

## Article

# Canadian twinning in the Indo-Pacific: the agency of non-central governments in present relationships and future strategies

Scott Michael Harrison <sup>a</sup> and Quinton Huang <sup>a,b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

<sup>b</sup> Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

## Abstract

Twinning relationships—that is, formalized long-term partnerships between two municipalities or provinces—have been a longstanding facet of Canadian foreign relations. They present a challenge to conceptions of foreign policy limited to sovereign states and national governments, particularly in Canada’s unique federal context, and serve as an entry point to a wider landscape of non-central government diplomacy, paradiplomacies and “other diplomacies.” Yet Canadian twinning relationships in the Indo-Pacific have been sorely understudied and underutilized. We therefore assembled the first comprehensive dataset of Canadian twinning in the Indo-Pacific to give an overview of the actors, drivers, chronology, and geography of these agreements. Many latent opportunities for new twinning and other diplomatic relationships still exist. Putting forward three possible trajectories for the future of Canadian twinning in the Indo-Pacific, we argue that Canada should pursue closer collaboration between federal, provincial and municipal governments and civil society by incorporating them as partners in the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

## Résumé

Les relations de jumelage, c'est-à-dire des partenariats officiels à long terme entre deux municipalités ou provinces, sont depuis longtemps une facette des relations étrangères du Canada. Ils remettent en question les conceptions de la politique étrangère limitées aux États souverains et aux gouvernements nationaux, en particulier dans le contexte fédéral unique du Canada, et servent de point d'entrée à un paysage plus large de diplomatie non gouvernementale, de para-diplomaties et d'« autres diplomaties ». Pourtant, les relations de jumelage canadien dans l'Indopacifique ont été sérieusement sous-étudiées et sous-utilisées. Nous avons donc rassemblé le premier ensemble de données complet sur les jumelages canadiens dans l'Indopacifique pour donner un aperçu des acteurs, des moteurs, de la chronologie et de la géographie de ces accords. De nombreuses opportunités latentes de nouveaux jumelages et autres relations diplomatiques existent encore. Proposant trois trajectoires possibles pour l'avenir du jumelage canadien dans l'Indopacifique, nous soutenons que le Canada devrait poursuivre une collaboration plus étroite entre les gouvernements fédéral, provinciaux et municipaux et avec la société civile en les incorporant comme partenaires dans la Stratégie Indopacifique.

**Key Words:** Twinning, city diplomacy, paradiplomacy, non-central governments, Indo-Pacific Strategy

**Mots-clés :** jumelages entre villes; la diplomatie des villes; paradiplomatie; gouvernements non centraux; stratégie Indopacifique

## Introduction

Provincial and municipal twinning relationships—sometimes referred to as “sister,” “friendship,” or “partner” city and province relationships—are rarely mentioned in discussions of foreign policy in Canada.<sup>1</sup> One key reason for this is that foreign policy is often considered the sole responsibility and purview of the federal government, with less attention

**Contact** Scott Michael Harrison: [scott.harrison@asiapacific.ca](mailto:scott.harrison@asiapacific.ca)

paid to the role non-central governments (such as provincial, municipal, and Indigenous governments) play in international affairs. Even within the discussion of international activities of non-central governments (NCGs), twinning is often portrayed as a minor, quaint or outdated mode of international engagement.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, in the Indo-Pacific, twinning agreements number in the thousands, occupy considerable governmental resources and have increasingly been at the centre of controversy. For example, after several years of spiralling tensions with China and contentious deals by state governments to participate in China's Belt and Road Initiative (Victorian Government, 2018), the Australian Parliament passed a new foreign relations act in December 2020 that gave the foreign minister the ability to scrutinize and veto any international agreement involving state governments, either existing or proposed (Pejic, Kosovac and Acuto, 2020; Tyler, 2020; Australian Government, 2020). In 2020, Shanghai cut all ties with its erstwhile sister city Prague a day after the Czech capital signed an agreement with Taipei, while 26 Swedish municipalities have terminated or suspended their decades-long sister city agreements with Chinese counterparts since 2017 due to diplomatic tensions (Šimalčík and Kalivoda, 2020; Wong, 2020). But the heightened scrutiny over twinning is not limited to agreements involving Chinese jurisdictions. In October 2018, the Japanese city Osaka abruptly ended its 60-year relationship with San Francisco in protest over a statue memorializing the 'comfort women' forced into wartime prostitution by the Japanese imperial military during the Second World War (Ingber, 2018). Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, municipalities in Japan, Europe and numerous other countries have suspended or ended their sister city relationships with Russian counterparts (Kasakov, 2022; Kobayashi and Murakami, 2022; Szpak et al., 2022).

Canada is no stranger to these concerns. After China's arbitrary detention of Canadian citizens Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, which followed Canada's arrest and extradition trial of Huawei Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou, numerous municipalities paused their relationships with sister cities in China and politicians at all levels of government began calling for their termination in light of bilateral tensions. In 2021, a proposed friendship city relationship between Vancouver and the Taiwanese city Kaohsiung attracted the ire of the local Chinese consulate in Vancouver, sparking a minor international incident (Chase, 2021). Amidst these public controversies, however, twinning agreements have also been credited for bringing cultural and economic benefits, and new agreements between Canadian non-central governments and counterparts in the Indo-Pacific—including those in China—have continued to be signed over the past five years. During the pandemic, these connections also helped facilitate the sharing of a wide range of personal protective equipment (PPE) and pandemic-related expertise between Canadian municipalities and their counterparts in the Indo-Pacific (Jin and Harrison, 2020; Harrison and Huang, 2022).

Despite the salience of twinning—and NCG diplomacy in general—to Canada's presence in the Indo-Pacific region, at the time writing these relationships and the municipal and provincial governments that engage in them are noticeably absent from the federal government's discussions of an emerging and evolving Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS). Two major documents that touch upon the drafting of the strategy—the December 2021 mandate letter for foreign minister Mélanie Joly and the 2022-2023 Departmental Plan for Global Affairs Canada—only mention provincial, territorial and municipal governments in the context of stakeholder engagement and addressing foreign influence without acknowledging that these actors have their own diplomatic activities and strategies in the Indo-Pacific

(Office of the Prime Minister, 2021; Global Affairs Canada, 2022). In fact, some NCGs such as the provinces of British Columbia, Québec and Nova Scotia—have had or are currently implementing strategies for the Asia region well in advance of the federal government (Ministry of Economic Development [Government of British Columbia] 2007; Nova Scotia, 2016; Quebec, 2022). At the time of writing, new details about the IPS are being released, but the degree of focus or inclusion of NCGs as partners in the strategy remains unclear (APF Canada, 2022; Prime Minister of Canada, 2022).

We share the concerns of other articles in this special journal edition that also point out the need for deeper consideration of non-central governments, Indigenous nations, civil society, and international students when formulating foreign policy strategies. In particular, twinning and other forms of NCG diplomacy challenge conceptions of foreign relations based solely on central governments, such as the Canadian federal government. Though it is generally assumed that the division of powers in the Canadian constitution specifies foreign affairs as within the domain of the federal Parliament, the Constitution Acts of 1867 and 1982 do not delineate federal or provincial roles in international relations beyond the signing of treaties (Simeon and Papillon, 2015; Madison and Brunet-Jailly, 2014). A tradition of diplomatic activity from the provincial and municipal levels has thus developed without legal barriers. An institutionalized framework—even an informal one—between Ottawa and the provinces on foreign affairs does not exist, let alone between those two levels of government and municipalities (Côté, 2019).<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, very little in the way of scholarly or policy analysis has been published on Canadian NCGs' international engagement, and reliable, easily accessed and comparable record-keeping on their activities, be it twinning, trade missions, offices abroad, or international strategies is scant. Existing studies generally focus on provincial or municipal governments in the context of their motivations and strategies for engagement abroad (Cohn and Smith, 1996; Madison and Brunet-Jailly, 2014; Labrecque and Harrison, 2018; Stren and Friendly, 2019) and provincial input into federal-level international trade policy (Kukucha, 2008; Paquin, 2022). Studies that do focus on Canadian twinning often treat it as an isolated phenomenon or examine individual cases and country-by-country relations (Shaw and Karlis, 2002; Harrison, 2018, 2015; Jin, 2020a, 2020b; Jin and Harrison, 2020). No study has treated the overall landscape of twinning in Canada as a phenomenon both worthy of independent analysis and deeply intertwined with broader diplomatic relations and foreign policy strategies.

This article aims to address this gap and advance the argument that twinning remains an effective, relevant, and underutilized avenue for strengthening and expanding Canada's presence in the Indo-Pacific region, through its function as an analytical and strategic entry point into the broader landscape of NCG diplomacy. We seek to answer four questions: (1) what is twinning, and how does it relate to other forms of non-central government diplomacy; (2) what are the different approaches to twinning in the Indo-Pacific; (3) where and when has Canadian twinning with Indo-Pacific counterparts developed; and (4) what are the drivers of twinning policy, and how have they changed over time? These questions are descriptive, an urgent task given the dearth of understanding in Canada about twinning and one that is methodologically distinct and prior to causal or normative arguments (Gerring, 2012).

However, in developing an interpretative framework to present our answers to these questions, we have found that a combination of structural and global factors on the one hand, and specific choices by communities, officials, and governments on the other hand, help explain how twinning between Canada and the Indo-Pacific developed unevenly over time and space. Our narrative demonstrates that the agency of municipal and provincial governments plays a decisive role in the creation, evolution, success, and failure of twinning relationships. Consequently, we end this article by presenting three possible futures of Canadian twinning in the Indo-Pacific. We argue in support of developing the agency and strategies of NCGs as actors, rather than stakeholders, distinct from the federal government. These governments should be included in Canada's evolving Indo-Pacific Strategy through the creation of an institutionalized framework for federal-provincial-municipal cooperation in international relations.

We envision three target audiences and potential uses for this article. First, federal and provincial policymakers can use the insights and recommendations in this article to integrate and support local governments as partners in Canada–Indo-Pacific relations. Second, local government officials and civil society groups interested in Canada–Indo-Pacific twinning can use this article as a guide to discover success stories and best practices to help them revive dormant relationships, improve ongoing agreements, and forge more resilient ties in the future. Third, our broad, preliminary study can serve as a foundation for other researchers to delve into Canada–Indo-Pacific relations beyond central governments, expanding our knowledge of the persistent and wide-ranging landscape of NCG diplomacy—including twinning—from various disciplinary and policy perspectives. We hope this article can help move Canadian provinces and municipalities, already on the front lines of Canada's engagement and presence in the Indo-Pacific, to the front lines of Canada's national conversation on foreign policy.

### **Concepts: placing 'twinning' in the broader landscape of non-central government diplomacy**

Though the contemporary practice of formal, twinning agreements between NCGs originated in 1956 when U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower included it within his framework of people-to-people ties (Eisenhower, 1956), the idea and practice of locality-to-locality relationships date back centuries (Leira and de Carvalho, 2021). Under Eisenhower's formulation, twinning relationships were a form of "citizen diplomacy" designed to build grassroots transnational connections during the Cold War in the hopes of fostering global peace. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, various governments and societies pursued twinning with multiple motivations, some very different from those articulated by Eisenhower. The Soviet Union, for example, used twinning to build unity within the Communist bloc (Scarboro, 2007; Applebaum, 2015; Kunakhovich, 2016), while twinning within Europe played a significant role in regional integration (Vion, 2002, 2007; Clarke, 2010; Falkenhain et al., 2012; Couperus and Vrhoci, 2019). In the Global South, twinning became a tool to support development, technical exchange, and economic growth, particularly through partnerships with localities in the Global North (Hewitt, 1999; Bontenbal, 2009; Clarke, 2012; Mayer and Long, 2021). While the end of the Cold War saw a resurgence in twinning as a tool for building mutual understanding and promoting global justice (Kavaloski, 1990; Leffel, 2018; Foglesong, 2020), emerging neoliberal policy norms that prioritized private sector growth

and devalued public investment in social goods also spurred a global shift toward twinning as a means for enhancing trade and investment (Clarke, 2009; Ryan and Mazzilli, 2021). More than three decades after Zelinsky (1991) made the first English-language attempt to describe twinning as a global phenomenon, finding tens of thousands of twinning agreements increasing rapidly in number, the twinning of the world continues to accelerate and expand at a celeritous pace.

Given the diverse characteristics, motivations, and activities that have driven twinning over the decades, pinning down a conceptual definition for the phenomenon is challenging. While there is no universal definition of what a twinning agreement is, there are varying types of characteristics of what they might include. Building on observations made by Zelinsky, Cremer et al. (2001) proposed that such agreements have the following six characteristics: (1) they are signed by heads of two jurisdictions; (2) they are meant to last indefinitely; (3) they are broad in scope and sector; (4) they are based on reciprocity; (5) activities are run by volunteers; and (6) they do not rely on the support of national governments. While it is likely that most twinning agreements around the world exhibit all six of these traits, based on our observations, exceptions—particularly regarding term length, scope, jurisdiction, and governmental support—have long existed and are likely increasingly becoming the rule.

In the first book-length treatment of the phenomenon in the Anglophone academy, Michel Laguerre (2019) expands on these core characteristics to consider the variety of names and models that encompass contemporary twinning activities. Historically, ‘sister cities’ (predominant in North America) and ‘twinning cities’ (predominant in Europe) have been the most widely used Anglophone terms, but other terms have been used with various connotations in different parts of the world. For instance, while ‘friendship’ agreements are often seen as time-limited and lower-priority compared to sister agreements in Canada and other Western countries, East Asian countries such as China have favoured using the term friendship agreement in part to distance themselves from the Cold War-era origins of the U.S. ‘sister city’ and the Soviet ‘brother city’ and to avoid the hierarchy of sisters (i.e., older or younger) that is implied in East Asian languages. For similar reasons, gender-neutral terms such as ‘partnership cities’ have become increasingly common into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Similarly, Laguerre notes that twinning involves diverse actors and activities. Official actors can include ministries and departments of provincial and national governments, individual diplomats, local officials, and city councils and staff. But just as importantly, a variety of non-official actors—such as Indigenous communities, schools and universities, sports associations, museums, friendship societies, diasporic communities, and ordinary people—can play pivotal roles in twinning (Harrison and Huang, 2022). Though official visits and delegations to twinned counterparts are perhaps the most prominent activities of twinning, other twinning-related activities can range from the cultural (e.g., educational exchanges, museum collaborations, diasporic connections), to the economic (e.g., trade and investment missions, tourism promotion, technology transfer, development assistance), to the humanitarian (e.g., disaster response, donation of medical supplies, charitable giving), to the political (e.g., policy advocacy, city summits and networks, transnational solidarity). Digital technologies and platforms are also used to facilitate various twinning activities and programs, a trend that has likely accelerated since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Laguerre combines these diverse definitions and attributes into a typology of seven twinning

models, drawn largely from his in-depth observations of twinning in the Americas, Europe, and North Africa.

We do not draw from Laguerre's typology of twinning in our analysis of Canada–Indo-Pacific twinning, partly because our focus is on the overall twinning landscape and how it fits into broader foreign policies. However, Laguerre's emphasis on the agency and interests of individual actors within twinning relationships—in contrast to the previously cited literature that tends to focus on global forces and trends—is instructive. By centering local actors and contexts, we can see how their agency has important impacts on the development of twinning relationships. We also want to highlight that twinning is one of the most prominent forms of diplomatic activity used by Canadian NCGs. In Table 1 (*see* Appendix), we compare twinning with six other forms of non-central government diplomatic activity, ranging from trade missions to development assistance projects. Though other activities may be more numerous, twinning involves a wider variety of Canadian NCGs over a longer period of time.

Furthermore, as briefly discussed below and identified in other studies of twinning (Ryan and Mazzilli, 2021; Harrison and Huang, 2022), twinning is not isolated from other forms of NCG diplomacy. It can often serve as the spark for these other activities or as a platform to institutionalize relationships begun through other activities. In other words, twinning serves as an important entry point into the broader landscape of NCG diplomacy, identified in the literature by various names such as subnational diplomacy, paradiplomacy, and “other diplomacy” (Henders and Young, 2016; Young and Henders, 2012; Beier and Wylie, 2010: xviii). A better understanding of and approach to twinning will not only strengthen this widespread and versatile tool of Canada–Indo-Pacific engagement, but also bolster the entire range of diplomatic activities pursued by Canadian governments of all levels.

### **Approaches to twinning in the Indo-Pacific**

In the above section, we have shown that twinning is a global phenomenon that encompasses a diverse set of actors, characteristics, and models. However, there is a great deal of regional variation, particularly when we examine the strategies and institutionalization behind twinning among central and non-central governments. From this perspective, twinning in Indo-Pacific countries can be characterized by a high degree of institutionalization and significant interaction between central and non-central governments. Northeast Asian countries such as China, Japan, and South Korea share centralized forms of government where central government foreign policy prerogatives and resources have a significant impact over the international activities of NCGs. At the same time, NCGs in these countries have also developed their own organizations for international relations, devoted paid staff or even departments to support twinning-related programming, and exercise a degree of autonomy over their engagement abroad that they gained through negotiation with the central government or national legislation. Other major countries in the Indo-Pacific, such as Australia and India, which are federal states like Canada, also share some of these characteristics though to a lesser degree.

In China, local governments are seen as extensions of sovereign power from the central government and there is substantial cooperation and collaboration with central government initiatives (Mierzejewski, 2020). While local governments abide by central government objectives (and an increasingly centralized system under President Xi Jinping), they also

pursue individual goals and may even influence central policies (Liu and Song, 2020; Jones and Hameiri, 2022). Twinning is overseen by the Chinese Peoples' Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFF), which provides general twinning guidelines and reports directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Government officials in China, such as CPAFF's former President Li Xiaolin, have often touted that twinning is a method for China to engage globally, support Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, and attract foreign direct investment (Li, 2019; Acuto et al., 2016; Yan, 2021; Han et al., 2021). This connection between central government guidelines and projects and twinning gives municipalities some incentive to sign and support twinning agreements that align with central government directives and priorities. Provinces have similar incentives but may need to have an agreement and its proposed partner approved by Beijing. According to the last publicly available count by CPAFF in 2015, China has about 2,310 twinning agreements (CPAFF, 2015; Liu and Hu, 2018).

In Japan, local governments maintain a high degree of autonomy in a 'highly unitary state' (Jain, 2006; Thomas and Williams, 2016). The central government, through its drive to internationalize Japan (*kokusaika*), has encouraged local governments to engage internationally since the 1980s through a mix of policies, programs, and funding. This means that there is some cooperation between some central government ministries and local governments on international issues, but also some attempt to regulate from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (O'Toole, 2001; Jain, 2006). While the details of twinning agreements and activities in Japan are left to local authorities and networks, there is a degree of support through the Council for Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR), a national government-affiliated foundation established in 1988 to support international activities of local governments. CLAIR has 67 offices in Japan and seven overseas offices (in Beijing, London, New York, Paris, Seoul, Singapore, and Sydney). CLAIR produces occasional survey reports on twinning, helps pair potential twins or those looking for twinning opportunities, and supports international local government meetings. It also maintains a list of all of Japan's municipal and prefecture twinning agreements, for which there are 1,788 (CLAIR, 2022).

South Korean local governments have increasingly gained autonomy over three decades of decentralization, despite the powerful executive (Lee and Suh, 2022). Under the 2016 Public Diplomacy Act, which allows local governments to request limited reimbursements (Choi, 2019) and some logistical assistance and promotion from Seoul (Jin 2020), local governments are seen as conduits of public diplomacy and 'internationalization.' In November 2020, however, the National Assembly of Korea adopted a comprehensive reform of the Local Autonomy Act that, for the first time, created a legal foundation for the international activities of local governments, which will come into effect in 2023 (Kim, 2021). This central government support of local governments means that South Korean twinning tends to be locally driven and backed by a high degree of proactiveness by local authorities, which have goals toward building international competencies and capacity. The Governors Association of Korea, an association made up of 17 municipal and provincial governments formed in 1999, works to strengthen cooperation between municipalities and provinces, collaborate with the central government, perform related policy research, and support local governments' international affairs, including twinning arrangements (GAOK, 2020). According to GAOK (2001), South Korea has 1,749 twinning agreements.

Australian states and cities also heavily use twinning relationships to engage globally. Sister Cities Australia (SCA), an association comprised of cities, towns and states with

twinning agreements formed in 1982, acts as both a promoter and tracker of twinning agreements. According to SCA (2021), a third of Australia's 638 agreements are with counterparts in China and Japan. Australia, like Canada, is a federal state and the national government shares powers with the states. Also like in Canada, there have been longstanding debates on the role Australian states should or can play in international relations. Outside of signing treaties with foreign governments states have had a high degree of flexibility to act globally. All states maintain international strategies focusing on trade and investment, tourism, and migration. Twinning agreements have been a part of these engagement efforts, especially in the case of China and Japan (Fan et al., 2019; Mascitelli and Chung, 2008; O'Toole, 2001). However, the Australian government's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act (2020) places subnational international relations and agreements under the purview of the foreign minister. For example, the foreign minister can nullify an agreement between a non-central government or publicly funded institution and a foreign government entity if they deem it counter to national foreign policy, whether it is explicitly stated or not. This includes twinning agreements old and new.

A notable exception to the prolific use of twinning is India, a federal union that historically and constitutionally limited the exercise of foreign relations to the federal government and exercised considerable, centralized power over the constituent states. However, over the past three decades, there has been an emerging upward trend of state and municipal involvement in foreign affairs outside the supposed limits of the constitution (Sridharan, 2007). The arrival of the Modi administration in 2014 saw official support from the federal government for these activities, particularly at the state level. In terms of cities, though Indian municipalities have signed sister city agreements in the past, numbering in the double-digits, a figure dwarfed by smaller countries with far fewer populous cities (Zelinsky 1991: 11). An uptick of new municipal twinning agreements in more recent years has often heavily relied on the initiative of state and federal actors, with few institutional frameworks in place for their support and promotion (Jain and Maini, 2017).

These examples demonstrate, on one hand, the institutionalization and government support for twinning that exists in diverse forms across the Indo-Pacific. On the other hand, regardless of the level of centralization that exists in some Indo-Pacific countries, there remains space for local governments and civil society to engage abroad on their own terms. An equally significant insight from this survey is the numerical scale and geographical reach of the twinning. Particularly, China, Japan, and Korea's thousands of twinning agreements do not stop at advanced or industrialized economies. Rather, they twin with a wide variety of counterparts both within the region and around the developing world.

### **Canadian twinning in the Indo-Pacific: drivers of policy, chronology, and geography**

To give an overview of the drivers, chronology and geography of Canadian twinning in the Indo-Pacific, we assembled the first comprehensive dataset of these relationships of its kind.<sup>4</sup> As far as the authors are aware, our efforts to systematically compile, validate, and discuss Canada-Indo-Pacific twinning in academic literature is a first. Our dataset on Canada-Indo-Pacific twinning is the most accurate and comprehensive dataset available to date. As such, it is necessary to provide some descriptive elements about our data to further inform our arguments and provide an evidence-based foundation for our brief discussion on future trajectories in the next section, and data for future studies.



While compiling our dataset we limited ourselves to official twinning agreements according to a definition roughly corresponding with the parameters proposed by Cremer et al. (2001) listed above.<sup>5</sup> We considered agreements signed between one Canadian NCG and one Indo-Pacific NCG up until the end of 2020.<sup>6</sup> We began by documenting twinning relationships from various online sources, including lists available from multiple central and non-central government websites and databases as well as Wikidata.<sup>7</sup> In previous years, we had made attempts to contact most provinces and municipalities on our list to confirm information, with mixed results. As the consulted websites, particularly Canadian ones, can be outdated or unreliable, we instead verified each relationship through at least one citation to a local government website or reputable news source, for both ends of the twinning relationship (i.e., one Canadian source and one Indo-Pacific source). While verifying data, we encountered some unrecorded twinning relationships and added them to our dataset with the appropriate citations.

In addition to the two entities on either end of each relationship, we collected four main fields in our dataset: country, province, city or district, start year (and date, if available), and end year (if applicable). This allowed us to examine the geographical distribution of and create a timeline of Canadian twinning in the Indo-Pacific. As administrative divisions (and the terminology for them) vary significantly between countries, we took as a general principle that the term “provinces” correspond to the first-level administrative divisions just under the national level that are popularly elected and/or have some form of administrative autonomy or delegated authority.<sup>8</sup> At the end of this process, we have documented 252 verified twinning relationships from 1960-2020 between Canada and the Indo-Pacific. Three of these have been officially terminated, leaving 249 nominally active twinning relationships.<sup>9</sup> We were able to ascertain and verify start years for 240 of these pairs, leaving 12 unaccounted for.

### ***Drivers of policy***

Municipal twinning policy in Canada may come from city councils, oftentimes from individual councillors and mayors themselves. Initiatives from individual municipal politicians have been a significant factor behind much of Canada’s twinning in the Indo-Pacific. For example, a 2017 agreement between Thunder Bay and the Chinese city of Jiaozuo, known as the birthplace of taichi, was pioneered by city councillor Peng Youlian, who is also a taichi instructor in Thunder Bay (Kaufman, 2020). Individual pioneering of official ties can also raise controversy. For example, when Brampton mayor Linda Jeffrey apparently bypassed the city council and announced in 2017 that she would sign a sister city agreement with Vavuniya, Sri Lanka, several councillors criticized her move, and she back peddled (Criscione, 2017). But twinning agreements have also been pushed from below by communities, grassroots organizations, schools, and the business community. A particularly recent example of this was a proposed relationship between Vancouver and Kaohsiung, Taiwan under a recently launched Friendship City Program by the City of Vancouver in 2021 (Carrigg, 2021). A local Asian-Canadian community organization, led by Taiwanese-Canadian Charlie Wu, took up the mantle of seeing through the proposal, which has garnered international controversy due to Taiwan’s contested status (Wu, 2021).

However, twinning has also been greatly affected by the agendas and interests of other levels of government. The federal government, through the foreign ministry and its

embassies in Indo-Pacific countries, has sometimes played a role in facilitating and introducing potential city twinning partners. For example, Burnaby's 1965 sister city agreement with Kushiro, Japan was originally proposed by the Canadian ambassador to Japan (Harrison, 2015). Embassies and departments under the foreign ministry have inconsistently maintained (often incomplete) country-specific lists of twinning agreements for specific countries, such as China and Japan. An attempt by the then-Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Development (now Global Affairs Canada) in 2011 to fund an online registry of Canadian twinning agreements abroad through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities—similar to the online databases maintained by Japanese and Korean local government organizations—would have been a significant step forward in the federal government's role in facilitating twinning. It ultimately did not come to pass (Harrison, 2018).

The interests and motivations of provincial governments have also been key to developing twinning relationships. Successive governments of Quebec, including both Parti Québécois and Liberal premiers, pursued strategies that asserted jurisdiction over international relations, independent of the federal government (McHugh, 2015). These activities became particularly pronounced in the 1990s, under which most of Quebec's twinning agreements with Indo-Pacific countries were also signed. Alberta's twinning with Gangwon (1974), Hokkaido (1980), Heilongjiang (1981) under the Peter Lougheed government was motivated by similar desires to stake out an economic policy independent of the federal government with a focus on expanding beef, agriculture and oil markets (Evans, 2012). Twinning policy has also been shaped and promoted by specific provincial strategies for engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, like those of B.C. developed from 2007-2015 and Nova Scotia in 2016 (Labrecque and Harrison, 2018). For example, under the Christy Clark government's Asia Pacific Initiative, the B.C. government invested C\$1 million to provide upwards of C\$50,000 grants to municipalities beginning in 2008, aiming to encourage new twinning agreements or strengthen existing ones with counterparts primarily in China, Japan, Korea, and India (Office of the Premier, 2008).

The reasons for pursuing twinning agreements have varied and changed over the years and across different contexts. As mentioned earlier, the first Canadian twinning agreements were born out of a desire to foster people-to-people ties in the spirit of President Eisenhower's original appeal. An exemplary case is the Burnaby-Kushiro agreement, initially proposed for their similar latitude and population numbers and has focused mainly on cultural exchanges since its signing (Harrison, 2015). The Alberta-Hokkaido twinning was conceived due to similar geographical affinities and the potential to develop energy and agricultural ties and has involved a significant educational component, with numerous student and research exchanges between the two provinces and the use of the sister province agreement in the provincial curriculum (Alberta, 1995). A relationship between Oxford County, Ontario and Tamsui, Taiwan, on the other hand, was signed in 2000 in recognition of the 140-year relationship established by Oxford County resident Reverend George Leslie MacKay, who founded a Presbyterian mission and the first Western-style hospital in Taiwan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Oxford County, 2020).

This original emphasis on 'people-to-people' ties persists, as the recent examples of Thunder Bay-Jiaozuo and the proposed Vancouver-Kaohsiung relationships demonstrate. However, there has been a clear trend of twinning promoters moving from a desire for broad people-to-people ties to a narrower emphasis on economic development and investment.

For example, the 1985 twinning agreement signed between Montreal and Shanghai, China, was primarily motivated by a desire to seek competitiveness in the global economy. Despite often being cited as a success story by government officials, the relationship has also been marked by a low level of public participation. This has been mainly due to the agreement and related activities being driven by the municipal governments in each city, and neither side has seen bottom-up citizenship engagement as a critical component (Hsu, 2003). Recent provincial initiatives to encourage twinning such as the aforementioned B.C. and Nova Scotia strategies, have also emphasized economic benefits to the neglect of other activities, such as cultural or educational exchanges (Neilson-Welch et al., 2007; Nova Scotia, 2016). The reasons for this shift may vary depending on jurisdiction and the time period. However, they reflect changes in how people and governments connect and growing pressure to focus on economic development and trade (budgetary restraints and focus on supporting trade and investment), or political recognition (especially for provinces and cities within provinces in tension with the federal government).

Amidst this change in motivation for twinning, many municipalities in Canada began to reconsider their existing twinning relationships, notably since the early 2010s. Inactive relationships are common, with reasons cited ranging from community disinterest and uncertainty over the relationship's goals, to budgetary restraints (Pratt-Campbell, 2019; Kaufman, 2020). A lack of clarity on the relationship between local governments and the federal ministry of foreign affairs has led some to advocate a suspension of twinning with currently controversial partners, such as those in China (Sandstrom, 2021). Some cities have terminated individual agreements or even entire programs altogether. For example, Brampton, Ontario, terminated its sister-city program in 2018 after the city's economic development director argued that the cost outweighed the benefits (Frisque, 2018). Instead, he proposed a "global partnership program" devoted specifically to advancing economic development in key industrial sectors, while not mentioning cultural or educational ties at all (Darling, 2018). Similar debates among city bureaucrats and elected officials have also prompted a proposal to scrap Thunder Bay's sister city program. Meanwhile, the city of Coquitlam decided to preserve agreements with Paju, South Korea and Foshan, China, precisely because of significant student exchanges, which the city's economic development manager credited for bringing considerable economic spillover benefits for the community and developing long-lasting personal relationships between the cities (Mckenna, 2017).

### **Geography**

Local governments in all ten provinces and one territory—Yukon—currently have twinning relationships with counterparts in the Indo-Pacific. British Columbia (97 pairs) and Ontario (69 pairs) lead the other provinces by a significant amount, with Alberta (38 pairs) and Quebec (18 pairs) being the third and fourth-most active provinces in Indo-Pacific twinning. On the other end of the spectrum, the Atlantic provinces and Yukon have the fewest twinning relationships. Municipalities in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut have yet to sign any twinning relationships in the Indo-Pacific (*see* Appendix, Figure 1).

Alberta boasts the most provincial twinning agreements (four) with Indo-Pacific counterparts and has the earliest agreements, with Gangwon in South Korea (signed in 1974) and Hokkaido in Japan (1980). The province with the second most provincial twinning agreements, Quebec, has on the other hand, signed all its Indo-Pacific agreements since 2008,

with the latest one with Kyoto Prefecture in Japan signed in 2016. Eight provinces and territories (Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, and Yukon) only have twinning agreements with Chinese counterparts. Of note here is Nova Scotia, whose twinning agreements with the Chinese provinces of Shandong (2016), Guangdong (2018), and Fujian (2020) in the last five years have been a part of a recent push to increase trade ties with China (Nova Scotia 2016, pp. 30-31; Asia Watch, 2019) (*see Appendix, Table 2*).

On the municipal level, twinning is concentrated in major population and economic centers, such as Metro Vancouver, Greater Victoria, the Greater Toronto Area, and Greater Montreal. However, in heavily twinned provinces, rural towns have also extensively participated in twinning. For example, in British Columbia—the Canadian province with the most municipal twinning relationships in the Indo-Pacific—some of the longest-standing relationships are in the province’s interior and towns on Vancouver Island away from the provincial capital. In Ontario, the province with the second-most municipal twinning relationships, in addition to twinning relationships throughout southern Ontario beyond the Greater Toronto Area, there also exist some twinning relationships in the north of the province, such as Thunder Bay, Timmins, and Kenora (*see Appendix, Figure 2 and Figure 3*).

There are ten countries in the Indo-Pacific with municipal or provincial twinning partners in Canada, yet Canada’s engagement is dramatically skewed toward Northeast Asia. Just under half—or 121—of Canada’s twinning agreements in the Indo-Pacific are with jurisdictions in the People’s Republic of China. Following close behind is Japan, which accounts for 84 of Canada’s twinning agreements. The remaining eight countries have dramatically fewer twinning agreements with Canadian municipalities and provinces. Finally, many economies in the Indo-Pacific currently do not have any twinning relationships with Canada. This list includes eight out of the 10 ASEAN member states (including G20 member Indonesia and regional powers such as Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia), all South Asian countries except for India and Sri Lanka, and all countries in Oceania except Australia and New Zealand (*see Appendix, Figure 4*).

Whereas Chinese and Japanese jurisdictions combined account for most Canadian twinning partners in the Indo-Pacific, the picture looks different when disaggregating provincial and municipal twinning relationships. Fourteen of the 18 Canadian provincial twinning agreements (almost 80%) in the Indo-Pacific are with Chinese provinces; Japan and South Korea have two each. Meanwhile, the Philippines, India, Australia, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka are only represented in municipal twinning relationships, at less than four percent each.

In Indo-Pacific countries, many municipalities and provinces that twin with Canadian counterparts are from the most populous and economically vibrant regions of their countries and are also often major origin locations for Canadians whose ancestral origins are located within the Indo-Pacific region. For example, Chinese coastal provinces such as Guangdong, Jiangsu, and Shandong—in addition to the major cities of Beijing and Shanghai—make up most Canadian twinning partners in that country. The interior province of Sichuan, which is a major population and economic center, is a notable exception. In South Korea, Canadian municipalities and provinces have overwhelmingly chosen to twin with districts in Seoul and the surrounding provinces of Gyeonggi and Gangwon, which are the population and economic hinterlands of the country’s capital and main economic and cultural center. And in India and Philippines, most cities with twinning agreements with Canadian counterparts are

from populous regions where many immigrant and diasporic Canadians trace their ancestry, such as northwestern India (Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh) and the island of Luzon (Metro Manila and Baguio) in the Philippines.

However, some were also formed due to geographical, cultural, educational, and economic affinities. In Japan, much of Canada's twinning is between governments in Alberta and British Columbia with counterparts in the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, owing to a similar climate, resource-based economy, and identity as a northern locale (Alberta, 1995). As well, both municipal and provincial-level twinning between Alberta and the northern Chinese province of Heilongjiang, as well as Saskatchewan and the northern Chinese province of Jilin, are likely for similar reasons (Evans, 2012).

### **Chronology**

Canadian municipalities and provinces have been signing twinning agreements with counterparts in the Indo-Pacific since the 1960s. Canada's first municipal twin with Japan was in 1963 (Moriguchi – New Westminster, BC) and the first with China was in 1980 (Suzhou-Victoria, BC). Canada's twinning agreements in the Indo-Pacific began accelerating in pace starting in the 1980s, with a peak period from the late 1990s to the early 2010s that saw roughly six new agreements each year on average (*see* Appendix, Figure 5). Though currently represented in a plurality of the Canadian twinning relationships in the Indo-Pacific, China only became Canada's biggest twinning partner in 2010, when cumulative twinning agreements with Chinese counterparts surpassed those with Japanese counterparts (*see* Appendix, Figure 6). This was mainly driven by four waves of twinning, which we can correlate to either the economic booms of certain countries (e.g., Japan and China) or the opening up and democratizations of certain countries (e.g., China and South Korea).

First, Canada-Japan twinning started the earliest in the 1960s and rose to a peak in the 1980s and 1990s before declining in the mid-2000s. This roughly corresponds to the rise and fall of the Japanese post-war economic miracle, bookended by the Japanese government's self-pronounced end of the 'post-war recovery period' in 1956 and by the Asian Financial Crisis in the late 1990s. Second, Canada-China twinning began shortly after China's 'opening up' in the late 1970s (several years after official diplomatic relations were established in 1970) but continued to increase in pace with a peak period from the late 1990s to late 2010s. Third, though Canada-South Korea twinning began in 1974 with Alberta and Gangwon Province's pairing, most twinning agreements between the two countries occurred following South Korea's democratization and the acceleration of economic growth from the 1990s to the end of the 2000s. Finally, most Canadian twinning with Indian and Philippine counterparts has occurred in the last 25 years.

Looking at individual Canadian provinces, we can see differences in the time periods when various provinces saw an acceleration or decline in twinning (*see* Appendix, Figure 7). Alberta saw a steady development of new twinning agreements beginning in the 1970s and becoming a consistent practice in the 1980s and 1990s. The majority of British Columbia's and Ontario's gains, on the other hand, came in the late 1990s and during the new millennium. However, new twinning has since tapered off. These three provinces have not signed any new municipal or provincial twinning relationships in the region since 2017. Finally, except for Saskatchewan and Manitoba (both of which forged new twinning

relationships in the 1970s through the 1990s), twinning in other Canadian provinces and territories generally began in earnest in the 1990s, with a particular increase for Quebec from 1993 to 1999 and for Nova Scotia in the latter half of the 2010s.

### **Summary**

The description of the drivers, chronology and geography of Canadian twinning in the Indo-Pacific we provided above shows that the development of twinning has been shaped not only by structural and global forces, as much of the existing literature alludes to, but also by concrete choices made by various actors. These actors do not just include federal, provincial, and municipal governments, but also involve individual officials and civil society members. For example, our survey of the factors that led to the signing (and, later, dissolving) of Canada–Indo-Pacific twinning agreements shows the impact of global trends such as the sister city movement and the rise of cities as an important node for economic globalization. The rise of Asia as an important region for trade and investment in the late twentieth century also influenced twinning decisions. But equally important were the political imperatives of non-central governments (such as those of the provinces of Alberta and Quebec), the introductions and initial connections made by officials and civil society members between future twinning partners, and the advocacy of individual members of city councils and consulates. Our discussion of the geography and chronology of Canada–Indo-Pacific twinning reflects these diverse factors and influences, resulting in the unequal distribution of twinning agreements over time and space in Canada.

This echoes Victor Ramraj’s insights in this special edition about the significance and complexity of actors beyond central governments in driving policies of engagement in the Indian Ocean region, which parallels our observations of international relationships at the local level in another study (Harrison and Huang, 2022). Foreign policy strategies ought to reflect these realities, rather than remain focused on central governments and foreign ministries. Despite the importance of the agency of NCGs in shaping Canada’s engagement with the Indo-Pacific at the local level, coordination and collaboration on twinning among different levels of government and civil society in Canada is an aberration rather than a norm. This underlines the importance of incorporating NCGs as equal partners in developing strategies to improve, strengthen, and better use international relationships.

### **Strategies: three trajectories for Canadian twinning in the Indo-Pacific**

There is significant potential for Canada to further benefit from current and future twinning relationships in the Indo-Pacific. As we have noted above, twinning agreements have in many cases created enduring and lasting relationships between localities in Canada and Indo-Pacific countries. Though many relationships are now inactive or dormant, many Canadian municipalities and provinces—including those who have never twinned with an Indo-Pacific counterpart before—have signed new twinning agreements, revitalized old ones, or even revamped their approaches to twinning. As the Canadian federal government focuses its attention on parts of the Indo-Pacific with significant growth potential and strategic importance—such as South and Southeast Asia—twinning could be an effective tool for developing sustainable and substantive relationships with communities in these regions.

But three principal challenges stand in the way of realizing this potential. First, compared to some Indo-Pacific countries that have an institutionalized approach for documenting and

promoting twinning, Canada lacks systems and initiatives that produce up-to-date information and analysis on Canadian twinning. As a result, policy recommendations and proposals on twinning are often based on assumptions, beliefs, political winds and trends, and geopolitical tensions, leaving Canadian policymakers ill-prepared to consider the benefits and drawbacks of different aspects of a potential twinning relationship. Second, Canadian governments require better understanding of the different twinning approaches in other countries, such as those in the Indo-Pacific, in order to maximize our engagement with them. Third, different levels of Canadian government (municipal, provincial, federal) and civil society (not to mention counterparts abroad) do not have institutionalized mechanisms to engage each other and collaborate on international relations. Depending on how Canadian governments respond to the three challenges, we suggest that there are three main possible futures of Canada-Indo-Pacific twinning.

In the first potential future, we see a continuation of the longstanding status quo in Canada, what we call 'mutual neglect.' As we have demonstrated, the federal government, NCGs and civil society largely do not interact with each other on twinning matters. In this trajectory, Canada's evolving Indo-Pacific Strategy would continue the federal government's pattern of neglecting non-central governments, civil society initiatives, and their activities abroad, including twinning. NCGs would continue to move forward on agreements according to their own goals, as they have today. But these activities could be unaligned with or even contradict federal goals or strategies, setting the stage for conflict between levels of government in the future. Federal or provincial governments would throw their support behind twinning-related initiatives, only to withdraw support or attention after a change in government or global trends. In this future, it is difficult for both the federal government and NCGs to create and implement long-term plans or strategies. Resources to support twinning would remain tentative, disjointed, and strained.

In this scenario, Canadian federal and non-central governments continue to be out-strategized by Indo-Pacific countries such as China, South Korea, and Japan that have twinning strategies and institutionalized frameworks. Canada may fail to expand its local engagement with important regions such as South and Southeast Asia. Canadian governments could misinterpret the interests of those partners, especially in the Global South, who have traditionally viewed twinning as a means for facilitating aid and development projects. The frustration and lack of results engendered by this approach would fuel narratives labelling twinning as an outdated and wasteful means of diplomacy, leaving initiatives in support of twinning in a defensive position. Maintaining the status quo may be the path of least resistance and effort, but it comes at great cost.

In the second potential future, which we call "constant conflict," the federal government would actively intervene and aim to control the international activities of NCGs, heavily restricting their existing autonomy. This would follow the example of the Australian federal government, which began taking more control of twinning agreements through its Foreign Policy (State and Territory Arrangements) Act. The legislation allows the foreign minister to potentially nullify existing and future twinning agreements, placing a degree of uncertainty on the practice. The clearer devolution of powers in Canada would prevent the Canadian government from cloning the Australian government's approach. That being said, a federal government policy that aims to subsume and control NCG relations could have a stymying effect on the drivers, actors and outcomes of twinning. It could also further increase the self-

ensorship and skepticism that would dampen not only twinning, but also broader NCG international engagement. This future would not improve the situation and would have a chilling effect on NCG diplomacy.

In a third scenario, the Canadian federal government would include NCG relations, particularly twinning, in its Indo-Pacific Strategy, treating NCGs such as provincial and municipal governments as equal partners. In this scenario, which we dub 'consistent collaboration,' Canada's international engagement in the Indo-Pacific would adopt a whole-of-government approach but with a twist; that is, it would involve not only collaboration among federal ministries and agencies, but also among various levels of government and civil society in Canada. Such an approach would also seek to create institutions that would be responsible for maintaining up-to-date, accurate information on twinning agreements and activities, and would encourage research on twinning and other forms of NCG diplomacy that could inform future policymaking and implementation.

This future echoes Max Bouchet's (2022) call for national and local governments to work more closely together to both extend national diplomacy and have it better reflect local expertise. He argued for the creation of a new "office of subnational diplomacy within the U.S. Department of State" as proposed by the 'City and State Diplomacy Act' introduced to U.S. Congress in 2021 (Congress.gov, 2021). While the act has yet to become law, the Biden administration did create the first post of Special Representative for Subnational Diplomacy within the Department of State in October 2022. Doing something similar in Canada would need to consider Canada's unique federalism (Simmons & Graefe, 2013) and existing institutions and organizations, rather than directly copying the U.S. model.

Some of the potential architecture for Canadian federal-provincial-municipal collaboration on twinning already exists. At the level of federal-provincial collaboration, Team Canada Trade Missions in the 1990s and early 2000s saw federal and provincial governments collaborate on trade promotion with a significant focus on markets in Asia. Through the Council of the Federation, provincial and territorial premiers have continued to collaborate on shared challenges and launch joint trade missions to Asia since 2003. At the level of federal-municipal collaboration, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Development considered funding a national twinning database, website, and research initiative in 2011 in partnership with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) (Harrison, 2018). Though the effort fell through, possibilities remain for harnessing the FCM's membership of more than 2,000 Canadian municipalities (about ninety percent of all municipalities in Canada) as a platform for federal-municipal collaboration on twinning.

Global Affairs Canada also has a division with staff that keep files on municipal collaboration. Provinces and territory premiers have been working together and discussing joint challenges through the Council of the Federation since 2003. There are also numerous twinned municipalities associations, such as the Alberta-Japan Twinned Municipalities Association (AJTMA), which could also serve as forums for intergovernmental collaboration. Regardless of whether these examples were wholly successful in achieving their stated aims, they represent existing institutional infrastructure required for deepening collaboration among various levels of government.

An approach of 'consistent collaboration' on twinning would not only meet local needs and interests; it would also contribute to Canada's overall soft power diplomacy and presence in the Indo-Pacific. Taking a more institutionalized approach toward twinning would also allow Canadian governments to fully realize the potential of twinning



relationships and the broader set of NCG diplomatic activities which it unlocks. Including NCGs and twinning in the Indo-Pacific Strategy will be a step towards affirming the international engagement of NCGs as a vital component of Canada's foreign policy.

### **Conclusion**

Twinning is one of the most widespread forms of Canadian NCG international engagement, yet it is perhaps one of the least understood and studied. Rather than viewing twinning as an outdated concept, we view it as a viable modern strategy for enhancing Canada-Indo-Pacific relations. The presentation of Canada-Indo-Pacific twinning data in this article is a first in academic literature and was used to highlight how Canada's foreign policy and strategies could be further strengthened by including NCG diplomacy, rather than attempting to subsume, control, or counter it. Our data also highlights Canada's strong twinning connections with Northeast Asia upon which Canada could build to refocus engagement in that area, and the glaring omission of Canadian twinning in regions and countries of particular interest for increasing engagement in the region, such as India, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.

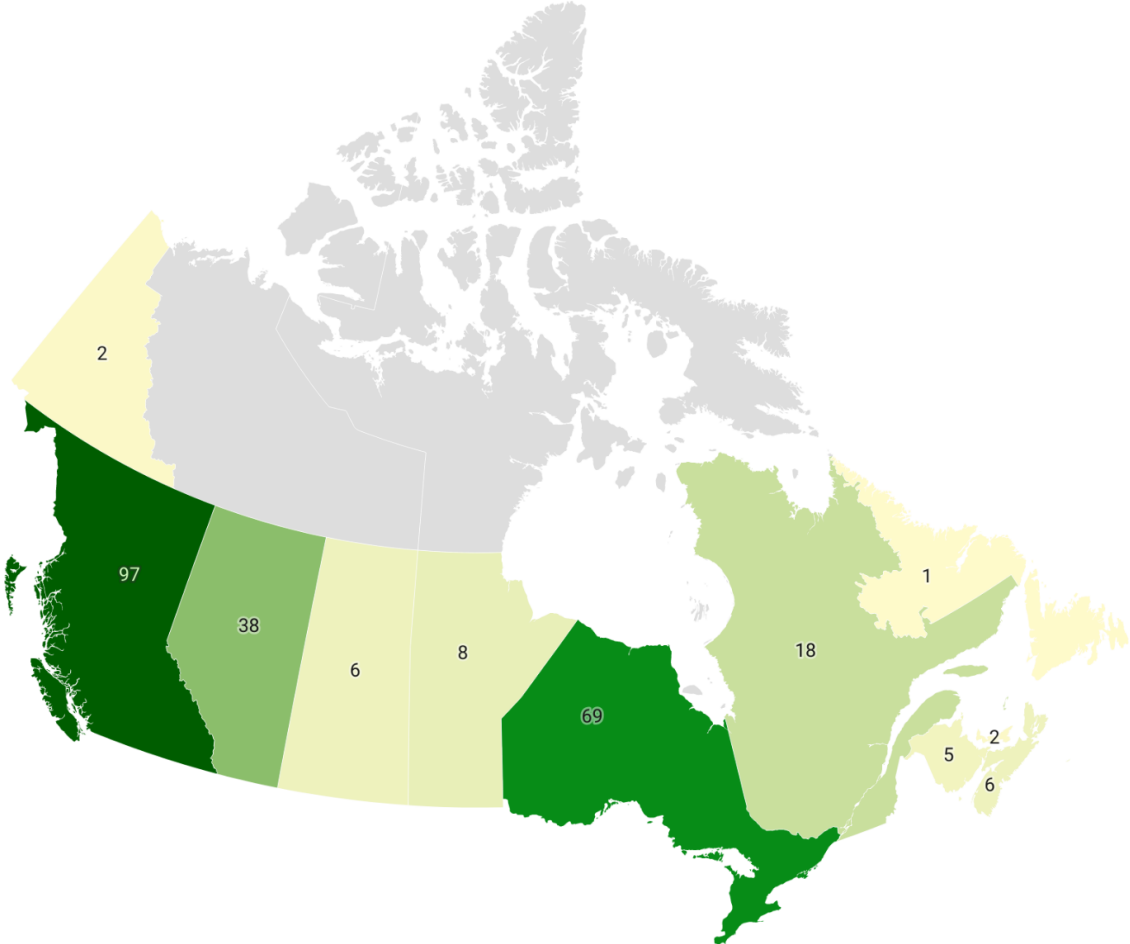
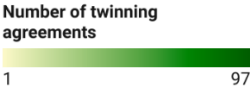
The COVID-19 pandemic and looming global challenges such as climate change have thrust municipalities and provinces into the international diplomatic spotlight, with many seeing NCGs as key actors in national foreign policy strategies and democratizing global governance (Leffel 2018; Pipa and Bouchet, 2020). To meet this moment, Canada should include NCGs and twinning in Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy. It should support Canadian researchers, policymakers, and citizens to engage in twinning and other forms of diplomacies beyond the central government. Doing so will allow Canada to forge a sustainable and productive presence in the Indo-Pacific for years to come.

## Appendices

**Table 1. Diplomatic Activities used by Non-Central Governments in Canada**

Activity	Description	Example	Prevalence in Canada
<b>Twinning</b>	Medium- to long-term agreements between two jurisdictions to foster people-to-people exchanges and collaboration across several policy areas	Montreal's sister-city agreement with Shanghai (Hsu, 2003)	~160 municipal governments and 10 provinces/territories have twinning agreements, with an estimated total of ~400 relationships worldwide.
<b>Memoranda of Understanding</b>	Agreements between two jurisdictions on specific collaborations, sometimes time-limited and tied to specific outcomes	2022 British Columbia-Gyeonggi Province (South Korea) Action Plan Agreement	Canadian jurisdictions (provinces, municipalities, universities, etc.) have likely signed thousands of MOUs with counterparts in the Indo-Pacific. For example, Manitoba maintains a page with all its international MOUs
<b>Missions and Delegations</b>	Official visits to a foreign jurisdiction by government, business or civil society representatives, often for the purpose of exploring possible agreements or promoting trade and investment	August 2022 Alberta Premier-led energy and auto-focused mission to South Korea; September 2022 Ontario Minister of Economic Development-led investment and manufacturing focused mission to South Korea	From 2010-2020, Canadian provinces led over 430 trade missions abroad, with 261 of these to Indo-Pacific economies (Harrison, Jin and Asgari 2020). Canadian municipalities have likely led hundreds of similar missions.
<b>Representative Offices</b>	Official premises of a local government in a foreign jurisdiction, usually to advance trade, educational or cultural interests	Saskatchewan's offices in New Delhi, Singapore, and Tokyo	Six Canadian provinces have established a total of 52 offices in the Indo-Pacific (Harrison and Jin, 2020).
<b>Local Government Summits</b>	Large meetings of local government representatives, usually mayors, on common policy areas and topics of concern	UCLG World Summit and Congress in Daejeon, Korea in October 2022	Canadian municipalities participate in various local government summits throughout the world, most of which are held regularly on an annual or biennial basis.
<b>Local Government Networks</b>	Multilateral associations of local governments, sometimes with permanent secretariats, that hosts regular meetings, acts as a unified voice for its members to advocate on policies, and provides resources for its members	C40 Cities Network	Some Canadian municipalities, such as Toronto and Montreal, are members of prominent local government networks. All Canadian municipalities who are members of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities are represented in the United Cities and Local Governments network.
<b>Development Assistance Projects</b>	Time-limited collaborations with local governments in the Global South to provide technical assistance for specific development outcomes, usually through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)	FCM's "Women in Local Leadership" projects in Cambodia and Sri Lanka	In the past decade, FCM has engaged in dozens of projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, involving experts from dozens of Canadian municipalities.

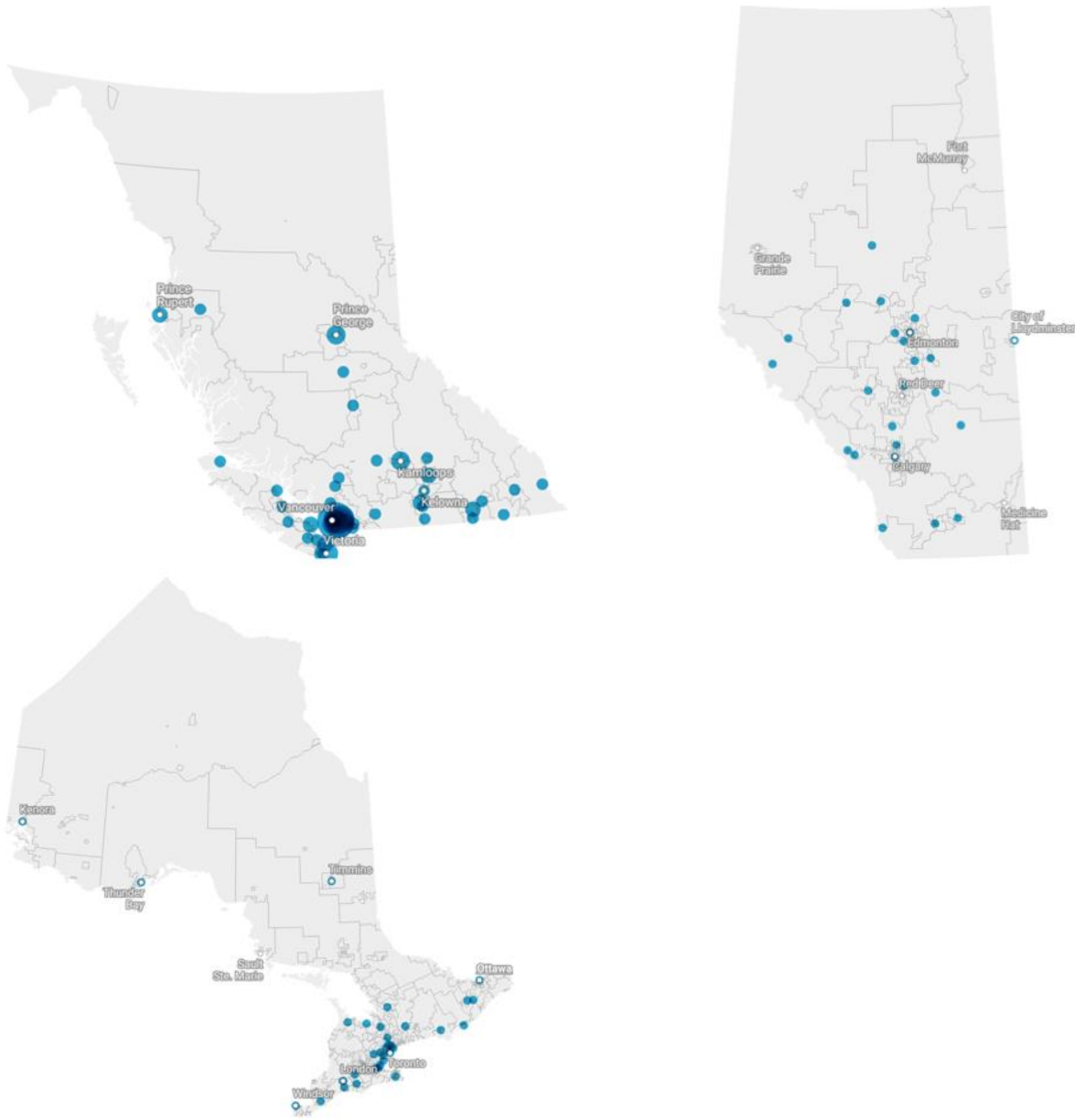
**Figure 1. Provincial Heat Map of Canadian Twinning Agreements with Indo-Pacific Counterparts<sup>10</sup>**



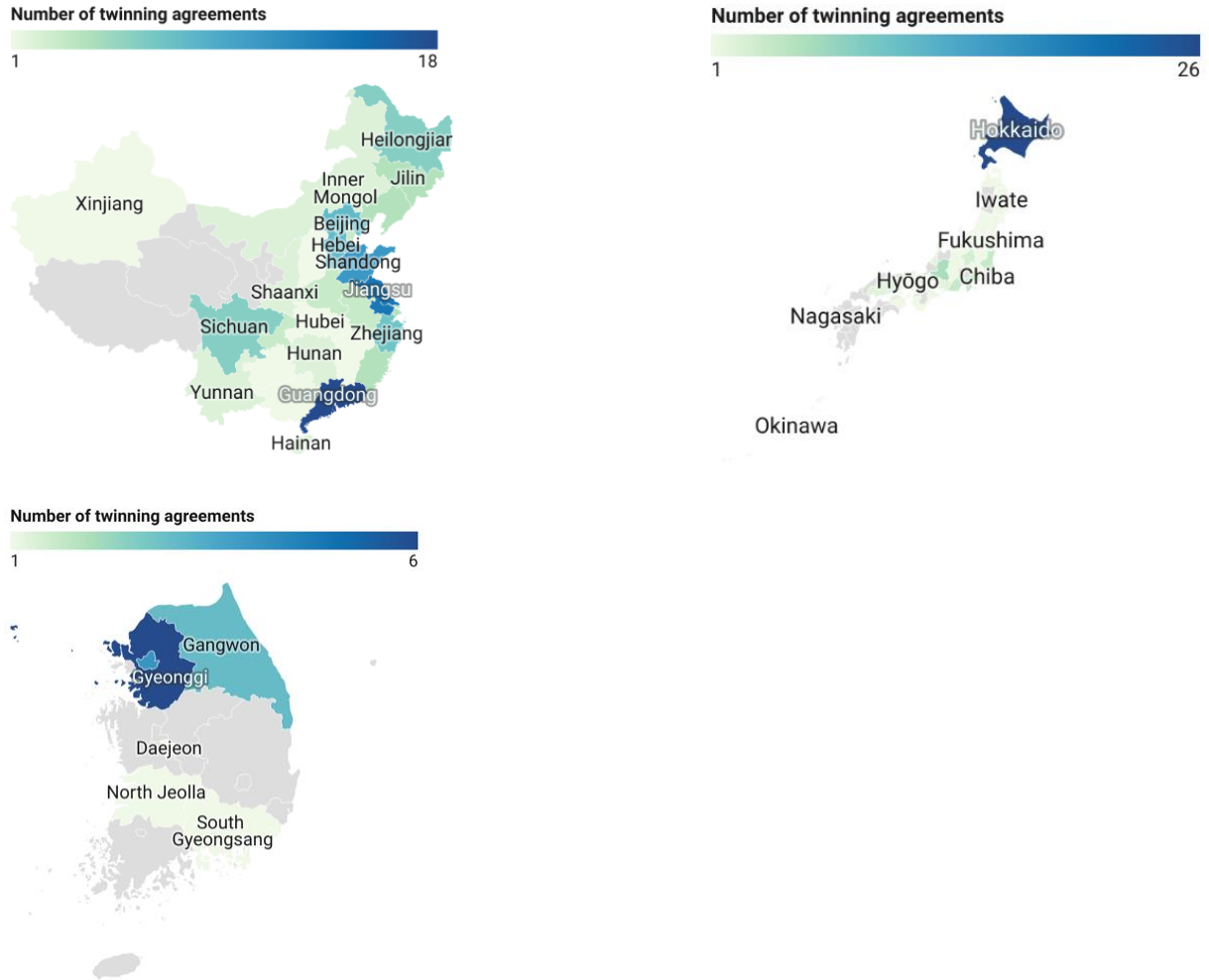
**Table 2. Provincial/Territorial Twinning Relationships with Indo-Pacific Counterparts**

Provinces and Territories (#)	Provincial/Territorial Twinning Relationships (Start Year)
Alberta (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gangwon Province, South Korea (1974)</li> <li>• Hokkaido Prefecture, Japan (1980)</li> <li>• Heilongjiang Province, China (1981)</li> <li>• Guangdong Province, China (2017)</li> </ul>
British Columbia (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guangdong Province, China (1995)</li> <li>• Gyeonggi Province, South Korea (2008)</li> </ul>
Manitoba (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Henan Province, China (1994)</li> <li>• Anhui Province, China (2001)</li> </ul>
New Brunswick (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hebei Province, China (1987)</li> </ul>
Newfoundland and Labrador (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zhejiang Province, China (2008)</li> </ul>
Nova Scotia (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shandong Province, China (2016)</li> <li>• Guangdong Province, China (2018)</li> <li>• Fujian Province, China (2020)</li> </ul>
Ontario (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jiangsu Province, China (1999)</li> </ul>
Prince Edward Island (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hainan Province, China (2001)</li> </ul>
Quebec (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shandong Province, China (2008)</li> <li>• Shanghai Municipality, China (2011)</li> <li>• Kyoto Prefecture, Japan (2016)</li> </ul>
Saskatchewan (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jilin Province, China (1985)</li> </ul>
Yukon (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaanxi Province, China (2012)</li> </ul>

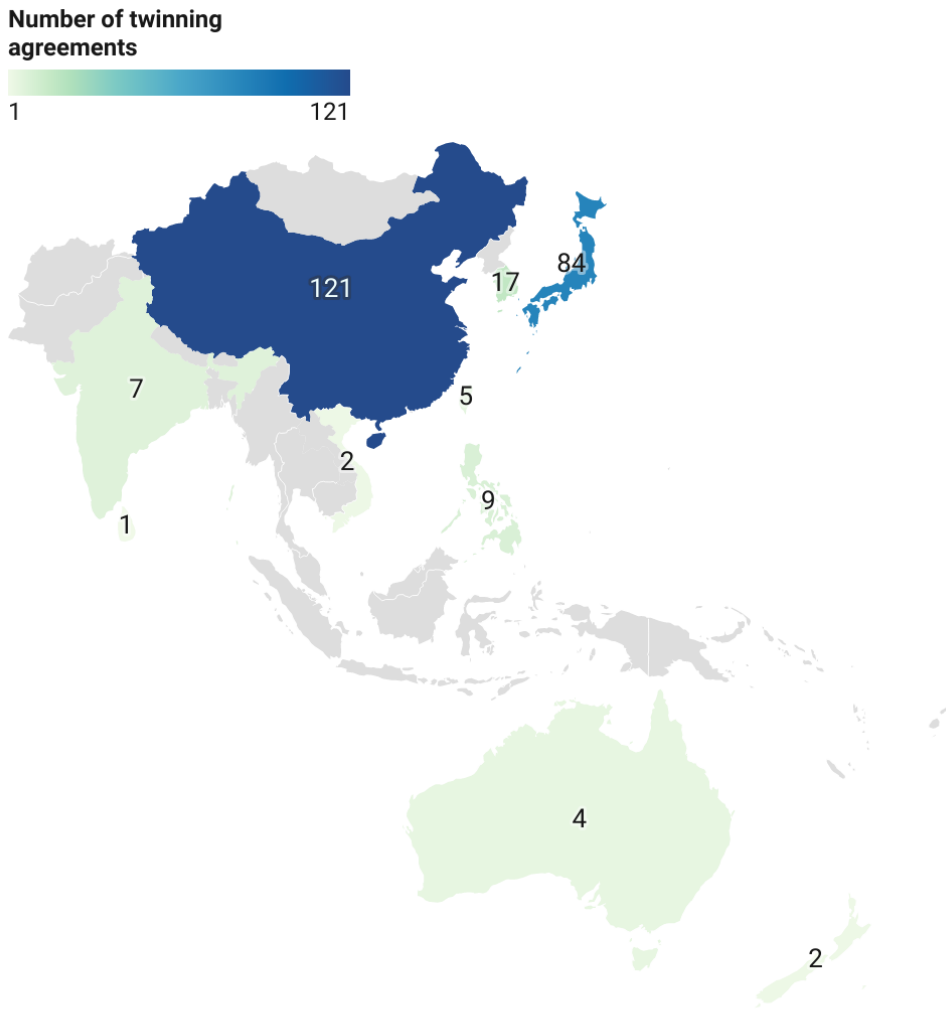
**Figure 2. Municipal Twinning Agreements with the Indo-Pacific in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario**



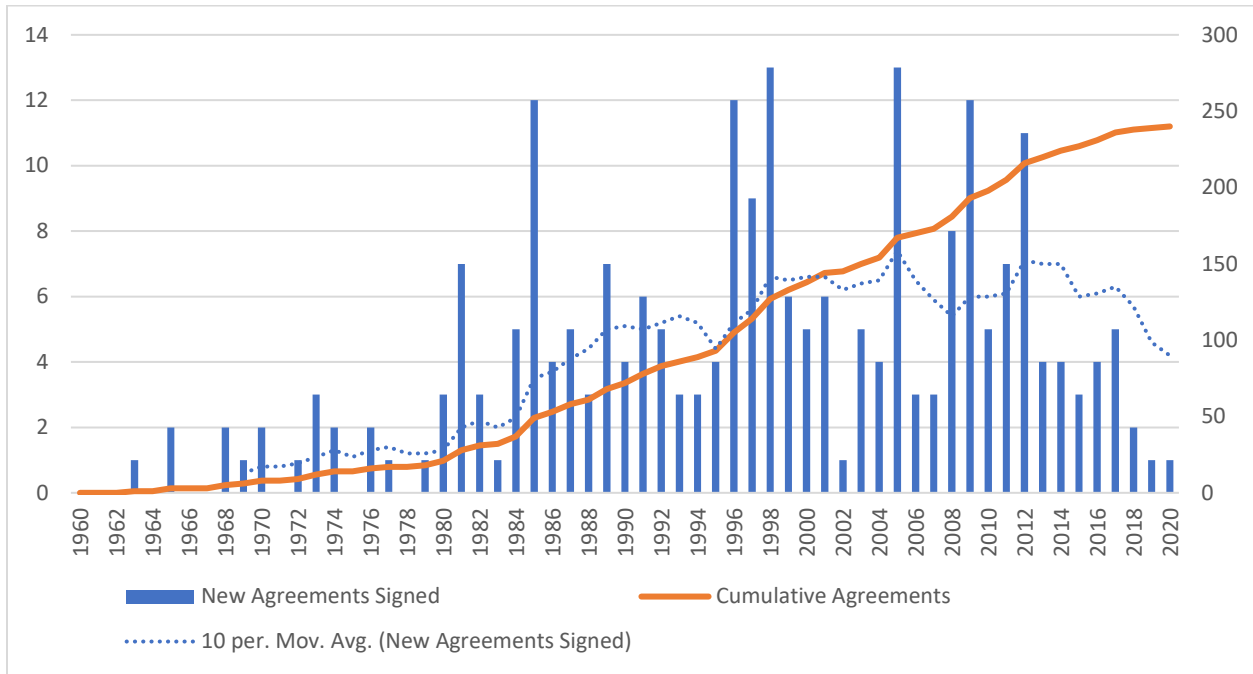
**Figure 3. Provincial/Prefectural Heat Maps of Canadian Twinning Agreements in China, Japan, and South Korea**



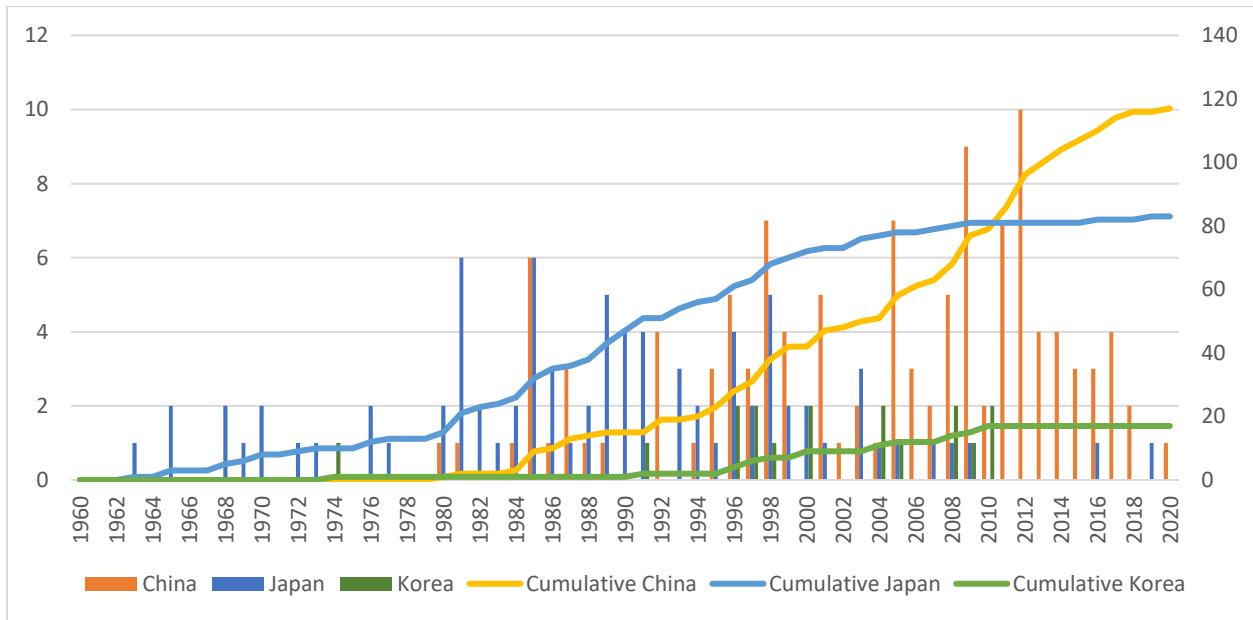
**Figure 4. Heat Map of Indo-Pacific Countries by Number of Twinning Agreements with Canadian Counterparts**



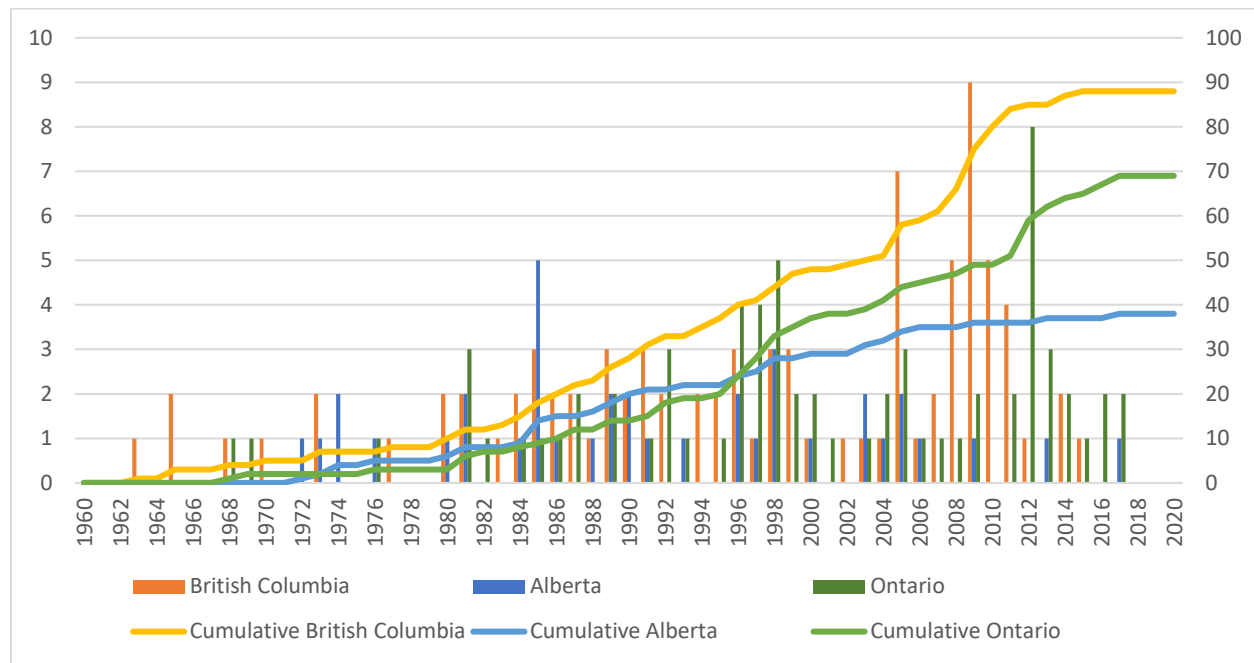
**Figure 5. Canada-Indo-Pacific Twinning Relationships by Start Year**



**Figure 6. Timeline of Canadian Twinning with China, Japan, and Korea**





**Figure 7. Timeline of BC, Alberta, Ontario Twinning in the Indo-Pacific**

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> We limit our discussion of twinning to the activities of non-central governments in this article, but it is worth noting that Indigenous nations, port authorities, and even protected parks and nature reserves have engaged in twinning in the past, both in Canada and elsewhere around the world.
- <sup>2</sup> Scholars and policymakers have used a litany of terms—including “subnational,” “constituent,” “regional” and “local”—to describe provincial, municipal, and other governments below the level of the sovereign state and their diplomatic activities. We adopt the term “non-central governments” as a general term throughout this article for two key reasons. First, by adopting a geographically neutral term, we can accurately refer to different levels and kinds of government outside of the central government. Second, by eschewing terms that imply a hierarchy between governments, we avoid implying that these governments’ actions are determined foremost by their status underneath a central government. However, where possible and appropriate, we use “provincial” or “municipal” as more precise terms for the two main categories of non-central governments that we focus on in this article.
- <sup>3</sup> For how Canada’s federalism compares internationally, see Labrecque and Harrison, 2018, 431; Derwawen et al., 2022; Shiavon, 2019; Michelmann and Soldatos, 1990.
- <sup>4</sup> The authors would like to acknowledge Xiaoting (Maya) Liu and Yiwei Jin for their contributions to previous iterations of this dataset.
- <sup>5</sup> Our definition includes any twinning agreement between two non-central governments (including those of provinces, municipalities, and municipal districts) that has been referred to as a “sister city agreement,” a “friendship city agreement,” or a “twinning agreement.” However, terminology for “sister cities/provinces,” “friendship cities/provinces” and “twinning agreements” varies considerably across contexts and languages. We excluded any agreements that were limited to a particular project, sector, or time period (such as development assistance or knowledge exchange MOUs), but we did not consider reported inactivity as disqualifying from inclusion in the dataset.

- <sup>6</sup> The term “Indo-Pacific” is most often used to represent a normative strategic concept rather than an objective geographic region (Medcalf, 2012; Reeves, 2020; Li, 2021). The same can be said of the term “Asia-Pacific” (Dirlik, 1992). For the purposes of this article, however, our definition of “Indo-Pacific” includes all separately administered countries with autonomy over foreign affairs in East, Southeast and South Asia, and Oceania. We consider Taiwan as a separate administrative entity from the People’s Republic of China for the purposes of analytical consistency.
- <sup>7</sup> These included the websites of Global Affairs Canada, China’s Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Japan’s Council for Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR, 2021), South Korea’s Governors Association of Korea (GAOK, 2019), various consulates, and many provincial and municipal governments. The CPAFC had previously published their dataset of Chinese twinning relationships on their website, but it was taken down in 2019 and remains inaccessible as of September 19, 2022. We thank Liu Xingjian and Hu Xiaohui for providing us their copy of the Canada-specific portion of that dataset.
- <sup>8</sup> To give some examples: for China, we used the 31 “provincial-level administrative divisions” (*shengji xingzhengqu* 省级行政区), excluding Taiwan and the two Special Administrative Regions; for Japan, we used the 47 “prefectures” (*todōfuken* 都道府県); for South Korea, we used the nine “provinces” (*do* 도) and eight “special cities” (*teukbyeolsi/gwangyeoksi* 특별시/광역시); for India, we used the 28 states and eight union territories; for Australia, we used the six federated states and ten federal territories; for New Zealand, we used the 16 regional councils; for the Philippines, we used the 81 provinces (*lalawigan*) and 38 independent cities, and not the unelected regional development councils; for Taiwan, we used the 13 “counties” (*xian* 縣), six “special municipalities” (*zhixiashi* 直轄市) and three “cities” (*shi* 市) currently governed by the Republic of China.
- <sup>9</sup> These three are Maple Ridge, British Columbia and Yingko (*Yingge* 鶯歌, now a district in New Taipei City), Taiwan; Pemberton, British Columbia and Miya (*Miyamura* 宮村, now amalgamated into Takayama City 高山市), Gifu Prefecture, Japan; and Thunder Bay, Ontario and Keelung (*Jilong* 基隆), Taiwan.
- <sup>10</sup> All maps were created using Datawrapper, using publicly available geographic boundary data and the authors’ dataset.

## About the Authors

*Scott Michael Harrison* is a Senior Program Manager at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada and a Research Fellow with the David Lam Centre, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC.

*Quinton Huang* is a graduate student in History at the University of British Columbia and a former Junior Research Scholar under the Engaging Asia pillar at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

## ORCID

Scott Michael Harrison: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8934-5459>

Quinton Huang: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4718-9341>

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