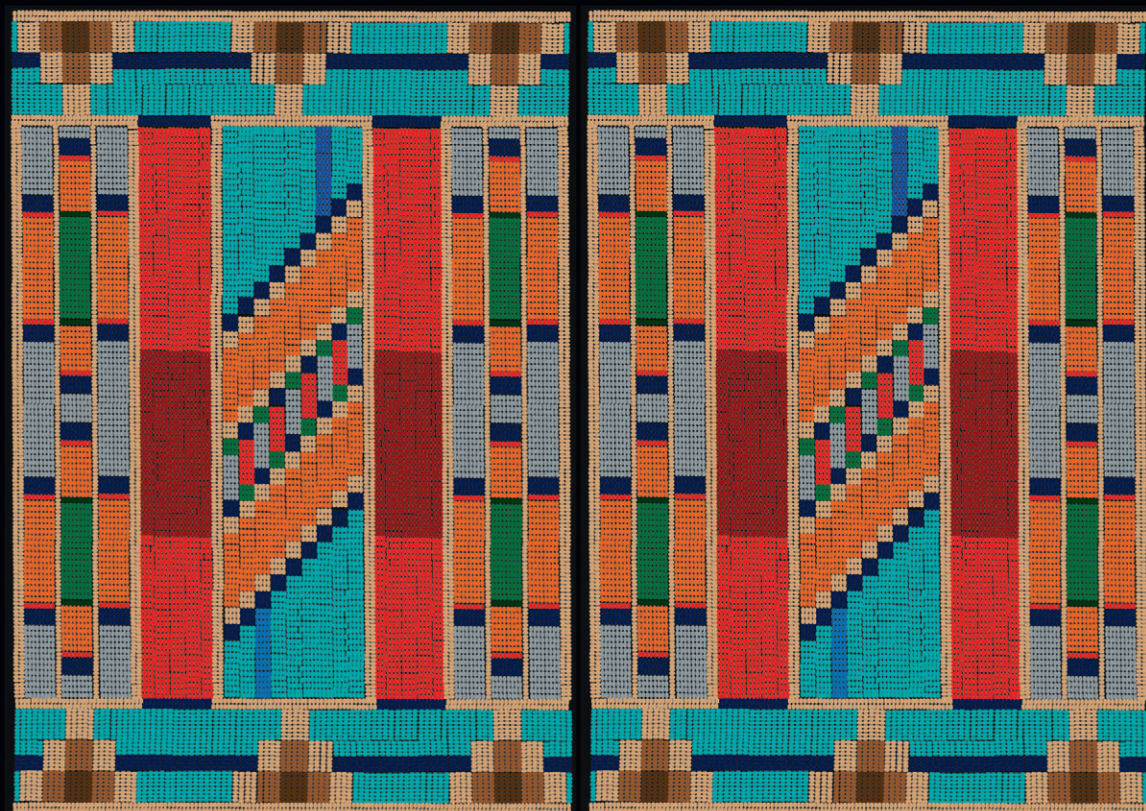# Clan and Tribal Perspectives on Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability

Indigenous Stories From Around the Globe

EDITED BY

James C. Spee • Adela J. McMurray • Mark D. McMillan

Clan and Tribal Perspectives on Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability

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EDITED BY

JAMES C. SPEE
University of Redlands, USA

ADELA MCMURRAY
RMIT University, Australia

MARK MCMILLAN
RMIT University, Australia

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

To Adela McMurray for inspiring and supporting the creation of this book every step of the way and to my wife Paige for her support in stressful times.
–James
To my parents and children, with love for all of time.
–Adela

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About the Editors

Prof. Mark McMillan, Wiradjuri man, is the Member of the Trangie Land Council, and since March 2017 has served as Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Indigenous Education and Engagement at RMIT University in Melbourne. He previously served as an Associate Professor at University of Melbourne Law School.

Prof. Adela McMurray is a Professor of Management at RMIT University, Melbourne. She has extensive experience researching in public and private sectors and has published over 260 refereed publications. Adela has won several teaching and leadership awards. Her research addressing workplace innovation, organisational culture and climate, cultural diversity, risk management, and sustainability is internationally recognised.

Prof. James C. Spee is Professor of Strategy, Sustainable Business, and Entrepreneurship at the University of Redlands in Redlands, California, USA. His lifelong interest in design thinking led him to focus his teaching and scholarship on sustainability and from there to helping entrepreneurs found sustainable startups in his community.

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About the Contributors

Meena Chavan is a Senior Lecturer and Program Director in International Business at Macquarie University, Australia. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and Fellow of the Intercultural Academy of Intercultural research. Her core research interests lie at the intersection of International Business & Entrepreneurship and Experiential learning and teaching.

Professor Brian L. Connelly is Professor and Luck Eminent Scholar in the Department of Management, Harbert College of Business, Auburn University, USA. He teaches and conducts research in the area of strategic leadership and negative organizational events. He is Editor of the *Journal of Management*, has published in other top management journals such as *Academy of Management Journal and Strategic Management Journal*, and regularly featured in top media outlets, such as *The New York Times* and *USA Today*.

Dr Andrew Creed is a Lecturer in the Department of Management in Deakin Business School, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia. He teaches, researches and consults in organizational behaviour, change, learning and sustainability. He is published in quality journals, including *Journal of Cleaner Production, Sustainability, Current Issues in Tourism, and European Business Review*, and top imprints including, Palgrave, Emerald, Cengage and Oxford University Press.

Bella L. Galperin, PhD, is Dana Professor of Management and Senior Associate Director of the TECO Energy Center for Leadership at the Sykes College of Business at the University of Tampa. Her interests relate to cross-cultural management and entrepreneurship. She is former Associate Editor of C*ross Cultural Management: An International Journal*.

Lawrence W. Gross is the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Endowed Chair of Native American Studies at the University of Redlands in Redlands, CA. He is the author of *Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being* (2014).

Bruno Marques is Programme Director for Landscape Architecture and Senior Lecturer. At the School of Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. His main research interests relate to the integration of indigenous methods in participatory design in landscape rehabilitation and ecosystem services.

Dr Virginia Marshall is Wiradjiri Nyemba. She is the Inaugural Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellow at the Australian National University, with the Schools of Regulation & Global Governance and Fenner Environment & Science. Virginia is the leading legal scholar on Indigenous Australian water rights and author of the award-winning seminal book *Overturning Aqua Nullius* (2017).

Jacqueline McIntosh is Senior Lecturer at the School of Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her main research interests are design-led culturally appropriate participatory design for improved health and well-being.

Dr Faye McMillan is Associate Professor Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia. Dr McMillan is a Wiradjuri *yinaa* (woman) from Trangie, NSW. Faye is the 2019 NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year and a Senior Atlantic Fellow. She is Australia's first registered Aboriginal Pharmacist. Her research interests are in Nation Building and Indigenous women in leadership roles.

Salahudin Muhidin is a Senior Lecturer in Demography at the Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. He has been involved in both research and teaching roles, especially at Management Department for the subject of International Business and Applied Demography.

Rosemary Mwipiko (Centre for Public Health Research, Massey University, New Zealand) is an Analyst working for the Environmental Health Indicators (EHI) team at the Centre for Public Health assisting with data visualisation. He is currently pursuing a Post-Graduate Diploma in Geographic Information Science at Victoria University of Wellington.

Dr Chioma Ohajunwa is Lecturer at the Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, and has a PhD in Health Sciences Rehabilitation focused on African indigenous spirituality and wellbeing and an MPhil in Disability Studies. He is currently involved in a transdisciplinary research on contextualization of indigenous knowledges within Medicine and Theology and disability policies within Africa.

Dr Ruth Hephzibah Orhoevwri (University of Otago, New Zealand) is Nigerian and has a PhD in Maori entrepreneurship from University of Otago, and an MSc in Business Administration from Umeå University, in Sweden. She currently works as an Intelligence and Insights Specialist with Inland Revenue in Wellington, New Zealand.

Dr Tamara Stenn (Landmark College, US) is a US Fulbright Scholar, Professor of Economics and Entrepreneurship, and a Coordinator for the HDCA Indigenous Peoples Thematic Group. Her research interests include economic wellbeing, indigenous wisdom, and sustainable development.

Dr Deborah Wardle (RMIT University, Australia) is a Researcher in the Office of Indigenous Education and Engagement at RMIT. She is published in Australian

and international eco-humanities journals. Her research interests include narrative expressions of groundwater.

Dr Farooq Yousaf holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Newcastle, NSW. He has previously completed his Master's in Public Policy from the University of Erfurt in Germany. His research interests include critical theory, traditional methods of conflict resolution and postcolonialism.

Associate Professor Ambika Zutshi (Deakin University, Australia) teaches and researches corporate social responsibility, business ethics, higher education and supply chain management. She has published in *International Journal of Management Reviews, Journal of Cleaner Production, European Business Review*, and the *International Journal of Environmental and Sustainable Development*. She is Australasian and Associate Editor of *European Business Review*, Emerald.

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Preface

Organizational stakeholders increasingly seek products and services that are produced and distributed in ways that balance the Triple Bottom Line of economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Definitions and expectations for sustainability, however, have often been dominated by non-Indigenous perspectives. This book gives voice to the ways sustainability has been enacted by cultures and communities that pre-date modern civilization by hundreds and sometimes thousands of years.

The book includes hands-on case studies on sustainability from a variety of clans and tribes, industry sectors, and global regions. The chapters explore five interdisciplinary themes relating sustainability to civilizations, entrepreneurship, leadership, politics and public policy, and health and well-being.

The book is a valuable resource for educators and students in business, environmental studies, race and ethnic studies, and interdisciplinary courses. It will help them see global issues through new lenses. Industry professionals will see in overlaps between tribal and clan perspectives and best practices in fields such as human resource management and entrepreneurship. For example, in their book *The Startup Community Way*, Feld and Hathaway (2020, p. 18) describe Startup Communities using terms such as putting startup founders first, giving before you get, having an intense love of place, recycling resources back for the next generation, and organizing through networks of trust, not hierarchies. Readers will see that the focus on relationships has always been a vital part of sustainability in tribes and clans. We thank the members of those groups for sharing their knowledge with us.

Reference

Feld, B., & Hathaway, I. (2020). *The startup community way: Evolving an entrepreneurial ecosystem* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.

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Chapter 1

Sustainable Relationships Are the Foundation of Tribal and Clan Perspectives

James C. Spee, Adela McMurray and Mark McMillan

The importance of sustainability has grown in the twenty-first century (Neshovski, 2020). Short-term pursuits for economic gain continue to threaten ageless cultures that have proven their resilience. Tribal and clan perspectives of cultural and economic sustainability resonate strongly across the globe. In this edited book, we present research from a dozen vitally unique scenarios. The authors of this volume address the barriers to economic, social, and environmental sustainability with courage and insight. They contribute to our understanding of innovative ways to maintain cultural diversity and strength. The relationships between Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural sustainability sit alongside the complex field of sustainable development. We explore these linkages through five themes.

(1) Civilizations and Sustainability.
(2) Entrepreneurship and Innovation.
(3) Leadership in Tribes and Clans.
(4) Politics and Policy in Tribal and Clan Organization.
(5) Tribal and Clan Views on Health and Well-Being.

To understand the Indigenous perspectives on sustainability entails recognizing the threats to their survival. These dangers resulted from the in-migration of people who are not from the clan or tribe. The resulting loss of sovereignty as well as the need for mutual respect and recognition drove some communities to search for together. The need for mutual respect and recognition also led them to greater cooperation. In that spirit, we hope this book encourages other researchers to share the stories and wisdom of Indigenous peoples in respectful ways.

We designed this book with a desire to fill a gap in the existing literature of sustainability. When we began the project in 2017, the literature was sadly lacking research that shared the perspectives of tribal and clan cultures about sustainability.

These cultures have many labels such as First peoples, First Nations, Indigenous, Indian, Aborigine, or Aboriginal. Some of the labels have roots in colonialism and evoke very negative emotions. Europeans who colonized regions where people lived for centuries often made their own labels, such as the word Chippewa for the Anishinaabe people of North America. For this reason, each contributing author uses the language suitable to the cultures they study.

According to Wood (2020), researchers first used the term sustainability to define an economic steady state in the 1970s. The Brundtland Commission (United Nations, 1987 as cited in Wood) popularized the term in the larger environmental sense. The Commission defined sustainability as "the ability to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

Elkington (1999) was one of the first to coin the term "Triple Bottom Line." It is now a common phrase to describe the three elements that must be balanced in evaluating sustainability often paraphrased as "people, profit, and planet." As wonderful as this search for balance may sound, the environmental movement in the United States has not always been appreciative of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and rights in its conversations about sustainability. In July 2020, the US environmental group, the Sierra Club, apologized for the racist views of its founder, John Muir, and many of its early members. A press release from the Club made it clear that the whiteness and privilege of the Sierra Club's early membership fed into a very dangerous idea – that exploring, enjoying, and protecting the outdoors could be separated from human affairs. The Club's leadership recognized that the wild places they love are also the ancestral homelands of native peoples, forced off their lands in the decades or centuries before they became national parks (Brune, 2020). For Indigenous peoples, it will not be enough for groups such as the Sierra Club to change a few policies, and they will have to change their behaviors to regain credibility.

Despite centuries of challenges to their survival such as these, Indigenous peoples have found ways to rebuild their relationships with each other and with their ancestral lands that enhance their health and well-being. From the Indigenous perspective, human beings, nonhuman animals, and the natural world have a common origin, history, and future (Watene & Yap, 2015, p. 52). From the Indigenous perspective, the separation of the world into economic, social, and environmental spheres as if they were independent of each other makes no sense. A tribe's survival is not based on financial transactions. It comes from community relationships and connections to the natural environment. The social life of tribal cultures is built on a shared understanding of where the world came from. Sustainable development from the tribal and clan perspective is about relationships. Relationships are the starting points for well-being. In turn, sustainable development encompasses shared origins, shared existence, and interdependent futures (Watene & Yap, 2015, p. 52). From a tribal and clan perspective, then, the non-Indigenous view of three competing bottom lines merges into one. Indigenous perspectives generate reciprocal obligations between people and the natural world (Watene & Yap, 2015, p. 52).

Newhouse and Chapman (1996) note that the relationships between the individual, the family, the clan, and the nation are crucial in Canadian First Nations cultures such as the Mohawk. The non-Indigenous model of economic organizations as separate from other social relationships is not the dominant one for most tribal and clan communities.

Our goal in this book is to widen the understanding of sustainability, not as defined by Western culture, but as Indigenous people in tribal and clan cultures understand it. In keeping with the best practices recommended by Indigenous researcher Shawn Wilson (2008), we take no ownership of this knowledge. It belongs to the peoples who share it with us. "Relationships don't just shape Indigenous reality," Wilson notes,

> …they are our reality. Indigenous researchers develop relationships with ideas in order to achieve enlightenment in the ceremony that is Indigenous research. Indigenous research is the ceremony of maintaining accountability to these relationships.

We recognize that what the English language calls economic, social, and environmental challenges threaten tribal and clan cultures for their very survival. In 2020, Indigenous communities experienced poor access to healthcare, higher rates of communicable and noncommunicable diseases, lack of access to essential services, sanitation, and other preventive measures, such as clean water, soap, disinfectant, etc (United Nations for Indigenous Peoples, 2020). The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has made this gap abundantly clear as infection rates in vulnerable Indigenous populations have far exceeded those of the dominant cultures that share their tribal lands. Their vulnerability makes it even more urgent to tell their stories.

To encourage a diversity of perspectives, we developed the five themes for the book noted above. We asked our contributors: How are tribal and clan cultures around the world overcoming challenges to economic, social, and environmental sustainability?

Chapters 2 and 3 explore our first theme, Civilizations and Sustainability. Chapter 2 "Sustainable Indigenous Water Rights" by Deborah Wardle draws upon the ongoing gaps and injustices in Western water policy and law. She analyzes how water policy in Australia has often failed to recognize Indigenous water rights. She provides two examples that illustrate the recognition of aboriginal connections to water. The examples reveal weaknesses in the Australian government's water policies. The examples also show how First Peoples re-established their claims to ancestral water sources by establishing United Nations World Heritage Sites.

Chapter 3, "Indigenous Ontologies" in "Caring for Country": Indigenous Australia's Sustainable Customs, Practices, and Laws, by Virginia Marshall analyzes how First People's tribal and clan wisdom has been long ignored by the Australian government. That wisdom, she argues, could inform land management in the face of drought, fires, and floods that were occurring with increasing frequency in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on our second theme, Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Chapter 4 "Indigenous Entrepreneurs in Australia: Past, Present, and Future" by Bella L. Galperin, Meena Chavan and Salahudin Muhidin finds that while First People entrepreneurs have less access to resources and capital, they still play a key role in the development of tribal and clan communities.

Chapter 5, "Māori Social Enterprise: A Case Study" by Ruth Orhoevwri, continues the theme of entrepreneurship and innovation. She examines social entrepreneurship and innovation among Māori tribes and clans in New Zealand. She finds a disconnect between government policies and Māori core values.

Chapters 6 and 7 investigate our third theme, Leadership in Tribes and Clans. Chapter 6 "Quechua/Aymara Perspective of Social, Economic, and Environmental Sustainability in the Bolivian Andes" by Tamara Stenn analyzes the fate of traditional Aymara and Quechua quinoa farmers following sustainable practices for centuries who lost out to global competition based on price rather than quality but are now rebounding.

Chapter 7 "Leadership Lessons in Sustainability from Elders and Events in Historical Clan Survival Stories" by Andrew Creed, Ambika Zutshi and Brian Connelly explores survival stories about the ways historical clan and tribal leaders look for lessons in sustainability. They find that these stories are powerful ways to pass on tribal wisdom and cope with current crises.

Chapters 8, 9, and 10 provide different approaches to the fourth theme, Politics and Policy in Tribal and Clan Organization. Chapter 8 "'Jirga,' Its Role in Conflict Resolution in Pakistan's Pashtun 'Tribal' Society" by Farooq Yousaf analyzes the Pushtun conflict resolution method called the *jirga*. The jirga, he finds, lost credibility because of colonial-era laws that undermined the role of tribal elders and because it has been weak at halting discrimination based on gender.

In Chapter 9, "Effectiveness of 'Traditional' Conflict Resolution and Transformation Strategies," Farooq Yousaf analyzes two aspects of conflict resolution in Indigenous communities. He examines the usefulness of a wider range of traditional conflict resolution methods. The examples in the chapter come from tribal groups in Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, and Timor-Leste.

Chapter 10 "The Resolution by the White Earth Anishinaabe Nation to Protect the Inherent Rights of Wild Rice" by Lawrence Gross looks at a different aspect of the politics and policy theme. His work tells the story of how the White Earth Anishinaabeg protected the plant by acknowledging its inherent rights through tribal legislation. Tribal leaders were strongly motivated to pass the legislation for two reasons. The first reason is the core value of wild rice in White Earth Anishinaabeg culture. The second reason is the threats to the survival of wild rice due to water pollution and genetic modification.

Chapters 11, 12, and 13 examine our final theme, Tribal and Clan Views on Health and Well-Being. Chapter 11, "Therapeutic Landscapes and Indigenous Culture: Māori Health Models in Aotearoa/New Zealand" by Jacqueline McIntosh, Bruno Marques and Rosemary Mwipiko, explores the relationship between Indigenous culture, the landscape through the lens of health and well-being. The analysis of three Māori health models reveals that culture, health,

and landscape are interconnected in Māori culture. She argues that the three must be balanced to reduce Māori health inequalities. Doing so could provide a more sustainable model for health and well-being for all New Zealanders.

Chapter 12 "Fire, Stories and Health" by Deborah Wardle, Faye McMillan and Mark McMillan explores Indigenous stories and practices related to fire. Their first goal is to understand fire and transformative relationships of Indigenous peoples to Country. Their second goal is to understand fire as an analogy for developments in Indigenous health. The stories of fire they share illustrate the resistance of Indigenous Australians to colonial dispossession. They show how stories engage Indigenous communities with their ancestral law and culture, leading to better health and well-being. Transformative forms of knowledge can be built upon rekindling Indigenous land and law practices through fire practices.

Chapter 13 "Ubuntu Identity, the Economy of Bomvana Indigenous Healers, and their Impact on Spiritual and Physical Well-being of an African Indigenous Community" by Chioma Ohajunwa views spirituality as a foundational concept within African Indigenous communities. Her findings show how spirituality informs the sociocultural, political, environmental, and economic systems within these communities. She recommends the practice of ethnomedical spirituality that is foundational to the identity and culture of the people who come from this area.

We are proud that the diverse contributors to this book hail from Australia and New Zealand, Asia, Africa, and North America. The tribes and clans they studied include Gunditjmara, Māori, Waikato-Tainui, Boandik, Klamath, Yoruba, Inuit, Torres Strait Islanders, Anishinaabe (Chippewa, Ojibwe), Aymara, Quechua, Pashtun, and AmaBomvane. We hope this book encourages other researchers to share the stories and wisdom of Indigenous peoples in respectful ways.

Readers from a wide range of disciplines will find insights from the Indigenous, tribal, and clan experiences of sustainability that are represented in this book. We wanted to include a range of voices and perspectives to honor and respect the work of Indigenous peoples. The book reveals ways that Indigenous peoples have sustained their cultural practices, their health, and their well-being. In doing so, they survived against the odds as colonial forces attempted to annihilate them. We hope this book contributes to the ongoing struggle for the recognition of, reconciliation with, and respect for Indigenous peoples, their tribes, and their clans.

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Theme 1
Civilisations and Sustainability

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