

SUMMARY

Demand Sharing as a Cultural Difference: the Effect of Cash, Commoditisation, and the Welfare Economy on Contemporary Aboriginal Kinship and Sociality

Akiko Ono

[National Museum of Ethnology]

Regional differences in contemporary Aboriginal society are evident regarding material culture, local social institutions (e.g. law and kinship), and systems of social practice (e.g. economic life and marriage patterns). The regional categorisation of “remote”, “rural”, and “urban” Aboriginal Australia has led Australian Aboriginal studies to limit its focus to the remote Aboriginal communities. However, up to now, cash, commoditisation and the welfare economy have permeated into all Aboriginal communities in Australia. Anthropologists are urgently needed to explore the dynamic response by Aboriginal people towards this drastic change in their economic lives. This paper explores the everyday practice of demand sharing or moral economy among Aboriginal people in “settled” Australia. By means of comparative examination of ethnographic data from remote Aboriginal communities and rural communities, this paper aims to reconsider the either-or dichotomy of change and persistence, or that of culture loss associated with “settled” Australia and cultural persistence associated with “remote” Australia.