

# Haítzaqv women bring strength for wáñái and catalyze change in fisheries governance

Sarah Harper, Anne K. Salomon, Dianne Newell, Pauline (Hilistis)  
Waterfall, Kelly Brown, Leila Harris and U. Rashid Sumaila



# Research setting & context

- Bella Bella, BC (Canada), Traditional territory of the Heiltsuk Nation;
- Fisheries resources key to existence & cultural continuity;
- Centralized governance system, limited access/control;
- Stakeholder conflict.



Photo by Sarah Harper

# Approach

## **Objective:**

- To examine how Heiltsuk women responded during a recent herring fishery crisis and conflict to influence a system-wide shift in governance.

## **Methods:**

- 18 semi-structured interviews;
- Analyzed using framework of Governance Transformations in Social-Ecological Systems and by applying an intersectional lens.

# Results

- Heiltsuk women were on the frontlines of demonstrations & negotiations; coordinating & communicating across groups; mobilizing people, building momentum;
- Heiltsuk women connected to traditional roles and responsibilities (as teachers, advisors, peace-makers, mothers), to bring strength to this conflict;
- Important progress was made towards transforming the exiting governance system, with Heiltsuk women having a pivotal role.

# Conclusions

- Positioning Indigenous women at the forefront of resource governance brings attention to intergenerational care & equity;
- Recognizing & supporting Indigenous women in fisheries leadership & decision-making important to decolonizing fisheries governance;
- Intergenerational transfer of knowledge key to resilience & sustainability in fisheries.





Thank you!

[sjmharper@gmail.com](mailto:sjmharper@gmail.com)