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Indigenous Peoples and Organization Studies

François Bastien
Diego M. Coraiola*
University of Victoria, Canada

William M. Foster*
University of Alberta, Canada

Abstract

This essay encourages scholars of management and organization studies (MOS) to critically reflect on how Indigenous peoples and their knowledges have been, and continue to be, systemically discriminated against. This discrimination is the result of colonization; it has deeply impacted and continues to affect which knowledges and practices are valued and embraced. The impact of colonization is mirrored in MOS via processes and actions within the academic setting and our business schools. The result is the continued marginalization of Indigenous peoples and their knowledges. We propose a shift in how MOS scholars approach research in relation to non-western societies to counter, and hopefully end, these continued practices of discrimination in our business schools. Specifically, we argue that demarginalizing Indigenous research in academia and going beyond 'cosmetic indigenization' in our business schools are new, collaborative ways of rethinking indigeneity and breaking down the current barriers in MOS that reinforce and perpetuate the systemic discrimination against Indigenous peoples, their knowledges and practices.

Keywords

'cosmetic indigenization', business schools, decolonization, Indigenous knowledges, Indigenous organizing, Indigenous peoples, management and organization studies, systemic discrimination

> It is difficult for me to believe that the colonizers are so materialistic, with an uncanny admiration for financial wealth, with no respect for the natural world and with no clairvoyance for the future of their own

*Both co-authors contributed equally to the essay. Names are displayed in alphabetical order.

Corresponding author:
François Bastien, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700 STN CSC, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2, Canada.
Email: fbastien@uvic.ca

> children. If that is their ideal life, it has no real worth. If they had the opportunity to start over, would they change their approach? Would they recognize all the wrongs committed on those who welcomed them with open arms, those who taught them how to live and survive? What recognition have they given to their benefactors? None, only misery.
>
> Huron-Wendat Elder

Introduction

American historian Donald A. Grinde Jr. (1977) proposed that the inspiration for the United States Constitution came from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Iroquois Confederacy). The thesis was furthered by American historian Bruce E. Johansen (1982). Both authors asserted that 'during the framing and ratification process of the United States Constitution, the Haudenosaunee lectured to colonial and revolutionary leaders on the virtues of unity and served as an example of democracy for Europeans and colonial Americans' (Levy, 1996, p. 588). The 'Iroquois Influence Thesis' received support in some sectors. However, academics in areas as diverse as history and anthropology attacked the thesis (Brandao, 1993). Grinde (1989, p. 16), in response, observed that these

> scholars are seeking to stop the process of de-Europeanizing American history. Such attempts in the 21st century will be seen as last-ditch efforts to maintain an Anglo cultural veneer that sought to dominate new scholarship in a rapidly changing intellectual and social environment.

We are now deep into the 21st century and, despite Professor Grinde's best intentions, 'little is known about Indigenous knowledges and their diverse epistemologies, pedagogies, and methodologies' (Battiste, 2018, p. 123). Although Indigenous knowledges continue to be attacked, dismissed and, ultimately, forgotten, Indigenous peoples in many parts of the world still speak their languages, celebrate their cultures and share their knowledges. This counter-institutional movement is currently transforming resilience into active resistance which has ignited a global undertaking to expose the deleterious effects of colonization and to promote (re)conciliation between western and Indigenous worldviews. For various western institutions, including academia, this has resulted in a push toward the decolonization (e.g. Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018) and indigenization (e.g. Doucette, Gladstone, & Carter, 2021) of universities and business schools.

The effects of colonization, although acknowledged and partially addressed at a political level, continue in society through systemic and institutionalized discrimination. The *Canadian Human Rights Commission Report on Plans and Priorities* (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2013–2014) defines systemic discrimination as 'the creation, perpetuation or reinforcement of inequality among disadvantaged groups. It is usually the result of seemingly neutral legislation, policies, procedures, practices or organizational structures. . .' (p. 4). Systemic discrimination against Indigenous peoples is prevalent and ubiquitous because contemporary organizations are prominent sites of social inequality (Amis, Mair, & Munir, 2020; Bapuji, Ertug, & Shaw, 2020). For example, systemic discrimination has been uncovered in health care (e.g. Wylie & McConkey, 2019), banking (e.g. Daly, Gebremedhin, & Sayem, 2013), education (e.g. Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002; Pirbhai-Illich, Pete, & Martin, 2017), economics (e.g. Biddle, Howlett, Hunter, & Paradies, 2013), knowledge development (e.g. Gray & Coates, 2010; Kuokkanen, 2017) and many other settings.

Systemic discrimination is insidious because it effectively marginalizes non-western knowledges and experiences (Scheurich & Young, 1997). In academia, this restricts the production, dissemination and transmission of these knowledges. For example, Chrispal, Bapuji and Zietsma (2021) excoriate management and organization studies (MOS) and its scholars for their silence and reproduction of the caste system in India. The absence of voices condemning this practice, they

argue, is the direct result of discrimination from the western hegemonies that silence the *other* (Said, 1979), rendering their voices ineffective and irrelevant. The value of the knowledges that exist within *other* cultures, including the colonized (Murphy & Zhu, 2012), is commonly dismissed in academia. Systemic discrimination is thus an essential epistemological component of this hegemonic philosophical system, introduced and imposed by the Eurocentric West to perpetuate a 'grand narrative' that justifies and reinforces its supremacy over anything related to knowledge (Lyotard, 1991).

In this essay we argue that our challenge as academics is to address field-wide, systemic injustices, to mitigate their harm and to prevent their persistence. Therefore, our 'call to action' is for management scholars to reflect upon ways that they can, and more importantly should, create a more inclusive and humane academy by respecting Indigenous peoples[1] and their forms of knowing and organizing. Western thinking still prevails as the standard against which academic and scientific endeavors are measured. This 'cognitive imperialism' (Battiste, 2018, p. 132) has produced, and continues to reproduce, systemic discrimination against Indigenous peoples in a variety of domains, including MOS. These dynamics are relevant and pressing because, as Meyer and Quattrone (2021) note, the current world is 'unsettled' and presents 'enormous challenges'. They call on MOS scholars to move beyond the 'colonialist impetus that made the discipline emerge' so we may 'learn from non-western traditions and Indigenous communities' (Meyer & Quattrone, 2021, p. 1377). Our essay embraces these aims by exposing how Indigenous knowledges are marginalized in MOS. Our intent is to dismantle the hegemony of colonial assumptions by raising awareness. We do not aim to represent the thoughts of the global community of Indigenous peoples. Nor is it our aim to synthesize their diverse views into a single perspective. Instead, our position is grounded in the experiences of the lead author, who is a Huron-Wendat from the Indigenous community of Wendake, and our observed incongruities between Indigenous ways of organizing and contemporary colonial models.

Colonization: Roots and Effects

Indigenous identities

The World Bank estimates that there are half a billion Indigenous peoples living today. Although defining them is fraught with challenges, Peredo, Anderson, Galbraith, Honig and Dana (2004) list six characteristics congruent with the framing of this essay: (1) being descendants of a population inhabiting a region prior to later inhabitants; (2) having experienced geographical, political and/or economic domination by later inhabitants or immigrants; (3) having maintained some distinctive social-cultural norms and institutions; (4) having an attachment to ancestral lands and their resources; (5) today engaging in modern subsistence economic arrangements; while (6) having and seeking to maintain a traditional language.

In Canada, the history of Indigenous peoples is indelibly connected to the control imposed by colonial powers. Colonizers initially imposed their worldviews on *Indians*[2] through land expropriation. For *Indians*, land was a 'hallmark of identity' (Henson, 2008, p. 95). This is still observable in how Indigenous peoples today commonly introduce themselves in relation to a particular place. The lands on which *Indians* lived were gradually stripped of their resources (e.g. minerals, agriculture and animals) for western economic gains and many *Indians* were forced to give up their ancestral ways because their ability to live off the land was significantly constrained or destroyed. In fact, early colonizers, because of their inability to survive in harmony with nature, worked to reconfigure Indigenous territory in ways to facilitate western practices while harming ancestral

ones (Treuer, 2019). Thus, a deep, or even visceral, sense of loss is common today for Indigenous peoples on *Turtle Island*.[3]

Later, colonization became largely enacted by the implementation of legal restrictions. The '*Indian* Act'[4] prohibited traditional dress (Gagné, 1998), Indigenous names, cultural ceremonies (e.g., powwows and potlatches), and political enfranchisement (Joseph, 2018). Further, beginning in 1886, the colonial regimes of *Turtle Island* forced Indigenous parents to relocate their children to residential schools operated by Christian missionaries. Many were kidnapped and taken away during the *Sixties Scoop*, a term coined by Patrick Johnston in his 1983 book – *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* – which describes the large-scale and forceful removal of Indigenous children from their families from the mid-1950s to the early 1980s. At these schools, students were prohibited from being *Indians* and were punished for speaking their languages. Residential school survivors traumatically remember how starvation and torture were used to discipline children as young as six years old (Alamenciak, 2014). The objective behind this colonial military strategy was to mould the 'pesky *Indians*' to western worldviews (King, 2013). Thus, these students were 'caught between two cultures: whites tried to assimilate them into a society that was not ready to receive them, while taking away all the skills necessary to function in their own society' (Gagné, 1998, p. 363).

The 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada'[5] concluded that residential schools, the last of which, Kivalliq Hall in Rankin Inlet, was closed in 1997, were a form of cultural genocide that, together with the '*Indian* Act', left behind a shameful legacy of sexual, spiritual, emotional and physical abuse. Many Indigenous children were ultimately murdered and, in a final act of indignity, their bodies were dumped in recently discovered, unmarked graves (Honderich, 2021). In addition, the '*Indian* Act', although somewhat amended since its original 1876 version, remains the primary law still used today by the colonial government of Canada to administer its relationships with the Indigenous Nations of northern *Turtle Island*.

The historical context of Canada exemplifies how colonization has been detrimental to Indigenous Nations. Moreover, we can see from these brief examples how past colonial dynamics continue to harm Indigenous peoples by (un)intentionally obscuring their vibrant cultures and identities. Instead, we advocate for a greater appreciation of the intricacies inherent to Indigenous peoples and their diverse experiences and identities. Indigenous peoples are often speciously viewed as a homogenous ethnic group that pre-existed the colonial occupation of a territory. For instance, some Indigenous communities are struggling, decimated by colonization. Other communities, on the other hand, are firmly engaged in resurgence – a term used by Indigenous peoples to describe their journey towards cultural revitalization (Corntassel, 2012; Simpson, 2011). Indigenous Nations therefore have distinctive ways of organizing and thinking in relation to both their pre-and post-colonial pasts (Bastien, Foster, & Coraiola, 2021).

Indigenous organizing

Indigenous organizing has been largely overlooked because of the incorrect assumptions that it is inferior to, and/or incompatible with, contemporary management. This oversight obscures the reality that *Indian* Nations were actively, and successfully, organized for hundreds of years before the arrival of Europeans. Traditional councils of *Indian* Nations actively organized to maintain peace and order within their Nations and with other Nations, while securing allies, settling disputes and managing trade (Harrington, 2017; Roberts, 1975). The Huron-Wendats, for example, have for centuries, had families manufacture various artisanal products in their community of Wendake. These families produced tens of thousands of pairs of moccasins each year to be sold in various regions across eastern *Turtle Island* and Europe (Beaulieu, Béreau, & Tanguay, 2013). This is still

a common practice today. More recently, this same Nation successfully reclaimed their ancestral land through strategic development and the cultivation of strong stakeholder relations. This resulted in more control over the use of their land in accordance with their culture and ancestors' wishes (Cyr, 2016). There are countless other examples of organizational resilience in many other Indigenous nations across *Turtle Island*.

Unsurprisingly, however, colonizers used their own stories about the past to justify and defend their approaches to organizing (Foster, Coraiola, Suddaby, Kroezen, & Chandler, 2017; Treuer, 2019). In so doing, they disseminated a dichotomous view of the world; good over evil, reason over passion, and, in the context of this essay, the civilized over the *savage* (King, 2013). These oppositional narratives also implicitly reinforce the position that *winners* dictate and impose their version of the world upon the *losers*, who should accept the outcome. Today, Indigenous modes of organizing are still typically disregarded because the worldview in which decisions are made is often deemed as incompatible with, or inferior to, western thinking.

Indigenous knowledges

The dominant culture of colonizing countries continues to place itself at the civilized centre. This reference point is used to create a caricature of the colonized as fragile and devoid of reason due to a lack of western common sense. Furthermore, those at the centre characterize themselves as possessors of universal *truth* while disparaging the *other* as primitive (Bopp, Brown, & Robb, 2017) and/or dependent. In fact, the supposed supremacy of western thinking is implicitly cited as a justification to disregard and marginalize the *other* (Dussel, 1992). Or, worse yet, to enlighten them with western *truths*.

There is significant value in Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing despite being characterized by western approaches as outdated, ineffective and irrelevant (Murphy & Zhu, 2012). For example, Indigenous peoples share a spiritual worldview and a distinctive attitude towards the natural world (Chapman, McCaskill, & Newhouse, 1991). This unique connection includes a spiritual contract with animals, land and the cosmos (Catjete, 2000). Also, Indigenous worldviews emphasize and encourage reciprocal relationships between variables that are often nonlinear (Taagepera, 2008), complex, related and seemingly circular. Gladstone (2018, p. 196) explains that '[f]or natives, the idea of "relatedness" is not understood within separate and distinct compartments; rather, "relatedness" is a physical and metaphysical connection to everything temporal, spatial, and material'. It is perhaps best exemplified in the core Cree concept of *Wâhkôhtowin*, or kinship, and in the way in which all things are related and interconnected (O'Reilly-Scanlon, Crowe, & Weenie, 2004). And it has in fact been the main premise of a recent publication by Cutcher and Dale (2022) that looks at the relations between local kinship and the audit culture in an Indigenous credit union in Australia.

Indigenous ontologies are relational. This means that knowledge is circular and cyclical as well as socially and culturally constructed. Being 'related', in other words, constitutes reality over time. This is exemplified by the *Seventh Generation Principle*, an ancient Haudenosaunee philosophy, which champions the belief that decisions made today should result in a world sustainable for seven generations. The principle is in stark contrast to western approaches to knowledge which emphasize rapid, individual outcomes, aimed at short-term gains. Indigenous epistemologies are not 'cognitively bound' to western norms and values (Banerjee, 2022, p. 1076). Ojibwe author and truth-teller Tanya Talaga (2019, p. 25) best describes the contrast between western and Indigenous epistemologies by noting their differences: 'linear, not cyclical . . . often filtered through the lens of psychology and science, the rational over the spiritual'.

It is important to remember that knowledge and culture are interconnected because, as Oguamanam (2008) argues, knowledge can only flourish in the context of culture. The marginalization of Indigenous peoples, their identities, and how they organize, restricts their ability to share their own knowledges. Since 'knowledge [is] an instrument for cultural survival' (Oguamanam, 2008, p. 39), the ongoing devaluation of Indigenous knowledges is an effective western defence that ensures the continuing legacy of colonial authority in most academic disciplines, including MOS.

Systemic Discrimination in MOS: Marginalization of Indigenous Organizing and Knowledges

Similar to other fields of knowledge, systemic discrimination in MOS stems from colonization, western hegemony and the dominance of capitalist approaches. The most apparent outcome is the marginalization of Indigenous peoples and their systems of knowing and organizing. Marginalization facilitates the reproduction of broad institutional processes that surreptitiously reinforce systemic discrimination against Indigenous approaches in academia. These barriers are not just visible hurdles to clear; these barriers are hidden, often indecipherable, and present in all academic fields including MOS. Since 'research . . . is an institution of knowledge that is embedded in a global system of imperialism and power' (Smith, 2012, p. ix), the culture of our discipline generally reflects the narrow perspective of western thinkers. The marginalization of Indigenous systems of knowing and organizing is discernable and manifested in our discipline on two levels: in academia and in our business schools. We discuss each in turn.

Academia

The prevailing definition of what is considered as *truthful, valid* and *worthwhile* knowledge in MOS is a product of colonial structures. All other cosmologies and systems of knowledge are disregarded as mythical, irrelevant and subaltern vis-a-vis hegemonic western science (Mignolo, 2000) because the 'sustained dominant voice of western science and progress is a continuation of a colonial legacy' (Khan, 2006, p. 2787). As Marie Battiste (2018), Mi'kmaq author and educator, observed: 'cognitive imperialism' (p. 132) reinforces a context where western hegemony confines knowledge, creates barriers and fortifies convictions that the *other* is lacking and rightfully subservient. This currently exists in our discipline in the guise of epistemological racism (Scheurich & Young, 1997).

The predominant interests and ways of thinking in and about MOS are reinforced and reproduced through the alignment of methods, theories and subjects. For example, subjects and objects are viewed as discrete and findings are decontextualized. Both approaches are in direct conflict with Indigenous philosophy (Smith, 2012). Also foreign to Indigenous theorizing are theories built upon dualistic views of the world that support the exploitation of nature (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014) and reinforce social inequalities. In addition, subjects such as racism, exclusion and violence – common to the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples – have only recently received attention from management scholars (George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi, & Tihanyi, 2016). Joy and Poonamallee (2013) also noticed that the universality of western science and the centrality of white scholars from the Global North are what shapes the concerns and experiences that deserve attention. This was also noted by Bruton, Zahra, Van de Ven and Hitt (2022, p. 1057) when they wrote that western management theories, in their perceived universality, have largely 'overlook[ed] subtle cultural and ideological differences in other settings'. Western knowledge, like a powerful

'gatekeeper', has been the universal standard against which all other systems of knowledge are compared (Mignolo, 2000).

Why, then, do MOS researchers, Indigenous or not, work to generate Indigenous knowledges if they are devalued and unappreciated? The reality is that they do so because of a strong belief in their importance, despite great personal cost and professional sacrifice. This type of work is more difficult to publish because it stands outside the sphere of western science and prioritizes non-western methodologies and theories (Lillis & Curry, 2010). In addition, translating Indigenous knowledges is a long process not conducive to the short-term requirements of our discipline. Those who are granted tenure in MOS build upon already existing knowledge to gain recognition among established western academics. In contrast, prioritizing Indigenous knowledges is a long-term approach that requires rebuilding destroyed systems of knowledges and practices, valuing tacit knowledges and, most importantly, listening to and learning from the experiences of Indigenous knowledge keepers (Doucette et al., 2021). This is particularly difficult to manage in MOS because of the pressures to replicate western modes of research (Adair, 1999) that focus on gap-spotting (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013), especially when standards for management scholarship are increasingly rigid and codified (Aguinis, Cummings, Ramani, & Cummings, 2020).

Despite the recent marginal growth of Indigenous research in MOS, there are many other structural limitations that currently hinder the production of Indigenous knowledges. First, Indigenous voices in MOS are few! The near absence of Indigenous scholars illustrates the systematic exclusion and marginalization of Indigenous peoples from western societies in general and academia in particular. The silence of Indigenous voices is, therefore, our most pressing concern. Second, although current Indigenous scholars are having a notable impact on our discipline (e.g. Doucette et al., 2021; Kelly & Woods, 2020; Price, Hartt, Yue, & Pohlkamp, 2017; Woods, Dell, & Carroll, 2022), most of the research on Indigenous issues is produced by non-Indigenous scholars. This pattern further marginalizes Indigenous representation and diminishes the recognition of Indigenous rights and the importance of their traditional systems of knowledge. Third, the lack of Indigenous voices reduces Indigenous communities to mere empirical sites where the focus is on learning *about the other* versus learning *from and with the other* (Jones & Jenkins, 2008; Said, 1979). The methods used to study, and not learn from or with, Indigenous peoples are commonly rooted in epistemic ignorance (Kuokkanen, 2008) which has caused, and continues to cause, serious concerns about the production of Indigenous knowledges (e.g. Banerjee & Linstead, 2004; Whiteman & Cooper, 2000, 2006).

These dynamics are exposed by Salmon, Chavez and Murphy (In press). They demonstrate that despite an emerging interest in Indigenous peoples and their knowledges, contributions to Indigenous-related research are mostly from non-Indigenous scholars. Also, they explain that most discussions of Indigenous knowledges and peoples are likely to have been published outside of core conversations within peripheral journals. These publications typically fail to reflect characteristics of participatory research and often promote the taken-for-granted benefits of western entrepreneurship and economic development strategies. Consequently, Indigenous knowledges linger precariously far from the centre, confined to the non-scientific fringes of our discipline. The marginalization of Indigenous knowledges in our discipline means that the values and norms of western culture continue to dominate the narrow discourse of MOS research (Filatotchev, Ireland, & Stahl, 2022).

Business schools

The purpose of business schools, first and foremost, is to reinforce the hegemony of the market economy and a market society (Fotaki & Prasad, 2015). For many Indigenous peoples, business

schools represent formal, western education and, thus, colonization. For instance, Indigenous peoples in Canada equate business education, as well as other forms of formal education, with residential schooling. Why? Because both were/are controlled, managed and funded by colonial governments and heavily informed by western thinking rooted in a colonial past. This may sound somewhat controversial, especially since settlers have, recently, started to self-aggrandize their commitments towards decolonizing university campuses. However, time spent in Indigenous communities elicits a much different perspective, one still firmly attached to the inter-generational trauma and legacy of residential schools. For the few Indigenous academics and educators in our field, this is easily seen in the business school accreditation process, that embraces and reproduces a sustained, institutionalized hegemony (Abreu-Pederzini & Suárez-Barraza, 2020), of 'measures and standards for assessment [that] are all western, with significant western biases' (Darley & Luethge, 2019, p. 105).

The overwhelming dominance of colonial thought is also rather apparent in the normative convictions of most, if not all, business schools: individuals are profit-seekers; land exists to be economically exploited and privately owned; organizations are hierarchies created to pursue specific goals; and markets are defined by competition and individualism. For many Indigenous peoples, these western ideas are antithetical to their own worldviews. One salient example is the concept of *Terra nullius* – a space that can be inhabited but that does not belong to a state. This principle once guided and served to legitimate colonial governments when they seized Indigenous lands on the pretence that its habitants were neither Christian nor baptized (Sioui, 2022). This dynamic remains today where colonial governments and extraction companies actively work to displace Indigenous Nations from their *unceded* lands because of their reluctance to exploit their traditional territories for economic purposes. This is easily exemplified by the recent debates about pipelines and their ensuing violation of Indigenous rights in colonial Canada. The new decree is clear: to participate in society, or to be civilized, you do not need to contribute to the church, but you need to contribute to the economy. This approach is equivalent to previous colonial dynamics, albeit under a new veneer, and reinforced by western business schools.

In contrast, Indigenous peoples honour the land as part of their culture, they embrace circular and cyclical ontologies to protect future generations and they cooperate to ensure cultural perpetuity and communal welfare. Whiteman and Cooper (2000) eloquently described the non-western spiritual, custodial and reciprocal relationships Cree trappers in Northern Québec have with their land. In contrast, business school students seldom have any emotional tie to any land. We typically teach students to look for opportunities anywhere, to relocate for study or work, and to change jobs frequently so they can stay ahead of the trends. Students become loyal to corporate mission statements and lack ecological reciprocity (Whiteman & Cooper, 2006). Further, many Indigenous Nations assign rank based on 'one's ability to share wealth rather than establishing rank by holding on to wealth' (Joseph, 2018, p. 48). In fact, even the hero of the business school, 'the [hypermuscular] lone entrepreneur' (Fotaki & Prasad, 2015, p. 565), is incompatible with many Indigenous worldviews because 'Indigenous histories are filled with examples of entrepreneurial action [by outsiders] that have all but destroyed social communities' (Tapsell & Woods, 2010, p. 552).

To be clear, we are not advocating an end to the business school, economic development or entrepreneurship. We are simply signalling that these institutions and their colonial dynamics are realities for Indigenous peoples that may detract from a focus on more immediate priorities such as social welfare, cultural revitalization and land protection, all of which are of equal importance with regard to how decisions are made. This is clearly reflected in the lack of Indigenous educators in business schools and, even worse, in the shortage of Indigenous students seeking a business education.

Indigenizing MOS: A Way Forward

Our core argument is that the field of MOS – including its business schools, scholars, conferences, journals and editors – remains implicitly rooted in colonial dynamics. This is reflected by broader institutional processes that (un)intentionally reinforce systemic discrimination and marginalizes Indigenous peoples. In other words, 'cognitive imperialism' (Battiste, 2018, p. 132) continues to restrict the ways Indigenous scholars approach, teach and present their ideas. We argue that unless systemic discrimination against Indigenous peoples is acknowledged, MOS will continue to uncritically reproduce research that discounts important voices. To reduce systemic discrimination, we must instead listen to and learn from these voices. We must bring Indigenous peoples and their ways of knowing and organizing to the *centre*. To do so, we argue that we need to *demarginalize* Indigenous knowledges by rethinking indigeneity in the academy and the business school.

Demarginalizing Indigenous research

Indigenous scholars need a legitimate platform from which to speak. Publishers and editors of top journals must acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledges (Hamann et al., 2020). Editors, specifically, must create space in their journals for Indigenous peoples so that their knowledges are not relegated to marginal outlets and audiences. In other words, concerted editorial efforts must be made since 'leading journals remain hostile to explanations other than universal theories such that very little Indigenous theory has permeated the "straight jacket of theory" that now exists in management' (Bruton et al., 2022, p. 1059). This 'gatekeeping' reinforces the supremacy of western theories and reduces the variety of knowledge needed to further develop our field of study (Bruton et al., 2022).

Some have suggested starting new journals solely focused on Indigenous issues. While this is a step in the right direction, we need to be careful not to further marginalize Indigenous perspectives. Instead, we call on editors and publishers to invite Indigenous scholars to take part in core conversations and address Indigenous topics and issues in their outlets. In doing so, it is imperative that whenever a paper explores Indigenous knowledges that Indigenous reviewers are consulted. Moreover, knowledge keepers and Elders should take an active role in evaluating the quality of Indigenous-based research (Smith, 2018).

The inclusion of Indigenous peoples, as well as their knowledges, in key academic positions and processes is a necessary step toward reducing systemic discrimination in our field. Organizers of academic conferences on colonized territories, for instance, must go beyond simply acknowledging the *unceded* land on which they walk. Indigenization signifies that conferences need to be planned in consultation with Indigenous knowledge keepers and Elders – i.e. defining dates and places, inviting Indigenous peoples as keynote speakers, creating themes on Indigenous issues, and evaluating the impact of the conference.

There have been some discussions about how Indigenous and non-Indigenous research can be bridged. For example, Seremani and Clegg (2016) have suggested the use of epistemological third spaces to negotiate identities and worldviews. Others have proposed two-eyed seeing to balance Indigenous and mainstream approaches (Colbourne, Moroz, Hall, Lendsay, & Anderson, 2019). And still others, such as Hamann and colleagues (2020), advance dialogical contextualism to surface our embedded assumptions in order to generate transformative dialogue. All such approaches are non-binary processes that reflect the context of equal power dynamics by generating complementary spaces of interpretation. This bridging is encouraged because 'enlightenment epistemology rests on a dualistic foundation' (Strega, 2005, p. 203) that contrasts the rationality of western modes to the *irrational* thoughts of the *other*. We believe that approaching Indigenous knowledges

as a counter-narrative endorses an enlightenment epistemology that can limit potential collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, while (un)intentionally keeping Indigenous knowledges at the margins of our discipline.

To indigenize, researchers need to involve Indigenous peoples in every aspect of the research process. Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars must work together to generate inclusive research questions that employ Indigenous methods, such as community-based participatory research. As Battiste and Henderson (2009, p. 5) observed, 'the best approach to learning and understanding Indigenous knowledges exists in the dynamic linguistic foundations of Indigenous frameworks and paradigms'. These frameworks and paradigms, when uncovered, can provide researchers appropriate platforms to learn, discuss and interpret established norms and ideas. This is especially important when perceptions of the world, particularly in our discipline, are exclusively filtered through western categories (Banerjee & Linstead, 2004).

Going beyond 'cosmetic indigenization' in business schools

Indigenization and decolonization are, finally, being recognized as significant and important to business schools (Abreu-Pederzini & Suárez-Barraza, 2020; Darley & Luethge, 2019; Kothiyal, Bell, & Clarke, 2018). This is particularly important for those situated on the ancestral, *unceded*, lands of Indigenous Nations. This brings us to a key element in our 'call to action'. We call for vigilance in how business schools move forward. Below, we warn business schools about the potential repercussions of 'cosmetic indigenization'.

'Cosmetic indigenization' is defined as the superficial appropriation of Indigenous identities and knowledges to enhance or further the image of a colonial organization. The process is often (un) intentional and can be well intentioned. Nevertheless, 'cosmetic indigenization' almost always occurs because of the hubris of colonial settlers. That is, settlers assume they know what is best for Indigenous peoples. For example, many Canadian university campuses have been inundated with Indigenous art and teepees after the recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in its final report. Business schools also followed suit. In their attempts to indigenize, business schools compete to hire 'token' Indigenous scholars without serious thought as to how they can be supported. And white, settler professors now automatically include native land acknowledgement on faculty email signatures without understanding the meaning or implication of their words.

Not surprisingly, this surface-level approach to indigenization has not translated into a better experience for Indigenous Nations and their peoples. We argue, instead, that 'cosmetic indigenization' merely reflects the *desire* to appear virtuous; a *desire* more noticeable since the remains of 215 children were recently found buried at a former residential school. Truth be told, the most obvious problem in business schools is that almost all efforts to indigenize will be cosmetic because colonial reasoning still informs its curriculum, organizational structures and knowledge. To many in the business school, indigenization is seen as an 'easy fix'; simple actions taken to assuage feelings of guilt they feel for the cultural genocide perpetuated by many of their ancestors. This belief that indigenization is easy and achievable is the reason why many forms of 'cosmetic indigenization' prevail. For instance, Dutta and Elers (2020, p. 5) noticed that in Aotearoa (New Zealand), 'rather than disestablishing the colonial education structure that has failed Māori, and reimagining and reinventing education, Māori cultural concepts are used superficially on official documentation to pass off the colonial education structure as being a system for Māori'.

To combat 'cosmetic indigenization', we embrace Gaudry and Lorenz's (2018) concept of *decolonial indigenization*. This 'paradigm shift' requires a strong commitment towards decentring the grip of colonial epistemologies and ontologies in our discipline. To frame it in our discipline's perspective, business schools must work towards recognizing Indigenous peoples as key and equal

stakeholders. Indigenous knowledge keepers and Elders must be empowered as legitimate holders of knowledge who have equal standing with western scholars. In colonized places, true indigenization goes beyond the formal boundaries of business schools. *Decolonized indigenization* of the business school embraces the unique conditions, realities and worldviews of the peoples whose territories are occupied by these institutions. After all, indigenization has different connotations for different Nations.

Indigenization cannot only be symbolic, or remain on the surface; rather, it is a process that requires meaningful, systematic and wholehearted change! Universities and business schools have yet to fully develop true capabilities to indigenize. Instead, what we see reflects processes of ceremonial adoption (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) and institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Since many of our business schools have expressed a strategic commitment to indigenize, we believe that they should be held accountable and this means quickly moving beyond 'cosmetic indigenization'.

Conclusion

As MOS scholars, we must break the barriers that marginalize Indigenous knowledges. We cannot continue to keep Indigenous knowledges on the periphery because doing so glosses over the uniqueness of Indigenous Nations and reinforces the hegemony of western knowledge. We believe removing barriers to Indigenous knowledges will reduce systemic discrimination in MOS, thus providing a meaningful alternative to the discipline's myopia.

The potential for Indigenous knowledges to reshape western science is already making headlines in other disciplines – i.e. fighting forest fires (e.g. Paling, 2021) and climate science (e.g. Bochove, 2022; Zingel, 2022) for instance. In our opinion, the time is now for our business schools to start listening and, finally, to start changing. We must be reminded that human activity relies on nature; but the natural world does not need humans (Marcus, Kurucz, & Colbert, 2010). As humans, we are only *part* of a sacred circle. To survive, we must understand our role and our responsibilities in that circle.

We have argued that a more respectful field of research emerges when we expand our understanding of Indigenous knowledges. This is the way to foster meaningful inclusion, to reframe the core of the discipline, to avoid perpetuating 'cosmetic indigenization', to work diligently against systemic discrimination, and to transform our business schools (Holtbrügge, 2013). Our 'call to action' is meant to inspire and animate MOS scholars to view Indigenous peoples and their many Nations in a different light. We ask our colleagues and friends to embrace a polyphonic climate of Indigenous resilience and resurgence that attends not only to 'traditional knowledge' but also to the notion of 'contemporary Indigenous knowledges'. These knowledges are not only relevant to our field, but paramount to counteracting centuries of colonial oversight and discrimination. In light of this reality, we suggest that management scholars ask themselves two questions: 'What can I learn from Indigenous peoples?' and 'Why have we not been listening?'

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ORCID iD


François Bastien https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2014-8366

Notes

1. This essay discusses the experiences of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian colonial context. Our personal histories and professional experience working with Indigenous Nations from *Turtle Island* (Canada) inform our conversation. We recognize, however, that our argument may also resonate with other Indigenous scholars and other marginalized groups throughout the world.
2. According to Joseph (2018, p. 110), 'the origin of the term '*Indian*' dates back to Christopher Columbus, who mistakenly thought he had reached the East Indies, so referred to the people in the lands visited as '*Indios*', which is Spanish for '*Indians*'. The term is now considered derogatory and outdated when used in reference to an individual, but it is still used in a historical and legal context'.

   Some Indigenous peoples still identify to the term, especially in relation to the pre-colonial past. We use the term '*Indian*' within a pre-colonial context and the term 'Indigenous' within a post-colonial one.
3. The term *Turtle Island*, especially for Indigenous peoples from the Northeastern part of North America, refers to the continent of North America. For the Huron-Wendat, *Turtle Island* represents mother earth – a central premise to stories about creation. As told by Elders, during the great flood, Yäa'taenhtsihk, the chief's daughter, was saved by geese, caught in midair, and gently placed on the back of the Great Turtle. With the help of other animals who also survived the flood and worked tirelessly to collect soil deep beneath the water, the world was recreated: the *Island of the Great Turtle* (Picard-Sioui & Sioui-Wawanoloath, 2016). In comparison to Adam and Eve, the Christian story of creation 'governed by a series of hierarchies – God, man, animal, plants – that celebrate law, order, and good government', the story of *Turtle Island* 'is governed by a series of co-operations – charm, . . ., animals, humans – that celebrate equality and balance (King, 2003, pp. 23–24).
4. The '*Indian* Act' is a Canadian Federal law passed in 1876 that governs in matters pertaining to *Indian* status, bands, and *Indian* reserves.
5. The 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada' is 'a report released on 2 June, 2015, after six years of hearings and testimony from more than 6000 residential school survivors and their loved ones. The report includes 94 calls to action to be followed if Canada is to address the 'cultural genocide' of Indigenous peoples as enacted with the residential school policy and achieve true reconciliation' (Joseph, 2018, p. 130).

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Author biographies

François Bastien's story begins in Wendake. As a Huron-Wendat, he has worked in both French and English with various Indigenous organizations. In his work, he has observed various incongruities between Indigenous

ways of organizing and contemporary colonial models. Throughout his PhD at HEC Montréal, his limited term appointment (LTA) at the John Molson School of Business, his work as an Assistant Professor at the University of Alberta (Augustana Campus) and now as an Assistant Professor at the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, he has noticed a shared struggle to decolonize and indigenize. His research work focuses on Indigenous peoples, Indigenous knowledges, Indigenous management, Indigenous organizing, collective memory and rhetorical history. He currently sits on the editorial review board for the Academy of Management Learning & Education.

Diego M. Coraiola is associate professor of entrepreneurship at the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business. His research focuses on collective action and social change. In his current research projects, he looks at collective memory and the strategic uses of the past, Indigenous organizing and collective entrepreneurship. His work has been published in journals such as the *Academy of Management Annals, Strategic Management Journal, Journal of Management Studies, Organization Studies* and *Journal of Business Ethics*. He is an Associate Editor at the Academy of Management Learning and Education.

William M. Foster is a professor of management at the University of Alberta. His primary research interests include rhetorical history, collective memory, Indigenous management and knowledges, and business ethics. He has been published in journals such as *Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Management, Strategic Management Journal* and *Organization Studies*. He is the former Editor-in-Chief of Academy of Management Learning and Education and serves on the Editorial Review Boards of *Organization Studies, Academy of Management Review* and *Journal of Management Studies.*