

## SUMMARY

### ‘They are supposed to be Aboriginal, but actually not’ : Community and Identity of Aboriginal people in South-western Sydney

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This paper explores the interwoven relationship between community and identity of Aboriginal people in southwestern Sydney. The idea of ‘community’ is and has been almost always associated with identity, especially after the shift of the argument of community to symbolism. However, not so much discussion has happened on their relationship. This paper addresses this issue by using Delanty’s (2003) argument that community is based on the experience of communication. For most of the Aboriginal people in rural and remote areas, kinship ties have been their primal social relations and their identity has been a matter of kinship ties associated with their perceived place of origin. However in urban areas such as south-western Sydney, Aboriginal social relations are not always exclusively based on kinship ties. In this area, organisations dealing with Aboriginal issues provide ways of connecting non-related Aboriginal people. Through participation in these organisations’ activities, Aboriginal people communicate with each other and feel the sense of community. In these activities, although they are from many different areas, Aboriginal people can usually recognize each other as Aboriginal by sharing and recognizing certain ‘Aboriginal’ cultural mores and traits, the most important of which is the practice of identifying each other by using their knowledge of kinship ties. However, in south-western Sydney, there are some who, for various reasons, although claiming to be Aboriginal, do not share these cultural mores and traits. Their presence gives rise to tension and conflict revolving around the concept of Aboriginality. Some people are accused to be ‘non-Aboriginal pretenders’. This accusation became prevalent but also has stayed as gossip because of the particular social structure of Aboriginal community in south-western Sydney. While unraveling the relationship between identity conflict and social relations, it is also argued in this paper that this accusation itself is a form of communication, and thus, a part of the experience of Aboriginal community in south-western Sydney.