

SUMMARY

Neoliberalism and the Ambiguity of Indigeneity: Race Relations in North Western Adelaide

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This study examined the ambiguity of Indigeneity in the neoliberal era and the resulting race relations in North Western Adelaide based on ethnographic data obtained since 2008.

The 'mainstreaming' of the Indigenous people under neoliberalism has caused economic disparity within the Indigenous community, which had been already diversified by physical traits and places of origin. In the absence of any consensus over who were the legitimate members of the local Indigenous community, fair-skinned, middle-class Indigenous people were the most likely to be rejected as Indigenous unless their kinship relations with people in the local Indigenous community was confirmed.

Conversely, the ambiguity of Indigeneity promoted solidarity between Indigenous people and white residents in the impoverished area. Through sharing of social space and everyday interaction, some members of both groups established complex social relationship which cannot be reduced to the abstract racial dualism of Indigenous vs. white. Solidarity was built on the basis of the experiences of exclusion from the mainstream society due to lack of whiteness, as observed in the case of the Lartelare Glanville land rights movement.

Although the case study cannot be generalised, it demonstrates that the relationship of Indigenous and white residents in an urban setting is established through the mediation of class and locality along with race. This reaffirms the significance of focusing on the agency of Indigenous people who capitalise on this complex, multiple relationship for their identity negotiation with the state.