The concept of jeitinho in Mexican and Australian culture

Bob Hodge
University of Western Sydney

Abstract
This paper will take the Brazilian concept of jeitinho, and the figure of the malandro, as outlined in Dr Duarte’s presentation, and show its affinities and differences, in form and function, with the Mexican concept of mordida and the figure of the coyote, and the Australian concept of mateship, and the figure of the larrikin, each connected to the relevant histories, cultures and social practices. The aim of the paper is not to find or construct a new unitary concept in all three nations, or within Latin American nations, but to bring out the complex patterns of contradictions, similarities and differences that make all three unique yet comprehensible to each other in surprising and evolving ways. This kind of understanding, it will be argued, is a far better basis than can be found in text books on ‘Cross Cultural Management’ to promote more respectful and productive interaction between Australians and Latin Americans, in business as in many other spheres of life.