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Editorial

Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Maggie Walter

This special edition of the International Critical Indigenous Studies Journal focuses on Indigenous people's engagement with the economy in Australia. Over the past two decades neo liberalism has shaped global economic activity. The international reach of the current economic crisis propelled by the subprime mortgage meltdown in the United States has affected Indigenous communities in different ways to those whose investments were depleted by the Wall Street activities of an unregulated corporate and banking sector. Throughout this roller coaster economic ride the low socio-economic position of Indigenous peoples continued in Canada, the United States of America, New Zealand, Hawaii and Australia. The logic, or illogic of capital, failed to extend the boom of the economic upturn to Indigenous peoples, but is poised to extend the repercussions of the current downturn deep into Indigenous lives. The consistency of the Indigenous socio-economic position across these countries, even where treaties exist, indicates that the phenomenon is based on a shared Indigenous reality. In this special edition, the commonality in the way in which Indigenous people are engaged in and positioned by market forces and regulation by their respective nation states is proposed as one of the foundation plates of that Indigenous positioning.

In the first article Maggie Walter argues that the socio-economic marginalisation of Indigenous people within Australia is due to an economy of poverty, which is maintained by the nation state through what she conceptualises as the domain of Aboriginality. This domain is multifaceted and entangled in its marginalisation from the broader economy by state intervention and regulation. In the second article Wendy Aitkin reveals that the historical origins of policy development within Indigenous affairs has been premised on defining Indigenous people as 'the problem' and that this continues into the twenty-first century. This premise masks the complicity of non Indigenous action in producing Indigenous poverty through policy mechanisms. The third article by Bronwyn Fredericks outlines the complexities and challenges that face Indigenous women within the health sector demonstrating that full time employment does not necessarily improve their well being instead, it can increase the levels of stress experienced in carrying out one's work within an environment shaped by non Indigenous rules and regulations. In the fourth article Steve Larkin exposes the racialised dimensions of neo-liberalism and how it constitutes and reflects non Indigenous worldviews and action within the non Indigenous economy. He argues that the excessive administrative and accountability requirements imposed on Indigenous community organisations creates a burden that compromises service delivery. In the fifth article Dennis Jose provides insight about how positive outcomes can be achieved by working with Indigenous communities. He explains how the private sector can contribute to longer term employment strategies for Indigenous communities by grounding them within the local context and providing skills to Indigenous employees that are transferable beyond the timeframe of the project.

The final article by Fiona Nicoll explicates how gambling, as an Indigenous response to neo liberalism's calls for self sufficiency in Canada and the United States, has more or less enabled some communities to succeed in meeting this goal. She argues that treaties can enable Indigenous communities to become economically independent of the state because of their ownership of resources. She compares this to the Australian context where there are no treaties between Indigenous people and the nation state and land rights and native title regimes provide few resources for economic independence.

Book Reviews

Everything You Know About Indians is Wrong, Paul Chaat Smith (University of Minnesota Press 2009) reviewed by Maggie Walter.