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The Ivey Case Study Writing Process: An Indigenous Decolonial Framework

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THE IVEY CASE STUDY WRITING PROCESS: An Indigenous Decolonial Framework



IVEY
Business School

WESTERN UNIVERSITY • CANADA

PRESENTED BY:
Emma L. Hedderson



Abstract

My research project involves creating a structural framework for Ivey business school to use when utilizing Indigenous peoples/communities in curriculum case studies. The case study we are currently working on with the Tahltan Nation Development Corporation (TNDC) is serving as a blueprint for creating this decolonial structural framework. The goal for this framework is that it provides important contextual information to guide the case writing process, while simultaneously maintaining the respect and integrity of Indigenous communities and their knowledge. Throughout my journey with Head & Heart I have learned many valuable lessons and have had the opportunity to deeply connect with my Indigeneity. The R's of Indigenous research have framed not only the research I've been doing, but also my personal journey with Indigenous resurgence. I am eternally grateful for the knowledge and relationships I have gained from my research experience, and I am committed to continue to utilize these to grow as an Indigenous woman and scholar.

Keywords: indigenous knowledge, decolonization, business case studies, community-based research

Table of Contents

- 04** Introduction
- 05** Part I: Pan-Indigenous Contextual Experiences
- 09** Part I - References
- 11** Part II: Nation-Specific Contextual Experiences
- 13** The 6 R's of Indigenous Research
- 15** Reflection Questions
- 17** Final Remarks

Introduction

This framework is the beginning of a reflective conversation for writers of business cases that have as their central focus, issues or stories, related to Indigenous experiences, topics and business cases within the context of Canada. This framework occurs in two parts. Part 1 takes a Pan-Indigenous Approach to think about, and offers information regarding the impacts of colonization on Indigenous communities across Canada. While Part 2 takes a Nation-Specific Approach, regarding the Tahltan Nation. We have chosen to discuss 4 interconnected topics about colonization as a means of orienting both writers and readers of Indigenous business cases. We believe that these topics are critical for the understanding of how colonization has operated within the context of Canada, and how it still operates today, impacting historical and contemporary Indigenous experiences, sovereignty, health and wellbeing.

To begin, I would like to introduce myself to you. To offer who I am, and my positionality, related to the offering of this information in this framework.

Aaniin! My name is Emma Hedderson and I am a proud mixed Ojibwe, Métis, and Inuk woman! I am a third year student pursuing an Honours Specialization in Psychology and a major in Indigenous Studies; I am also a fellow in the 2022 Head & Heart Indigenous Research fellowship this summer! I unfortunately grew up with a significant disconnect to my Indigenous culture due to the intergenerational effects of the residential school system and Sixties Scoop. However in recent years, I have just started my journey to heal and reclaim my Indigeneity while practicing Indigenous resurgence. While I still have a long way to go, I am committed and passionate about this journey and am excited to grow as an Indigenous woman and scholar!

Indigenous knowledge is cyclical, holistic, and relational; all living beings and entities are related and have spirit. Indigenous peoples' lives are centered around relationality and understand that human lives are interdependent with one another. Indigenous experiences such as the Indian Act, environmental dispossession, MMIWG, and the residential school system, are also all relational and have had profound effects on Indigenous communities. These institutions/experiences have ravaged and devastated Indigenous communities and are all interconnected; you cannot speak about one experience without speaking about another because they mutually reinforce one another. For example, the Indian Act enforced the residential school system, and intergenerational trauma caused by the residential school system contributes to the crises of MMIWG, as does environmental dispossession. While these are just a few among the many examples these events are interconnected; evidently, all of these experiences are cyclical. When utilizing and considering Indigenous experiences it is important to fully understand each of these disparities and their effects in order to maintain the integrity and respect of these communities. If proper context is not provided on these experiences, there is a risk that these experiences could be misinterpreted and used to discriminate against Indigenous peoples.

PART 1: PAN-INDIGENOUS // CONTEXTUAL INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES

The Indian Act, Environmental Dispossession, MMIWG, and Residential Schools



THE INDIAN ACT

- The Indian Act was first introduced in 1876 and its purpose was to eliminate First Nations culture in order to assimilate them into Euro-Canadian society. The Indian Act has enabled social and cultural disruption for generations of Indigenous peoples which in turn has also resulted in severe trauma. The Act destroyed Indigenous self-determination and instead placed dependency on the Canadian government and its agencies. The Canadian government dictated Indigenous identity, political structures, governance, cultural practices, and education. This power restricted Indigenous freedoms and allowed the government to determine the rights of Indigenous peoples based on what they believed were 'civil' and 'moral'. Ultimately, the Indian Act permanently altered the trajectory of collective Indigenous cultural identity and well-being, as well as their relationship with the Canadian state.
- The Act has been amended multiple times, most notably in 1951 and 1985; these changes primarily focused on removal of the discriminatory sections (however one can argue the entire Act is discriminatory...). Today, the modern version of the Indian Act is still the primary law the federal government uses for terms of Indian Status, rules/regulations for reserves, financial guardianship of minors and the mentally incompetent, management of band resources, elections, and various other aspects of life on reserves. Evidently, the Indian Act has had everlasting and ongoing impacts on every aspect of Indigenous life and is an extremely important category to have in place in order to better contextualize the social/cultural disparities Indigenous peoples face in Canada.

- In my eyes, the Indian Act is sort of a 'blueprint' for almost every inequality Indigenous peoples have faced and continue to experience today.
- "We all want to move beyond the Indian Act's control and reconstitute ourselves as Indigenous peoples and Nations with fundamental inherent rights." - Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Perry Bellegarde

ENVIRONMENTAL DISPOSSESSION

- "Environmental dispossession refers to processes that reduce Indigenous people's access to the resources of their traditional lands and resources" (Gifts from the Elders, 2013).
- For time immemorial, Indigenous communities have been "caretakers of the environment, protecting their lands, respecting wildlife and utilizing traditional knowledge passed down through generations" (Climate Academy by Grounded, 2020). In Indigenous culture, land is much more than something one can possess or own, its meaning and existence is much deeper than just property. Land/Mother Earth is the foundation of life for Indigenous peoples and is the source of cultural, spiritual, and social identity.
- Scholars Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua state that, "to separate Indigenous peoples from their land is to preempt Indigenous sovereignty" (Hanson, 2009, p. 2). Therefore, Land and Indigenous rights are intimately connected (Hanson, 2009, p. 2).
- Indigenous peoples cannot function as Indigenous peoples without their ties to the land. Environmental dispossession is a key contributor to the loss of Indigenous culture, knowledge, and teachings, and has also had devastating consequences on Indigenous peoples' health— especially Indigenous peoples occupying Northern Canada. Indigenous peoples have been at the foreground of the impacts of pollution and climate change, both processes of environmental dispossession. Pollution and consequently, climate change, impact nearly every aspect of Indigenous life, resilience, cultural continuity, and transmission of Indigenous knowledge and land skills, particularly among Indigenous youth (Ford et al., 2020). Ultimately, Indigenous peoples are particularly sensitive to processes of environmental dispossession due to their close relationship with the land and all of its elements (Ford et al., 2020).

MMIWG

- MMIWG refers to ‘Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls’. In the past 30 years, roughly 4,000 Indigenous women and girls have gone missing or been murdered (Morin, 2020, p. 28). In other words, that is approximately 133 a year, or 3 women/girls a week. Undoubtedly, MMIWG is a national crisis and a genocide. The MMIWG crisis is a result of the historical and contemporary oppression that Indigenous communities face; including but not limited to: the residential school system, the Sixties Scoop, and sexual exploitation. These inequalities among many, have all contributed to the ongoing violence and specific vulnerabilities that Indigenous women and girls experience in Canada as well as the way they are dealt with and perceived by law enforcement, government agencies, and Canadian society (Windsor, 2015, p. 3).
- A national conversation regarding MMIWG must occur and be transformed to build a strong foundation for healing, justice, and reconciliation (Bell, 2018, p. 9). There has been an extreme lack of awareness regarding MMIWG, and Indigenous women activists have referred to this as a “deafening silence” (Brant, 2017, p. 34). When Canadian courts “allow men to torture and kill Indigenous women with impunity, it paints Indigenous people as unmournable, subhuman, and underserving of justice” (Lewis, 2021, slide 31). Most cases of MMIWG remain unsolved, and in cases that did go to trial, family members and survivors felt unsupported, marginalized and reduced to stereotypes (Buller, 2019, p. 1). In order to preserve the rights and dignity of these women, the Canadian government, society, and our laws must become conscious of the systematic causes and failures to respond to the crisis of MMIWG. Indigenous women and girls are sacred and deserve to be protected.
- This category is important to have in place due to the lack of awareness of this genocide. Most Canadians are oblivious to the crisis of MMIWG and I believe that including this topic is an area readers/learners must explore.



RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

- The Canadian Residential School System was undeniably a form of genocide and was designed to “kill the Indian in the child” in order to assimilate them into Euro-Canadian society. Indigenous children who attended these institutions experienced psychological, physical, spiritual, and sexual abuse inflicted upon by their ‘caregivers’ and this was disguised as forms of ‘discipline’. The abuse and neglect faced by Indigenous children in residential schools was a horrific event in Canadian history and its effects are still felt today in the form of intergenerational trauma. Survivors were not nurtured and shown love while institutionalized, instead ‘parenting’ models were based on coercion and abuse (Menzies, 2020, p. 5). With little to no experience of nurturing familial conditions, many survivors lack the knowledge to nurture their own children as adults (Menzies, 2020, p. 5). Evidently, many residential school survivors face significant mental health challenges, which in turn, is interconnected with most socioeconomic disparities in Indigenous communities.
- In a national survey conducted between 2008 and 2010, members of First Nations communities identified “managing substance use as the number-one challenge for community wellness” (Menzies, 2020, p. 4). Indigenous youth are extremely vulnerable in Canadian society, and while they only make up less than 8% of children aged 14 and under, they account for 52% of children in the foster care system (Menzies, 2020, p. 5). Evidently, the trauma of residential schools remains today not only through survivors, but also their offspring.
- Readers/learners must explore this topic because the intergenerational trauma caused by the CRSS is critical to understanding Indigenous inequalities with a deeper context. This awareness allows for educated and unbiased perspectives on present day crises within Indigenous communities and eliminates the risk that such crises could be used to discriminate and misunderstand Indigenous peoples.



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PART 2: NATION-SPECIFIC // CONTEXTUAL INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES

Why is a contextual approach so important to understanding Indigenous experiences in Canada?



Colonization has reshaped and damaged not only Indigenous communities, their culture and their identity, but also Indigenous peoples' relationship with the Canadian state and society. The Canadian government and settlers have created and sustained the boundaries and disparities that exist within Indigenous communities and Canadians must assume the role of reversing these effects. It is not the job of Indigenous peoples to educate Canadian society on colonization and its outcomes.

While Indigenous voices and inclusion are particularly important in guiding these conversations, we are not responsible for educating Canadians on what *Canadians* have done. It is important to acknowledge colonization and subsequently Indigenous disparities when learning about Indigenous peoples because these experiences shape and contribute to the collective identity of Indigenous peoples. With this being said, it is also important to understand that Indigenous peoples are not defined by these experiences and these experiences do not make up one's entire identity—rather only a fraction of it. If Canadians are not provided a proper contextual education on Indigenous peoples, these experiences can be misunderstood and result in racist, colonial views towards Indigenous peoples. In order to heal the individual and collective identity of Indigenous peoples in Canada, society must become awakened to their role in colonization but also avoid a deficit approach when considering Indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples are much more than these experiences; Indigenous peoples have inherent rights and rich cultural values and practices. They are successful and resilient people who have made great contributions to Canadian history that are beyond the impacts of colonization. These contributions and Indigenous people as a whole must be celebrated and acknowledged as triumphant peoples in Canada.

Examples of the type of contextual knowledge that would be important to consider with respect to the Tahltan Nation:

Via: Tahltan Central Government. (2022, June 29). Retrieved July 25, 2022, from <https://tahltn.org/>

- “Our culture is organized through a **matrilinear** clan system. This means that crests and inheritance are passed down through the mother. Since time immemorial, this system has provided the basis of Tahltan law and governance.”
- “The Tahltan Nation is divided into two **clans**, the **Crow** (or Tsesk’iya) and the **Wolf** (or Ch’ioyone). Each clan is further divided into several family groups. Legends about the Crow and Raven continue to guide the Tahltan people about the best way of living, for example, by the principles of determination, generosity and resourcefulness among others.”
- **Key Stories-** “As an example, our stories provide inspiration to talented Tahltan artists, who enshrine our stories into beautiful moccasins, drums, blankets and other valuables. These are just some of the ways in which Tahltan culture is preserved and shared with the world.”
- **Connection to Land**
 - “Tahltans currently make up over half of the residents in Tahltan territory, dispersed between three main communities: Telegraph Creek, Dease Lake and Iskut.”
 - “Tahltan Territory is 95,933 km² or the equivalent of 11% of British Columbia. If the Tahltan Nation were its own country, we would be bigger than Portugal and slightly smaller than South Korea. The territory is rich in natural resources and continues to garner international attention for its mineral potential and abundant wildlife.”
- **The Tahltan Central Government (TCG)-** “In July of 1976, at a First Annual Gathering of the Tahltan people, a collective decision was made to unite the people under a democratic system which would represent the interests of the Tahltan Nation, thus forming the Association of United Tahltans.”
- **Declaration of the Tahltan Tribe**
- **Relationship with the Canadian State**

The 6 R's of Indigenous Research

McGregor, Deborah; Restoule, Jean-Paul; and Johnston, Rochelle, "Indigenous Research: Theories, Practices, and Relationships" (2018). Books.

RELATIONSHIPS

RESPECT

RESPONSIBILITY

RELEVANCE

RECIPROCITY

REFUSAL

The 6 R's of Indigenous research is an excellent tool and framework to guide scholars through the lens of Indigenous knowledge. The 6 R's: Relationships, Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility, and Refusal, are all principles that embody the collective Indigenous culture and identity. These principles highlight how to approach and create research in a way that is respectful and maintains the integrity of Indigenous peoples and their knowledge. Each R is important to consider and reflect on when pursuing Indigenous knowledge and all are of equal significance and relevance. I invite you to explore each R and its meaning below and utilize these principles in your research/learning journey. Miigwech!

The 6 R's of Indigenous Research

Relationships: Relationships exist between the researcher and their participants, between the land the research is being conducted on, between the people who learn or read about the final research, and ancestors and future generations. Ultimately, researchers are constituted by their relationships, there is even a relationship itself between the researcher and the knowledge they're seeking.

Respect: The researcher must behave with respect in relationships. The researcher must also exhibit humility by showing respect to all individuals and communities they work with and the knowledge they share.

Responsibility: More than taking responsibility as a researcher; rather about taking responsibility as a human intertwined in a network of relationships. This is called 'relational accountability', meaning one is responsible for the research being done in a 'good way'.

Relevance: Research must be relevant and serve a purpose. Ideally, Indigenous communities initiate the research and have expressed a need or desire for the research. Every aspect of research must be understood and have bearing on the lives of the community members.

Reciprocity: Embodies the principle of serving the community and is also a way of maintaining balance in research relationships. Reciprocity serves as establishing a mutual relationship. Offering tobacco is just one of many examples where a respectful, and mutual relationship can be formed.

Refusal: Communities and participants may refuse to disclose or share information in research. Refusal represents sovereignty in research and Indigenous research methods base their efforts on Indigenous self-determination.

AS PART OF IVEY'S ONGOING COMMITMENT TO PRACTICING RECONCILIATION, WE INVITE YOU TO THINK ABOUT HOW YOU MIGHT ANSWER THE FOLLOWING REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS THAT WERE WRITTEN BY HEAD AND HEART FELLOW, EMMA HEDDERSON, FOLLOWING FROM THE 6R'S RESEARCH PRACTICE FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED BY MCGREGOR, RESTOULE AND JOHNSTON. WE HOPE THAT THESE REFLECTION QUESTIONS OFFER YOU SPACE TO CONSIDER HOW YOU HAVE BEGUN TO ENGAGE IN THE PROCESS OF DECOLONIZATION AND THE RICH CULTURE AND EXPERIENCES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CANADA.

Relationships:

- Whose traditional land/territory is the research being conducted on?
- What meaningful relationships have been formed in your research journey?
- After reading the final research, what is your relationship to the research?
- What relationship do you have to the knowledge you're seeking?
- What relationships have you cultivated with the water, plants and animals of the territory you are working or a guest on?

Respect:

- How have you shown respect to the individuals and communities you have worked with?
- How have you shown respect to the water, plants and animals you have encountered during your research with the community?
- How have you shown respect to the individual's/community's knowledge?
- How have Indigenous voices been prioritized? Have their ways of knowing/methodologies been respected and given sovereignty?
- How will you ensure Indigenous worldviews/knowledge will continue to be respected by those who learn or read about the final research?

Responsibility:

- How have you upheld '*relational accountability*'?
- What responsibilities have been required of you in your research journey and how have you upheld them?
- Who are you responsible for?
- How will you demonstrate your responsibility to the community or to individuals?
- How will you demonstrate your responsibility to the water, plants and animals related to the community you are working with?

AS PART OF IVEY'S ONGOING COMMITMENT TO PRACTICING RECONCILIATION, WE INVITE YOU TO THINK ABOUT HOW YOU MIGHT ANSWER THE FOLLOWING REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS THAT WERE WRITTEN BY HEAD AND HEART FELLOW, EMMA HEDDERSON, FOLLOWING FROM THE 6R'S RESEARCH PRACTICE FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED BY MCGREGOR, RESTOULE AND JOHNSTON. WE HOPE THAT THESE REFLECTION QUESTIONS OFFER YOU SPACE TO CONSIDER HOW YOU HAVE BEGUN TO ENGAGE IN THE PROCESS OF DECOLONIZATION AND THE RICH CULTURE AND EXPERIENCES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CANADA.

Relevance:

- What is the purpose of this research? Who does it benefit and why?
- Has this research been initiated by an Indigenous community? Have they expressed a need or desire for the research?
- How has this knowledge become relevant to you?
- How do you envision future work to be relevant and meaningful to Indigenous communities?
- How do you envision future work to be relevant and meaningful to the water, plants and animals related to the community?

Reciprocity:

- Does your research serve the Indigenous community in a meaningful way?
- Have you maintained a balance in your research relationships? Are all relationships mutually beneficial?
- What have you done to ensure that respectful and mutual relationships are formed and sustained over time?
- What actions have you taken to ensure that respectful and mutual relationships are formed and sustained over time with the water, plants and animals related to the community?

Refusal:

- Have you respected the wishes of those communities/individuals that have chosen to refuse to disclose or share information?
- Have you created a space that uplifts and promotes Indigenous self-determination/sovereignty?
- Have you listened to when the environment: the water, plants and animals have refused their participation in the proposed research? What queues has the land given about its fulsome participation?



Miigwech!

I hope that my work has guided you in the direction of Indigenous knowledge and research.



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