profits, it also had the potential to bring drug and alcohol problems into the community, as well as a greater number of outsiders. Moreover, there were a limited number of jobs that Toquaht citizens were likely to fill, so much of the job creation opportunity related to a resort business would not directly benefit Toquaht people anyway. From an environmental perspective, a resort would also create more pressure on the marine environment, due to an increase in boat traffic and human activity along the shoreline. In turn, this could reduce food gathering opportunities for Toquaht people, who had sustainably harvested shellfish and salmon in the area for thousands of years. In sum, based on the Toquaht's worldview, the negative impacts related to environmental and community wellbeing were not adequately offset by the employment and profit opportunities created by a resort business. [Effectual principle: affordable loss]

As a result, there was a general consensus that the community would prefer to develop a campground, including a kayak launch and eco-cabins that could be rented to tourists, or leased out on a long-term basis. Yet, how such a project would be carried out was yet to be determined. When discussions turned to the community dimension of wellbeing, they began to strategize around how to maximize the training and employment opportunities for Toquaht citizens. To have the business up and running as soon as possible, the Toquaht could partner with external developers who could build the necessary facilities quite rapidly. But how many Toquaht citizens were currently trained to take on the construction or facilities management jobs that would be created? Realizing that moving quickly, with external partners, would leave many Toquaht citizens behind in terms of job creation, the EDC decided to sequence different aspects of the work so that ample time would be available for Toquaht citizens to gain the training and experience needed to take on the available jobs. This would also potentially create a greater variety of jobs and work for Toquaht people over a longer period of time – from felling trees, to milling lumber, to building cabins and managing a campground – better meeting the Nation's needs in terms of job creation. Ultimately, while the campground business would create less profits and fewer jobs in total than a resort hotel, for the Toquaht Nation this was preferable, because it would have a lower environmental impact and would be more beneficial in terms of community wellbeing, while fitting better with the actual training and employment needs of Toquaht people. [Effectual principle: pilot in the plane]

Exhibit 1. Secret beach campground and kayak launch.

Adapted from [Sarasvathy \(2008: 101\)](#).

related to the projects assessed and the long-term implications of using the TPAS, our study provides a number of insights into how the system may be used to collectively effectuate entrepreneurial opportunities in the Toquaht Nation.

5. Discussion

At a time when some Indigenous communities have a degree of autonomy to pursue self-determined paths to development ([Hindle and Lansdowne, 2005](#)), and entrepreneurship is frequently proposed as an important element of self-determination and reconciliation ([Fuller et al., 2005](#); [Hindle and Lansdowne, 2005](#); [Hindle, 2010](#)), it is important to recognize how little we know about *how* the

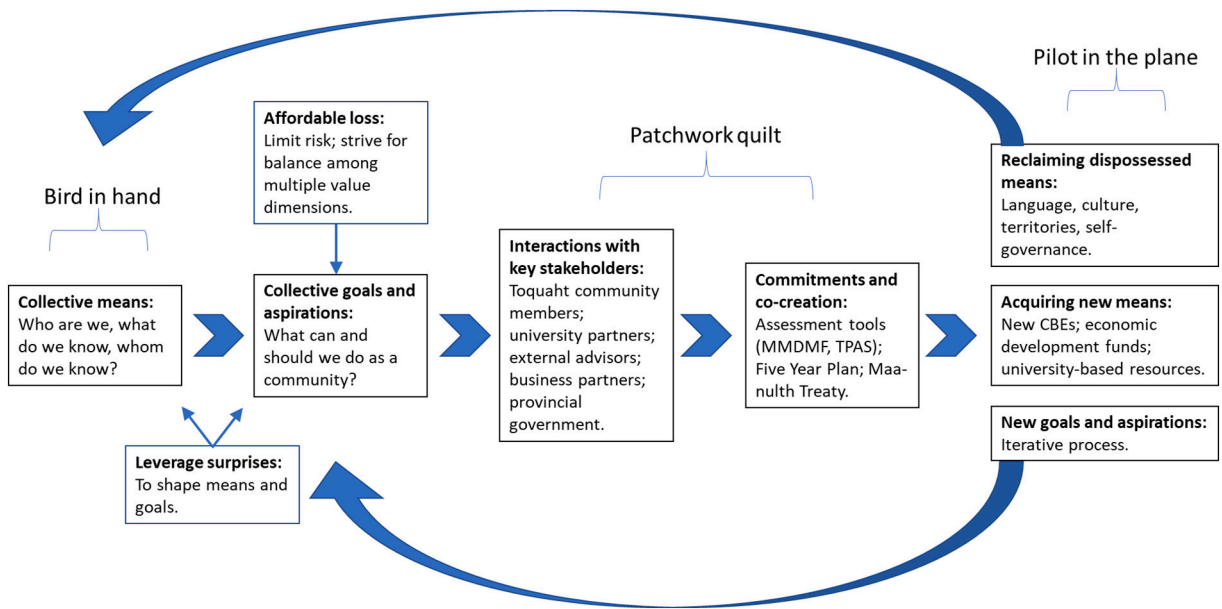


Fig. 4. The process of collective effectuation in the Toquaht Nation.

values, knowledge and heritage of Indigenous communities influence entrepreneurial practices and, in particular, opportunity identification. Although prior research has recognized the essential role that such community resources have for value creation (Collins and Norman, 2018; Hindle, 2010), this research enables a better understanding of the role that they play in entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and illustrates how community resources can be leveraged, co-created and converted into value, across multiple dimensions of well-being, through entrepreneurial efforts.

In their research examining opportunities and constraints for Indigenous enterprises within Indigenous economies, Collins and Norman (2018) argue, “the challenge is how to grow the Indigenous Estate and fully utilise its assets” (p. 158–159). Their concept of the Indigenous Estate is similar to the Nuuchah-nulth concept of Ha’houlthii (defined below), and the responsibility of the Ha’wiih (chief) in Nuuchah-nulth society is related to the idea of growing the Indigenous Estate. However, Nuuchah-nulth values emphasize balance as opposed to growth. For the Toquaht, their Ha’wiih (chief) and government’s responsibility is to care for the Estate, or ha’houlthii, ensuring not that its assets are grown, but kept in balance. Mack’s, 2011 chapter, “Hoquolist: Reorienting through storied practice”, describes the ha’houlthii (territory) and responsibility of the Ha’wiih (chief) as follows:

“The word ‘ha’houlthee,’ Wickaninnish tells me, refers to ‘the distinct boundaries of the tribe’s territory and all the things contained in those boundaries, and all the people contained in those boundaries.’ Thus, a ha’houlthee encompasses people, animals, plants, and minerals. Each of these things comprising the ha’houlthee are intimately connected...; the hawiih’s responsibility was to engage in practices of listening and balancing the voices and concerns of the ha’houlthee.”

(Mack, 2011, p. 307)

The Toquaht’s emphasis on and approach to ensuring balanced value creation in nascent CBEs holds important lessons for sustainability practice and is reflected in the design of the TPAS. Both the Toquaht Nation’s development and use of the TPAS highlights the roles played by community-based values, resources and heritage in the effectual process of entrepreneurial opportunity identification (see Exhibit 1 and Fig. 4, above). The Nation’s moral imperative to pursue and maintain balance between all life forms in the ha’houlthii (traditional territory) is reflected in the TPAS’s use of four dimensions of well-being used to assess all projects. Meanwhile, the knowledge of Toquaht people about, and importance they place on, particular assets, resources and life forms in the ha’houlthii is reflected in the indicators of well-being that are part of the TPAS. By evaluating entrepreneurial opportunities through a system that explicitly considers the value created, or lost, across a variety of dimensions and highly contextualized indicators of well-being, the Toquaht Nation operationalizes its ancient guiding principles through its contemporary entrepreneurial practices that are aimed at developing a sustainable Indigenous economy.

Other resources reclaimed by the Toquaht Nation are also important to entrepreneurial opportunity recognition that is aligned with and driven by Indigenous values, resources and heritage. Prior to the identification of entrepreneurial opportunities, the Toquaht Nation began a process of reclaiming and revitalizing its ancient cultural practices and territory. Although entering a modern treaty was not accomplished without paradoxical dilemmas and sacrifices, implementation of the Maa-Nulth Treaty in 2011 provided the Toquaht Nation with a degree of autonomy and law-making authority as well as a small portion (about 4%) of the territory that it had never before ceded to the Canadian government (i.e. “the Crown”). Capital to invest in economic development was also received as compensation for entering the treaty. Therefore, implementation of the treaty effectively allowed the Toquaht Nation to obtain a set of governance, territorial and financial resources (assets). In turn, the Toquaht Nation created a Constitution and set of laws that,

while still reflecting the Canadian system of government and socio-economic paradigm to a large degree, also incorporated and prioritized simultaneously ancient and contemporary Toquaht values and guiding principles.

The emphasis in Toquaht laws on respect and care for the *ha'houlthii* (traditional territory) (Toquaht Nation, 2007; Toquaht Nation, 2011), akin to the Indigenous Estate, requires entrepreneurial opportunities chosen and implemented by the Toquaht Nation (i.e. ICBEs) to adhere to these values and aspects of well-being. Yet, a system to operationalize these laws and values in entrepreneurial practice was still needed.

In terms of the functioning of the economy and the nature of particular commercial opportunities, much had changed since the time when Toquaht people governed their own economic activity, almost 150 years ago. Therefore, traditional Toquaht commercial practices were not, by themselves, fit for navigating the modern, capitalist, economic system. To confront this challenge, the Toquaht Nation decided to leverage its network to access resources through collaboration with external university-based and Indigenous partners to develop a system that would translate and integrate Toquaht values into modern business practice through the systematic, consistent and thorough evaluation of entrepreneurial opportunities and the impacts and value created by them. As a result, the indicator set as well as the TPAS was a product of co-creation. The partnership itself represented an extension and expansion of Toquaht resources that began with Toquaht community members' own university-based experiences, brought in other university-based resources through their relationships, and ultimately linked with external Indigenous (i.e. Māori) knowledge and university-based resources located in Aotearoa (New Zealand).

In order to effectuate on community resources that were rendered inert, or ineffectual, due to dispossession that resulted from colonization, the Toquaht Nation first reclaimed these resources in law, then incorporated them into community-based entrepreneurial opportunity recognition processes through the TPAS (including its indicators of well-being) that reflect the values and resources important to Toquaht people. In parallel to this activity, the Nation engaged in many activities to bring Toquaht people together to thicken ties to ancient knowledge, ecological stewardship practices, culture, food gathering activities, song, dance, art and language.

For example, hosting a potlatch in 2017, for the first time in over 40 years, represented a significant achievement in terms of the revitalization of Toquaht identity and culture. The preparation required to host a potlatch also represents another example of the Toquaht Nation leveraging its own resources (e.g. cultural knowledge and kinship ties) to collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to co-create, or reclaim, community resources. Because the Toquaht Nation had not hosted a potlatch in over a generation, few members of the Toquaht community had witnessed or learned the songs, dances and protocols that took place in earlier Toquaht potlatches. However, within the wider Nuuchah-nulth cultural group, there were individuals who were witnesses to the last Toquaht potlatch and were able to share their knowledge of that and similar potlatches held in other Nuuchah-nulth Nations. These elders and cultural knowledge holders collaborated with the Toquaht Nation to share and practice the songs, dances and protocols that had been used in Toquaht potlatches, or similar gatherings, in the past. This collaboration allowed dozens of Toquaht people to learn everything required to host a potlatch, and pass this experience on to future generations. In summary, through Toquaht laws, cultural and linguistic revitalization, and implementation of a Toquaht system for evaluating business opportunities, the guideposts for Toquaht entrepreneurial practice have been re-established. However, the process of reclamation, rather than having an end goal, is ongoing and can be expected to continue indefinitely.

The findings of this research contribute to the understanding of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition in the context Indigenous entrepreneurship, and, in particular, within the context of CBEs and ICBEs. Most importantly, we illustrate *how* nascent Indigenous CBEs revive a holistic form of wealth generation through entrepreneurship after multi-generational dispossession. Specifically, building on prior research that has recognized the essential role that community resources have for value creation (Collins and Norman, 2018; Hindle, 2010), the Toquaht experience shows *how* Indigenous values, knowledge and other cultural and physical resources are able to influence entrepreneurial opportunity identification as well as the evaluation of value and impacts related to entrepreneurial activity.

Evaluation of projects in relation to four dimensions of well-being, each with a customized set of indicators, is critical to this process. Each set of indicators translates the traditional knowledge and principles of the Toquaht Nation that are being reclaimed through practices of self-governance and entrepreneurial activity into metrics that can be assessed to both predict and monitor outcomes. The translation function enabled through development and use of the TPAS provides a refined understanding of effectuation by and in an Indigenous community. In turn, development and use of the TPAS provides a compelling example of how Indigenous communities can meet the challenge of growing the Indigenous Estate (i.e. structural and human resources) and fully utilise its physical and human assets (Collins and Norman, 2018).

Our work contributes to the broader entrepreneurship literature on opportunity recognition and effectuation theory by providing deeper insights into how contextual factors, particularly those that are community-based, shape the process by which potential entrepreneurial opportunities are identified and evaluated. Whereas much of normative entrepreneurship theory emphasizes the individual–opportunity nexus as a defining feature of entrepreneurship (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Venkataraman, 1997), our research highlights the need to contextualize entrepreneurial opportunities within the communities in which the entrepreneurial activities actually occur (Hindle, 2010). In the Toquaht Nation, entrepreneurial opportunities tend to be conceived of, assessed, and exploited at the community–opportunity nexus, which is reflective of a collective cultural orientation and concern for a broad range of stakeholders, including past and future generations, and the health of Toquaht lands and community. Like much of the prior research on Indigenous entrepreneurship and ICBE, our research highlights how identification and evaluation of entrepreneurial opportunities is largely a means-based, effectual process, strongly shaped by communal resources, capabilities, and heritage, which both facilitate and constrain the attractiveness and viability of potential entrepreneurial endeavors. While our findings are derived from a particular empirical context, we argue that, in a globally interconnected world, organizations and entrepreneurs everywhere are increasingly

called upon to act in ways that are aligned with values and needs of those they serve, and to provide value to the communities where they operate. In this sense, community context may be viewed as a key determinant of the possibility and potential of any entrepreneurial initiative (Hindle, 2010), and hence worthy of increased attention in our theorizing.

Our research extends and enriches effectuation theory by applying it in an empirical context (ICBE) that has rarely been examined in the mainstream entrepreneurship literature. Beyond broadening its contextual locus, our work suggests that effectuation theory can be further enriched by a modest reconceptualization of some key tenets. Following from our prior discussion of collective rather than individual agency, entrepreneurial means (exemplified by the bird-in-hand effectual principle) may be reconceived as community- and place-based. Rather than a central actor asking, who am I, what do I know, whom do I know, and what can I do, the questions become: who are we, what do we know, whom do we know, and what can we do collaboratively as a community (see Fig. 4)? In indigenous contexts, these questions are inexorably connected to notions of place and the meanings and experiences connected to them. The Toquaht people's intimate knowledge of their ancestral lands, and their concern shown for the well-being of those lands, feature prominently in their assessment of entrepreneurial opportunities and their means for pursuing them.

Similarly, our study sheds new light on effectual principles related to stakeholder engagement and co-creation (the patchwork quilt principle) as well as control versus prediction (the pilot in the plane principle). Effectuation theory depicts the patchwork quilt principle as a way to opportunistically expand the individual entrepreneur's limited resource-base by pursuing partnerships and pre-commitments with self-selecting stakeholders. In this process, a commercial logic is largely assumed whereby stakeholders put material "skin in the game" (e.g., financial equity) and essentially share the economic risks and rewards of creating new products, markets, and firms (Sarasvathy, 2008). Given that our theoretical notions of entrepreneurship and effectuation are broader in scope (i.e., encompassing holistic, multidimensional aspects of value creation) than normative conceptions of these concepts (focused mostly on creation of economic value) the "skin in the game" concept takes on new meaning. In the Toquaht context, stakeholder pre-commitments are not merely commercial but also encompass broader elements (e.g., joint commitments to achieving social, political, legal or moral objectives). As such, the process of engaging stakeholders becomes more theoretically nuanced and multi-faceted as a number of institutional logics (beyond a purely commercial one) may be articulated and co-created during the effectuation process.

Likewise, the pilot in the plane principle emphasizes controlling an inherently unpredictable future rather than trying to predict the future (e.g., via market research). Such control is linked to the co-creation process, which yields new means that the entrepreneur can use to expand the possibilities of their venture. The pilot in the plane principle as observed in the Toquaht context differs from normative effectuation theory in at least two important respects. First, as with other elements of the theory, the pilot in the plane principle adopts a largely commercial logic in conceptualizing the creation of new entrepreneurial means and outcomes, and hence focuses largely on the creation of economic value. Our observation of collective effectuation in the Toquaht context highlights the theory's potential to help better understand value creation in a more holistic sense. That is, the pilot in the plane principle may be re-envisioned as a way to enable institutional entrepreneurship, and to co-create solutions to complex problems (e.g., social justice and environmental preservation in view of climate change and other similarly vexing challenges) where the predictive control implied by causal approaches to entrepreneurship is difficult or impossible to achieve. Second, the pilot in the plane principle, as observed in the Toquaht context, is focused not only on the creation of new means, but on reclaiming of dispossessed means (e.g., language, culture, territory, self-governance) that comprise critical aspects of the Toquaht community's identity. Understanding this reclamation process may be critical in understanding entrepreneurship in Indigenous contexts, as well as other community-based contexts where emancipation, social change and identity feature prominently in the entrepreneurial process.

In sum, our research highlights the need to broaden our conceptions of entrepreneurship to recognize the diverse motives and orientations of multiple entrepreneurial agents, both within and outside of the communities where the entrepreneurial process takes place, and to recognize that a wide range of entrepreneurial phenomena are differentially shaped by diverse cultural and institutional contexts and worldviews. Likewise, our work highlights the potential to extend effectuation theory to more fully incorporate collective and place-based conceptions of entrepreneurial means and how they may shape the ways in which opportunities of all kinds are identified, assessed and pursued. It also suggests how key effectual principles, and entrepreneurship more generally, may be reconceived to understand entrepreneurial phenomena in a broader range of contexts, such as nascent CBEs in Indigenous communities. We hope that our rethinking of effectuation theory can enhance its potential to understand and address a variety of complex social, economic, political and environmental challenges.

6. Conclusion

Like all studies, ours has limitations, which point the way toward future research. It is important to note that as our study derives its findings from a single, in depth, case study, generalizability beyond the Toquaht context is limited. While the values of the Toquaht Nation share similarities with those of many other Indigenous communities, as well as some non-Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs, additional case-based and, perhaps, large sample studies would be a useful way to further explore how communities and entrepreneurs with diverse worldviews might influence and broaden our understanding of entrepreneurship. Likewise, it would be useful to explore the degree to which the Toquaht approach to entrepreneurship is shared by other entrepreneurial actors who operate outside of the dominant economic paradigm.

There is also an opportunity to investigate how the TPAS and other adaptations of the MMDMF (Morgan, 2006) are able to support decision making and impact assessment for projects outside of the realm of business. The MMDMF has previously been adapted to support Indigenous community-based decision making related to topics as diverse as disaster response in Aotearoa (New Zealand) (Faau, 2018), water resource management in Southern Papua, Indonesia (Wambrauw, 2015), and the impact of fracking on Indigenous people in Alberta, Canada (Rehu, 2012). Given that the TPAS is an adaptable, online system, it could be utilized and

customized to fit a wide variety of contexts and purposes, including consultations with external actors.

We also suggest a more comprehensive understanding of the relatively unexplored context of nascent entrepreneurship in Indigenous communities as a way to further enrich the broader entrepreneurship literature and support Indigenous self-determination through Indigenous forms of entrepreneurship and economic development. Lack of research in diverse contexts has been a persistent problem in applying entrepreneurship theory across international and cultural boundaries (Thomas and Mueller, 2000) and Indigenous contexts have seldom been included, even within the comparative entrepreneurship domain. As our study reveals, a deeper understanding of Indigenous approaches to entrepreneurship may provide opportunities for enriching entrepreneurship theory, such as effectuation, by extending it to new contexts, thus paving the way for a more nuanced understanding of entrepreneurship in different national and cultural settings. Likewise, community-based participatory research projects such as this one hold the potential, through a combination of research, learning and action, to develop innovative approaches to self-determined forms of entrepreneurship and economic development in other Indigenous communities.

While our study used effectuation theory as a lens for understanding nascent CBE in the Toquaht context, there are opportunities for further theory development. For example, our data is consistent with much of the Indigenous entrepreneurship and ICBE literature, which suggests that a collective effectuation approach is typical of entrepreneurial endeavors in these contexts. However, given the diversity of Indigenous contexts, there may be instances where other heuristics (e.g., causal logics) are employed (Croce, 2017; Peredo, 2003). Therefore, it is important that future research considers how Indigenous and community-based enterprises approach opportunity recognition in a variety of contexts.

Finally, we acknowledge that the community-based entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and effectuation processes we observed are relatively recent phenomena in the Toquaht Nation and are still ongoing. While the study of these nascent processes has provided novel theoretical insights for entrepreneurship and effectuation theory, and a better understanding of practical issues related to advancing entrepreneurship and sustainable economic development in Indigenous contexts, future research is needed to explore the degree to which anticipated impacts and outcomes of the TPAS are realized, and how the use of TPAS affects the management of nascent ICBEs and the evaluation of future opportunities.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Matthew Murphy: Conceptualization; Methodology; Formal Analysis; Investigation; Resources; Writing – Original Manuscript; Supervision; Project Administration; Funding Acquisition.

Wade Danis: Conceptualization; Writing – Original Manuscript.

Johnny Mack: Conceptualization; Resources; Project Administration; Writing – Review & Editing; Funding Acquisition.

Judith Sayers: Conceptualization; Methodology; Investigation; Project Administration; Writing – Review & Editing; Funding Acquisition.

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