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**A MULTIDISCIPLINARY THEORY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A
FUNCTION OF CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF OPPORTUNITY**

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Principal Topic

This paper flows from our evaluation of some 90 works exploring the entrepreneurship and enterprise activities Indigenous people around the world. The authors of these works discuss the contemporary economic activities of Indigenous peoples from a variety of perspectives, including anthropology, development studies, education, entrepreneurship, ethnic studies, geography, management, sociology and political science. By studying these works we seek to determine if entrepreneurship among Indigenous people differs from entrepreneurship in mainstream western economies; and if it does, how and why.

Methodology/Key Propositions

We did not develop categories of analysis prior to data analysing the articles. Instead, taking an emic approach, we opted to seek units of conceptualisation by analysing the experiences of the people studied in the works using inductive analysis to identify patterns and themes that emerge from their stories.

Results and Implications

As result of our analysis, we identified 10 patterns and themes that characterize entrepreneurship by Indigenous people and that taken together give it a distinct character. In the paper we explore these patterns in depth; they are summarized below.

1. There is rich heterogeneity among indigenous peoples; their respective values are far from identical.
2. Cultural values of indigenous peoples are often incompatible with the basic assumptions of mainstream theories, which are based on different set of cultural values.
3. Indigenous people are often close to nature and in some cases depend on immediately available resources, such as animals or fish.
4. Social organisation among indigenous peoples is often based on kinship ties, and not created in response to market needs.
5. Much of the entrepreneurial activity conducted by indigenous people does not take place in the markets of the modern economy.
6. Some indigenous communities believe in elements of egalitarianism, sharing and communal activity ... optimizes social inclusiveness rather than the maximization of individual or family economic well-being

7. Some communities have a propensity for co-operation in entrepreneurship.
8. Opportunity recognition is culturally influenced, as are definitions of and the measurement of success.
9. Culturally determined opportunities for entrepreneurship are often disrupted by entities external to indigenous people.
10. Indigenous people are sometimes pulled to traditional forms of self-employment¹ but pushed to other money-earning activity, out of economic need

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¹ King wrote, "Without deer there is no culture (2003, p. 133)."