

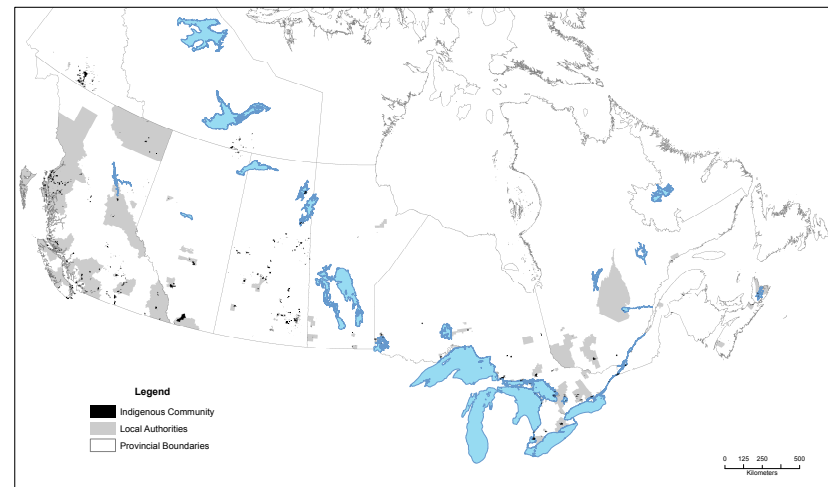
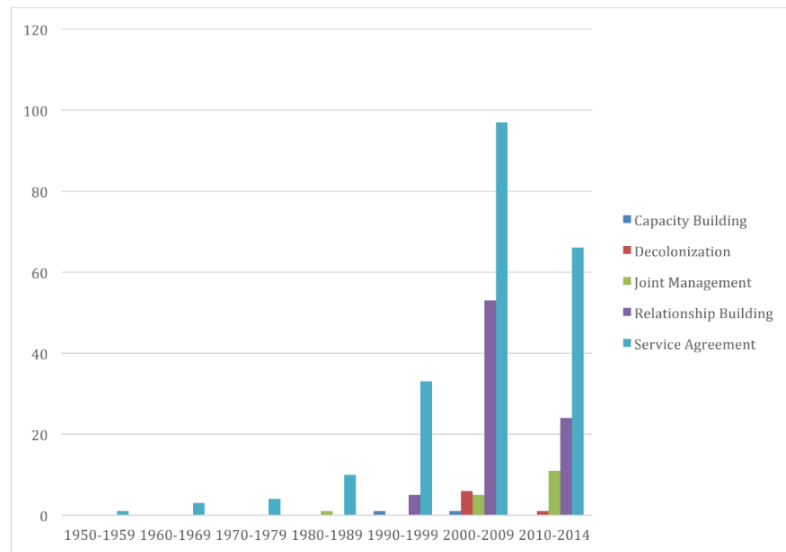
Summary of Research Results SSHRC Insight Grant

CHRISTOPHER ALCANTARA *The University of Western Ontario*

calcanta@uwo.ca

What you need to know

1) There has been an increase in Indigenous-local partnerships across Canada since 2000 (Alcantara and Nelles 2016):



2) Water partnerships benefit from strong water governance at the local level (Alcantara, Longboat, and Vanhooren 2020), in the form of:

- Adequate funding (from the federal government or own source revenues); Regulations; and Formalized decision-making; and

- Indigenous knowledge and principles, such as: Relationality; Seven Generations/Grandfathers; and Women leadership.
- 3) Some communities and leaders are skeptical of water sharing partnerships. Can agreements be designed to address their concerns (Huo, Charbonneau, and Alcantara 2022)?
- Some reasons for not wanting to pursue water sharing: Financial capacity/obligations; Cultural concerns; Impact on Sovereignty
 - We analyze 40 agreements and find that they only sometimes address these concerns:

Agreement Assessment Criteria
A. Financial Capacity
1. Does the agreement include bulk water fee structures that better align with Indigenous economies?
2. Does the agreement include provisions for the negotiation of any future rate increases?
3. Does the agreement include funding provisions for initial capital costs associated with the implementation of the agreement?
4. Does the agreement include other factors which impact the capacity of First Nations to implement the agreement?
B. Cultural Protection
1. Does the agreement include wording which recognizes the spiritual relationship of First Nations to water as something more than a commodity?
C. Sovereignty
1. Does the agreement include provisions which recognize Indigenous nationhood, treaties, rights, and other forms of Indigenous sovereignty?
2. Can the municipality, for any reason outside routine maintenance and repair, unilaterally cut off the supply of water to the First Nation?
3. Does the agreement allow for the free usage of water, for any purpose, by the First Nation?
4. Does the agreement include mechanisms of joint governance of the agreement?
5. Does the agreement include other factors which impact the sovereignty of the First Nation?

TABLE 2 Agreements by category

Categories	Number of agreements	% of Total agreements
A. Financial Capacity		
1. Bulk Fees	36	90.0%
2. Rate Negotiation	10	25.0%
3. Capital Costs	13	32.5%
B. Cultural Protection		
1. Spiritual Relationship	2	5.0%
C. Sovereignty		
1. Recognize Indigenous Rights	19	47.5%
2. Unilaterally Cut-off Water	19	47.5%
3. Free Usage of Water	28	70.0%
4. Joint Governance	6	15.0%

How can you use this research?

Community leaders can use our research to explore whether water-sharing is a potential option for their communities and to design agreements that protect their communities. Others might draw on our findings to assess and modify their water governance structures, if needed.

References

- Christopher Alcantara and Jen Nelles. 2016. *A Quiet Evolution: The Emergence of Indigenous-Local Intergovernmental Partnerships in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.
- Christopher Alcantara, Sheri Longboat and Shanaya Vanhooren. 2020. “Improving First Nations Water Security Through Governance.” *Canadian Public Administration*. 63 (2): 99-121. <https://doi.org/10.1111/capa.12363>
- Cynthia Huo, Philip Charbonneau, and Christopher Alcantara. 2022. “Overcoming Barriers to Indigenous-Local Water Sharing Agreements in Canada” *Canadian Public Administration* 65 (3): 421-438. <http://doi.org/10.1111/capa.12492>