

Notre Dame Nulungu Talking Heads Seminar Series



A New Partnership, William Roe, 1994

Inter-generational Transmission of Indigenous Culture and Children's Wellbeing

Tuesday 11th June 2019

Venue: UNDA NDB11-101

12:30pm – 1:30pm

Presenter:

Michael Dockerty

Abstract

A limited body of empirical evidence suggests a strong sense of cultural identity promotes wellbeing and other socio-economic outcomes for First Nations people, including for Indigenous Australians. A challenge to this body of evidence is potential endogeneity: that Indigenous people who achieve positive outcomes are then more likely to maintain and engage in their traditional culture. This paper uses data from Australia's Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children to address that challenge. Indigenous parents' attitudes and practices with respect to passing on traditional culture to their children in early childhood are related to children's later health and socio-emotional adjustment. Exploratory factor analysis identifies three key elements of parental transmission of Indigenous culture to their children: connection to country, connection to kin and traditional knowledge. Parents fostering a strong kinship connection is found to contribute to positive child development. Positive effects of stronger connection to country and parental desires to pass on traditional knowledge are also identified in some regional contexts, providing further evidence that traditional Indigenous cultures should be seen as a resource for addressing Indigenous disadvantage, not a contributing factor. The research design eliminates the possibility of (the child's) outcomes 'causing' greater cultural identity or engagement, but not the possibility of omitted variables shaping both parents' practices toward cultural engagement and child outcomes.



Biographies

Associate Professor Mike Dockerty is a Principal Research Fellow with the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre at Curtin University. As an applied labour economist his research focusses on improving labour market, education and wellbeing outcomes for marginalised groups within society, with much of his work based on analysis of panel data. Some recent projects have included studies into housing and children's wellbeing; outcomes from Native Title in WA; the benefits of Indigenous participation in football; and modelling Indigenous population and mobility in remote Australia. Mike has published over 50 papers in national and international journals, plus a variety of book chapters and monographs.



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