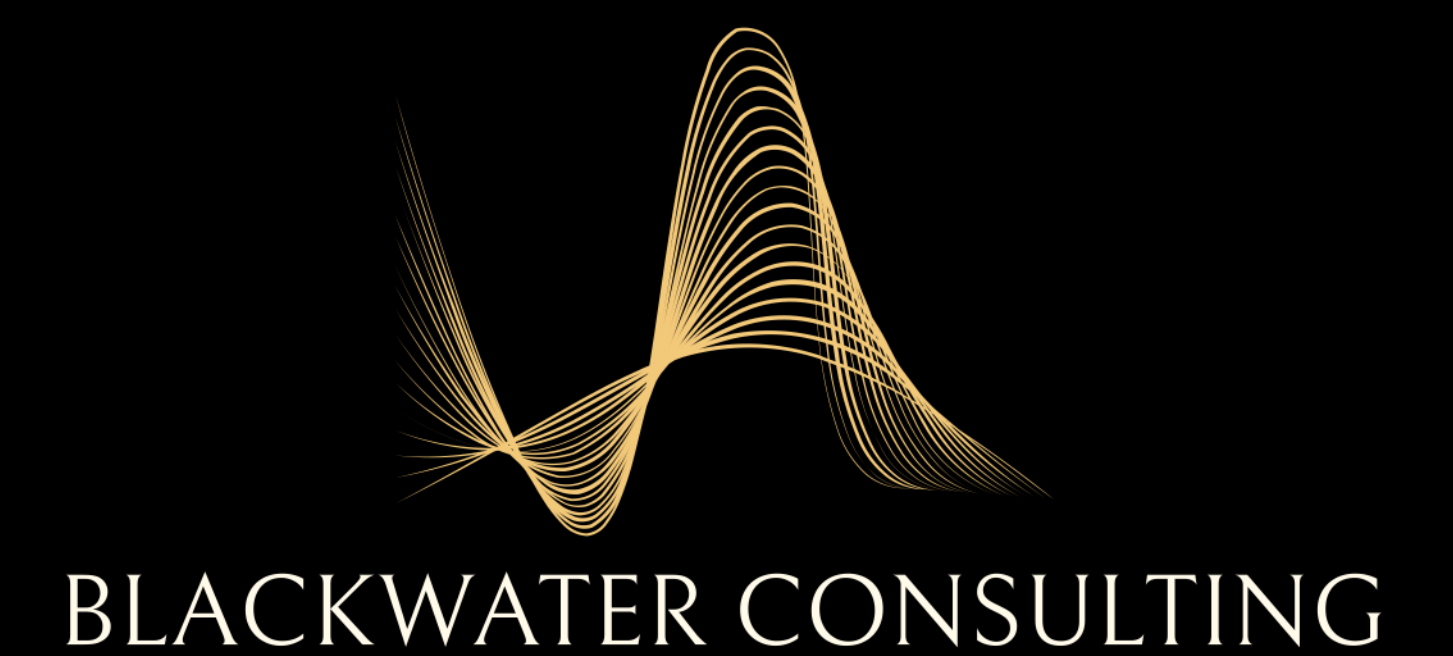


Polycentric systems for spectrum management: the case of Indigenous spectrum sovereignty movements

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BACKGROUND

- Electromagnetic spectrum ("spectrum") as a valuable natural resource
- Indigenous peoples' observation and interaction with spectrum for millennia
- Recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples' rights to spectrum on their lands
- Rights to serve their people with spectrum

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Federal government holds all authority over spectrum management on tribal lands
- Contributes to the digital divide: 18% lack broadband access on tribal lands (2022), compared to 4% in non-tribal areas
- Opportunity for change: Native Nations can prioritize spectrum decisions
- Aim to connect their people and maintain spectrum relationships

METHODS

- Case study design
- Emphasis on Indigenous and tribal spectrum sovereignty movements around the world
- Variation in success of movements and in demands
- Global and comparative perspective
- Focus on the US as a critical case

RESULTS

Guatemala

- A merit report issued by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, without access to spectrum
- Indigenous Guatemalans could not establish community media outlets or enjoy and exercise the right to freedom of expression through these outlets

Canada

- Early in 2024, the Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada announced an Indigenous Priority Window for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples to access the 800 MHz Cellular and 1900 MHz Personal Communications Services spectrum licenses

United States

- 2018: GAO found that only 18 out of over 550 federally recognized tribes had ever held a broadband-capable spectrum license
- 2020: FCC opened a Rural Tribal Priority Window, allowing over 150 Native Nations to access a 2.5 GHz spectrum license, with conditions

New Zealand

- The Māori people of New Zealand have made inspiring progress in their fight for spectrum rights
- The Māori asserted their rights to spectrum in the Waitangi Tribunal, which affirmed that spectrum is a treasured resource (known to the Māori as "Taonga") and, therefore, included in the treaties between the Māori and the government of New Zealand
- Feb. 2022: Various Māori parties signed a memorandum of understanding with the government that includes the allocation of 20 percent of commercial spectrum to the Māori

CONCLUSION

Conclusion and Discussion

- Recognition of Indigenous authority over spectrum
- Meaningful progress in realizing sovereignty for Indigenous peoples
- Greater autonomy for Native Nations, businesses, and nonprofit organizations
- Decisions about spectrum management and use

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REFERENCES

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See also:

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