Haíłzaqv women bring strength for wáńái 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.
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