Indigeneity and Indigenous Peoples Around the World: Expanding the Intersections of Business and Society

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Abstract

Despite growing research interest in Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous issues, the intersection of business and society, particularly in the Global South contexts, remains underexplored. This special issue aimed to take a collective first step in addressing these gaps by placing Indigenous values and ways of knowing at the center of inquiry. Building on the papers in this special issue and our collective expertise, this editorial essay examines what Indigeneity means across global contexts and discusses its misrecognition and misuse. To support the development of a robust Indigenous scholarship in business and management, we discuss what business and management mean from an Indigenous perspective; identify future research opportunities; and provide guidance for writing, reviewing, and editing Indigenous research. We conclude with a reflection on our editorial experiences to emphasize the importance of Indigenous values of care, collaboration, and community building that are integral to building a robust Indigenous scholarship.

Keywords: Ethics; Global South; Indigeneity; Indigenous Peoples; Recognition; Scholarship; Sustainability

Introduction

There is increasing acknowledgement of the distinct position of Indigenous Peoples in today's world. The United Nations has declared 9th August as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples to promote and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, which is crucial for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Historically, however, Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous knowledges have been largely dismissed and silenced in

societies as well as business and management scholarship (Kamble & Kumar, 2025; Karlsson & Kikon, 2017; Peredo & McLean, 2013; Price et al., 2021; Walker et al., 2025; Xaxa, 2018). More broadly, scholars have documented patterns of systemic and institutionalised discrimination against Indigenous Peoples (Bastein et al., 2023; Colbourne et al., 2024; Turkina, 2026).

Although the body of business and management literature concerning Indigenous Peoples has grown over the last two decades (Bastein et al., 2023; Peredo, 2023; Salmon et al., 2022; Walker et al., 2025), the intersection of business and society remains under-explored in this literature. Further, business and management literature has paid limited attention to the Indigenous Peoples in the Global South[1], many of whom are not recognized as Indigenous Peoples (Doshi, 2026; Kamble & Kumar, 2025). We, therefore, launched this special issue to give further momentum to the growing body of Indigenous research and to expand the research to hitherto understudied contexts and Peoples.

Our call for papers for this special issue set out a series of questions that signalled the wide-ranging possibilities for research that recognizes the distinctiveness of Indigenous worlds and reimagines the role of business and society in advancing sustainable futures. Specifically, we asked: how organizations, governments, and communities can work toward the SDGs with Indigenous Peoples; how Indigeneity is understood, represented, and mobilized across varied colonial and cultural contexts; how Indigenous Peoples navigate and transform organizations, entrepreneurship, and leadership; how global disparities, intersecting identities, and regional specificities shape Indigenous experiences; and how appropriate, respectful, and innovative methods can deepen the quality of Indigenous scholarship.

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[1] The Global South refers to countries historically categorized as Third World, underdeveloped, or developing (Pinheiro, 2024), while recognizing that 'Souths' may exist within the geographic North and 'Norths' within the geographic South, reflecting uneven and relational global development (Malher, 2018).

In this essay, we first discuss the conceptual foundations of Indigeneity by reflecting on the meaning of Indigeneity, focusing on its global framings as well as the misrecognition and misuse of the term Indigenous. Next, we introduce the papers in this special issue. To build robust Indigenous scholarship to further advance the aims of this special issue, we discuss what an Indigenous perspective means for business and management; identify future research opportunities; and provide guidance on writing, reviewing, and editing Indigenous research. We conclude with reflections on our experience in editing this special issue to further underscore that Indigenous values of care, collaboration, and community building are integral to building robust Indigenous scholarship.

Indigeneity

Indigeneity reflects relational ontologies; worldviews in which relationships among humans, non-humans, ancestors, and the land are constitutive of identity. These worldviews emphasise stewardship, where land is not seen as a resource to be exploited but as a living entity to which communities have reciprocal responsibilities (Spiller et al., 2015). Indigeneity is also about deep, ancestral ties to specific territories, where cultural survival and meaning are embedded in the landscape. However, in urban and diasporic communities that may have weaker connections to place, Indigeneity is expressed through a deep connection to cosmo-genealogies. Additionally, ceremony and intergenerational wisdom form an abiding sense of expressing Indigeneity. Therefore, being Indigenous is inherently collective, oriented around community, cosmo-genealogical kinship, ceremony, and shared responsibilities (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006; Spiller & Nicholson, 2023).

Indigeneity is a lived, relational way of being rather than a fixed category or a purely individual identity. Recent estimates by the United Nations suggest that there are over 476 million Indigenous Peoples living in 90 countries across the world, accounting for 6.2 per cent of the global population comprising more than 5,000 distinct groups (UN, n.d.). The UN

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples upholds self-identification as an inalienable right to determine one's own identity or membership in accordance with one's customs and traditions.

Political tensions can arise between self-identification and a lack of recognition by others. Indigeneity is not only imposed from outside (through state definitions, census categories, UN framings) but also actively organised and mobilised by Indigenous Peoples themselves as a strategy of survival, resistance, and self-determination. Thus, whilst the term Indigenous has a transnational political identity that has largely emerged through UN and NGO advocacy, many Indigenous Peoples themselves are taking up the term to build pan-regional solidarities while retaining their place-based, historical identities.

Notwithstanding the emergence of Indigenous as a transnational political identity, Indigenous Peoples worldwide are known by different names due to their rootedness in place, community, and history. For example, in Australia, the colonial term *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders* has been used, though many people prefer their specific mob names, such as Wurundjeri and Yorta Yorta. Therefore, much sensitivity and depth of understanding are required around both global and local terminologies when it comes to discussing 'who is Indigenous' in view of distinct relational and contextual lived realities of Indigenous Peoples. To underscore, we present below three short illustrative vignettes from India, Abya Yala (Central and South America), and Aotearoa (New Zealand)[2].

India is home to 104.5 million Indigenous people who constitute 8.6% of the country's total population (source: Census, 2011). This vast population is referred to by various terms,

[2] We draw examples from these specific regions due to this special issue editorial team's familiarity with these contexts. Abya Yala is a name used by many Indigenous Peoples for the territories now called Central and South America (including Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru). Turtle Island is a name used by many Indigenous Nations for the lands now called North America.

such as *Adivasis* (meaning first/original inhabitants), Indigenous Peoples, Scheduled Tribes (STs), and distinct community names (e.g., Bodh, Dhodia, Garo, Gaddi, Nagas, and so on). The variation in usage of these terms has roots in legal (STs), activist (Adivasi/Indigenous), and academic (Adivasi/Indigenous/STs) discourses (Bapuji, Chrispal, Attri, Ertug & Soundararajan, 2024). Indigenous communities were perceived as outside the caste/religion categories that defined the majority of the population in the Indian subcontinent. These communities are now grouped as Scheduled Tribes (STs, i.e., tribes listed in a schedule of the Indian constitution). However, STs is not a uniform term or category, as there are more than 700 tribes in India. While many groups (particularly in central India) self-identify themselves as Adivasi, other STs do not do so and may even perceive the term to be derogatory (compared to the term Indigenous, which they prefer). Further, a group may be recognised as an ST in some states but not in others, an aspect discussed by Poonam Barhoi in this issue (Barhoi, 2026). As a result, the terms Adivasi, tribal, and Indigenous are best not treated as interchangeable in the context of India.

In the Abya Yala territory, particularly in the Andean mountains and the lowlands of the Amazon, the term 'Indian' has long been regarded as a derogatory and stereotyped label. For example, in Peru, during the 1970s, a political and ideological shift reframed Indigenous Peoples under the category of 'peasant' (campesino), which emphasised their class identity over ethnic identity (Paredes, 2018; Telles & Torche, 2018). However, since the late 1980s and 1990s, this began to change as Indigenous groups gradually reclaimed their heritage and asserted their distinct identities, based on their languages or nations. Therefore, while Indigenous Peoples is a useful umbrella term in the context of Abya Yala , it is important to recognize and honour the specific identities of communities, such as Quechua, Aymara, Arawak, Yanomami, Asháninka, Shuar, Shipibo-Conibo, Guaraní, Mapuche, and Wayuu.

In Aotearoa (New Zealand), the collective label "Māori" became widely used during

colonisation as a way of distinguishing *tangata whenua*, peoples of the land, from settlers. While the term Māori existed in te reo – the language of the Māori – prior to colonisation, its use as a broad ethnonym was shaped and reinforced through colonial categorisation. Māori identity itself remains grounded in whakapapa (loosely translated as lineage) and in relationships to iwi (tribes), hapū (sub-tribes), and specific places of origin. Large-scale urbanisation and state policies over the twentieth century meant that many Māori grew up away from their tribal homelands and were distanced from aspects of this knowledge. For instance, between 1936 and 1986 the Māori population shifted from 83 percent rural to 83 percent urban (Derby, 2011). Yet, even where tribal connections were disrupted, many Māori raised in urban contexts continue to draw strongly on shared cultural practices and expressions of Māori identity (Henry, 2007). In other words, the term *Māori* is used rather than "Indigenous Peoples," many Indigenous communities prefer to identify themselves by their iwi, such as Kai Tahu or Ngāti Porou.

In sum, each Indigenous community has their own narratives of identity, resistance, survivance, advocacy, activism and resurgence. Many contemporary struggles over Indigenous identity are shaped by practices of recognition and misrecognition, including the use and misuse of the concept of Indigeneity in research and practice.

Misrecognition and Misuse of Indigeneity

Misrecognition of Indigenous Peoples means that some Indigenous groups may not be acknowledged or officially classified as such, despite their Indigeneity, reflected in their connection to the land, nature, and community. At the same time, others who are native, in the sense of being locals, but may not be Indigenous, may be misrecognized as Indigenous. Misrecognition may also happen when groups that are 'local' or 'marginalised' are equated or conflated with being Indigenous (Doshi, 2026), resulting in insufficient understanding of both groups. For example, in India, STs are often administratively categorised alongside Scheduled

Castes (SCs or Dalits, who have experienced entrenched stigmatisation and oppression through the caste system as 'untouchables') and are commonly referred to as 'SC/ST' and treated as a single category in empirical studies (Bapuji et al., 2024). Conflating Dalits and Indigenous Peoples into one category obscures their distinct identities and histories and results in the misrecognition of both groups.

Scholars may misrecognize Indigenous Peoples when they use the term 'Indigenous' too broadly or equate certain lifestyles as Indigenous. For example, agrarian life has often been equated with Indigeneity in Global South contexts (e.g., Stone, 2011) although Indigenous Peoples in the Global South are not confined to agrarian life alone (Doshi, 2026). Further, such framing overlooks the complex and diverse lived realities of Indigenous Peoples across urban, peri-urban, and translocal spaces, and also misrepresents the reality in which the boundaries between rural and urban are becoming increasingly fluid.

Finally, some scholars frame Indigeneity in relation to the West or colonisation (e.g., Venkateswaran & Ojha, 2017), while others equate it with 'local', as in specific to the country-context (e.g., Bruton, et. al., 2024; Dholakia, Dholakia & Chattopadhyay, 2018; Saini & Budhwar, 2008). While colonisation profoundly impacted Indigenous Peoples, their experiences and struggles are not interchangeable with broader postcolonial identities. For instance, while many citizens of postcolonial nation-states may share a history of colonisation, not all can claim Indigenous status (Doshi, 2026). This is because Indigeneity is rooted in distinct ties to ancestral lands, cultural continuities (Vogeley & Oetojo, 2025), and historical marginalisation within colonial, precolonial, and postcolonial frameworks (Vakkayil, 2021).

Taken together, the above discussion reminds us to use the term Indigeneity with care and not use it as a generic label for rurality, tradition, or marginality, even though they might overlap with Indigeneity. The term Indigeneity carries specific historical, cultural, and political meanings rooted in people's deep relation to land, community and identity, and their ongoing

struggles for recognition and self-determination. As such, these relationships and struggles render business and management different in Indigenous contexts as reflected in the papers in this special issue.

Papers in this Special Issue

In response to our call, we received 36 submissions, reflecting the growing interest in Indigenous management research. Seven papers authored by 15 scholars were accepted to this special issue after extensive revisions over multiple rounds. We are especially pleased to see the strong participation of early-career scholars, who sole-authored two papers and led two other papers. As we present in Table 1, the collection of papers in this special issue presents diversity across: *geographical contexts* (five – Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, and India), *countries of affiliation of authors* (nine – Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, India, Switzerland, UK, and US), *theoretical lenses* (authenticity, two-eyed seeing, anthropology of development and developmental logics, liminality and identity work, temporal work, Amerindian perspectivism, and recognition), *methods of data collection* (interviews, participant/non-participant observations, and archival data), *business issues* (carbon offset project, mining, cultural tourism, tea gardening, and animal trapping) and *societal aspects covered* (animal rights, Indigenous Peoples' rights, nature's rights, negotiations, and recognition).

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Stephanie Daher, Lucas Stocco, and Gasodá Paiter Suruí explore how Indigenous realities intersect with global sustainability frameworks in the context of the world's first Indigenous-led forest carbon project, the Paiter Suruí Carbon Credit REDD+ Project in Brazil. Grounded in collaborative fieldwork, and co-authored with a Paiter Surui community member, the authors use interview, observational and archival data, and Amerindian perspectivism- a political ontological approach that recognises multiple natures and human–nonhuman relations

(Daher et al., 2025). It identifies two mechanisms shaping engagements in sustainability partnerships with Indigenous communities: ethical imposition, where one party unilaterally defines ethical terms, and ontological violence, where external frameworks disrupt Indigenous lifeways. The authors argue that sustainability partnerships often assume parity while neglecting legacies of injustice. Therefore, rethinking justice and politics from Indigenous perspectives requires recognising diverse ontologies and resisting imposed frameworks to enable more equitable collaboration.

Thierry Viale and Yves Gendron stress the importance of reflexive engagement in Indigenous research by sharing their immersion into Indigenous context and their positionality toward participants. They examine how the Wendat community of Wendake, Québec, pursues cultural resurgence and recognition of identity while navigating the pressures of economic development. Although the 1876 Indian Act curtailed sovereignty by restricting land ownership, the Wendat rely on what the authors term an “inherited capital of recognition” to sustain peaceful struggles for self-determination (Viale & Gendron, 2025). Drawing on Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition, the authors identify two strategies: asserting the legal validity of historic treaties; and developing an economic system adapted to Indigenous needs. Based on participant observation and interviews, the authors’ analysis shows how inherited recognition, rooted in cultural esteem and ancestral political and economic practices, supports contemporary initiatives and demonstrates how sovereignty can be reinforced without abandoning tradition or rejecting the state.

Silvan Oberholzer examines how the Arhuaco, Kogui, Wiwa, and Kankuamo peoples in Colombia integrate nature as a living presence within their business practices. Drawing on interviews, Indigenous-authored literature, and observations, Oberholzer introduces the concept of a “nature-sensitive mindset,” grounded in spiritual connectedness, relational embeddedness, and recognition of nature as a guide. Framed through the principles of Two-

Eyed Seeing, the author interlaces Indigenous and Western perspectives to articulate how relationships with nature inform organisational practices in Indigenous contexts (Oberholzer, 2026). The paper highlights how Indigenous businesses' multidimensional nature-inclusive stakeholder engagement creates regenerative socio-economic, cultural, and ecological value. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing debates on regenerative organising and planetary health.

Maegan Baker, Jarrod Ormiston and Leanne Cutcher advance scholarship on temporality by examining how Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners bring distinct temporal frames to collective Indigenous entrepreneurship collaborations. They highlight tensions arising from differing orientations to time horizons, project perspectives, and momentum. Drawing on the Bundian Way – a traditional walking track of cultural and spiritual significance to Yuin custodians on the Far South Coast of New South Wales, Australia – they show how divergent temporal frames lead partners to prioritise opposing goals and outcomes, producing friction (Baker et al., 2025). The authors argue that these temporal tensions can be constructively addressed through "temporal work" by non-Indigenous partners, which entails openness to shifting frames, learning from Indigenous understandings of time, and questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about the past, its bearing on the present, and its role in shaping futures.

José Carlos Marques, Johnny Boghossian, and Diego Coraiola show that secondary historical data, such as international conference transcripts, can advance Indigenous research in business and management. They examine how Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups negotiate Indigeneity during contentious interactions, challenging the binary of strategic essentialism versus decolonisation. Using constructed authenticity theory, the authors analyse a late 20th century Canadian summit on fur harvesting, where Indigenous leaders, animal rights activists, policymakers, and industry actors debated Indigenous rights. Non-Indigenous participants advanced conformity-based authenticity, claiming "authentic" Indigeneity

required pre-modern practices without modern tools or trade. Indigenous leaders countered it with consistency-based authenticity, stressing values, worldviews, and adaptive traditions, though this often reinforced stereotypes and constrained agency (Marques et al., 2025). Polarisation eased when leaders reframed authenticity as connection, grounded in ties to land, history, and heritage. This approach fostered dialogue and reconciliation, showing that authenticity can constrain yet also empower Indigenous sovereignty and recognition.

Negotiated agreements in Australia are ubiquitous in shaping engagements between Indigenous communities and industry, with both positive and adverse consequences. Julia Benkert, Robyn Eversole and Krzysztof Dembek investigate how such agreements can better support Indigenous aspirations and address longstanding injustices. Their study examines agreements between nine Indigenous communities and a major mining company in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Set against the backdrop of Rio Tinto's destruction of the Juukan Gorge rock shelters on Puutu Kunti Kuruma and Pinikura Country, and BHP's damage to a Banjima cultural heritage site, the research highlights both the risks and possibilities of agreement-making (Benkert et al., 2025). Using an anthropology of development lens, the authors decentre Western notions of development and argue for agreements grounded in culturally situated aspirations for self-determination to counter dominant legalistic and colonial logics.

By studying the identity struggles of Assam's Tea-Tribe Adivasis, Poonam Barhoi highlights not only the tensions between self-identification and the lack of institutional legitimacy surrounding Indigenous identities but also the complexity of terms such as Adivasis and Scheduled Tribes in India. Drawing on qualitative interviews and using a constructivist approach, the research shows how these intersecting identities generate positional liminality, an enduring state of being between two social positions. While the labourer identity is legitimised and expressed through political advocacy, the Adivasi identity– lacking

institutional recognition– requires both cultural assertion and political activism for validation. The study (Barhoi, 2026) extends the literature on liminality and identity work by demonstrating how unequal institutional legitimacy shapes the forms and intensity of identity negotiation. It also contributes to understanding the identity challenges faced by Indigenous groups in India.

In sum, the seven papers in this special issue highlight the importance of identity to Indigenous Peoples around the world and how such identities – together with heritage, culture and rituals are maintained and mobilised for recognition. An important aspect of this maintenance and recognition is the challenges the Indigenous Peoples face in their engagement with non-Indigenous actors and the state. Finally, sacredness of, and connection with nature and ancestors emerges as key distinguishing features of Indigenous perspectives. Recognizing and honouring these distinctions is important to build a robust Indigenous scholarship in business and management.

Building Robust Indigenous Scholarship in Business and Management

In this section, we first discuss what an Indigenous perspective means for business and management, followed by future research opportunities. Further, to support such scholarship following Indigenous ethics and perspectives, we present some guidance for scholars as well editors and reviewers who support them.

What does Business and Management Mean from an Indigenous Perspective?

To understand "business" and "management" in Indigenous contexts, it is necessary to expand our view beyond dominant Western paradigms[3] to recognize different ontological and

[3] We recognise that what is often referred to as "Western" knowledge is itself internally diverse and contested and cannot be reduced to a single Anglo- or US-centric tradition. Nonetheless, it is commonly noted that management research predominantly uses theories and samples from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) countries (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010).

ethical commitments as noted by the papers in this special issue. While a comprehensive discussion of an Indigenous perspective on business and management is beyond the scope of a single work, we briefly illustrate it in terms of purpose, structure, and understanding of value.

Purpose. While there is no singular Indigenous worldview, many Indigenous societies understand the economy and business as inseparable from the broader society. Therefore, the purpose in Indigenous business and management frequently extends beyond income generation to strengthening community, safeguarding ecosystems, and renewing collective identities (Peredo et al., 2004; Stewart et al., 2017). As Peredo and Chrisman (2006) highlighted in their work on *community-based enterprises* and echoed by papers in this special issue (e.g., Oberholzer, 2026; Viale & Gendron, 2025), economic activity cannot be separated from social, cultural, spiritual and environmental goals and values (Vogeley & Oetojo, 2025). Such understanding of interdependence is central to business and society research and practice, even more so in an increasingly volatile world (Arora, Gardberg & Louche, 2026).

Structure. The building blocks of Indigenous societies and economies are not individuals, but families and extended kinship networks (Spiller et al., 2025). From this perspective, management becomes less about hierarchy or efficiency, and more about *relational stewardship*. Spiller et al. (2011, 2020) describe Indigenous management as an ethic of care and responsibility that centers “relational wealth” – the ties of reciprocity and kinship that bind people to one another and to the natural world. This is also underscored by multiple papers in this issue, including by Baker et al. (2025) and Daher et al. (2025).

Value. Across many Indigenous contexts, value is understood more broadly to include spiritual, cultural, ecological, historical and intergenerational dimensions alongside economic considerations (Banerjee & Linstead, 2004). Business, then, may include practices that are invisible, indivisible, or undervalued in mainstream scholarship, such as reciprocal systems of labour exchange (Peredo 2012), collective governance of land and waters, integration of

ceremony into organisational life, and initiatives that revitalise Indigenous languages, arts, and traditions (Vogeley & Oetojo, 2025). These activities resist reduction to “economic development” alone; they represent holistic approaches to sustaining life, presenting an alternative imaginary for business and society (Vijay et al., 2026; Peredo & Chrisman 2006). In this special issue, this distinction is noted in Barhoi (2026), Benkert et al. (2025), Marques et al. (2025) and (Viale & Gendron, 2025).

In sum, Indigenous business and management present an alternative imaginary of business and society, going beyond income generation to building communities and ecosystems; developing organizational structures that build communities; and pursuing value in a holistic sense.

Future Research Directions

The special issue aimed to pave the way for building a robust Indigenous business and management scholarship by (i) including underrepresented Indigenous Peoples and (ii) highlighting under-researched issues pertaining to Indigenous Peoples. To this end, we posed a number of questions in our call for papers. In Table 2, we present the research questions from our call for papers and indicate those that have been addressed by papers in this special issue and note those that present opportunities for future research.

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This special issue aimed to set an ambitious agenda for Indigenous research in business and management. Given the breadth of topics envisaged and the depth contained in each research question, it is fair to say that the questions cannot be addressed with a limited set of articles. Rather, these topics and questions provide a strong grounding for future research and the papers in this special issue illustrate the vast untapped potential of Indigenous research to contribute to building better businesses and societies.

Collectively, the papers in this special issue have directly addressed some of the issues related to identity navigation and maintenance by Indigenous Peoples (Barhoi, 2025; Marques et al., 2025), participation in economic activity while maintaining Indigenous way of thinking and being (Baker et al., 2025; Viale & Gendron, 2025), challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples due to business and management models imposed by non-Indigenous actors (Benkert et al., Daher et al., 2025), and the unique contributions that Indigenous perspectives can make to address sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Baker et al., 2025; Daher et al., 2025; Oberholzer, 2026). Together, these speak to the themes of SDGs, issues at the intersection of business and society, and entrepreneurship and leadership (i.e., the first three themes in Table 2). These issues fall within the traditional domains of business and management and as such, present viable avenues for further research.

The remaining themes (i.e., Indigenous Peoples in the global landscape, Indigeneity from a global perspective, and research methods and researchers) are only indirectly addressed in this special issue and present viable future research opportunities. Examining Indigeneity from a global perspective and expanding the research attention to Indigenous Peoples in the Global South are important avenues for future research. However, such pursuit is likely to result in greater insights if future research on these topics is conducted following Indigenous ethics and protocols and communicated by honouring Indigenous Peoples and their worldviews. Towards this end, Therefore, we developed some guidance to help authors as well as reviewers and editors who support them by drawing on our collective expertise (including our familiarity with Indigenous research governance frameworks, guidelines of *Committee On Publication Ethics*, and institutional research ethics protocols) and the insights gathered from editing this special issue.

Guidance for Scholars

We would like to preface this guidance by noting our own entanglements in the

epistemic encounters with Indigeneity and our positionalities from Aotearoa, Abya Yala, India, Turtle Island, and Australia. Further, it is important to recap the intellectual foundations for this guidance: a) To embrace Indigenous perspectives is to rethink business not merely as economic exchange but as relational practice rooted in land, community, and continuity; b) To recognize that the Global South remains a vast, under-researched landscape of Indigenous business and management knowledge, and that its stories hold transformative lessons for the world; c) To understand that Indigenous struggles for recognition are not just political, but are intellectual struggles that demand research be attentive to epistemic justice; and d) To engage with Indigenous scholarship is to practice humility, reflexivity, and relationality; it is scholarship as allyship, not extraction. With these, we now turn to present our guidance[4] (please see Table 3), organized around concepts and topics, context, methods, theoretical lenses, and writing.

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Topic

An overarching question researchers need to ask is: *Does the concept or topic advance Indigenous research in terms of depth or breadth of perspective?* This is a particularly important question because Indigenous perspectives and contexts have innumerable concepts and topics, which need to be recognised and learned from.

Researchers are increasingly engaging topics that deepen and broaden Indigenous scholarship, albeit in different ways. *Depth* is advanced through studies that engage intensively with Indigenous concepts, processes, or tensions, offering a fine-grained insight into how these

[4] Beyond our guidance, we recognise that journals internationally are articulating more explicit commitments to Indigenous scholarship. For example, we draw attention to the recently adopted *Journal of Industrial Relations*' *Editorial Principles* (2025), which offer six core commitments to pursue excellence in Indigenous scholarship, data sovereignty, partnership, and ethical stewardship. While distinct from our own framework, these principles resonate strongly with the spirit of this special issue and may provide a valuable reference for scholars, reviewers, and editors working in this space.

are negotiated in practice. Examples of such depth in this special issue include sustainability and environmental impacts of extractive projects (Daher et al., 2025; Benkert et al., 2025), authenticity in negotiations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups (Marques et al., 2025), how Indigenous recognition evolves over time and through modernisation (Viale & Gendron, 2025), and temporality in Indigenous entrepreneurship and collaboration (Baker et al., 2025).

By contrast, the *breadth* of Indigenous scholarship is extended through papers that expand the sites of Indigenous scholarship and experiences and worldviews of Indigenous Peoples. This includes papers that foreground community-specific concerns and ontological orientations that have been largely absent from the field, such as Barhoi (2026)'s analysis of tea tribes in India and their liminal identities around (non-)recognition of Adivasi identities and Oberholzer (2026)'s examination of how ontological relationships with nature shape organisational practices among the Arhuaco, Kogui, Wiwa, and Kankuamo peoples in South America.

In broadening and deepening Indigenous scholarship, researchers need to honour prior Indigenous research. While this is a common expectation from any research, it assumes particular significance in an Indigenous context because of the respect given to the trustees of knowledge in Indigenous communities and the respectful acknowledgement of all community members. Further, given the historical and ongoing struggles of Indigenous communities for their rights and welfare, research should be aimed at advancing the rights and welfare of the relevant communities.

Context

Context is more than an empirical data collection site for Indigenous research (Valente, 2012). Therefore, researchers need to ensure that their manuscripts carry sensitivity to their study context, which not only conveys groundedness of the study but also the credibility of the

research process. One way of doing this is to weave the context throughout the manuscript, beginning with the title, introduction, methods, findings, and discussion. For example, authors can include the community's name in the title, abstract, and keywords. Steps like these not only give due attention to the context, but also honour the historical and ongoing struggles of Indigenous Peoples for recognition of their communities and their ways of being.

Despite the growth in Indigenous research, we see fewer studies set in Global South contexts, where Indigenous struggles and innovations have long informed and inspired global movements for justice, sustainability, and self-determination. At the same time, recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights– both in society at large and within business arenas– remains limited in many Global South contexts. In studying such contexts, it is important to recognize that widely prevalent etic versus emic country-level approaches (Galperin et al., 2022) might not capture within-country nuances, particularly at the community level. Therefore, researchers – directly in their research as well as indirectly in their roles as reviewers and editors – need to expand the place-based contexts in which Indigenous business and management are studied and understood rather than treat context at a country level.

Methods

Traditional Western epistemologies are commonly classified as qualitative or quantitative. Even when Indigenous methodologies are *classified as qualitative*, they are grounded in distinct ontological and epistemological commitments that privilege oral, visual, relational, and ceremonial ways of knowing (Smith, 2012). These approaches may offer more holistic, sensory-rich insights than conventional text-based data, allowing scholars to engage with knowledge as lived, relational, and situated. Therefore, being open to new and local epistemologies that have the potential to capture reality as it is is necessary to build a robust Indigenous scholarship. In making this recommendation, we recognize the constraints of textual and visual representations that a publication requires and appreciate the need to adhere

to them. Please see our reflections on the cover page of this issue and its meaning in the next section.

While expanding their methodological repertoires, scholars also need to have a reflexive positionality, particularly so if they are non-Indigenous authors conducting research on Indigenous issues and contexts. All authors should acknowledge power dynamics, epistemic authority, and their location within the research to bring credibility and robustness. Clearly articulating how Indigeneity is defined, claimed, represented, or researched during the data collection is equally important. Further, being well-versed with debates in the relevant national or community context provides a well-rounded approach to understanding Indigeneity in a context. Relational integrity can be further enhanced with close engagement with Indigenous ethical protocols (e.g., ceremony, relationality, data sovereignty) and through long-term collaborations with Indigenous scholars and/or community partners. In some cases, co-authorship with Indigenous communities may naturally emerge from shared research processes and enhance both credibility and voice. Overall, transparency, thick description, context-rich data, and non-extractive allyship enhance methodological robustness.

Theoretical Lenses

A range of theories have been used in researching Indigenous Peoples and issues, including critical and post/decolonial theories (Banerjee & Linstead, 2004, Peredo, 2013), cross-cultural management (Jackson, 2019), feminist theories (Price et al., 2021), institutional theory (Newhouse, 2004, Bastein et al., 2023), leadership theories (Evans & Sinclair, 2016; Spiller et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2017), social identity theory (Williams & Biggemann, 2020), stakeholder theory, and ethics (Spiller et al., 2011). These engagements often reflect a tension long discussed in the literature through the emic–etic distinction, that is, between theory that emerges from within a cultural context and theory applied from outside it. We empathize with the scholarly tensions involved in reconciling novel, grounded, and inductive theory building

and complementing it with, if not superimposing, existing theories to be able to claim a 'theoretical' contribution. However, scholars must be mindful not to superimpose Western theories on Indigenous knowledge systems, which may amount to ontological violence (Daher et al., 2025). Greater theoretical insights arise when researchers follow Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies or crosspollinate them with extant theoretical lenses.

In adopting theoretical lenses, it is advised to avoid overgeneralisation or essentialism, claiming universal Indigenous perspectives or collapsing diverse Indigenous groups into a single category, respectively. Relying on settler-centric frames (e.g., strategic essentialism, Western constructs or theories) without reflexive critique is problematic as a theoretical approach. Equally problematic is deficit framing that portrays Indigenous communities primarily in terms of marginalisation, underdevelopment, or lack, without highlighting their agency, resilience, or worldviews.

Writing

Authors need to maintain reflexive positionality during the writing process and be open to different ways of writing to be more amenable to Indigenous ways of being, for example, storytelling. Further, authors need to present Indigenous voices and avoid stereotypes or deficit framing.

While English is the dominant language of academic publishing in business, management, and social sciences, it creates barriers not only for Indigenous and Global South scholars but for many of the world's academics for whom English is not a first language. More importantly, methodological conventions and reviewer concerns from a Western standpoint often privilege generalisable abstractions over context-rich, place-based, and cosmo-genealogical knowledges. Thus, structural bias rather than linguistic capacity alone, can constrain how Indigenous concerns are articulated and recognized. Therefore, journals carry a responsibility to support diverse scholarly voices by valuing different ways of writing,

reasoning, and representing knowledge. For example, this can be done by offering practical language support where needed and by reimagining the traditional article (e.g., to accommodate storytelling as a way to communicate) and expanding the format of presentation (e.g., to accommodate visuals and evocative writing).

In summary, we can build a robust Indigenous scholarship by expanding the breadth and depth of perspective, doing justice to the context and relationality inherent in Indigenous worldviews, adopting reflexive positionality, and respectfully engaging with (if not embracing) Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies to develop novel insights and present them to the scholarly community. In the next section, we contextualize these by reflecting on our own experience of curating this special issue and conclude this editorial.

Curating a Special Issue with Indigenous Values

Pursuant to *Business & Society*'s renewed vision: *leadership for inclusion and impact* (Bapuji & Higgins, 2023), the journal leadership decided to commission a special issue to advance Indigenous scholarship. Accordingly, Hari Bapuji approached three Indigenous women researchers from different parts of the world to collectively envision and curate this special issue: Vijayta Doshi, of Swangla and Bodh lineage; Ana Maria Peredo, a Peruvian mestiza with Tallan maternal lineage; and Chellie Spiller, of Māori and Pākehā lineage.

We attempted to curate this special issue through the shared spirit of community development. This meant working closely with each other and with the authors to strengthen their manuscripts, over multiple rounds and even outside the submission system for quicker turnaround. Throughout this close working, we attempted to be mindful of the thin line between guiding the authors and imposing editorial authority. Some moments made us wonder whether we were holding non-Indigenous authors to greater scrutiny of reflexivity and ethical explanation. In the spirit of Indigenous values, it is important recognize that this approach to community building was made possible by the generous contributions of many reviewers,

receptiveness and openness of the authors to the feedback (while also asserting their voices and rights), and copy editing support from *Business & Society* and *Sage*.

In line with Indigenous approaches to communicate the relationality, we opted to design a cover image for this special issue, with the help of a talented Indigenous woman, Te Ata-a-rua Hansen-Cribb, of Māori lineage. This cover design, entitled *Woven Presence*, represents and celebrates our ethnicities through various elements and mosaics of the design – which Te Ata-a-Rua beautifully interpreted for us. For example, we purposefully chose a gender-neutral body to represent the gender inclusiveness of various Indigenous communities. At the same time, the motifs and patterns we use extend beyond our specific heritages. The necklace is known as *gau* (made up of gold pendant, pearls, and turquoise and orange beads worn on special occasions and celebrations) in the Lahaul's community (Swangla and Bodh tribes) to which Vijayta belongs.

The mountains signify our ancestral lands and connection to place, while also evoking teachings and learnings carried across generations—for Ana María, they echo the Quechua and Aymara landscapes, where mountains (apus) are revered as living beings and guardians of community. For Hari, they represent the many lands on which he is grateful to live on for various lengths of time, including the mountains that he can see in the distance from Naarm Melbourne.

The woven shawl represents the idea of ancestors wrapping themselves around their descendants, offering guidance and protection. The skirt design is a symbolic representation of our three cultures, but also reflects the many other Indigenous cultures, underscoring our shared humanity and the diverse struggles Indigenous Peoples face for justice, recognition, and the right to live on our own cultural terms. The mat serves as a metaphor for grounding, symbolising how Indigenous Peoples are rooted to the land, and through that connection, how we are connected to one another.

The colour palette reflects strength, resilience, and interconnected Indigenous economies, using deep reds, rich blues, earthy greens, yellows, and strong blacks. Two intersecting Indigenous design elements are central**.** The first is that of Weaving reflecting interconnection and strength — a universal Indigenous motif seen in Māori raranga, Pacific tapa, First Nations and Adivasi basket weaving, and Andean textiles. Subtle woven patterns reflect interconnected economies, trade, and relationships. The other design elements are Circles reflecting continuity and collective well-being**.** Circles are present across Indigenous worldviews, from the Medicine Wheel in First Nations traditions to whakapapa in te ao Māori. A circular motif, whether evoking the sun, weaving, or a symbolic meeting space, reinforces wholeness, unity, and prosperity. Overall, the cover was designed to communicate Indigenous perspective in a bold, structured, and visually striking style.

In closing, we trust that scholars across the globe advance Indigenous scholarship not only with the highest rigour, but also the tenderest care that is needed every step of the way. Further, we hope that this special issue serves as an example for community building, which we hope will continue through assemblies such as the *International Academy of Research in Indigenous Management and Organizational Studies (IARIMOS)* and *Dilin Duwa Dialogues,* and through writing and mentorship programs, such as those conducted by the *Action to Improve Representation* along with the many local initiatives that nurture Indigenous research within their own contexts. We offer this special issue as one thread among many in the dynamic, layered constellation of Indigenous efforts.

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Hari Bapuji is a Professor in the Department of Management and Marketing, Faculty of Business and Economics, The University of Melbourne, Australia. His current research is predominantly focused on how societal economic inequalities affects organizations, and vice versa. His research appeared in many leading management journals and is frequently recognized for its impact on business and society. He served as a co-editor of *Business & Society* (2020-2025) and is a co-founder of *Action to Improve Representation*.

Table 1. Collection of Papers in *Business & Society* Special Issue on 'Global Indigenous Peoples: Expanding the Intersections of Business and Society'

Article	Country of Authors' Affiliation	Theoretical Lens	Country Context	Study Context	Data Sources	Business Aspect Covered	Societal Aspect Covered	Theoretical Contribution
Daher et al., 2025	Brazil and UK	Political ontology Amerindian perspectivism	Brazil	Indigenous carbon credit project	Interviews, observations and archival data	Carbon offset project/ carbon market	Effect on Indigenous culture and nature	Ethical imposition and ontological violence
Viale & Gendron, 2025	Canada and France	Theory of recognition	Canada	Evolution of an Indigenous community and its place	Ethnography based participant observation and interviews	Entrepreneurial initiatives in the community	Struggle for recognition being an Indigenous community	Inherited capital of recognition
Oberholzer, 2026	Switzerland	Two-eyed seeing Nature-inclusive stakeholder engagement	Colombia	Individual Indigenous businesses	Interviews, observations and secondary data.	Indigenous businesses	Nature-inclusive approach	Relational nature Ecosystem stakeholder approach
Baker et al., 2025	Australia	Indigenous entrepreneurship Temporal work	Australia	Indigenous cultural tourism	Case study interviews, and secondary data	*Bundian Way*, a large-scale Indigenous social enterprise aiming for cultural tourism	*Bundian Way* as not just a physical path but a cultural and spiritual journey	Temporal frames

Article	Country of Authors' Affiliation	Theoretical Lens	Country Context	Study Context	Data Sources	Business Aspect Covered	Societal Aspect Covered	Theoretical Contribution
Marques et al., 2025	Canada	Authenticity	Canada	Formal negotiations meetings between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups	Archival data	Livelihood of Indigenous communities being impacted because of ban on fur imports	Animal rights and Indigenous social movement	Connection-based authenticity
Benkert et al., 2025	Australia, Germany and US	Anthropology of development Development logics (Indigenous, economic, legalistic)	Australia	Mining	Interviews, observations and archival data	Business' engagement with Indigenous communities	Tensions between development logics; differing understandings of risks/benefits	Reflexive approach to the participation of Indigenous stakeholders in development agreements
Barhoi (2026)	India	Liminality Identity work	India	Tea cultivation	Interviews	Tea garden labouring	Mis/recognition of Scheduled Tribe identity	Positional liminality at the intersection of institutionalised and under-institutionalised identity work

Table 2. Mapping of Questions Posed in the Original Call for Papers

Research question in the call for papers	How it is addressed
Indigenous peoples, grand challenges, and SDGs	
How can businesses, management, and organizations achieve 'decent work and economic prosperity' (SDG 8) for Indigenous peoples across the globe?	• Directly Addressed
How can various stakeholders work towards 'climate action' (SDG 13) in collaboration with Indigenous peoples?	• Directly Addressed
How can businesses and management, working with Indigenous Peoples, contribute to achieving the SDGs, such as 'no poverty' (SDG 1), 'zero hunger' (SDG 2), 'good health and well-being' (SDG 3), 'quality education' (SDG 4), 'reduced inequalities' (SDG 10), 'sustainable cities and communities' (SDG 14), and 'peace and justice' (SDG 16)?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
How can Indigenous knowledge/wisdom support/facilitate the achievement of these and other SDGs?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
Indigeneity, business, and society	
How are 'Indigenous' and 'Indigeneity' defined and delimited in business and society research?	• Directly Addressed
How does Indigeneity vary across contexts, and why does this matter for business and society?	• Directly Addressed
What roles can businesses play in alleviating the injustices and inequities faced by Indigenous populations? What mechanisms aggravate/alleviate them?	• Directly Addressed
What solutions can reduce the exploitation and oppression of Indigenous Peoples, and what roles can business and society play?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
What are the implications of the branding and commodification of Indigenous culture and heritage for a global market?	• Indirectly addressed Future research
How does ideological colonization erode Indigenous stories and values? How to deal with it?	• Directly Addressed
What roles can business and society play in how Indigenous peoples are protecting their histories – often damaged due to silence (or lack of written form) or biased narratives?	• Future research
How are Indigenous peoples mobilizing for climate action and just transitions?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
Indigenous peoples in organizations, entrepreneurship, and leadership	
What pressing issues are faced by Indigenous customers, employees, entrepreneurs, managers, migrants, and leaders in different contexts?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research

Research question in the call for papers	How it is addressed
How to strengthen the situation of Indigenous employees in organizations and reduce inequity, marginalization, and oppression within organizations?	• Future research
How to legitimize Indigenous entrepreneurship knowledge among business and society at large?	• Future research
How is knowledge being transferred to Indigenous peoples by expatriate/non-indigenous colleagues? What are its implications?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
How effective are local content legislations for achieving not only employment but also the development of Indigenous talent?	• Future research
How to equitably prepare and promote Indigenous peoples for/to leadership positions in organizations?	• Future research
What alternative management and leadership theories can be found in Indigenous ways of doing business?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
What are Indigenous ways of organizing and how can they inform theories of organization and management?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
Indigenous peoples in the global landscape	
Which Indigenous populations or regions around the world remain unrecognized, in the management literature on Indigenous peoples? How to include them? What new insights emerge from their lived experiences and contexts?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
How does Indigeneity intersect with other identities (e.g., caste, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion), and how do these intersections shape disadvantage?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
What does Indigeneity look like in the Global South business and societal context?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
Indigeneity from a global perspective	
What are the ways in which Indigeneity can be theorized from a global perspective, rather than a Western perspective?	• Future research
Which new theoretical lenses may be utilized to understand Indigenous peoples and their issues?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
How can different nations learn about responsible Indigenous management from each other?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
What opportunities exist to apply the learnings about Indigenous peoples and management in the Global North to the Indigenous peoples and management in the Global South and vice versa? And, what challenges are faced in such application?	• Future research

Research question in the call for papers	How it is addressed
Research methods and researchers	
Which methods and methodologies are appropriate for understanding Indigenous peoples and their contexts? What are the limitations or strengths of those methods/methodologies?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
Are there new methods/methodologies that better capture Indigenous experiences and phenomena? How may they be adopted by business and society scholars?	• Indirectly addressed • Future research
Who are the researchers studying Indigenous populations in management research? How do their identities influence the nature and content of the scholarship on Indigenous management?	• Future research
Are Indigenous scholars fairly represented in management research? What are the implications? What challenges do they face? What opportunities exist to erase inequalities faced by them in academia?	• Future research

* “Addressed” indicates questions substantively examined in this special issue; “Indirectly addressed” indicates that papers in this special have implications for these and engagement on these topics is emerging in Indigenous scholarship; “Future research” indicates areas not addressed and remain viable areas of inquiry.

Table 3. Checklist for Indigenous-Centred Authoring, Reviewing, and Editing

	Authors	Reviewers/Editors
Topic	• Does the topic honour and broaden/deepen previous Indigenous scholarship? • Does the topic benefit Indigenous communities and advance their rights?	• Does the topic advance Indigenous scholarship in a substantive way, by broadening or deepening it? • Are the implications of research clear, with benefits to Indigenous knowledge and communities highlighted, and risks acknowledged?
Context	• Am I grounding the study in its specific Indigenous community or context? • Am I acknowledging Indigenous voices?	• Is the context clearly articulated and respectful of Indigenous perspectives? • Is the study from an underrepresented context, e.g., Global South?
Methods	• Why am I doing this research (e.g., is it to extract from the context)? • What is my relationship with the participants and their communities? How am I accountable to them, their ancestors, and future generations? • Have I followed Indigenous protocols and Indigenous data sovereignty (consent, control, governance, benefit-sharing)? • Am I reflexive and transparent about data collection? Does my data contain stories or knowledges that are not meant to be recorded?	• Are methods transparent, reflexive, and non-extractive? • Are Indigenous protocols followed and Indigenous data sovereignty respected? Is there anything that is off-limits? (e.g., knowledge, practices, or narratives that communities identify as restricted or not for public circulation) • Is accountability shown to communities, ancestors, and future generations? • Is Indigenous authorship or partnership evident where appropriate?
Theoretical lens	• Is my lens grounded in context and empirical evidence that honours and uplifts Indigenous worldviews? • Am I uncritically imposing a Western-centric or culturally dominant lens?	• Is theory appropriate, grounded, and critically engaged (does it avoid essentialism or uncritical imposition)?
Writing	• Does my language avoid stereotyping and deficit framing? • Is the terminology respectful and culturally appropriate? • Have I reflected critically on my positionality and biases? • Does my writing capture different way of reasoning, and representing knowledge?	• Does the writing use respectful terminology, avoid deficit framings, and include critical reflection on positionality? • Does the article expand the format of presentation (e.g., visuals, storytelling, and evocative writing)?