Looking From Within, What Comes Out?
An indigenous perspective on community and urbanism

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While many Australian indigenous communities may be associated with western desert regions or remote country towns, this paper explores the notion(s) of indigenous communities in relation to the inner city.

Given the potential nature and range of assumptions about communities in general, the paper will focus on three specific aspects of indigenous ‘involvement’, the first of which addresses the overall notion of what constitutes community and thus what constitutes community in relation to indigenous populations? On the basis of this, and given that communities in general may be understood and/or perceived in a range of different ways, the second investigates how indigenous communities are often regarded as being enclosed or self-aggregated – almost as if there is a negative perspective from the outside looking in – and thus addresses the question why might it be assumed that these people have nothing to offer? In opposition to this, then, and given the potentially positive nature of indigenous communities, the third, and perhaps most important section of the paper, involves a close examination of a particular urban indigenous population, that of Redfern in NSW, in order to advance the view that such a community might engender issues, qualities and/or values that can be utilised to enhance other and different communities.

This paper therefore addresses the idea of indigenous communities from two quite different perspectives. The first interrogates the negative approach of the outsiders looking at indigenous communities and, in a sense, mentally pushing them away, as if to say ‘they don’t have anything to do with me’, while the second, and more positive approach, advances the proposition that there are indeed different and additional community elements within indigenous populations that might seriously enhance the nature of ‘ordinary’ communities.
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Introduction

While many Australian indigenous populations may be associated with remote desert settings or with a variety of country towns, this paper explores the notion(s) of indigenous communities in relation to a specific urban setting, that of Redfern in New South Wales. The current paper will briefly address the idea of indigenous communities from two quite different perspectives. The first interrogates the negative approach of ‘outsiders’ looking at indigenous communities and, in a sense, mentally pushing them away, as if to say ‘they’re essentially different and I have no interest in them’, while the second, and more positive approach, advances the proposition that there are indeed different and additional community elements within indigenous populations that might seriously enhance the nature of ‘ordinary’ and non-indigenous communities.

While indigenous populations may be viewed by many either in a negative light, and/or from the supposedly ‘neutral’ perspective that ‘they have nothing to do with me’, why might we assume that these people have nothing to offer? As such this paper raises a number of issues, values or characteristics that, while they might promote disagreement, are considered to be potentially positive or beneficial to these communities.

The information and views within this paper are not, as yet, derived from a large survey or extensive gathering of data, but, instead, from the beginning of an ongoing study that will ultimately comprise a PhD thesis that will explore, in much more detail, a range of issues associated with indigenous populations in inner city areas, ideas of communities, and notions of values and value differences. The information provided within this paper, then, comes from a limited range of authors, but seeks to pose the questions: What is defined as community? What constitutes a community in relation to indigenous populations? How might this notion of indigenous community relate to an urban setting? And how might the specific location of Redfern – or, more particularly, The Block – represent a particular view of (potential) indigenous interaction?

What constitutes community?

As a starting point, then, we might ask how might we begin to define the ambiguous term ‘community’? While many people may talk about community; use the term in common parlance; and nod and agree on what it is, as if its ‘content’ and ‘requirements’ are easy to understand, and essentially problem-free; it becomes clear that it is not something that can simply be defined as one universal ‘context’. Rather, our understanding and interpretation of the term is essentially different depending on time, location and, perhaps most importantly, culture. While this paper cannot explain all of the different assumptions and/or agreements and disagreements behind the idea of community, it aims to focus on a particular aspect of this notion that is defined as a group of people sharing local issues and bounded within a real physical space.
Yet the issue of physical space is of significance insofar as it may suggest two quite different viewpoints. From one perspective it might be suggested that, while different locations and/or different suburbs are ‘inevitably’ different on the basis of, for example, higher or lower socio-economic determinants, and thus perhaps physical planning and ‘higher quality’ homes, this does not mean that supposedly ‘similar’ suburbs necessarily constitute communities comprising identical issues and values. From a second perspective the idea of location in relation to particular ‘residents’, and the notions of density and/or specific physical and spatial setting within a particular town or suburb can suggest major differences. As will be discussed later, if Redfern has a very small indigenous population, but The Block, a single housing area located within the suburb, has a high concentration of indigenous people and thus a high density; and if the town of Inala, in Queensland, has a significantly higher percentage of indigenous people but a considerably lower density since they are effectively ‘spread throughout the town’, then what can this tell us about cultural ‘representations’, notions of potentially dissimilar or even conflicting community values, and lifestyle choice?

At its essence, then, it is about an analysis and understanding of people, issues and physicality, but in relation to a parallel understanding of culture and cultural values. Chance encounters within physical space notwithstanding, this notion of community has to go beyond the mere recognition of people. It is only when the relationships are multi-layered, or, as Christopher Alexander suggests in ‘A city is not a tree’ (1966), a closed link of relationships, that this notion of community is what the paper is alluding too.

Yet, while communities are generally taken to be both ongoing and ‘sound’ in relation to their residents, from a contemporary perspective it might be suggested that many current communities actually constitute a society in withdrawal, an erosion of social ties, increasing tension, etc. In many suburbs around Australia, and in many other quasi-Western countries around the world, there is a suggestion of a decline in traditional community values (c.f., for example, Sennet 1992; Buchecker 2005). The considerable forces at play behind this effect – the advent of social media, the modernist ‘nuclear’ family breaking down family structures, etc. – have been extensively researched. While this may be seen as a negative – or, potentially, a positive – effect, there are consequences that come with this change in contemporary lifestyle, consequences such as alienation and self-withdrawal from the public environment and community in which one lives, and into the privacy and safety of one’s home.

At the same time, though, it might be suggested that, since the dawn of mankind, humans have evolved as social creatures; we desire contact with the other. But while new technologies go some way to fill this ‘social contact gap’, it is not enough. As such there are a whole range of side effects relating to social withdrawal, such as mental effects, anxiety, depression, etc. All combine to produce an environment where anonymity, loneliness and, at worst, the early demise of our youthful population through suicide, is the norm. As a March 2013 Australian Bureau of Statistics Report notes:

**Whilst the reasons behind [suicide] are unknown, it is likely to be due to a multitude of societal and personal factors including our economic stability and continued emphasis on improving access to mental health early intervention services...However, suicide is still the most common cause of death for young Australians, and is associated with particularly high rates of death for**
young men and indigenous people [our emphasis]. The personal costs of suicide for families are enormous. [ABS website.]

Additionally, an environment that produces and reinforces the notion of ‘invisible people’ – the homeless, the elderly, the disabled, and our indigenous populations – means that such people are sidelined, rendered voiceless, and forgotten – or perhaps, more directly, pushed aside!

**Indigenous community definition**

How might the above notion of community apply to indigenous communities? Hunt & Smith’s (2007) description of an indigenous community suggests that:

*Family identities and relationships to ‘country’ lie at the heart of Indigenous ‘communities of identity’. As one researcher described it, a community ‘is a constellation of individuals, families, clans, ceremonial groups and language groups’ [our emphasis] (p4).*

One theme that becomes clear from this description is the notion of the extended family. This sits opposed to the modern singular ‘nuclear’ family, which dominates family structures in Western society today. Within the indigenous community the idea of family is not simply that of ‘conventional’ parents or children. Rather, as Larissa Berhendt (1994) explains:

*Groups were a family. The concept of a family was different from European families. Some ‘aunts’ took on the role of mothers and were called the same name as ‘mothers’. Similarly some ‘uncles’ were fathers, and cousins were brothers and sisters. A person’s relationship to others would dictate how to treat them and what a person’s obligations were to them (p13).*

Given this notion, the suggestion might well be not that one community is simply different from another – on the basis of the ‘separation’ between different suburbs, between the wealthy and the non-wealthy, and/or between different migrant groups, for example – but that the indigenous population, en masse, has a different notion of family, hence a different notion of relationships, and hence a very different notion of what constitutes ‘community’ and what constitutes the idea of ‘values’.

**An urban indigenous community**

What, then, does it mean if we compare the above notion of indigenous communities to the idea of communities in general? While Behrendt identifies herself as an urban aboriginal on the basis of where she lives, at the same time she recognizes – and significantly retains and commits to the notion – that she is a Eualeyai, one of a dispossessed people from their traditional land in the northwest of New South Wales (1994: 55).

At the same time it is not just a connection with the land of her people’s origin that she retains – the land being an intrinsic part of indigenous ‘understanding’ and ‘values’ – but also with the Eualeyai people themselves, which, she explains, constitutes what might be called ‘the nature of her being’, an important part of who she is. While, in Behrendt’s case, she no longer lives in her dispossessed lands, she still maintains a connection with its people, and thus has a dual notion of community – the community of her background, and the community of her current location. Using Behrendt as an
example it might be noted, then, that the engagement and interaction with the extant location and community – in the case of this paper, the inner city area of Redfern – is, at the same time, affected by and reinforced by both the ‘background of the past’ and by the values that are deeply intertwined within this social and cultural background. While many migrant populations within Australia may suggest similar diversities between being ‘here’ and ‘remembering there’, the indigenous connection to the land, to the physical location of contemporary living, and to the diversity of the community values, may well be significantly different.

Of course, the notion that inner city communities are also intrinsically involved with and affected by non-indigenous groups may still be persuasive. From Behrendt’s (1994) perspective this has a twofold influence. On the one hand she still maintains certain traditional values in the face of a culture that not only does not understand such values, but, in a sense, expects her to disregard them when operating within white society. On the other, she notes that:

*Non-aboriginal people do not understand how I can operate in the white sphere...and not be overcome by the values of white society. There is an assumption that by operating within white society, the non-traditional society, I lose my traditional values of community, collectivism, strong sense of family, respect for elders, cooperation, reciprocity and cultural pride (p60).*

Yet, if Behrendt (1996) prefers, as she says, “collective co-operation and community spirit to the individualism of white people and their emphasis on competition and materialism” (p60), this is not to suggest that such views are universal among inner city indigenous communities, nor that such views can be kept separate from integrated – or at least, ‘mixed’ – communities, nor that indigenous views and values should simply be dismissed as being ‘outside of’ or irrelevant to, extant communities.

**Redfern as self-enclosed and self-aggregated**

At this point let us move on to the ‘idea’ of Redfern; and on to issues of urbanism, planning, and the relation between location and indigenous populations.

Redfern is an inner city suburb of Sydney, and has been in existence for many years. Of the multiple issues that might be analyzed in relation to it, three are of key importance here.

The first of these – long held – is the assumption that Redfern is effectively an indigenous community; that it is potentially dangerous; and that ‘it’s not where I’d go!’

The second is recent information from a 2011 report from the Bureau of Census and Statistics, which establishes that the indigenous population of Redfern constitutes a mere 2.4% of the total population – equivalent to 288 people – with the total population of Redfern at the time being 12,034.
The relation between the above, however, has two quite different perspectives. While the 2011 ABS report *contradicts* the view of Redfern as an essentially indigenous community – the percentage of the indigenous population is far less than in many ‘normal’ and ‘acceptable’ suburbs – the historical perspective of the 1960s effectively *confirms* the above view, Redfern then having a substantially larger population of approximately 35,000, involving considerably increased density, and comprising about 12,000 indigenous residents. The ongoing assumption that Redfern has *remained* indigenous is thus an intriguing amalgamation of extant history with a lack of contemporary information!

The third point, however, potentially merges the above information: while the 2011 population might well have been reduced to 2.4% of the *total* population, it is suggested that 100% of indigenous residents live in a single location – what has been known for many years as The Block!

Both the negative perspective from the outside, and the effective consolidation of indigenous people within one specific and essentially ‘gated’ area, has had quite diverse effects on the perception of Redfern, and on the notion of community. For many, the perception of Redfern as being ‘substantially indigenous’ – despite the fact that it is not – and thus either ‘somewhere not to go’ or assumptively dangerous, clouds the actual notion of what constitutes the urban environment and the issue of community.
Before we talk of the current issues facing Redfern and The Block, however, let us briefly analyse the history of indigenous involvement within that location.

**A brief Redfern history**

The history of indigenous people in Redfern has been a back-and-forth affair and, in many respects, still is today. Long considered a gathering place for Sydney’s indigenous peoples, the Gadigal tribe, due to its close proximity to Shea Creek (now the fully concreted and culverted Alexandria Canal), its nearby wetlands, and its elevated position offering a good view of the surrounding area, pre-dated white settlement and the development of Redfern as a ‘mixed’ community.

By the 1960s, indigenous peoples from all around Australia, and particularly from nearby La Perouse Aboriginal Reserve, came to Redfern not only pursuing employment in the Eveleigh rail yards – the largest employer of indigenous people at the time – but also seeking refuge from discrimination by being close to relatives and other kin concentrated in and around this location.

At this point Redfern, together with a number of other inner-city indigenous suburbs such as Darlington and Waterloo, began to attract much media attention, predominantly negative, and the areas were considered slum-like as the houses became run down and neglected.
In 1967 the National Referendum gave citizenship rights to Aboriginal people for the first time and, potentially in connection with this, large numbers of indigenous people from rural Queensland and NSW started ‘migrating’ to Redfern. As noted above, the population increased dramatically, serious problems of overcrowding developed, and, perhaps most significantly, many Aboriginals faced discrimination – akin to but different from the discrimination facing them in their previous ‘natural’ environment – when seeking accommodation. Such discrimination culminated in 1968 in a campaign to relocate the large Aboriginal population away from inner city areas, with the NSW Department of Housing resettling them to far out suburbs such as Mt Druitt and Campbelltown.

A key turning point for the indigenous community in Redfern, however, was the development of community-controlled services, which included the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Aboriginal Medical Service, the Aboriginal Children’s Service, and the Aboriginal Black Theatre House. The development of these services provided the indigenous community of Redfern with a key foothold in the inner city, and was an important moment for a move towards self-determination for many Aboriginal communities nationwide. Most notable of these community-controlled services in respect of this paper was the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC), which, with funding from the Whitlam government in 1972, purchased six terraces on what is today known as The Block. The aim of AHC and its Housing Project was to provide a communal living environment run by Aboriginal people.
In 1975, however, a major backward step for the AHC’s project occurred with the dismissal of Whitlam, the election of the Fraser coalition, and the subsequent termination of funding for the project, with The Block once again plunged into disrepair. By the 1980s, however, and staying true to the back-and-forth nature of indigenous peoples in Redfern, renewed support from the Keating Labor government meant that now the AHC had acquired over half of the properties on The Block, and, by 1994, had full ownership of it.

Over recent years, however, Redfern has changed yet again as the forces of inner city property – increased land values, rent prices and council rates, and the general issue of gentrification – have pushed most of Redfern’s indigenous population into other inner city suburbs, or further out onto the city’s fringe. Apart, that is, from those living in The Block.

**Redfern today**

Returning now to contemporary Redfern and, despite the previously mentioned statistical evidence that suggests otherwise, the misplaced view that it is a place made up predominantly of aboriginal people, we must ask, why is this so? Why is an essentially tiny portion of the population, albeit filling 100% of The Block, to be considered a negative effect on the suburb?

![Figure 4: Demolition of The Block, Redfern – 2011.](image-url)
While outside the current issues discussed in this paper, three dramatic effects on The Block should be mentioned: first, that the AHC still has ownership of The Block; second, that decisions have been made to demolish the existing fabric; and, third, that The Block will be rebuilt, accommodating indigenous peoples, and comprising the same number of houses as previously, as well as a substantial art gallery. When this will occur, and who will provide the funding, and will it actually go ahead at all, is a matter of some concern, but a significant factor is not that this will simply comprise re-housing, but that – quite deliberately one suggests – it will have a potential future impact on the suburb, and on the city of Sydney itself, and on the art world: a small but important urban and planning proposal.

To return to the paper itself, though: how has indigenous involvement impacted on the place of Redfern itself?

While Andrew Benjamin (2013) talks of humans as placed beings, in that the very thing that defines us is place – i.e. the place in which we live, the place which we come from, or the place in which we dwell, it might also be suggested that the very opposite is also true, that the place that defines us, is also defined by us. In the case of Redfern, and despite a very low percentage of indigenous people today, the suburb is still defined as an indigenous place. This misconception is further reinforced by Spark (2003) when he claims about The Block that “Aboriginal person-place relationships here would seem to be a ‘matter of degree’ rather than absolute...Aboriginal people are struggling to remain in this place to which they are intimately connected” (p34).

At this point some ‘visitors’ or residents may say that they walked past Redfern train station, or past The Block, and had seen some indigenous people. Nothing surprising about this, but the ‘expanded’ idea that such people fill the whole of the suburb is erroneous and, in reality, there is no real reason to assume so. Yet, when told that Redfern is not full of indigenous people, ‘outsiders’ may concede this fact, but then go on to say that it only takes a few aboriginals to make the place ‘dangerous’. The reality is that Redfern is full of relatively new migrants, and has been for a some time now, and yet the idea that Redfern is an enclosed or self-aggregated indigenous community is still held. This leads to the idea of The Block being seen as a kind of ‘gated community’ – not in terms of wealth, where you may want to close off those from the outside, but rather a dual system which, on one hand, and from an indigenous perspective, says we are closing off The Block from all those around it, while, on the other, and from an ‘external’ perspective, suggests that we are putting the gates around it because we don’t want to be involved.

While this external perspective may be negative – or again perhaps neutral in the sense that ‘these people have nothing to do with me’ – Behrendt claims that this is a type of antagonistic stereotyping prevalent in contemporary Australia and perpetuated by the media – the medium through which most Australians have contact with aboriginal people – and is selective in how it wishes to portray such people. Often indigenous people are thought of as having problems that only apply to them and not to other cultures.

Behrendt (1994), however, is very upfront with the negative aspects of indigenous communities, and presents them as things that are quite normal. As she states:
As a community we have our problems. They are well publicized and I do not deny that we have issues related to violence, substance abuse, sexism, racism and homophobia. While noting that these are all problems that have been introduced since colonization I will also point out that these problems do not erode the integrity of our traditional values (our emphasis) (p58).

She suggests that these are problems, full stop; but not necessarily only indigenous problems, as they affect communities across the world. We all have these problems; they are bad things in themselves; but this does not mean that they are solely indigenous problems. Yet, while the misconception that indigenous communities are plagued by these problems may be true, it is a misnomer – and an offensive one at that – to interpret such issues as relating only to indigenous populations.

In many respects, this is a typical sort of negative stereotyping being placed on indigenous people that is prevalent in modern day Australia. It is further perpetuated by some media in the way it selectively wishes to portray aboriginal people; and, sadly, is the way in which most Australians assume they have contact with Aboriginal people. As Behrendt (1994) claims:

Ever since the white people invaded Australia, aboriginal identity has been attacked. Aboriginal people were portrayed as uncivilized, barbaric and primitive...We are continually stereotyped in a negative way...These stereotypes are used to justify the continuing oppression and poverty of aboriginal people. The stereotype becomes a tool by which to blame the victim (p58).

Furthermore, as Hughes & Hughes (2012) have noted, this negative stereotyping is prevalent within the “many organisations which claim to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders which go along with withholding fundamental rights without protest (p25).

Moreover, as Behrendt previously expressed, White society expects her to act in a certain way. This is reinforced by Nenova (2012) when she claims that the common conception is that “Indigenous people should behave in the same way as white Australians, have the same education, develop the same skills, have the same goals in life, same schedule and preferences, so that they can be assimilated and cease to be a problem” (p29).

As such, and from an external perspective, indigenous populations have had a substantial amount of negative connotations placed upon them, and a true understanding or deeper knowledge of the potential values these people have, have been pushed aside and considered irrelevant.

The notion of values

This paper – and many other people involved in the battle for recognition for indigenous peoples – therefore wishes to point out that there are indeed different and additional community elements within indigenous populations that might seriously enhance the nature of ‘ordinary’ and non-indigenous communities. Given the things Behrendt has said, and taking on board the values that seem to come from indigenous populations, we might begin to say that here are a number of things that seem to be, in themselves, positive, while not necessarily understood by, accepted by or thought...
of by non-indigenous populations. Hence, the quality of them means that we should look at them and consider them very carefully.

While all communities have values, different kinds of communities – and different cultures – have different values. Yet, while such values may reflect genuine differences, it should be pointed out that we should look at these, not as opposites, but as containing different but potentially useful and significant contributions to other communities. It is thus not about pointing out that we have different values to those people ‘over there’ – which should be ignored – but rather that values from indigenous communities, different as they may be, and initially at odds with those of others, may offer significant benefit and a potential reconceptualization of what we currently take for granted.

That values is a generic word, and while Behrendt (1994) may argue that “…urban aboriginal communities have a distinct culture and cultural values” (p56), this is not to suggest that these cannot be accepted by, even adopted by, the non-indigenous and, as such, might be utilized to enhance other and different communities.

While we cannot go into enormous detail about all the generic indigenous values, nor can we differentiate between the specific values of different indigenous groups, we might offer here four particular values associated with the aboriginal culture and considered positive from within:

1. A particular idea of and commitment to family, often very different from that of many non-indigenous residents;
2. The notion of the extended family and its great significance to indigenous peoples;
3. Ongoing respect towards elders as a central part of aboriginal culture; and

While such values may, to some – indeed, perhaps, to many – be perceived as being irrelevant, lacking significance, and/or being not attributable to ‘our’ concept of community, these are, not merely from an indigenous viewpoint but from an ‘Australian’ perspective, values not to be dismissed. While not necessarily ‘superior’ or ‘better’ than the values of ‘other’ cultures, which constitute communities in their own right, these are, from the ‘inside’ of indigenous culture, values considered to be very positive. As such, it might then be asked, why would you not want to know about them? And if you did know of them, why, and on what basis, would you simply reject them? What do they offer that is not wanted? And is it the fact that we simply do not understand them, or that they actively contradict our ‘own’ extant values?

Example of a different value: The notion of land

While each of these different values will be addressed in substantial detail in the ongoing research, a brief example, that of the aspect of the spirituality towards land, will be introduced here to highlight this notion of difference. While it is becoming something of a cliché to say that ‘indigenous people have a connection to land’, it is nonetheless significant that such people hold a very different idea of what the land ‘means’ and of the important notion of connectivity to the land, that is substantially different to the way other cultures view it.
Land, in a Western sense, is often seen as something that can be possessed, taken hold of, or conquered. The earth, soil, plants, and animals are seen as ‘property’ to be owned, utilized, and exploited for individual gain. But from an indigenous perspective, land is seen as the very thing that sustains life on this planet, and is treated as such. Behrendt (1995) illustrates the importance of this connection to indigenous people by claiming that:

*Land is central to Aboriginal existence and survival. It has always been essential for the survival of indigenous people and remains a most precious resource. Aboriginal religion teaches us that we are born from the land. When we die, we return to the land. During our life on earth we are required to look after our land and protect our land* (p9).

Behrendt (1995) is also clear on the different ways indigenous peoples view land by noting:

*People are associated with specific areas of land, but not in the same way that a proprietary right would explain attachment to land. The link is spiritual, not proprietary. Land is central to the spirituality of an aboriginal person. It also provides the food to ensure the survival of Aboriginal groups* (p9).

As previously stated, Behrendt has a particular connection and attachment to the traditional land of her ancestors. She does not own this land in a financial sense, but it still forms a significant part of
her identity, and governs a series of potential relations with other Eualeyai people – a kind of extended family notion where individuals, families, clans, ceremonial groups and language groups are incorporated.

In an age where global ecological balance is a major issue, this view of land – as custodian, caretaker and guardian – must surely have merit. It might thus be asked, how might other communities begin to rethink their relationships to land in a different, and potentially more positive way? This is but one example of a value that, while perhaps quite different from the other outside perspectives, is considered positive and beneficial within indigenous culture.

Conclusion

As a very brief conclusion, four particular issues are in need of consideration.

First, it should be noted that, as yet there have been limited studies into Australian indigenous involvement within the larger notion of an Australian society. Similarly, there have been very few studies into indigenous community values, their differences, and how these may potentially be of benefit to other cultures.

Second, and as numerous studies suggest, cohesive, supportive and engaged communities equate to happier and healthier people. But how do communities achieve this? Might a close examination of a particular culture engender certain values, issues or characteristics considered to be positive, that begin to offer suggestions on how to deliver this? Might these values shine a light onto addressing some of the general problems every community faces? How might this perspective address a contemporary community withdrawing into the privacy of the home?

Third, and in light of the above, studies that investigate such values may offer a richer understanding and meaning within the places we live. The city as an expression of presence and identity is important due to the way we might begin rethinking our cities in terms of community and in terms of the positive elements that make indigenous communities ‘different’. Australia’s indigenous culture is special and it should be treated as such.

And, finally, how we might understand the very idea of community, both from an indigenous and a ‘western’ perspective, but based on a clearer understanding of the notion of indigenous values and community.

This short paper therefore addresses, albeit briefly, the assumptions about Redfern; the difference between these assumptions and what is actually taking place; the changes that have occurred over a number of years; and also, more importantly, the idea of values and what constitutes this community as opposed to other communities. In the ongoing research we will be looking in much more detail at the above issues, as well as at five further questions:

1. What are the values contained within The Block?
2. Are these values conventional indigenous values or have they been changed by virtue of being both inner city and condensed?
3. Are certain parts of these values universal, while others are different?
4. Are these values unacceptable or antagonistic towards other external values? and
5. In the potential ongoing development of The Block how might such values be changed; perhaps become more important; and conceivably affect both notions of community and urbanism via a more powerful and more persuasive notion of aboriginality that integrates with non-indigenous communities by offering ‘more and different’ values and ideas.

Whether the non-indigenous population may know or not know of the above, the important question remains: are these values being rejected because they don’t fit with another notion of values? Alternatively, in what ways might some or all of these values be a positive addition to other cultures?

References


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