

Research Directions

Office of Research Services

LARRIKINS, JEITINHO & FAVORES

Professor Bob Hodge from the Centre for Cultural Research is leading a team from the School of Management (Drs Gabriela Coronado, Fernanda Duarte and Greg Teal) that is exploring links between culture and international business practices. This ARC Discovery project is focusing on Australia and Latin America.



Ernie Dingo -
Photograph courtesy
of Geraldton Guardian

Latin America was chosen because the region has been tipped to become a new super-power in the future and is a good place for Australians to do business but its people are often represented in stereotypical ways by business schools, for example, as 'relaxed' and 'unreliable'. The project will analyse management texts and listen to business students to learn what they are being taught about other cultures and how Australians can do business with other cultures.

The researchers have identified a cultural figure that may be important in connecting Australia and Latin America – the well loved 'larrikin'. The Australian larrikin would love the Brazilian idea of *jeitinho* – which roughly translates as 'cutting through red tape' to get things done –and the Australian idea of 'mates rates' is similar to the Mexican concept of *hazme un favour* (do me a favour). This study aims to create greater understanding and a more flexible approach to those cultural habits.

"This three-way comparison of forms of the 'larrikin' will assist Australian businesses in Latin America by pointing out misleading assumptions about culture, their own and others" Professor Hodge said. "We are also now told that being a bit of a larrikin is something to be ashamed of, that the Aussie way is outmoded and embarrassing in doing business because the model of 'economic rationalism' for managing the globe should replace the old cultural model. But far from having to hide our larrikin" Professor Hodge says, "the project will attempt to understand and use it".

The research will encourage Australian business people to trust their own 'larrikin' and to be more understanding of other cultural practices, creating more responsive, effective ambassadors for their country.

The research's focus on management education may lead to innovative curriculum ideas, such as cultural studies approaches in business units.

Project Title: *Cross-cultural 'larrikins; in a Neo-liberal world: ideology and myth in postmodern Australia, Mexico and Brazil.*

Funding has been set at: \$181,000

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