DEFINING INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A RESEARCH FIELD: DISCOVERING AND CRITIQUING THE EMERGING CANON (SUMMARY)

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Recommended Citation
Available at: http://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol27/iss9/1

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SUMMARY

DEFINING INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A RESEARCH FIELD:
DISCOVERING AND CRITIQUING THE EMERGING CANON

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Principal Topic

As recently as 2001, there was no extant concept of ‘Indigenous entrepreneurship’ in the scholarly literature of entrepreneurship and related disciplines. However, there was a profuse and diffuse sprinkling of works bearing on issues germane to the economic and social development of Indigenous peoples, that is, the original owners of territories that had been conquered by an invading culture. In countries including the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Northern Scandinavia, Japan and many others the polity of the invader has become ‘the mainstream’. Original, direct hostility to Indigenous peoples has been superseded by the debilitating social, economic and individual effects of passive welfare systems that have deprived Indigenous peoples of the much of their capacity to create wealth in autonomous and culturally sensitive ways (Hindle and Lansdowne 2005). Worldwide, and remarkably recently, the practice of Indigenous entrepreneurship has come to be seen as a means of addressing a variety of entrenched problems associated with disadvantaged Indigenous minorities in otherwise rich nation states. Since 2001, there have been several discernible attempts to define ‘Indigenous entrepreneurship’ as a distinct sub-field of research, but no work has been done to try to integrate the variety of efforts in this area. This study provides an investigation of over seventy-five works that have the \textit{prima facie} potential to be listed in any emerging canon of Indigenous entrepreneurship.

Method

The study began by casting a wide net and ‘trawling’ to capture as many works as possible with \textit{a priori} claim (mainly by title and abstract) to be in the field. Using a specially developed literature classification matrix, the authors then divided the works under scrutiny for the purpose of achieving two goals: the definition of a research field in Indigenous entrepreneurship; and the listing and critique of a canon of extant, scholarly works that can be said to belong in that field.

Results and Implications

We conclude that there is an emerging body of conceptual and empirical work sufficient to argue that ‘Indigenous entrepreneurship’ constitutes a distinct and legitimate sub-field of the entrepreneurship discipline.

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