> Wednesday, January 14th, 2026
> 10:30 – 12:00
> ICOR

IÉSEG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

THE STORIES THE ROCKS REMEMBER: INDIGENOUS RELATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

BY SAMANTHA COOMS – SENIOR LECTURER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

ABSTRACT

Indigenous knowledge systems are dynamic, relational, place-based frameworks that have sustained societies and ecosystems for tens of thousands of years. This presentation explores Indigenous relational ontologies—particularly Quandamooka philosophies in which land, waters, winds, rocks, ancestors, and more-than-human beings are recognised as knowledge holders, memory-keepers, and actors in law, economy, and governance. Through the metaphor "the stories the rocks remember," the session challenges growth-centred and extractive paradigms shaped by linear progress and human exceptionalism, reframing sustainability as a negotiated relationship rather than an industry, strategy, or technical fix.

By positioning knowledge as relational, responsibility as intergenerational, and Country as a co-author of sustainable futures, the talk invites a paradigm shift: from managing environments to being accountable to them; from resource to reciprocity; from innovation as disruption to innovation as deep remembering. It proposes that regeneration and equity are not merely outcomes but practices sustained through care, continuity, and accountable relationship with the more-than-human world that sustains and remembers us.

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EXPLORING INDIGENOUS STRATEGIES FOR ASSERTING PLACE-BASED RIGHTS

BY JACOB VAKKAYIL – FULL PROFESSOR AT IÉSEG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on how indigenous people in the specific context of a post-colonial state assert their placed based rights. It explores how certain inside-outside distinctions are made in the process resulting in the inclusion of certain elements and exclusion of others.

The results indicate a variety of positions adopted by indigenous people concerning various elements of place with degrees of concurrence evolving around some of them.

This work illustrates strategies adopted by indigenous people as they leverage institutional systems and associated structures to assert their interests. Reconfiguring the idea of place with changed conceptualizations enables indigenous people to navigate these systems with mixed results.

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