

TRANSLATED TRADITIONS:  
A COMPARATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY OF TRADITIONAL DANCE IN THE IRISH  
AND CROATIAN COMMUNITIES IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Sydney Conservatorium of Music  
The University of Sydney

2018

### **Statement of Originality**

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Signed JEANETTE MOLLENHAUER

Date 4/12/17

### **Author Attribution Statement**

This thesis contains material which has been published in the following articles:

Mollenhauer, J. (2015). Competitive Irish Dance: Culture and Community. *The Australasian Journal of Irish Studies*, 15, 35-54.

Mollenhauer, J. (2015). Fifty Years of Remembering: Blato's *Kumpanjija* in Australia. *Croatian Studies Review*, 11, 109-138.

Mollenhauer, J. (2017). Irish Dancing in Sydney: Global Patterns, Local Practices. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 38(2), 213-227.

Mollenhauer, J. (2017). Embodied Emplaced Embraced: Performing the Chain Sword Dance of Blato (Croatia) in Sydney, Australia. *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship*, <http://www.jedsonline.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Mollenhauer.pdf>

I was solely responsible for the development of these articles.

As supervisor for the candidature upon which this thesis is based, I can confirm that the authorship attribution statements above are correct.

Signature      Kathryn Marsh

Date            1/12/17

## **Abstract**

This comparative ethnography investigates the traditional dance practices of the Irish and Croatian communities in Sydney, Australia. Transnationalism theory affords the means through which to examine the multiple ways in which individuals and groups have forged, and continue to participate in, fields of engagement across national borders. The study situates the immigrant groups within the context of multicultural Australia, and additionally references the theoretical paradigms of cultural identity, diaspora studies, nostalgia theory and ethnochoreology. Thus, the role of traditional dance practices in the two communities is analysed.

The research entailed detailed case studies of three dance groups from each of the immigrant communities under investigation. Data were gathered through ethnographic fieldwork conducted in dance classes and special events over two years and interviews with 100 participants. Themes which developed from the data revealed participants' agency in multiple transnational spaces including, at a personal level, cultural identity, emotional attachment and embodied signification. Themes relating to structural and functional fields were the global organisational frameworks, patterns of pedagogical practice and flows of material goods. The final theme which emerged during data analysis was transnational representation through public performances of dance.

The research revealed that participation in traditional dance was an important means through which immigrants may perpetuate links with their ancestral birthplace. Strong affective bonds with that former homeland were noted amongst the large majority of respondents. Dance was also identified as an important signifier of cultural belonging amongst members of both communities. Additionally, the study acknowledged that transnational engagements were not the sole province of immigrants, but also included those who have merely affiliated themselves with a traditional dance genre. The study affirmed the value of a transnational prism in evaluations of immigrants' experiences and validated ethnochoreological research amongst settler groups in multicultural Australia.

## Acknowledgements

Dance has held a lifelong fascination for me and I have experienced so much enjoyment in both researching and writing about it. As with any work of this magnitude, there are many people who need to be thanked for providing inspiration and encouragement along the way.

Most of the credit goes to my supervisor, Professor Kathryn Marsh. Kathy, your vast experience provided a sound foundation for my research venture and, as a marvellous educator and generous scholar, you have continually inspired me to pursue higher academic standards. It has been my great privilege to learn so much from you along the way.

There are others to whom I owe much, for both their input in my life and in this research adventure. The first person is my Mum, Gwen Cooper, who passed away before I completed high school. There are many times when I wish you could have been here, Mum, and I will never stop missing you. Thanks, too, for taking me to calisthenics classes, because that was the start of my dance journey, and so this research, in a way, connects me with you.

My young adults, Phil, Erin and Hannah, are inspirational, and I am immensely proud of you. My husband Andrew has helped in whatever way he could with this project, including driving me to events and taking photos for me. All of these small things made a difference.

My childhood piano teacher in Melbourne, Lin Threlfall Boles (dec.), arranged for me to be half of a piano duet playing a piece called *Bulgarian Rhythms*, and thus introduced me to non-classical musical forms. She also always hoped some of her students would study at a Conservatorium of Music, so I think she would be pleased that I finally made it, even if not as a piano student.

Dr Tiffany Bodiam, former colleague at Anglicare Sydney, first suggested that I pursue doctoral studies in dance research, and Dr Wendy Brooks suggested I send my research proposal to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Wendy and I also spent many hours together as “dance Mums” at Irish step dancing competitions with our daughters. Thank you both for your part in my research adventure.

To the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, particularly Dr Michael Webb, who initially interviewed me, I extend my grateful thanks for accepting me as a doctoral candidate.

I thank all of the “expert participants”, the scholars of Irish and Croatian dance and music who made themselves available for interviews and have answered questions by email. Your input has been both valuable and welcome, as it provided information about the various dance genres in their original contexts and suggested directions for my research here in Sydney.

I also thank my band of proof readers, who bravely took on reading a chapter each: David Gordon, Wendy Gordon, Fran Isaksen, Erin Mollenhauer, Robyn Newton, Sue Ritchie, Sue Spedding and Lynda Toohey. Your work was so important.

Finally, I owe a huge debt of thanks to the Sydney research participants who permitted me to share not only their dancing, but also their life experiences. I have been made welcome and you shared your insights and precious memories with me. I hope I have done justice to your stories here.

May you all have many years of dancing ahead of you!

*“Sláinte!”*      *“Živjeli!”*

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Background to the Study

Australia has a somewhat extraordinary immigration story in that all non-Indigenous Australians are likely to be able to trace and identify their migration history, as that history only dates back, at its furthest point, to the arrival of the First Fleet<sup>1</sup> in 1788, which signalled the beginning of white colonisation. Since Australia as a national entity was founded, settled and governed under the sovereignty of the British Empire, those with a Great British family history became the dominant sector of the population<sup>2</sup>. However, as a result of subsequent migration patterns, Australia is currently home to almost 200 immigrant communities with varying settlement histories (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Often, the relationship between immigrants and the majority population sector has been capricious and unpredictable; both synchronic and diachronic studies of immigrant groups demonstrate contrasting and divergent situations. This thesis is concerned with the experiences of two of those groups, the Croatian and Irish communities in Australia's largest city, Sydney, and explores the mediating factors: the historical, political and social contexts which serve to mould and configure each community's position in the landscape of Australian society.

In this thesis, dance provides a new prism through which the processes of immigration and resettlement may be interpreted. Much has been written concerning the general construction and negotiation of identity in relation to immigrant, diasporic populations in multicultural Australia (Ang, 2014; Arasaratnam, 2008; Colic-Peisker, 2002; Drodzewski, 2007; P. O'Connor, 2005; Noble, 2013b), but relatively little research in Australia has focussed on the role of folkloric traditions such as dance and music, which are tangible markers of cultural heritage in that construction (Seal, 1998). As long ago as 1993, the eminent Australian folklorists Davey and Seal (1993) wrote that the lack of research into folkloric practices amongst immigrant communities in Australia was "one of the great gaping holes in research in Australia" (p. 110).

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<sup>1</sup> The flotilla which arrived in January 1788, carrying convicted prisoners and military, administrative and scientific personnel.

<sup>2</sup> Prior to the arrival of the First Fleet, Indigenous Australians were the sole occupants of the land. As a result of increasing migration from Great Britain, and the policies of the colonial administration, which discriminated harshly against the Indigenous people, the British immigrants became the largest population group.



A work which examines immigrant communities in a nation such as Australia, which is characterised by its heterogeneous population, opens up possibilities for exploration within multiple theoretical paradigms. While each one is scrutinised further in Chapter Two, some preliminary remarks here, concerning each relevant discourse, are salient. Australia's history of immigration, beginning from the arrival of the British, means that the situation for individual communities of immigrants is determined by the political and social contexts which existed at the time of arrival and have developed since that time. Official policies surrounding immigrants and their absorption into the Australian population have, most often, been ones which have led to forms of marginalisation for certain sectors of that populace. Initially, the British colonial government sought to exclude a number of non-British population groups from the social acceptance and privileges afforded to settlers with British heritage. Irish immigrants were one of these marginalised groups (Stratton, 2004; D. Hall, 2014) but the sanctions extended to other minorities including Indigenous Australians and immigrants from China and the South Pacific Islands. Subsequently, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the White Australia policy of the newly formed Australian parliament strove to maintain a non-Indigenous population which was homogeneous<sup>3</sup>, although the constraints of labour shortages following the Second World War led to the acceptance of large numbers of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, including Croatia (Anderson, 2013; Keddie, 2014; Moran, 2011). Since the late 1960s, multiculturalism has been, first, adopted as official policy, but has undergone multiple transformations under various political leaders (Keddie, 2014). The effects of this mutability on the immigrants themselves, and on their relationships with the broader population, provide a wide field for scholarly exploration.

Of greater interest, in this study, are the effects of multiculturalism on the habits and practices of immigrants. The notion of "everyday multiculturalism" (Wise & Velayutham, 2009, p.1) provides a good point from which to begin, since it seeks to understand the ways in which mundane interactions can further our understandings of multiculturalism in practice. The use of dance and music at the cultural interface is of particular concern here, and this topic has raised much debate. The effect of public performances of culturally-specific dance and music genres on both the performers and audience members is contested (Duffy, 2005; Hage, 1998; Mackley-Crump, 2016); this thesis aims to explore performance, in a multicultural context, as it affects the Irish and Croatian communities.

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<sup>3</sup> The terms "homogenous" and "homogeneous" are employed interchangeably in extant literature. In quotations, the chosen spelling of the quoted author will be used; otherwise the spelling in the thesis will be "homogeneous".

The notion of Irish and Croatian communities invites considerations from the field of diaspora studies. The earlier work of scholars such as Clifford (1999), who recognised that diaspora is a concept which is processual as well as focussed on common origins, lays the foundation for appreciation of the nuances which may exist in a given immigrant community. This heterogeneity results from the individual variations of personality and experience contained within one group of people (McAuliffe, 2008). Nevertheless, those disparate individuals share much with their fellow group members, and so the activities of a diasporic community may be directed towards remembering their former homeland and developing bonds with others who emigrated from that homeland (Hickman, 2012; Ramnarine, 2007a). One of those activities may be the perpetuation of culturally-specific dance genres.

A third area of discursive interest is that of identity studies, since much of the material presented in this thesis is concerned with the ways in which participants employ dance as a marker of personal and group identity. The observation that identity is a fluid construct and one which is subject to multiple influences is noted well in extant literature (S. Hall, 1997; Phinney, 2005; Zhang & Noels, 2012). Specific studies of immigrant communities within an Australian context draw out many location-specific influences, many of which relate back to the nature of multiculturalism in Australian society (Drodzewski, 2007; Noble, 2002; P. O'Connor, 2010). Other research focuses on diasporic groups and their traditional artistic practices as perpetuated in Australia (Duarte, 2005; Winarnita, 2014; 2016) and serves to contextualise and provide points of comparison for the current project. In combination, the dialogues concerning multiculturalism, diaspora studies and identity studies are woven into the fabric of this thesis, forming the basis for the main focus of the present inquiry: the dance practices of the Irish and Croatian communities in Sydney.

In existing dance discourse, ethnographies have been undertaken overseas by a number of researchers. Some have involved studies of dance in the homeland (Dankworth, 2014; Dunin, 2001; Foley, 2013; Kaeppler, 2004; Wulff, 2009; Zebec, 2000), while others have analysed dance practices amongst immigrant groups (David, 2005; Knudsen, 2009; Nahachewsky, 2012; Shay, 2006; Wrazen, 2005, 2010). Of the second group of scholars, only Nahachewsky (2012) is a member of the immigrant community being investigated. The research projects which have been undertaken in Australia amongst immigrant groups have tended to be carried out by an academic who was a member of the particular cultural group being investigated, such as Ram (2000a, 2000b, 2005), an anthropologist writing about traditional dance practices amongst her fellow immigrants from India. Similarly, the sociologists Duarte (2005), Senay (2009) and Tabar (2005) write, respectively, about Brazilian, Turkish and Lebanese music and dance in Sydney. These scholars have drawn on their considerable experience in studying human behaviour to produce short papers

about activities within the immigrant communities to which they belong. In terms of more intensive projects, there is Roy's (2012) analysis of a particular dance performance by a touring Slovakian troupe, Winarnita's (2014, 2016) studies of Indonesian dancers in Australia and Wulfhorst's (2014) work on Brazilian capoeira as practised in Australia, each of which is based on doctoral research projects. These studies are the first among a new wave of dance research in Australia which is concerned with the dance practices of various immigrant communities. The current study adds to this body of work.

In the process of conceptualisation, the research aim was not to primarily investigate dance in and of itself; this study was not intended to be a documentation exercise in which the names of dances and their frequency of practice or performance would be recorded and analysed. Such a process is foundational in dance research in the European tradition and context, where it is important to distinguish and identify subtle differences in dance style between neighbouring villages (Felföldi, 1999; Zebec, 1996). Instead, the aim is to understand the meaning of dance in the lives of the individuals who participate in dance groups, and the role of dance in the environment of each immigrant community. To that end, the following research questions were developed:

- 1) What is the role of dance practices in the Irish and Croatian communities<sup>4</sup> in Australia?
- 2) In what ways have dance practices been operationalised to forge various modes of linkage between immigrants' former and current nations of residence?

### **Terminology Utilised in the Study**

This section explores some of the relevant terms which are employed in this thesis, so the reader may be clear as to the particular meanings which are invested in the terms in this context. The terms are *cultural heritage*, *dance*, *traditional dance* and *translated traditions*.

#### **Cultural Heritage**

Locating terminology which is both descriptively accurate and socially acceptable is often fraught with difficulties. National boundaries are not always appropriate for application in defining the boundaries of a group of immigrants with shared traditional practices. In this study, participants' self-identification has been used as a guide. Some Irish immigrants in this study have come from the Republic of Ireland while others are from Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom. They all identify as "Irish", and hence the term "Irish" in this thesis includes immigrants

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<sup>4</sup> Further explanation of these terms is provided below under the heading "Cultural heritage".

from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. In the same manner, the Croatian immigrants may have their origins in Croatia or in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they self-identify as “Croatian”. Therefore, the term “Croatian” in this thesis refers to participants from both the Republic of Croatia and from Bosnia and Herzegovina. This terminology reflects the shared traditions and practices of participants, rather than their ancestral nationality.

Neither heterogeneity, essentialism nor any form of othering is implied in the application of inclusive terms such as “Irish” and “Croatian”. Skrbiš (1999) argues that the various immigrant groups in Australian society should not be treated as “organic homogenous communities” but as “groups...composed of individuals with different interests” (p.13). Similarly, Bottomley (2002) cautions against defining cultural groups as “parallel homogeneities” (p.14) rather than recognising their “contrapuntal histories” (p. 14). The words “Irish” and “Croatian” are employed merely as the simplest form of encompassing taxonomy, for the purposes of clarifying which immigrant group is being discussed in various sections of this thesis.

## **Dance**

Dance is a form of human movement and is representative of a web of connections with oneself, with fellow humans, and with the physical world in which we live (Vissicaro, 2004; Warburton, 2011). Kaepler (2000) contends that, since dance is a term which has certain connotations in Western thinking (that is, that “dance” means all movements which are accompanied by music), it would be better described as a “structured movement system” (p 117). As such, dance has the ability to provide insight into the nature of humanity in much the same manner as spoken language.

Bodily movements are located within the natural scientific boundaries of time, space and gravity (Block & Kissell, 2001), and manifest evidence of the interconnections between the intellect, the psyche and the physical flesh (Warburton, 2011). Elements which are part of the performance of a dance may be located outside of the boundaries of the written choreography, including facial expressions, vocalisations made during the dance, theatrical props and stage decorations (Giurchescu, 1992). While dance does not always have musical accompaniment, dance and music are often inextricably entwined in a mutually stimulating and enriching partnership (Meglin & Brooks, 2013); both are vessels through which people may negotiate and perform narratives of space and place (Stokes, 1994). Dance and performance are also frequently partnered, whether for the purpose of an “in-house” performance such as may occur during a wedding reception, or on a stage where members of the audience have paid for the experience of viewing the performance. The involvement and

emotional responses of audience members, the choice and contextual presentation of individual items within the performance and the effect of the physical features of the performance venue upon the performance are all issues of importance to dance researchers (Alvarez, 2012).

Dance has been described as a representation of a person's actuality in the physical world, involving connections both with that world and with others in the world (Block & Kissell, 2001). Laban (1988), who developed a system of recording the steps of dance choreographies (known as Labanotation) commented that movements are "charged with human qualities" (p. 68). Emotional expression through dance may be observed. Music (and by extrapolation, dance) is a means through which people can construct facets of their past and present experiences, and future aspirations, in tangible form (Finnegan, 2003). The same characteristics may be ascribed to dance. Dances may also express emotions which are *not* being felt by the dancers in everyday life. For example, some dances may, through their choreographies, express dark emotions such as war and murder, but this does not mean that dancers, at the time they are dancing, are contemplating killing another person; they are actors expressing emotions through the medium of dance (D. Williams, 2004).

The characteristics described here are applicable to multiple genres of dance, such as ballet, tap, ballroom and the dances which belong to particular cultural heritage groups and which may often have unknown origins, unknown choreographers and oral transmission. The dance in this research falls into the latter category, but finding a name for this kind of dance has led to much academic contestation.

### **Traditional Dance**

The dance genres which are explored in this study are those which are performed by a given group of people "to make a statement about their identity as members of that group" (Royce, 2004). They may be perpetuated through written form, transmitted orally, taught through demonstration, or continued through a combination of these methods. The dances found within one cultural group represent processes of both personal and social integration operating within that community (Turino, 2008), concepts of social structure, family relationships and religious beliefs (Sorce Keller & Barwick, 2013). The configuration of the way the dancing is undertaken embodies both personal and cultural knowledge and is peculiar to each cultural heritage group (Sklar, 2001; 2006). This knowledge is systematised through means which, again, are idiosyncratic to that group, and the repository for that knowledge is located within the collective memory and identity of the group's members

(Kaepler, 2004; Turino, 2008). The necessity for the study of semiotics (S. Hall, 1997), which, in the case of dance, would include factors such as costume, gestures and dance formations, has been noted. Such signs operate at both the level of basic description and at a more profound interpretative level (Kaepler, 2004). Deeper, culturally-specific communicative functions of a dance may not be comprehended by someone watching who does not belong to the cultural group in question (Royce, 2004). Symbolic representations require insider knowledge; audience members viewing through an etic lens may reach a different interpretation of the symbols from that which is intended by the performers (Vissicaro, 2004).

Having described the nature of the dance under investigation, the question of suitable taxonomy remains. Multiple terminologies may be located within dance scholarship and this section describes a process, not of dismissing incorrect terms and choosing a right definition, but of finding the most appropriate term to apply within the context of the current study and signifying that this term is deemed preferable within this particular research situation. Comparative studies, such as the current project, are uncommon in extant literature and therein lies a problem which is unique to this study: to find an overarching term which can be most suitably applied to dance from two different geographical and cultural origins.

The term “folk dancing” is one possibility. “Folk” provides association with the discipline of folklore (Seal, 1998) and with accompanying practices such as food, festival and literature. In the academy, there is a lack of consensus surrounding the meaning of “folk dancing”; van Zile (2001) states that “no common definition has emerged and many [scholars] avoid using the term” (p.37). Nahachewsky (2006) points out that the term may be assumed to imply restriction to “peasant dancing” (p. 165), a connotation which needs to be avoided. In later writing, he states that “folk dancing” carries “cultural baggage and multiple meanings” (Nahachewsky, 2016, p. 298). There is a further problem in that while Croatian dancing often has the adjective “folkloric” attached to it (Shay, 2002; 2016), Irish dancing does not. The term “folk” was in use some decades ago (Breathnach, 1996) but none of the current Irish dance scholars employ either “folk” or “folkloric” when speaking of dancing which has originated in Ireland (Brennan, 1999; de Gallaí, 2013; Foley, 2013, F. Hall, 2008; Ni Bhriain, 2008, Wulff, 2009). It would be somewhat problematic to employ a term which is only used by one of the communities included in the study. Hence, the phrase is not employed in the thesis except where an author, having used the term, is directly quoted.

“Ethnic dance” is an alternative term, but one which has a colourful and variegated history. Kealiinohomoku’s (2001) paper, originally written in 1970 and entitled “An Anthropologist Looks

at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance” was intended to highlight inappropriate use of the term: instead of being objective, she argues that scholars employ “ethnic” as a synonym for “‘heathen’, ‘pagan’, ‘savage’ or the more recent term ‘exotic’” (p. 41). Kealiinohomoku argues that all dances are cultural in that they belong to a given group of people, including when that group is a ballet class, and that there should not be different strategies for investigations of Western and non-Western dance genres, because in both cases, the aim is to understand the dance practices of a certain group of people. The problem lies in the fact that this meaning is rarely assigned; the descriptor “ethnic” implies that there is usually an assumption of some form of common ancestry or geographical origin amongst all of the dance participants in the genre being described. While this commonality exists in most of the dance groups included in this study, it is not present in all of them, meaning that the term would not always be able to be applied in a completely accurate manner.

The term is rarely used in the literature, which is another concern; only Callos (2012) links “ethnic” with “dance” (p. 4) other scholars writing about dance connect the adjective “ethnic” with other nouns such as “identity” or “community” (Bottomley, 2002; David, 2005; Duarte, 2005; MacLachlan, 2016; Tabar, 2005) but not with the dance. “Ethnic dance” is more recently suggested by Nahachewsky (2016) to describe “dance which makes explicit reference to any specific culture in a cross-cultural situation” (p. 307). This definition is succinct and its recognition of the significance of the setting of the dance event is important, because those settings may be subject to much variation in the context of a multicultural society such as Australia. However, it is not the explanation *per se* which is contentious, but the word “ethnic” which is, once again, the potential source of problems. The term “ethnic”, when employed in contexts such as “ethnic identity” and “ethnic groups”, may be contested, as will be explored further in Chapter Two. While the adjective “ethnic” is used in some situations in this thesis, the composite term “ethnic dance” will be avoided except when quoting an author who has employed the term.

Certainly, words such as ethnography, ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology appear repeatedly in this thesis, and are not viewed as problematic even though their prefixes share a common etymology with “ethnicity”. The difficulty is that the ongoing hegemony of Anglo-Australians continues to be problematic. In the popular imagination, “ethnicity” may be considered as a trait possessed solely by minority groups; in Greenhill’s (1994) ethnography of English immigrants in Canada she writes that “because the English have not been considered an ethnic group... they are usually located solely in the domain of power” (p. 4). In performance studies in Australia, the word “ethnic” carries perceptual baggage, and “artists of ethnic minority background are generally offered marginal spaces in which they can express themselves” (Idriss, 2016, p. 406).

It is not the intention in this thesis to imply any inferiority on the part of any of the dance groups or research participants. It is possible that this association is not present in the Canadian context from which Nahachewsky (2016) writes, but since the current study is situated in Sydney, a descriptor with possible negative associations in the Australian context is undesirable.

Thus, preferential usage of the term *traditional dance* is employed in this thesis, although the terms “folk dance” and “ethnic dance<sup>5</sup>” may appear when scholars are directly quoted. *Traditional dance* is a term which has been employed by scholars of both Croatian dance (Dunin, 2009; Zebec, 2006) and Irish dancing (de Gallaí, 2013; Edwards, 2000; Foley, 2010; 2011), so it is one which fits with previous scholarship in both fields. Valley (2008) points out that the word “tradition” emphasises aspects of transmission and adds that traditional music is characterised by its “value in a community which is at ease with it” (p. 10). Another facet of the term is provided by Kaeppler (2004), who states that “tradition operates through continuity and change, retention and innovation, and most importantly through transformation and recycling” (p. 310). The application of the migration process to a dance which has been passed down for generations increases the complexity of that dance, since there is a new context and new conditions under which it is performed. Schippers (2009) writes that traditions often “keep changing with the demands of the times, in an organic way, or in a conscious effort to retain relevance to their audiences” (p. 45), while Aubert (2007) suggests that “the nature of tradition...is not to preserve intact a heritage from the past, but to enrich it according to present circumstances and transmit the result to future generations” (p. 10). The definitions provided by these scholars combine to accurately reflect experiences of dance in a post-immigration context, which is precisely the situation which exists for the dance genres under consideration in the current study. The descriptor “traditional” is, therefore, appropriated in this thesis as a reminder that the dance genres which are included here all had their origins outside of Australia, have been passed down through generations both in the homeland of the past and in Australia in the present, may have been subject to change when practised in a new context, and are cherished amongst the relevant immigrant communities to which they belong.

### **“Translated Traditions”**

The title for this thesis was chosen to succinctly describe the processes which have influenced the traditions (particularly dance) of the cultural heritage groups which are participating in this study. The word “translate” has several linguistic uses (Oxford University Press, 2017), several of which are utilised in the description and analysis of the data upon which this thesis is based. The first meaning is one of mathematical origin, where a

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<sup>5</sup> The descriptors “ethnic” and “cultural” are discussed in further detail in Chapter Two.



geometric shape is translated (moved without rotation) across the page. This usage is synonymous with words such as relocate, transfer and transplant. In reference to this study, the traditions have been moved across the globe with the migration of people from one country to another. The second meaning of “translated” is that of being converted to another language: in this thesis, dances have been removed from their homeland base, to be practised now in a new location; multiple changes in dance practice result from this relocation. This meaning is also utilised in this thesis.

There is a third meaning of the word, and one which is *not* used in this thesis: that is the process of taking dance “across into your own system of conceptual and aesthetic categories” (Toynbee & Dueck, 2011, p 9). The thesis is not, for example, about the international folk dance movement (Laušević, 2007; Shay, 2008); nor is it about Australian residents of either Irish or Croatian heritage who train in Western dance forms such as classical ballet and then choreograph balletic works using influences from their respective cultural heritage backgrounds. It is about dances which belong in the archives of tradition of both Irish and Croatian immigrants in Sydney.<sup>6</sup>

### **Theoretical Framework: Transnationalism**

Having introduced the study and defined important terms and concepts, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to provision of a theoretical framework which is considered appropriate to both the research questions, the methodology which was employed and the analysis of the collected data. The study views dancing not only as an activity in its own right, but as a means through which the various personal and social constructions of the dancers<sup>7</sup> may be accessed. Therefore, this study requires a framework through which interpretation of both the dancing practices and the individual experiences of immigrants may be achieved. To that end, transnationalism has been selected as an appropriate analytical lens.

#### **The earliest notions of transnationalism**

The original definition of the term is discerned from the word itself: that which is across or between nations (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994; Gowricharn, 2009). Vertovec’s (1999) definition is that transnationalism describes the “multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation states” (p. 447). This interpretation has, at times, been employed to describe those persons or organisations who have some form of connection, whether familial, social, cultural, economic or political,

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<sup>6</sup> However, as will be explored later, all forms of Irish dancing are also practised by many without Irish cultural heritage.

<sup>7</sup> While the term “dancers” is employed here, the study includes multiple adherents to dance groups, such as teachers, musicians and parents. This is explored further in Chapter Three.

between two countries (Baldassar, Kilkey, Merla & Wilding, 2014; Dahinden, 2010; Gowricharn, 2009). Fourn & Glick Schiller (2002) state that transnationalism is “a process of movement and settlement across international borders in which individuals maintain or build multiple networks of connection to their country of origin while at the same time settling in a new country” (p. 172). This definition not only refers to the movement of people across borders but also, importantly, identifies that there is a measure of simultaneous activity in both the sending and receiving societies. The notion of simultaneity will be discussed further in the next section; here it suffices to note that activity takes place at both “ends” and that any analysis should involve the home location as well as the diaspora. Finally, Scully’s (2012) idea that transnationalism represents “the extent to which a life is lived in two (or more) countries simultaneously - whether that be materially, socially, economically or affectively” (p. 196), foregrounds the personal and lived experiences of those involved in transnational living. The concept of embodiment and transnationalism is explored later in this chapter.

### **Transnational social fields**

Migration involves a process of physical movement from one location, across at least one national border, to another location. Intrinsic to this process is the establishment of personal connections and social networks which traverse those national borders. As these networks become enmeshed with each other, there is development of “fluid social spaces that are constantly reworked through migrants’ simultaneous embeddedness in more than one context” (Levitt, 2009, p. 1227). These spaces or fields (the terms are employed interchangeably in existing literature) are multiple: individuals, families and larger groups may be engaged with several intersecting and/or overlapping fields simultaneously. There is a “network or networks of unequal power that link individuals to one or more institutions that organize and regulate the daily economic, political, social and religious activities of social life” (Glick Schiller, 2012, p. 25). The notion of multiple networks suggests not only complexity but also fluidity, both within and surrounding these fields (Lacroix, 2014), so allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of immigrant experiences.

The use of “field” or “space” has the further advantage of dislodging the previously-held hegemonic position of nationalist discourse from the theory of transnationalism (Glick Schiller, 2005; McAuliffe, 2008). While the theory would not exist without migration across national borders, and national ideas of allegiance influence transnational activities (Zevallos, 2008), notions of “field” and “space” encourage examination of the intersection between all kinds of belonging which occur at local, national and international levels instead of being

bound up by the nationalist paradigm (Glick Schiller, 2005). These terms also reinforce the importance of recognising and considering simultaneity. Levitt (2009) urges researchers to consider the “simultaneous processes that mutually inform each other” (p. 1225) whenever studying the connections formed between those who have emigrated and their ancestral home. By following this suggestion, not only is research able to consider both “ends” of the transnational connection (the sending and receiving societies), but to consider activities at each “end” as manifestations of different facets of “one coherent transnational social process” (Tsuda, 2012, p. 634), thus providing a deeper understanding of the complex processes at work in individual lives.

Levitt (2001) also describes transnational social spaces as “transnational villages” (p. 11) in order to more explicitly illustrate the duality and simultaneity which is intrinsic to the term “transnational”. She argues that in reality, the experience of migration is not necessary in order to be a transnational villager or to operate within a transnational social field; people who have remained in the sending society, but who are in some way connected with relatives or friends who have emigrated, are as able to be designated as “transnational villagers” as the emigrants themselves. The notions of “field”, “space” and “village”, then, have transformed transnationalism from a way of looking at migration to a “paradigmatic term that facilitates researchers to maintain a holistic interest in all the mobilities and other links (including communication) which immigrants and their descendants undertake, and upon the multiple allegiances and senses of belonging that they experience” (Dunn, 2008, p. 2).

### **Characteristics of transnational social fields**

Some immigrants are ambivalent towards their place of birth whilst still living there, then later form a strong emotional attachment following immigration. Others may focus on adaptation to the receiving society, then subsequently develop a desire to reconnect through some form of transnational field following their first return visit to the place of birth (Levitt, 2001). The chosen level of engagement with the mainstream society in the receiving location affects the level of participation in transnational social fields (Tsuda, 2012). Socio-economic status can affect involvement: work commitments or low wages may prevent an individual from participating in desired social fields (Levitt, 2001), as may gender, educational achievement and religious affiliation (Colic-Peisker, 2002; Levitt, 2009; Tsuda, 2012).

Transnational fields may influence the migration decisions of other individuals still residing in the country of birth; palpable, variegated strands of linkage with the homeland may encourage further exodus, since prospective migrants have the assurance of the presence

of a range of networks within the receiving society, thus rendering the migration process somewhat less daunting than it otherwise may have been (Levitt, 2002). The degree of organisational involvement which is available within the immigrant community in a given geographical location is significant (Levitt, 2001). A community which has, for example, multiple artistic, social and sporting clubs in operation is likely to have stronger and more numerous transnational spaces in operation. The government of the sending country may have a prescribed system for connecting the homeland with those who have left to dwell elsewhere. Finally, religious, civic and political fraternities may be a powerful binding force. The number and variety of institutional involvement processes determine the dimensions of the relevant social field, and increase the number of available combinations of participation for immigrants (Levitt, 2001).

The physical distance between sending and receiving societies is influential: a shorter distance makes travel between the two locations more likely and more frequent (Levitt, 2009). The political situation in each location also plays a part, for example, when there is great unrest in the sending society and an immigrant is worried about the welfare of relatives still living there, and whether instability in the receiving society will be encountered. For people from the same cultural group, settlement in two different geographical locations within the receiving nation may produce different levels of transnational activity (Dunn & Ip, 2008). Furthermore, the level of diversity present in the population and the government policies surrounding multiculturalism also exert influence upon levels of transnational activity (Dunn & Ip, 2008; Zevallos, 2008).

Individual engagement with transnational activities exists in a symbiotic relationship with assimilation and acculturation practices. There are some who contend that transnational activity is (relatively) inversely proportionate to acculturation; that is, that as an immigrant settles into the receiving society, his/her ties to the sending society automatically diminish (O'Flaherty, Skrbiš & Tranter, 2007). This view has some logical merit to it, but at the same time, fails to acknowledge the multiple life course incidents, as previously outlined, which may lead to waxing and waning of transnational activities. Tsuda (2012) argues that acculturation and transnational participation should not be considered as always being mutually exclusive phenomena: there develops a co-existence between the two where each phenomenon may even be positively reinforcing the other. This is exemplified in cases where an immigrant gains financial stability in the receiving society (that is, becomes more acculturated), which then allows more frequent travel to the sending location, thus reinforcing participation in transnational fields. Longer settlement histories permit acquisition of such

stability (Dunn & Ip, 2008). The interaction of the many and varied factors described in this section produces multiple permutations and combinations of transnational experience and practice, resulting in a spectrum of individual histories to be explored.

### **Transnationalism and the second generation**

This study concerns second generation immigrants as well; scholars of transnationalism have turned their attention to the fields and spaces occupied by the children of those who chose to leave their homelands. Members of the second generation occupy a unique place in the immigrant experience; they must find a way to mediate between the experiences of their parents and their own lives (Bottomley, 2002). Put another way, they “live as a product of both nations, as well as being potentially judged from without as a product of neither” (McAuliffe, 2008, p. 65). There may have been some socio-economic changes (usually, improvements) since the era of their parents’ migratory enterprise. A loss of dual language skill may happen, and the influence of parental religious beliefs may decline (Rumbaut, 2002). Conversely, members of this generation have access to technological means of communication with persons still residing in the sending society which were not available to their parents’ generation (Kasinitz, Waters, Mollenkopf & Anil, 2002). The second generation feels the pull of both their parents’ homeland and the society in which they’ve grown up.

As with their parents, the personal choices of the second generation may vary. They may accept the receiving society and all for which it stands, reject it as much as possible, or be selective and choose elements which serve a purpose while retaining appealing elements of their parents’ culture (Levitt & Waters, 2002). The attitude of the receiving society, and hence the self-perceived cultural identity adopted by immigrants, is of relevance. The presence of racially-motivated bias on the part of the majority population, or the positioning of an immigrant group within a lower socio-economic status profile may result in second generation immigrants choosing to identify with the sending society as a means of developing intra-community pride and a sense of belonging which has been denied to them by the wider receiving society (Fouon & Glick-Schiller, 2002). More subtly, where there is a perception (whether real or imagined) that the host society views the particular immigrant group in a negative light, transnational practices may be taken up as a form of defensive measure. R. Smith (2002) observed this phenomenon amongst immigrants from Mexico to the United States: they did not wish to be identified with the negative image of Mexican immigrants which they believed to be generally held among the broader population, so they sought to

embrace and disseminate a different version of Mexican identity in the hope of winning approval.

The nature of the immigrant community should also be acknowledged as exerting influence. The presence of multiple opportunities for participation in social activities (including dance, music, language and sporting groups) within an immigrant community is likely to result in higher levels of transnational participation amongst the second generation (Jones-Correa, 2002). Such groups provide opportunities for parents to introduce children to their traditions and rituals, and their continuation has been observed to be associated with higher levels of transnational activism amongst second generation immigrants (Gowricharn, 2009). Another pertinent issue is the rate of flow of new immigrants from the country of origin, especially if these new arrivals are of similar age to the second generation already growing up in the receiving society. A new wave of young, first generation immigrants enables the existing second generation to interact with contemporaries who have physical experience in the homeland and thus are able to form new strands of connection as the concept of the homeland is interpreted for them by members of the same generation instead of the previous one (Kasinitz et al., 2002).

The nature of the relationships between parents and children is another mediating factor in transnational practice. Being raised by parents who have the physical experiences and memories of a different life in a faraway location seems, logically, to have great potential to produce children who engage in multiple transnational practices, but it is important to note that transnationally active parents do not always produce transnationally active children (Levitt, 2009). The parents' transnational choices are influential in determining the practices of the next generation (Eckstein 2002). Some children may, out of a sense of obligation, seek to keep the "immigrant bargain" with their parents (R. Smith, 2002, p. 146) and honour them by perpetuating rituals and traditions brought by the parents from their former homeland. It is these members of the second generation who are most likely to choose to socialise within the immigrant group, marry within the group and have the focus of their lives, for the most part (with the probable exceptions of education and employment) within the group. Others may have a form of conversion experience (which, as stated previously, often results from a trip to the sending country) leading to a decision to learn and take up traditions from that society in order to maintain the sense of connection (Levitt, 2001; 2002).

The second generation lives at a crossroads of two cultures: that of their parents and that of the country of residence, and so there may be "different codes, cultures, ideologies and goals" which need to be sorted out in their minds and in their daily lives (Wolf, 2002, p. 257).

If the child has never seen the country of his or her parents' birth, then transnationalism often takes on an element of fantasy. There are two ideas which vie for prominence: the "home" of the present and the "Home" of the past, with its imputed superiority in morality, behaviour, conventions and culture (Wolf, 2002, p. 285). The only contact with the heritage culture is through the activities of groups and organisations in the diasporic community. The transnational social space which they inhabit has an additional, emotionally-generated element (borne of lack of physical experience of the homeland), which is absent from the realities of their parents' memories (Wolf 2002).

Finally, the level of transnational practices may fluctuate over the life cycle, in the same manner as in the first generation. Maturity on the part of members of the second generation may bring a growing understanding that members of the broader population may, in fact, have no issue with the continuation of traditional customs and habits by immigrants. On the contrary, the perpetuation of such traditions may be considered to be not only an accepted corollary of the immigration process, but also to represent a valuable contribution to the fabric of a poly-cultural society. This psycho-social maturity, bringing with it the ability to publicly endorse ownership of one's cultural heritage, is often accompanied by increased financial security, which in turn allows the transnational space to become concrete through actual visits to the country of origin (Foner, 2002). Acknowledgement of these numerous and interacting factors allows for increased understanding of the ebb and flow of transnational activity which has been observed through different phases of immigrants' children's lives (Foner, 2002; Jones-Correa, 2002).

The study of transnational practices amongst members of the second generation opens a window onto the "processes and lived experience" (R. Smith, 2002, p. 147) of that generation as they navigate between past and present socio-cultural spheres through their interactions with members of the previous generation. It provides opportunities for focus on "human interaction and situations of personal social relationship" (Fouron & Glick-Schiller, 2002, p. 173) amongst those who have grown up hearing about the place of their forebears and may even have visited that place for short periods, but whose day to day existence is grounded in the country of adoption, which may be vastly different in every sphere (geographically, linguistically, politically and religiously) from the sending society.

### **Transnationalism theory as applied to studies of dance and music**

As this research is concerned with dance and music, a special focus on applied transnationalism within ethnochoreology and ethnomusicology is required. Studies of dance and music in diasporic contexts reveal that these artforms exist and are practised within

transnational spaces; they had their genesis and development in the country of origin and have since been translated to the new location. Dance and musical scholarship amongst specific cultural groups, which for the most part began in locations of origin, has been enriched through studies located in multiple diasporic communities around the globe (Bottomley, 2002; Cullinane, 1994; Dunin, 1998, 2012; Erol, 2012; Hemetek, 2012; Mackley-Crump, 2013; Nahachewsky, 2012; Ram, 2000a, 2000b; Ramnarine, 2007a, 2007b; Scott-Maxwell, 2002, 2013; Wrazen, 2005, 2010). C. Silverman's (2012) study of Romani dance and music is a potent example: having observed that "dance is closely embedded in the social life of Balkan Romani communities and is especially tied to music, gender and status" (2012, p. 107), she pursues the Čoček dance from its origins in Eastern Europe through to its current manifestations in modern day New York, following each of the three social ties as she goes. Similarly, Wilcox's (2011) work on Chinese dance practices amongst immigrants in the United States provides specific examples of practical ways in which dance groups in diaspora may form connections with the location of origin, including the purchase of costumes and visits by dance choreographers from China. These more obvious, tangible forms of connection provide a springboard from which the more subtle transnational linkages may be revealed and investigated.

Several scholars in Australia have specifically applied transnationalism theory in their research and analyses. Bottomley's (2002) work concerning Greek music and dance in Australia makes reference to the nexus between dance, nostalgia and transnational links, while Tabar (2005) describes the performance of the Lebanese dabki dance as a means by which immigrants may position themselves "in a comfort space" (p. 150) between past and present spheres of existence. Sorce Keller and Barwick (2013) contend that "a transnational perspective is needed to understand not only the nature and development of the migratory flow of Italian people to Australia, but also the ongoing interactions of Italians in Australia with families in Italy and elsewhere in the diaspora" (p. 3). To that end, they have included chapters from scholars in Australia, in Italy and from other segments of the Italian diaspora, thus illustrating the ebb and flow of musical connections between multiple locations. They have, therefore, accounted for the simultaneity of practice in both sending and receiving societies as urged by Tsuda (2012).

Dance, as previously discussed, is an activity involving the mind, the body, the emotions and the senses. Dance can embody cultural knowledge, giving that knowledge expression through the combined sensory experience of the dance performance. Notions of embodiment and sensory expression have also emerged within transnationalism studies. Dunn



(2010), in using the term “embodied transnationalism” (p. 1), urges the study of not only the physical settings in which immigrants find themselves, but the immigrants’ reactions to those settings. This focus on the people is reiterated by P. O’Connor (2010) who describes the necessity for study of the possible connections between spaces and the bodies located within those spaces. Embodiment is, additionally, inextricably entwined with sensory experiences, for the people experience the spaces they inhabit through sensory modes. Immigrants’ memories are most strongly experienced through the culturally-specific propagation of sensory activities which focus on place and home. When sensory memories are awakened within unfamiliar locations, a transnational sensory space is formed, within which these culturally-mediated senses, memories and embodied identities interact to both re-imagine ‘home’ in the past and interpret particularity in the present (Low & Kalekin-Fishman, 2012).

A dance group engages in learning dances, and often performing what they have learned; in the case of a diasporic dance group, this performance may be undertaken within their cultural heritage community or for the broader population. Thus, the group engages in strategies of self-representation through their network of connections with others in the same cultural group and with members of the general public (Shay, 2006). The relationship between cultural identity and the resulting choreographical effects and possible changes invites investigation so as to “elucidate what constitutes ethnicity in any given period and location and the ways in which ethnic groups choreographically situate themselves throughout history” (Shay, 2006, p. 55). Some groups perform dances which inspire an internal audience (from the same cultural group) to imaginatively relocate themselves to the former homeland for the duration of the performance (Nahachewsky, 2012). In such instances, the dance is fostering a temporary, albeit highly intimate, space of transnationalism.

Dance genres have established a variety of global circuits of connection. This may involve travel back to the homeland for courses in the latest steps, formations or teaching methodologies (Wulfhorst, Rocha & Morgan, 2014). With current technological advances, online learning of the latest trends, for example, from videos posted on the YouTube website by a teacher or group from the country of origin, is possible. In some cases, the increased popularity of a dance genre outside of the homeland may be the catalyst for renewed interest within the original context, thus creating a sort of reverse transnational field in which the diaspora, rather than the homeland, has the leading role in the relationship (Foley, 2001). There is also the possibility of cultural emulation through dance, where boundaries determined by genetics or geography have been disbanded and what was once a culturally-specific tradition has transformed into a pan-national practice (Mollenhauer, 2015a; Wulfhorst

et al., 2014). Studies of traditional dance groups provide opportunities for unpacking the multiple important encounters which feature in the everyday lives of immigrants (Kennedy & Roudometof, 2002). In a post-immigration environment, these encounters often involve expressions of difference (Wulforth et al., 2014), bringing to the fore, again, notions of multiculturalism and identity which are inseparably linked with transnational practices.

Transnationalism theory allows for analysis of the employment of dance as an expression of personal and corporate cultural identity, and provides a framework for consideration of the modes of affiliation between homeland and diaspora. Wilcox (2011), in her paper about Chinese dance in the United States, draws upon the work of Ram (2000a; 2000b; 2005) amongst immigrants from India who now reside in Australia. She states that in “examining Chinese dance in transnational social spaces...culture and home are in fact socially constructed realities, and that dance plays an important role in their construction” (Wilcox, 2011, p. 323). The triad of dance, culture and home is, similarly, located within this current project: traditional dance practices which have been translated elsewhere expose multiple forms of transnational social spaces and are, therefore, useful for explorations of the migration and transnational experiences of individuals and groups.

The aim of this thesis, then, is to interpret the transnational practices which are embedded in the dancing of Irish and Croatian immigrants in Sydney. Some of the varieties of transnationalism exposed match those listed in the general discussion of transnationalism: personal, familial, emotional, religious and linguistic. Others pertain specifically to the transmission and praxis of dance: pedagogical, choreographical, material, sensory and representational<sup>8</sup>. Evidence of each strand will be teased out from the research data and examined in depth with reference to both the Irish and Croatian communities, and some comparative observations will be drawn.

### **Thesis Structure**

In this introductory chapter, I have provided foundational and contextual information which provides the framework for the remainder of the thesis. I have explained both the usefulness of dance in examining the narratives of immigrant groups in Australia and the dearth of research into the dance practices of these groups, thus demonstrating the relevance of this study. I have also furnished definitions for essential concepts such as traditional dance and cultural heritage, which are employed extensively throughout this document. Finally, I have presented the theoretical lens of transnationalism, including the historical development of the discourse to the present time, a

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<sup>8</sup> Each of these is defined and explored in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

specific focus on transnational activities of second generation immigrants and a review of the theory as applied to ethnochoreological research.

Chapter Two presents a review of extant scholarship across six fields of specific relevance to this research. Multiculturalism is explained in detail, including the historical development of the concept in other settler societies as well as in Australia, and so the situation of the immigrant groups in this study is contextualised. The term, “diaspora” is defined and discussed, drawing on current theories and concepts to show the groups’ positioning of themselves in relation to the homeland as well as the homeland’s attitude to emigrants. A discussion of identity is presented next, and although its contested nature is revealed and debated, the notion is demonstrated to be important in understanding the self-representational strategies of individual immigrants. Nostalgia theory provides background to a comprehension of the motivation for forming transnational connections, and again, the particular situation of second generation immigrants, with their varied levels of contact with their forebears’ former homeland, is given attention. The chapter introduces dance as an academic discipline, and presents the ways in which dance research has been conducted in previous scholarship, to demonstrate the need for investigation of the phenomena which are studied in this research and validate the methodologies which have been employed. Particular emphasis is given to studies of traditional dance in post-immigration contexts, and the changes which may be observed when dance genres are perpetuated outside of the homeland situation. Finally, the chapter explores literature surrounding performances and festivals, since the issue of self-representation through dance is a significant topic emerging from the collected data in this study.

Chapter Three presents the methodology employed in the current study, including the epistemological stance and details about the modes of data collection and analysis which have been used. It explains the location and entry to each field site, and describes the process of familiarisation with each group of participants. It also includes a reflection on different situations of researcher positionality in the various field locations. A focus of this chapter is on the appropriateness of employment of an ethnographic case study within the theoretical framework of transnationalism.

Chapter Four provides relevant information about the Irish and Croatian communities, beginning with their immigration histories and particular issues which have been faced by each group since the beginning of settlement in Australia. Building on this foundation, the chapter moves on to an historical overview of the traditional dancing genres found in each community, starting with an account of dance in the homeland setting and then presenting a narrative of dance practices in the post-immigration era of each community. Finally, it presents the history of each dance group, from its inception to the fieldwork period, so that the following three analysis chapters may be understood in the light of the specific situations within which each dance group is operating.

Chapter Five is concerned with transnational fields which primarily concern individuals. The main interest of this research is the way in which immigrants utilise traditional dance as a means of connecting themselves with the country of their ancestors. This chapter, then, documents the self-assigned identities of the participants who were interviewed, demonstrating a high level of identification with the former rather than the current homeland. Closely linked with identity, the chapter also describes the notion of emotional expressions of identity through participation in traditional dance groups, as the participants have shared deeply personal meanings which they conceive to be embedded in their dance praxes. Finally, it surveys traditional dance as an embodiment of the former homeland, so drawing upon ideas of somatic and sensory representations of cultural specificities and the role of dancing bodies in immigrant communities.

Complementary, but more group-focussed, transnational fields are the areas of interest in Chapter Six, which begins with culturally-specific organisations which may be formed within immigrant communities. These may have a more general field of influence such as politics or religion, but the chapter moves on to describe various dance organisations, both formal and informal, and the different ways in which diasporic dance groups may be connected both with the homeland and with each other. It then describes the pedagogical patterns within each genre, seeking to show how teaching methods, through faithfulness to homeland patterns, may reflect a desire for continued links to that land. A discussion of situationally-defined changes in pedagogical practices, which were observed in Sydney dance groups demonstrates the various influences which may result in such alterations. Finally, the chapter outlines the material field of activity, primarily driven by the purchase of costuming items from the homeland, and shows how the ongoing activities of both entrepreneurs and their international customer bases serve to reinforce the flow of goods across multiple borders.

Chapter Seven contains a discussion of various strategies of transnational self-representation through public performances of traditional dancing. It begins with an exploration of the global popularity of Irish culture in general and Irish step dancing in particular, as a result of the media exposure afforded by theatrical Irish dance shows. The corollary of this has been a high demand for Irish dance performances at public events in Sydney. In contrast, the Croatian dance groups have had fewer opportunities to present their dance traditions to a diversified audience. In the light of the data from the dance groups in this study, the chapter raise and debates some general issues of public performances of traditional dance in multicultural Australia.

In the final chapter, the various threads of data from the previous three chapters coalesce, and hence the chapter offers some closing remarks about transnationalism theory as it pertains to the current research. It also includes some discussion about the current situation for traditional dance

practices in multicultural Australia, which grounds the dance praxes of the research participants in the present socio-cultural context of suburban Sydney. Thus, the chapter draws the results of this research together to summarise the findings of this investigation into the cultural significance of traditional dancing amongst Irish and Croatian immigrants.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of the Literature**

This thesis is concerned with Sydney, Australia, and the traditional dance practices of two cultural communities amongst its population. Since particular cultural communities that are resident in Sydney are being investigated, the locale in which they live and function is likely to exert some influence on them. Thus, literature relating to the history and development of multiculturalism, especially within Australia, is a relevant starting point. The next sections concern cultural groups within Australia's multicultural society in relation to three issues: their movement from their previous homeland to a location outside of it, thus forming a branch of a diaspora; their reconstruction of personal identity as a result of their interactions both within and outside of their cultural group within the new locale; and their experience of a degree of nostalgic thought towards the former homeland. The chapter also examines literature concerning adaptation and innovation of traditional practices within the context of immigration and public performances of dance in multicultural societies.

#### **Multiculturalism**

The word "multiculturalism" has a short history of appropriation; it appeared in a newspaper article in the USA in the early 1940s, then was used in Canada from the late 1950s when it was linked closely with Canadian national identity (Stratton & Ang, 1994). The term may be employed as a simple statement of demographics to indicate the presence of people from multiple cultural backgrounds within a given population (Berry, 2013; Brett & Moran, 2011). Most often, it refers to an ideological stance, or to a governmental policy position (Berry, 2013). Many nations are recognised as being multicultural: the United Kingdom, many European countries such as France and Germany, the United States of America, Canada and Australia (Anderson, 2013; Banting & Kymlicka, 2013; Berry, 2013). The term has multiple shades of meaning depending on the context; "multiculturalism" is not a globally homogeneous term. Hence, this exploration of multiculturalism will commence with some comparatives; in particular, the development and nature of multiculturalism in Australia will be juxtaposed with understandings of the term in other locations.

The term has been applied in other settler societies<sup>9</sup>, namely the United States (USA) and Canada. Stratton and Ang (1994) have described three facets of the situation in the USA. The USA has always prioritised commitment to the idealisation of that nation as the pre-eminent and most desirable place in which to live. The notion of race remains embedded in the national psyche, and has been the basis upon which various minority groups have become politically active. Multiculturalism as an ideology was developed as a result of the influence of the marginalised groups in society, especially African Americans. The Immigration Reform Act of 1965, which abolished the system of applying quotas based on country of origin, came into being as a result of the actions of the Civil Rights movement led by African Americans (Banks, 2008; 2013). Multiculturalism involves the recognition of the contribution of minority groups such as African Americans and Native Americans to the wider American society and has often been likened in American literature to a “melting pot” (Weisman, 2000, p. 707), where all markers of distinction are subservient to the idealised notion of an amalgamated American society (Ramakrishna, 2013).

In contrast, Canada’s policy was initiated by the conservative government in 1971 (Berry, 2013). Its aims included the maintenance of inherited cultural practices, exchanges between cultural groups and assistance to learn one of the official languages of Canada, either English (most often) or French (Berry, 2013; Grosu, 2012). An important aspect of the Canadian policy is that it does not privilege British heritage above all others, most likely due to the presence of dual colonial influences (English and French) from the nation’s inception. The policy aims for equality of all cultures which form the total population (Levey, 2012; C. Taylor, 2012), thus celebrating the diversity contained within the totality of Canadian identity (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013).

In Australia those of British heritage immediately assumed a position of privilege from the arrival of the First Fleet. Evidence of marginalisation of anyone who was not of British origin has been recorded; much of the antipathy was directed towards both Indigenous Australians and Irish immigrants, whether transported prisoners or free settlers (D. Hall, 2014, O’Farrell, 1986, Stratton, 2004). Thus a form of “ethnocentrism” (Berry, 2013, p. 669) existed, where a particular cultural group (in this case, the English) believes its members to be superior to members of all other cultural groups. This ethnocentrism became formalised when Australia’s fledgling national government, in 1901, enacted the Immigration Restriction Act: a declaration of preference for immigrants from Great Britain. Later, this policy became

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<sup>9</sup> Societies whose populations consist mainly of people whose forebears migrated during colonial time periods (Stratton & Ang, 1994).

the White Australia Policy, a term which proclaimed, with brutal honesty, that only Anglo-Celtic persons were welcome to settle in Australia (Keddie, 2014). The policy at least acknowledged, finally, the presence of people from Ireland, including them in the majority population sector, an action which had also taken place in the United Kingdom (D.Hall, 2014; Ignatiev, 1996). Yet it continued to ignore Indigenous people along with other immigrant groups such as those from China at work in the goldfields. Australia's population was already heterogeneous before any political notions of multiculturalism were actualised (Jacubowicz, Collins, Reid & Chafic, 2014).

As time progressed, it became apparent that the nation did not have enough variety of capacity within its workforce to build the required infrastructure, so a concession, designed to provide for workers yet maintain a supposedly acceptable level of cultural uniformity, was introduced. The White Australia policy was adapted to address the need for skilled labourers from southern and eastern Europe who could fill labour shortages in the Australian workforce (Anderson, 2013; Moran, 2011) but the anticipated complete assimilation of this immigrant cohort did not eventuate (Keddie, 2014). In delineating the nature of social changes in Australia in the early 1970s the Labour government, under the leadership of Gough Whitlam, developed a policy in which the term multiculturalism was appropriated (Anderson, 2013). Over the past forty years, successive governments have sought to place their own stamp upon the policy, which has undergone several overhauls and changes during this period. The conservative government of Malcolm Fraser institutionalised multiculturalism in 1977, focusing on ideals of social accord, cultural identity and equality for all citizens (Anderson, 2013). Under John Howard, also a conservative leader, the government reduced the number of culturally-specific services it provided, and prioritised concepts of duty and responsibility to the Australian nation rather than heterogeneity of the population (Anderson, 2013; Keddie; 2014). In 2007, the Labour government of Kevin Rudd restored the term "multiculturalism" to policy wording (Keddie, 2014). In 2011, the Gillard government released another policy document which acknowledges diversity but reiterates the need for loyalty to the nation and citizenship (Keddie, 2014). Successive governments have manipulated the taxonomies and language contained within the strategies and the current policy, entitled "Multicultural Australia: united, strong, successful" claims a commitment to tolerance and diversity (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2017).

Multiculturalism, as a policy, was formulated in recognition of the diversity which already existed within the population; it was developed as a response to a need to manage a current situation, not plan for a future one (Anderson, 2013). Elements of nation-building



were present, as governments sought to accept and include those from outside of the English-speaking sector within the national identity (Moran, 2011). It was also, in some ways, a public relations exercise directed towards the rest of the world, as Australia publicly abandoned the principles of a White Australia, replacing them with a position of welcoming inclusiveness (Castles, 2001).

While multiculturalism has enjoyed bipartisan support at government level in Australia, the term has remained surrounded by contestation in academic discourses and within the general population. Much of the criticism of multiculturalism in Australia has resulted from the policy's perceived preferential treatment of the Anglo-Australian majority. Multicultural policy, it has been argued, has reinforced and perpetuated the "ethnic hierarchy" (Berry, 2013, p. 669) which, as discussed previously, has existed in some form since British settlement. The Anglo-Australian majority, it was feared, would deign to allow certain privileges to those outside its ranks, while congratulating itself for being open and tolerant (Hage, 1998). Furthermore, while the policy may have addressed issues of social disadvantage to some extent, the simplistic notion of cultural pluralism contained within the policy ignored the traumatising experiences of many marginalised minority groups (Hage, 1998; Kalantzis & Cope, 1984).

A second area of criticism has arisen from the multicultural policy's encouragement of the continuation of heritage practices and traditions, which may reinforce notions of alterity instead of dissolving cultural borders. It has been posited that any maintenance of difference allows a dominant group to adopt exclusionary tactics aimed at all those outside of that group (Ang, 2014; Sarmiento, 2014). This results in a tendency to focus on loci of "panicked multiculturalism" (Noble, 2013a, p. 163), where anxieties relating to possibly harmful interactions between different cultural groups have been brought to the fore. The notion of a society consisting of different and discreet groups attempting to live in harmony has raised concerns about the ability of the policy to address deeper issues of need and anxiety amongst immigrants (Blair, 2015).

At the same time, multiculturalism in Australia has been considered successful by observers located elsewhere around the world. The lack of suburbs with large numbers of people from one cultural group concentrated in that location has been admired by other nations, especially in Europe (Jacubowicz et al., 2014). The establishment of social organisations has been encouraged, but there is an absence of culturally-specific political parties, which have caused much distress elsewhere (Pakulski, 2014). Australia has, in spite of increasing rates of immigration, been successful in allowing its immigrants access to job

security, and has been relatively free from inter-group conflicts compared with other settler societies (Pakulski & Markowski, 2014). Australian multiculturalism has been linked with strategies aimed at reducing racism, a move which has not been replicated elsewhere (Blair, 2015). It has also not been superseded by a policy of integration as has been the case in some European nations (Collins, 2013a).

Within the wider population in Australia, the term “multicultural” is generally employed as a positive descriptor of Australian society (Arasaratnam, 2014; Brett & Moran, 2011; Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2010). Of the 37% of respondents in a nation-wide survey who indicated “strong agreement” to the statement “multiculturalism has been good for Australia”, half had been born overseas in a country where a language other than English is spoken (Markus, 2014, p. 43). This may reflect a sense of gratitude on the part of these immigrants based on the notion that multiculturalism allowed them to live in Australia. It is possible, too, that the attitudes expressed by Anglo-Australians towards those who are immigrants depend on their perceptions of the home country of the immigrants concerned. A recent analysis of the state of multiculturalism in Canada shows that mutual hostility may result when members of the majority feel threatened in any way by a minority group, and that minority groups which are physically dissimilar from the majority tend to face greater levels of intolerance (Berry, 2013). A measure of discomfort may be felt towards those who maintain ties with other nations whose ideologies may be at odds with Australia. Keeping ties with the homeland is deemed acceptable, however, in the case of major events such as natural disasters or sports competitions in that homeland. The difficulty may lie in determining the degree of connection with the former homeland which is compatible with commitment to the values and aspirations of community solidarity in Australia (Carruthers, 2013). The current policy document (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2017) acknowledges both aspects of immigrant life and suggests that diversity should be viewed as a sign of national strength rather than a hindrance to progress.

Carruthers (2013) points out that Australia’s population diversity has been further complicated by phenomena such as intermarriage and generational shifts in areas such as language and religion. He also notes that many immigrants and their children are able to participate in transnational practices of various kinds (whether informal such as email or Skype conversations with relatives, or the formal establishment of business connections between Australia and their former homeland) as a result of increased affluence and technological advances. To move successfully forward, Australia’s multicultural policy needs to be fluid, able to adapt to changing times and needs, and less focused on identity and

boundaries than it has been so far (Collins, 2013a). Australia, along with other societies which are multicultural, is “faced with the problem of constructing nation-states that reflect and incorporate the diversity of their citizens and yet have an overarching set of shared values, ideals and goals to which all of their citizens are committed” (Banks, 2008, p. 133).

However, extant literature provides suggestions for future directions. It has been posited that the expectations of the success of multiculturalism may have been set at a level which is too high. Blair (2015) believes that total compatibility between cultures may not be, in reality, achievable. She suggests that instead of attempting to understand the differences which may exist between cultural groups, the aim should be to recognise and accept that difference exists without attempting to comprehend that difference. Further, it is posited that, while the multicultural policies should continue to acknowledge the mutual rights and responsibilities of all sectors of the population, a promotion of equity in the sense in which it was intended in those policies, as equal opportunity rather than equal outcomes, should be encouraged (Pakulski, 2014).

The literature also suggests a movement of research focus from ideologies to practicalities. The focus on commonplace encounters which occur in the daily lives of Australian citizens has been termed “everyday multiculturalism” by Wise and Velayutham (2009, p. 1) and “everyday diplomacy” by Noble (2013a, p. 163) and seems to provide a relevant counterpoint to political and ideological analyses (Blair, 2015; Lobo, 2010). Analysis of the personal interactions in shops, places of employment and local streets is likely to yield information concerning the ways in which multiculturalism plays out in a variety of social spheres. Arasaratnam (2014) suggests that through positive experiences of the diversity of Australia’s population, it would be possible for people to exhibit increases in “cognitive complexity [which] in turn, is associated with the ability to deconstruct stereotypes in positive ways” (p. 41). She believes that exchanges surrounding culture and language would be appropriate starting points for the alteration of typecasting processes, by allowing people to encounter others from different cultural backgrounds in comfortable environments. Through studies of these commonplace interactions, it is hoped that deeper understanding of the effects of living in a multicultural society on individuals and neighbourhoods will be gained (Wise, 2010; Wise & Velayutham, 2009).

It is noted by a number of authors that one means through which this “cognitive complexity” (Arasaratnam, 2014, p. 41) may be increased is through the education system (Arasaratnam, 2014; Banks, 2008, 2013; Watkins, Lean & Noble, 2016). Those who are teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse situations can teach children that “cultural

racial, ethnic, language and religious diversity is manifested in nations around the world” (Banks, 2013, p. 80) and promote understandings of diversity. It is argued that through the influence of participation in classrooms where democracy is exemplified and practised, children and young people may take part in “transformative citizenship education” (Banks, 2008, p. 135) in which they will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to identify issues and be active participants in the solution-seeking processes. Given the already multicultural nature of the teaching workforce in the state of New South Wales (Watkins et al., 2016) and the willingness of educators to apply principles of multicultural education in their teaching (Arasaratnam, 2014), the foundation for the type of education urged by Banks (2008) is already in place.

Another area of possible interaction across cultural boundaries is through folkloric performances; multiculturalism does not have an isolated existence but should operate in all areas of life, including the performing arts (Mar & Ang, 2015). Public displays of folklore are mounted in Australia as a means of promoting cultural heritage retention for the performers and cross-cultural understanding for the audience (Kapetopoulos, 2010). Such events have been highly contentious, dividing scholars between those who argue that this reinforces notions of Anglo-Australian superiority (Hage, 1998; Povinelli, 2002) and those who contend that public performances are beneficial to performers and witnesses alike (Duffy, 2005; Mackley-Crump, 2016; Roy, 2012; Senay, 2009). A more nuanced discussion of this particular area of applied multiculturalism is given its own section later in this review, under the heading “Performances and Festivals”.

Having discussed the situation of diversity within Australia’s population, this review now turns to the immigrant groups which combine to make up the total population. Each group consists of those who have chosen to leave their country of origin and make a new life in Australia. They now form part of a diaspora or a community of immigrants with a shared cultural background who are now living in a location which is geographical removed from the “home” culture, and so they choose to form various alliances within the community based on their shared experiences.

### **Diaspora**

The term “diaspora” is characterised by a measure of contention and contestation within the academy. In a general sense, when the phrase “in the diaspora” is employed, it may be taken to mean persons from a given nation who are living outside of that nation. This usage has been derived from the original function of the Greek word, as applied to groups of

exiled Jewish people living in small communities around the known world (Safran, 1991). While the word may indeed be used in this way, a more differentiated understanding of the concept is required. A list of six characteristics of a diaspora was set out in early writings: a scattering of people from their birthplace to reside in other nations, shared memories of the homeland, the persistence of a perceived non-acceptance by the majority group in the new locale, a regard for the sending society as one's legitimate home, a desire to be actively involved in the upkeep of the ancestral homeland and continued modes of connection with that former location (Safran, 1991). A prescribed list of characteristics suffers not only from an overly rigid stance, but also fails to allow for variations in experience for both the group as a whole (in different geographical locations and historical periods) and the individuals within that group. However, later definitions have continued to emphasise some of Safran's (1991) descriptors. Bhatia and Ram (2009) state that those in a diasporic community "distinctly attempt to maintain...connections and commitments to their homeland" (p. 141), while Baumann (2010) speaks of a "state of enduring consciousness of living away from home" (p. 23).

The word "home" implies a conceptualisation which privileges the former homeland as being the ideal location in which immigrants would prefer to be living, but this should not be presumed to be true in every situation. Other definitions include the presence of a measure of community solidarity within the receiving society: "diaspora discourse articulates, or blends together, both roots and *routes* to construct new forms of community consciousness and solidarity" (Clifford, 1999, p. 251, italics in original). Brubaker (2005) believes that three elements are implicit in the conceptualisation of a diaspora: some form of dispersion, whether forced or voluntary, proclivity of thoughts towards the homeland and the existence of community boundaries.

One criticism has been that there is a tendency to view "diaspora" as representing homogeneity (Scully, 2012). Ramnarine (2007c) remarks that the term is too often seen as simply representing the migratory experience, rather than being inclusive of any phenomena occurring after migration. She believes that the term "diaspora" implies an ongoing association with the homeland which may be assumed, often incorrectly, to continue indefinitely through subsequent generations. Brubaker (2005) is concerned about the essentialism which, he argues, has arisen through misguided and inappropriate application of the word. He argues that genetic ties to a former homeland are insufficient: not everyone adopts "a diasporic stance" (p. 12) following immigration.

In order to increase the degree of discursive discernment, various scholars have focused on the multiple facets of “diaspora”. Hickman (2012) states that immigration has had a fundamental role in the formation of many European nations and that “diasporic encounters are embedded within [those nations’] complex social relations” (p. 24). Remembering history, she urges, leads to a recognition that diaspora “refers to a hybrid, historical social formation in process that has been produced by migration” (Hickman, 2012, p. 22). This principle applies to the receiving society as well as the sending; the ongoing, everyday lives of immigrants are directly affected by the web of “historical forces” (Bhatia & Ram, 2009, p. 147) in which those immigrants find themselves within the context of the receiving society.

Hickman’s (2012) usage of the word “hybrid” (p. 22) brings to light another facet: the fluidity of the diasporic experience. Stuart Hall (1990) wrote that “diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (p. 235). Its transformative and fluid nature is further underlined by Clifford (1994), who describes how, through changing circumstances, diasporic experiences of both individuals and groups may be altered, so producing a “constellation of responses to dwelling-in-displacement” (p. 306). The experience of living in a diasporic community brings change: “life in the diaspora inevitably changes people...there will be, inevitably, shifts of consciousness, perceptions and values” (Duarte, 2005, p. 328).

Diaspora communities have been analysed to examine the modes of thinking about the idea of “home” and the role of memories in the diasporic experience. Immigrants may cling to an “image of a remembered home that stands at a distance both temporally and spatially” (Stock, 2010, p. 24). Stock’s concept of “home” here refers solely to the original place of residence; other scholarship acknowledges that “home” may be differentially employed by various individuals and groups. Duarte (2005) draws on the idea of “liminality” as proposed by Turner (1969, p. 95) when he writes that “*home* is simultaneously in the present as the host country, and in the past as the country of origin” (p. 319, italics in original). He also employs the concept of “habitus” as originally conceived by Bourdieu (1990), concluding that “the creation of special spaces that remind diasporic individuals of their homeland can be said to fulfil the important function of maximising their *habitus*; of making them feel ‘at home’ in the diaspora” (Duarte, 2005, p. 323). Hage (1997) explains that this *habitus* will involve the creation of a space about which members of a community have a “maximum practical know-how” (p. 103). Putting the same idea in yet another way, Ramnarine (2007a) describes how immigrants may “often feel a sense of connection to places in which they both

do and do not live” (p. 6), so therefore, “diaspora can be the space in which people establish ‘home’” (p. 10).

If, then, there is variability within the realms of history, socio-political context and personal experience, the result will be multi-layered heterogeneity, a mosaic of experiences within the diaspora instead of an essentialised conglomerate. The variegated nature of a diasporic community may be further discerned through simple stratification along lines of, for example, language and religion (McAuliffe, 2008). Similarly, division under headings of age, gender or socio-economic status, would most likely reveal experiential variations. Gilbert and Lo (2010, p. 156) state that “diasporas are neither discrete nor preformed, but function as historically and politically produced formations that are emplaced, embodied, interactive and performative”.

When a group of immigrants who have originated in one locale come together (for whatever purpose) in the receiving society, their activities often involve memories of home, whether those memories are expressed through language, traditional arts, sport or food. Theories of nostalgia will be discussed further in this chapter; here, it is sufficient to note that memories “contribute important dimensions to thinking about belonging, homelands and diaspora” (Ramnarine, 2007a, p. 2). Hickman (2012) explains that when members of an immigrant group congregate, a space is formed, and that such spaces are “zones of interaction that are inflected by memory and imagination as well as the materialities of migration” (p. 41). By analysing the nature and purpose of the various spaces in which members of a diasporic community have some function, greater understanding of the resettlement experience may be achieved, since “diaspora spaces focus on the creation of new social relations and identifications in terms of the specificities of those encounters, origins and identities” (Hickman, 2012, p. 23). These spaces are locales for the nexus of the past (in memories), the present (a new geographical location) and the future (networks and identities). They provide a new way of viewing the immigrant experience: “to understand diaspora as a space of belonging challenges knowledge about identities, cultures, hybridities and, above all, diaspora as only being about displacement” (Ramnarine, 2007a, p. 10).

The diaspora space may also have a characteristic which may seem to contradict the earlier definitions of “diaspora”. Generally, it has been assumed that a diasporic community shares the same cultural ancestry. Adoption of the notion of diasporic spaces allows for interactions, not only with others who have come from the same place of origin but also with people from other cultural backgrounds; it permits examination of the “transethnic alliances in these encounters and takes us beyond the history of a particular ethnic group” (Hickman,

2012, p. 40). One of the most vocal critics of injudicious appropriation of the word “diaspora” writes that “it may be more fruitful, and certainly more precise, to speak of diasporic stances, projects, claims, idioms, practices and so on” (Brubaker, 2005, p. 13).

The notion of diaspora and diaspora spaces describes the situation in which immigrant communities find themselves following resettlement in their new country of residence. Within this different environment, members of the group encounter people from both the majority sector of the population and other diasporic groups. These encounters necessitate the contestation and renegotiation of personal identity, the next topic discussed in this review.

### **Identity: A Contested Term**

This section is concerned with the notion of identity as applied to groups of immigrants and individuals within those groups. Within a multicultural society such as Australia, immigrants begin to encounter others who do not belong to the same cultural heritage group. As a result, they must work through their view of themselves within a new context, usually as a member of a minority group as opposed to part of the majority in their former country. They must also, over time, negotiate the degree to which they retain markers of their heritage and the level to which they adapt to the values and habits of the majority population sector.

The following paragraphs are devoted to a review of historical and current trends in identity theory. In addition, specific research within particular immigrant groups in other settler societies such as the United Kingdom and Canada is explored and research undertaken in an Australian context is surveyed. It is necessary to deal with the use of the words “ethnic” and “cultural”, which are both employed within existing scholarship. For example, Berry (2005, p. 702), along with Bhatia and Ram (2009, p. 140), employs the descriptor “cultural” while Lobo (2010, p. 85) and Skrbiš, Baldassar and Poynting (2007, p. 265) prefer to use “ethnic”. Others such as Yuval-Davis (2010, p. 262) and Zevallos (2008, p. 21) avoid the use of any adjectives, preferring to simply say “identity” without further qualification. The dilemma surrounding appropriate taxonomy was raised in Chapter One, where it was stated that “cultural heritage background” would be employed in this thesis to describe participants’ self-assigned cultural grouping, rather than following nationally-determined assignment processes. It was also stated that the descriptor “ethnic dance” would not be used due to the presence of contention concerning application of this term. However, in this section concerning identity construction, both “ethnic” and “cultural” are encountered in existing scholarship. The bulk of the relevant literature is drawn from the disciplines of psychology and sociology, and demonstrates an abundance of interchangeable usage of these terms to



describe the same phenomenon. Scholars cited here are investigating immigrants' situations and experiences post-immigration; authors' reasons for choice of nomenclature are not always explained. Thus, each author's phrase of choice, either "ethnic identity" or "cultural identity", will be employed in each example.

### **Development and description of the notion of identity**

The concept of identity has undergone considerable refinement within the literature over time, becoming increasingly nuanced as more research is carried out. Historically, a biogenetically-based essentialism prevailed, dividing humankind into rigidly categorised groups (Zagevka, 2009). While the fixed nature of this definition is no longer accepted, categorisation along the lines of familial heritage, geographical origins and religious affiliation is still employed (Phinney, 2005; Zagevka, 2009). In the past few decades, however, constructionist notions concerning ethnic identity have been foregrounded, based on research which has identified multiple factors contributing to identity formation. S. Hall (1997) describes cultural identities as self-assigned names which refer to different means of being both situated by, and situating oneself within, chronicles of the past. The definition may also include a comprehension of the self, considered in terms of both heritage and emotions which are connected with that heritage. In other words, identity reflects internalised understandings of group membership and its implications for daily living (Phinney, 2005; Schwartz, Zamboanga & Weisskirch, 2008).

Identity is no longer viewed as immutable, but as constantly evolving (S. Hall, 1997). The identity construction process spans a lifetime, indicating that changes in life circumstances may be reflected in alterations in identity conceptualisation (Phinney, 2005). During that lifetime, different circumstances may involve an individual's navigating back and forth between affiliations with the heritage group and the adopted society (Zhang & Noels, 2012). So, for a person who was born in Lebanon but came to Australia, identity lies somewhere along a spectrum with "Lebanese" at one end and "Australian" at the other, and may slide either way along that scale as a result of multiple influences, both intrinsic and extrinsic (Noble, 2002).

The complex nature of identity results from the influence of the multiple factors in the lives of individual immigrants. For example, participants in Yankova and Andreev's (2012) study who migrated to Canada from Bulgaria described sadness at needing to leave their homeland for political and economic reasons; this is a different situation from moving to be near relatives, and therefore likely to encourage persistent strong affiliation with the

homeland. Behaviour in social settings may vary between generations, with first generation immigrants encouraging continuation of traditional practices in the home and having less contact with people from outside of their own ethnic group than members of the second generation (Noels, Leavitt & Clément, 2010; Zhang & Noels, 2012). Finally, the extent to which a person is able to adapt to life in a new country depends on his or her psychological make-up (Zhang & Noels, 2012). One ameliorating factor does appear to be the settlement time frame; the longer people live in a place, the more accustomed they may become to that place (Batrouney & Goldlust, 2005; Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006).

The attitudinal position of members of the dominant majority is another influence. The host society has “the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as ‘Other’” (S. Hall, 1990, p. 225; italics in original); perceived attitudes of rejection and marginalisation may hinder the settlement process. In his early work, Berry (1997) notes the importance of both the host society’s favourable view of diversity as a valuable asset, and a demonstration of low levels of prejudice towards immigrants. Later work echoes his beliefs: the value of interaction between the host society and the immigrant groups is underlined and reiterated, and needs to be encouraged and promoted through governmental policies and strategies (Berry, 2005; Berry et al., 2006; Liu, 2007; Zhang & Noels, 2012). This can be problematic to deal with, however, since immigrants may be too busy struggling with the practicalities of resettlement, while members of the host society may be either ignorant of the need to graciously accept immigrants from multiple heritage backgrounds, or unwilling to do so (Kunst & Sam, 2014; Liu, 2007).

It is also impossible to regulate and control the degree of difference between the host society and the immigrant group. Physical appearance of immigrants seems to be an unfortunate but influential factor in the settlement process; those who appear most similar to members of the host society have been found to experience the greatest levels of acceptance (Jurva & Jaya, 2008; Wiley, Perkins & Deaux, 2008; Zevallos, 2008). Differences in societal values may also pose problems; for example, immigrants from a society which values collectivism and community spirit may find settlement into a society where independence and individualism are encouraged, to be a daunting prospect (Schwarz et al., 2008).

It is important to note that perceived attitudes are as influential as actual attitudes. A survey of Chinese immigrants in Canada (Noels et al., 2010) revealed that most participants believe that Anglo-Canadians perceive them to be Chinese, rather than Canadian. This was more common amongst first generation participants, and also more prevalent when in a public environment. These perceptions concerning the views of the dominant population

group may extend to issues of stereotyping in some instances. Ryan's (2010) research, amongst Polish immigrants in the United Kingdom, showed that most participants described experiences of stereotyping and generalisations arising from instances of criminal activities or inappropriate behaviour in public places by Polish immigrants, leading to the broader population making the assumption that all Polish immigrants are undesirable.

### **Identity Research in the Australian context**

A common methodological choice among researchers in an Australian context is to concentrate on one particular cultural group and the self-assessed identities of its members. The focus is on the extent to which group members have identified with Australia as their new place of residence. For example, Arasaratnam (2008) conducted research among immigrants from Sri Lanka, employing Berry's (1997) categories as her framework. She reports that there were a variety of identities adopted even within a small sample, depending on the range of Sri Lankan activities in which the respondents were involved. Other work focusing on identity construction within one cultural community includes that of Brockhall & Liu (2011), Drodzowski (2007), Noble (2002) and P. O'Connor (2010). Comparative studies which include multiple groups are less common but do exist: the work of Zevallos (2008) compares Turkish and Latino immigrants.

Thematically-based studies have also been proven to be illuminating. Motivation for immigration is an important theme in the research of Batrouney and Goldlust (2005), who interviewed 128 immigrants to Australia from a variety of origins. The affiliations of one sub-group remain with their birth country; for them, the decision to emigrate was one of pragmatism and not due to dwindling loyalty to their original homeland. The second sub-group were able to recognize potential mutability in their identities with increasing time lived in Australia. Participant responses demonstrated that immigration by choice produces more satisfactory psycho-social outcomes than immigration by pressure.

Immigrants are concerned with potential effects of their possession of various markers of difference. Immigrants with physical features which are less congruent with the Anglo-Celtic majority, such as the immigrants from China, have been subject to the most blatant experiences of discrimination (Ang, 2014). More subtle markers, such as having non-Anglicised names and not speaking English have also been recorded as being problematic. Many participants in one study spoke of Anglicising their names in the hope of increased acceptability in wider society (Brockhall & Liu, 2011). In another study, Irish immigrants in Australia all spoke English but felt that their Irish accents defined "an otherwise invisible

immigrant group as ‘other’” (P. O’Connor, 2010, p. 80). This perception of “othering”, through one sole marker of difference, may be somewhat astonishing amongst a group which may usually be considered to be part of the Anglo-Australian majority, but serves as a reminder of the potency of any such marker to create boundaries.

Australian research demonstrates a high incidence of the continuity of links with heritage-based practices. This may be expressed in family gatherings (Arasaratnam, 2008; Morgan, Rocha & Poynting, 2005), attendance at clubs and associations (Brockhall & Liu, 2011; Drodzewski, 2007) and participation in cultural events (Waite, Galea & Rawstorne, 2001). Drodzewski (2007) describes the establishment of clubs as being a common activity amongst post World War II immigrants. Her focus is on a property which was bought and developed by the Polish community. She states that this property empowers people within the Polish community, because they can choose between coming to this Polish place and going to another social event at a place which is not distinctly Polish. These empowering characteristics extend to second generation immigrants, who view the site as somewhere to meet others in the Polish community, and to reinforce genealogical and emotional links with Poland and each other.

There is, sometimes, a motivational cause for continuity of traditional practices which is more concerned with the host society rather than the immigrant community, and that is when immigrants perceive that there is little in Australia with which to replace the customs of the homeland. Anglo-Australian society has its traditions, but they are not the same kind of tradition, such as a national form of dance with accompanying music and costume, as found in many of the countries from which the immigrants have come (Nahachewsky, 2006). Immigrants may view Anglo-Australians as having no equivalent cultural practices and so continuation of their own traditional practices reinforces a sense of pride in their heritage and encourages perpetuation of hybridised self-identity assignments (Zevallos, 2008).

Everyday events such as education, work and shopping may involve intercultural encounters. Having everyday encounters and culturally-specific traditions existing side by side within the life of one individual is another reason for hybridisation of identities. This is the private/public dichotomy described by Zhang and Noels (2012); it may lead to a hybridised form of self-ascribed identity. The concept of hybridity, with hyphenated descriptors reflecting both former and current places of residence, is often applied to immigrants (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Kivisto, 2003; Skrbiš et al., 2007). However, hybridity should not be viewed in terms of bipolarity but more as an organic chameleon, altering in response to the influences which, as discussed previously, exist in the surrounding

environment (Chacko & Menon, 2013). Noble (2013b) believes that being an immigrant in Australia is particularly tortuous, and that there are multiple planes which may intersect and overlap with each other, resulting in what he describes as a “multi-dimensional interface” (p. 354) between culturally-specific communities (and individual members of them) and the broader Australian society.

The nature and frequency of contact with the home country is another important facet of identity construction amongst immigrants. One feature which is peculiar to the Australian immigrant situation is the geographical tyranny of distance. In research using the 2001 Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, it was found that those who had come to Australia from countries in Asia, Western Europe and North America were more likely to visit their home country than people who had come from other regions (O’Flaherty et al., 2007). Given that these regions are either geographically proximate and/or economically powerful, it is likely that geographical proximity or the comfortable financial status of immigrants and their families still in the homeland renders the possibility of return visits more likely. Electronic transnational communication methods such as making use of telephone and internet resources to maintain connections with family and friends in the former homeland are commonly employed (Brockhall & Liu, 2011; P. O’Connor, 2010). Contact with the homeland is now accessible to more people, not simply those who can afford to return to their birth country for a visit.

The interaction between identity formation and Australian multiculturalism is foregrounded by several authors. Multicultural Australia encourages immigrants to form hybridised identities, instead of imposing an expectation of total assimilation (Brockhall & Liu, 2011; Skrbiš et al., 2007; Zevallos, 2008). It would seem, then, that the host society’s attitudes have moved away from that described in earlier times (Hage, 1998), where its members believed it was their right to make decisions about who is and is not acceptable as an Australian. A person who adds the title “Australian” into his or her identity may now be more likely to find acceptance in the receiving society (Noble, 2002). It has also been suggested that hybridised identities, especially among second generation immigrants, may result in a form of alienation from the immigrant community, as it is unclear whether they are second generation immigrants or first generation Australians. The latter category may be viewed as a betrayal of tradition and heritage by others within the relevant immigrant community (Skrbiš et al., 2007).

Identity construction, then, is complex, and influenced by a myriad of both internal and external factors. Examination of identity construction may be undertaken from a variety of

perspectives, as demonstrated in the broad spectrum of lenses employed by scholars in the literature surveyed in this section. Some researchers have chosen to focus on participants' attitudes, but behaviours may provide more insight into ethnic identity than attitudes (Ward & Kus, 2012). Certainly, *both* attitudes and behaviours (in this study, participation in dance) should be factored into a research project. The inclusion of behaviours in addition to attitudes lends weight to the argument that terms such as "commonality", "connections" and "self-understandings" might be more appropriate descriptors than "identity" in seeking the "conceptual clarity required for social analysis" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 36). "Identity" is still the most frequently used term in existing literature, however, so it will continue to be used in this review.

Under the heading of "identity" some of the physical, social and psychological realities in which immigrants to Sydney (including participants in this study) may find themselves have been described. The heterogeneous nature of immigrant communities, where the disparate stories of individuals need to be drawn together for a full representation of personal and community identity, has also been highlighted (Colic-Peisker, 2002; Scully, 2012). The search for identity reflects a desire to re-establish a measure of "ontological security", as immigrants work out their sense of belonging, and to reconcile aspects of their past and present existences (Giddens, 1990, p. 92).

One final aspect of the immigrant experience needs to be unpacked before attention is turned to dance. The people who have chosen to leave their place of birth and settle in a new locale across the globe still have memories of the birth location which they may cherish privately, pass on to their children or celebrate with others who share the same heritage. The next section is thus concerned with the notion of nostalgia.

### **Nostalgia**

Implicit in the adjective "traditional" is a connection with times past, with memories of the way life used to be and with a desire to maintain that connection with the past. The degree of connection may influence self-assigned identity in the present (Berry et al., 2006; Schwartz et al., 2008; C. Ward, 2008). Nostalgia refers to the human tendency to position oneself in relation to home, which is perceived as the locus of significance, attachment and ideals (Wu, 2006). Looking back to past times involves the use of the memory, a phenomenon which may operate at both individual and societal levels; individuals bring their unique perspectives, remembering what was significant to their lives, and societies remember, collectively, their history (Shelemay, 2006). A group of people with shared

narratives, including the processes of immigration and resettlement, are the carriers of memories, while the contents of the memories include “knowledge, repertoires of stories and scripts, implicit memory...habitus and...forgetting” (Erll, 2011, p. 14). The inclusion of “forgetting” is a reminder that memories do not capture the past with precision, but are interpreted through the emotions. As a result of globalisation, especially from the second half of the 20th century, the worldwide potential for collective memories and practices of nostalgia has grown (Boym, 2001). There has been a spread of multiple cultural repertoires across the world. Erll (2011) notes that memories which migrate have “dynamic, multilinear and often fuzzy trajectories” (p. 14). In the following sections, factors which influence mnemonic trajectories are discussed.

Nostalgia is a phenomenon with a broadly binary nature; it may be used in either a negative or a positive sense (Boym, 2007; Farrar, 2011). There are those who believe that people who enjoy exploring and confronting the past are fixated with that past to the point of being incapable of visualising and conceptualising the future (Pickering & Keightley, 2006). This criticism implies that nostalgia is something of a pointless indulgence and therefore incapable of exerting a positive influence. Some express concern that nostalgia may involve a glossing over, or denial of the full emotional impact of painful memories, resulting in a form of “collective narcissism” (Adorno, 2003, p. 11, cited in Ray, 2010, p. 362). Farrar (2011) contends that nostalgic recollections can easily become distortions of the past, where a created sphere of universal bliss replaces historical reality. Nostalgia may, however, be harnessed as a means through which the lessons of the past may provide guidance for moving into the future. Pourtova (2013) argues that nostalgia does indeed involve negative emotions such as grief, but that through an honest representation of the past, people may be able to leave behind what cannot continue, and utilise only what is useful for integration into their future lives. These positive appropriations of nostalgia serve to harness the experiences of the past as an anchor of security in order to successfully navigate one’s future path (Pickering & Keightley, 2006).

### **Variations in nostalgic expression and experience: within and between groups**

Much of the existing literature confronts nostalgia within the context of a particular cultural group, seeking to engage with the meaning of nostalgic practices as they unfold within the given social and political contexts within which the group is situated. Brockmeier (2002) believes that shared memories are forged through communal recollection of a past which was both inhabited and encountered by many people simultaneously, and that these shared memories are appropriated to configure a shared self-understanding. The longing may

not be for simply a geographical location; it may be for the loss of social and community ties with the accompanying security of the values and beliefs bound up in that community (Boym, 2007; Wu, 2006).

Within a given group, there may be those who feel no positive emotions towards the land they have just left, others who are ambivalent about immigration, and still more for whom the forfeiture of homeland habitation was a huge emotional loss. These variations are reflective of the disparities found in the human psyche (Pourtova, 2013). Modes of remembering and representations of these memories may also vary between groups. For examples, Wang and Brockmeier (2002) report that Anglo-American children's recollections feature themselves as the protagonist in the narrative, with emphasis on their decisions and ideas. In contrast, children with Asian heritage recall incidents within frameworks of social standards and etiquette. These differences are attributed to absorption of different foci and values from their parents, which in turn influence the modes of remembrance of past events by the children. The different social, cultural and political spaces in which cultural groups have previously lived also play a part in their practices and forms of nostalgia.

### **Variations in nostalgic expression and experience: individual**

The act of migration includes the creation of the concept of a homeland, a concept which necessarily involves both the memory and the emotions, and which is temporo-spatial as well as geographical (Skrbiš, 1999; Stock, 2010). Reactions to the schism now found between the self and the homeland vary between individuals. The term "broken clock syndrome" (Krupinski, 1984, p. 933) was an early descriptor used to illustrate the conflict between parents who want to cling to the values and societal attitudes governing life in their homeland, and their children who wish to embrace the values of their adopted country. A similar analogy has been applied to immigrants from South India; that of "phantom limb syndrome" (Ram, 2005, p. 123), where a person who has had a limb amputated still feels as if it is there, and is therefore unable to move on to a life without that limb. Pourtova (2013) has noted that nostalgia felt soon after the immigration process may result in a fixation with the past life, making development of any form of affinity with the adopted country impossible to achieve.

Nostalgia may also be seen to wax and wane for the individual immigrant at different stages along the pathway of the immigration experience. Pourtova (2013) describes immigrants who, at a later stage, are able to use nostalgia as an agent of adaptation in the process of settling into their new surroundings. These persons, she believes, are able to



confront the past and use it to forge a new future. This process involves acknowledgement of the past as a component of one's personal history, but does not allow the past to be the sole habitus for the self. Similarly, nostalgia can be used as a strengthening agent within the life of an individual: an immigrant may use even forced exile and the impossibility of a return to one's homeland as a mechanism of survival (Boym, 2007). Such reasoning seems to be related to, and builds upon, the earlier conceptualisation of "possible selves" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954), where a person may choose aspects of the past as agents for building the future, the "possible selves" being representative of real and imagined visions of a person's future life. These visions may be appropriated to a greater or lesser degree at varying stages of the immigration and settlement timelines.

### **Forms of nostalgia**

The previous sections have examined nostalgia and the factors which exert influence upon it in both group and individual situations. Boym (2007) describes two forms of nostalgia: restorative nostalgia, in which the lost homeland (with its symbols and rites) is faithfully reconstructed within the imagination, and which may be observed among those expecting to return to, and restore, their place of birth. Reflective nostalgia involves a conscious reflective viewing and acceptance of change, understanding it as a process to be experienced as an integral component of moving forward through life. It may be exemplified through creative practices such as music and dance, which have the capability to maintain the affiliation with the past, even if this is only achieved temporarily through their performance, as they suggest remembrances of places, and responses experienced physically, mentally, and/or emotionally (Ram, 2005). The transient realm, within which these emotions are elicited, diminishes neither their intensity nor their importance (Fortier, 2000; Turino, 2008).

There is one final facet within the discourse of nostalgia which needs to be examined: nostalgia for what one has never personally experienced, described by Appadurai (1996) as "armchair nostalgia" (p.78). This term may be used to describe thoughts which amplify or even exaggerate aspects of positivity and enjoyment (Ray, 2010), but it goes further, to include notions employed by those with no realised connection with the past about which they are reminiscing: those who wish to align themselves with a group whose traditions and customs they see as worthy of their aspiration and emulation. This phenomenon has been documented within the spheres of the short music festival (Holyfield, Cobb, Murray & McKinzie, 2013), the Irish music session (Rapuano, 2001) and the international folk dance movement (Lausević, 2007; Shay, 2008), where evidence of cultural emulation and its attendant nostalgia by proxy have been observed.

## Nostalgia and Traditional Dance

Links forged with a former homeland through traditional dance practices represent a topic of relevance to the current study. D. Taylor (2003) observes that in relation to the traditional dancing of a given cultural group, there is both an archive, where material records such as musical scores and dance notations are stored, and a repertoire, which includes the intangible items such as steps, motifs and choreographies which have never been written down but are transmitted orally and by demonstration. Within a cultural group, music and dance have been employed over time as signifiers of group bonding; they are inextricably entwined with the history and culture of the group (Maghbouleh, 2010; Stevens, 2015). Stevens notes that the multimodality implicit in music, where engagement of multiple senses occurs simultaneously, is the key to music's ability to evoke emotional responses. Music and dance are connected with place (Cohen, 2014) and are able to elicit remembrances of people and events associated with those places (Davidson & Garrido, 2014). Dancers may be reminded of sensory experiences as they dance (Bottomley, 2002); they may experience deep longing for the homeland (Duarte, 2005); audience members' connections with the past may be reinforced through the performance of dance (Ram, 2000a), and dance and music may possess the ability to evince memories of past times (Wrazen, 2005). When a group collectively recalls the past, as in the case of a diasporic dance group performing a traditional choreography, the dancing thus contributes to the enhancement of intra-community solidarity.

For members of the first generation, music and dance which are associated with individuals' memories of their youth are particularly powerful (Krumhansl & Zupnick, 2013). Music and dance may also act as an intergenerational bridge: a "nostalgic touch-point" (Maghbouleh, 2010, p. 213), which connects both first and second generation immigrants to the former homeland. Members of the second generation are thus able to internalise their thoughts about the past: their nostalgia is highly reflexive in nature. Speaking about young people in the Cayman Islands, C. Williams (2012) states that "they, in effect, believe in the legitimating force of their ancestral past and its immortal position within Caymanianness, and this belief substantively informs their love of being modern Caymanians" (p. 471). Thus, nostalgia is linked with cultural identity, for "how human groups identify themselves is partly a matter of cultural memory" (Mazrui, 2013, p. 27).

Specific methodological choices may enhance collection of nostalgia-based data, whichever aspect is being explored. Shelemay (2006) writes that through the interview process, the juncture between history and memory may be exposed, as participants are encouraged to verbalise elements of their past, as well as express those memories through

music and movement. Through musical memories, both the time and place of past events may be recreated, emphasizing the ability of music to contain and transmit multiple forms of memories. Each episode of revisiting the musical experience may also elicit further experiences of remembering, thus facilitating the construction of a timeline of diffusion and preservation (Shelemay, 2006).

Nostalgia, then, is an entity with observable plasticity and malleability, simultaneously being a locus of connectivity with personal and community history, an agent of spatial embedding in the present, and an agent of place-making for the future. It recalls past events and interprets those events through the prism of contemporary understandings (Ray, 2010; Stock, 2010), functioning as a tool which may give agency in the processes of self-understanding. It is a “desire of being there *here*” (Hage, 1997, p. 108, italics in original). Members of the Filipino community in the USA have stated that “our movements and choreographies continue to be some of the most precious resources for rewriting the past, *as if it were still a part of us, still connected*” (Gonzalves, 2010, pp. 146-147, italics in original).

The previous sections of the Literature Review have surveyed the context of this research: multicultural Australia, the immigrant group situation of being in diaspora, the group members’ responses to that situation as they formulate personal and group identities and their relationship with the homeland of the past through nostalgic recollections. The following sections examine scholarship surrounding the particular activity at the centre of this study: dance, with particular reference to: the nature of dance itself, with special emphasis on traditional dance; the changes which may be observed in traditional dance over time and in various contexts; and the performance of traditional dance outside of the homeland from which it originates.

### **Dance: Adaptation and Innovation Following Immigration**

The introduction of change is a phenomenon of immense interest among those who have studied cultural practices such as music, dance, arts and crafts and poetry. This section examines authenticity in the continuation of traditional artistic activities both within the homeland and in diasporic locations. The seminal work of Hobsbawm (1983) is often cited in writings about tradition, authenticity and variations which have been introduced over time (Foley, 2013; Hebert, Kallio & Odendaal, 2012; Tan, 2005). In that work, it is posited that societies have, in order to maintain continuity with their historical pasts, constructed practices whose purpose is to reinforce their beliefs and values. Hobsbawm is concerned primarily with homeland situations and with a notion of rigidity of traditional practices, but more recently

greater attention has been paid to alternative modes of viewing authenticity. Schippers (2006) observes that, in music, authenticity may be considered as following historical scores, using old-style instruments, imitation of the original context, playing in the precise historical method and seeking to replicate the original emotional responses. He also notes that the idea of authenticity meaning that an entity has remained unchanged is a Western idea; the music of some other cultures has been repeatedly altered to suit current contextual circumstances. The authenticity of which Schippers (2006) speaks is more concerned with following the pathways of a tradition than establishing the veracity of its origins, and thus is better applied in diasporic circumstances.

Other scholars concur, stating that the processes of adaptation of traditional practices within a new geographical context may be indicative of the historical, political and social narratives of the cultural group being studied and that studying the progression of adaptation and innovation in dance may help to uncover and understand these narratives (Fleming, 2004; Nahachewsky, 2006). Authenticity should be understood as a multi-faceted construct; returning to the basic tenets of ethnochoreology (Dunin, 2006; Foley, 2012), authenticity not only encompasses what is being danced but also when, how, where, why and by whom the dance is performed, as well as the means of interpersonal transmission (Buckland, 2006a).

### **Changes observed in dance in the homeland context**

Change may provide the dances with the ability to survive; through adaptation, preservation may be more likely to be achieved than if the dances were left in their original form for all time (Grant, 2012). Aubert (2007) contends that traditional arts do not reflect a concrete and fixed past, but are focussed in the present while simultaneously acknowledging the pathway from the past along which they have travelled. This signals a movement away from the notion that traditions are material and discrete, to the idea that tradition encapsulates malleability as well as intrinsic historicity (O'Shea, 2008). Kaepler (2004) traces the path of dances in Hawaii from icons of remembrance, to artistic representations of the past, to their use in public ceremonies for those outside of the Hawaiian cultural group. New frameworks are created, within which the dance movements are presented, and new meanings are constructed to fit in with presentations to an audience which is broader and more diverse than the audience for whom the dance was originally intended. The continuity of tradition, she concludes, has not been disrupted, but endures both within the thoughts of the group members, and in the feelings elicited by watching the movements of the dance.

Cultural traditions are generally interpreted by their owners through the lens of current situations. As these contexts change, so traditions are subject to multiple interpretations by individual group members over the life course (Klimaszewski, Bader & Nyce, 2012). One Polish choreographer, attempting to preserve as much traditional practice as possible, made changes in order to enhance the visual effect and maximise audience engagement and appreciation of the dance (Black, 2008). Sometimes dancers who have learned folk dancing during their childhood, then have been trained in classical ballet or other Western dance genres, revisit and reinterpret the folk dances later in their lives. Hungarian dancer Eszter Salamon preserves folk dances by focusing the audience's attention on the aesthetic qualities of both the music and the dance steps, so bringing them to the foreground and through juxtaposition of traditional dance steps with balletic steps, thereby demonstrating that, they are of equal value in terms of both aesthetics and virtuosity. She positions the dances within the context of contemporary Hungary, instead of leaving them attached to the Hungary of the past (Hardt, 2011).

### **Dance in a new country: changes applied to dance practices**

The assumption that 'culture' *per se* is transported along with the immigrant's belongings is invalid; following immigration, elements from the old life and the new life are blended into a new entity, but the proportions and the method of blending may vary both between and within different cultural groups (Bramadat, 2005). The body of literature involving dance *during* the process of immigration is limited. Since the modern immigrant is most likely to use air travel, historical evidence must be unearthed concerning practices of passengers on board ships during long journeys to new locations. Historical accounts of those migrating from Ireland to the USA have been reviewed (Morrison, 2001). While there were no modifications made to the dance steps during the transition process, alteration to contextual meaning began to emerge. Morrison draws parallels between the symbolism invested in dances performed just before a ship sailed, and those performed following a funeral, since both occasions involve a departure of some kind. On board the ship, dancing served a number of functions: it served as a locus for nostalgic thought, provided much needed physical exercise for the passengers, and developed into a means of contact between passengers, crossing the lines of socio-economic status. Such studies are rare, but examinations of available historical accounts of immigration journeys may enrich the overall account of dance practices within the immigration experience.

Once immigrants have arrived in a new location, performances which are located within diasporic contexts reflect the network of social processes entrenched in the specific

immigration and resettlement experiences pertaining to a particular cultural group (Um, 2005). The term “calibration” has been suggested for use when describing adaptations which are made within a new socio-geographical context (Ramnarine, 2007c, p. 11); this term avoids polarisation, emphasising that the nature and extent of post-immigration changes lie along a continuum. What follows here is a discussion of multiple modes of change which may be observed.

The idea of dance groups with set times and venues may in itself be an innovation when compared with homeland practice (Knudsen, 2009; Nahachewsky, 2002; Ram, 2000a, 2000b; Savigliano, 2009; Wrazen, 2005). An increasingly formalised pedagogy for the dissemination of traditional practices may be developed when dance groups are established in a new location, as in the Irish community in Newfoundland. It is thought to result from being re-located within a more diversified community, thus necessitating a regular formal teaching session which draws in dancers who may share cultural heritage yet be geographically spread across a town or city (Harris Walsh, 2008). Previously entrenched gender roles may also change, such as when women take up teaching roles in the new country which were previously occupied only by men in the homeland setting. This may involve considerable negotiation and contestation processes within the group, as generations-old habits are abandoned in order to ensure continuation of the traditions (Tabar, 2005; Wrazen, 2010).

Change in the performance repertoire of a cultural group’s dancing is another important area of study for dance researchers. In the country of origin, it may be that various regions had their own idiosyncratic styles; a fusion of these styles would not have been normative. In diaspora, dancers from disparate regions collaborate because they share more common features with each other than they do with the dominant culture of their adopted homeland (Giuriati, 2005; Scott-Maxwell, 2013; Shay, 2006). Immigrants from multiple regions of Lebanon, now residing in Sydney, happily join in the *dabki*, a dance with particular regional associations in the original Lebanese geographical context. They choose to ignore regional affiliations and join the dance as a symbol of unity with those with whom they are *most* alike in their new surroundings (Tabar, 2005). The circumstance of unification through dance, post-immigration, is therefore observable in both performative and participatory contexts.

The performance choreography may be complicated by the presence of traditionally gender-specific steps, whose alteration may cause considerable chagrin amongst the older members of the group. This may mean that dance motifs, or entire dances, experience dissolution of gender boundaries (Cruz-Manjarrez, 2008; Wrazen, 2010). One example is the

mixed gender dancing of the *dabki*, where only single sex groups would have been permitted to perform the dance in Lebanon itself (Tabar, 2005).

Change may involve generational differences. Wrazen (2005) notes that within the Górale community in Toronto, Canada, the older people tend towards spontaneity within community performances, whereas the younger dancers prefer routine, structure and definition. In addition, the younger dancers, having seen public performances by other dance groups from the Polish community in Toronto, harbour aspirations to perfect and polish their performances, striving for professionalism and recognition as artists of high calibre. This difference in style is attributed to differences in motivation between the generations; whereas the older people dance as a form of nostalgic commemoration, the younger dancers are focused on developing their cultural identities as Canadians of Polish heritage and background.

Some dances which were never performed within the public arena may now be pushed into that limelight (Wrazen, 2010). This phenomenon, again, may be upsetting to older members of the particular community in question. Completely new dances may be choreographed in diasporic settings, utilising traditional steps, formations and music, but nevertheless representing a created dance which did not exist in the homeland (Nahachewsky, 2002). When this happens, the motivation of the choreographer may reflect one of the following perspectives (Nahachewsky, 1992):

1. This dance was choreographed by the maestro from Ukraine himself. This is the way it must be done by all Ukrainians.
2. I choreographed this dance. It might have been done this way in a Ukrainian village.
3. I choreographed this dance. Prove it wasn't done this way and I'll change it. At least the steps are authentic, and I needed to organise the sequence and formations to make it nice.
4. I choreographed this dance. It is not intended to be the same as a village dance. That would be boring. It still reflects the essence of Ukrainian-ness and it is beautiful. (p. 4)

The position of the choreographer on this spectrum may be sharply opposed by the position of others within the cultural group, again leading to potential conflict. The contestation involved may be less to do with the actual folk practices, and more to do with the establishment of who has the right to make a judgement about the level of authenticity attributed to those practices (Fleming, 2004). Sometimes certain individuals within a group either acquire, or are entrusted with, the responsibility for making decisions on issues of authenticity (Schauert, 2007).

Micro-changes may be introduced to the choreography of a dance, particularly when dances are to be performed on a stage and for a cross-cultural audience. Changes include shortening the timeframe of a dance, dramatizing certain features, adding a new spoken or written narrative before the dance performance, providing additional weight through rhythmic or melodic emphases, removal of religious connotations embedded within dances, and changing the nature of the publicity disseminated for the event in question (Giuriati, 2005; Gonzalves, 2010; Honzlova, 2012; Schauert, 2007; Savigliano, 2009). These alterations often reflect pragmatism resulting from the necessity to fit the dance into the accepted framework for staged dances existing in Westernised societies (Savigliano, 2009), especially when the performance is one of short duration, such as is found in the context of a community multicultural festival.

The practicalities of settling into large cities and a society which may have vastly different structures and practices may catalyse change. Dances may need to be adapted to suit the physical characteristics of the performance setting (Harris Walsh, 2008). The group may have insufficient numbers to perform a particular dance, necessitating alterations to the dance formation or steps (Mollenhauer, 2015b; Shay, 2006). Materials used for costumes may have to be sourced locally, with some possible variations occurring as a result, and live music may simply be unavailable or too expensive, thus requiring the use of recorded music (Knudsen, 2009; Mollenhauer, 2015b). Finally, in a situation which appears to be more common within the USA than it is in Australia, dance groups from different cultural backgrounds may be required to compete for public funding, thus causing groups to seek to theatricalise their performances (Shay, 2006; Wrazen, 2010). These changes may be considerable, or they may be miniscule; nevertheless, even the smallest change may have involved contestation between those wishing to preserve a dance intact and those wishing to adapt dance for its new location.

### **Dance in a new country: changes in meaning of the dance**

Changes to the affective meaning of the performances may occur through innovation and/or adaptation within the new geographical location. The process of migration fundamentally alters the role of traditional dancing; for example, in a village context in the homeland, the dance practices may have been part of the regular social activities for the whole population, but following migration those same practices often become signs of difference and an indicator that those who have migrated now belong to a minority group (Nahachewsky, 2002). Further to this, Ram (2005) suggests that patterns and processes of cultural actions which were unconscious and assumed prior to migration must be made into



conscious activities following resettlement. In particular, pathways for the transmission of cultural and choreological knowledge may need to be more structured in a diasporic community than in the setting of the sending society.

The notion of personal and community identity being expressed through dance often continues after the migratory experience, but the process may undergo some nuanced changes. Dunin (1988) observes that the Croatian dance *Salonsko Kolo* retained its purpose of asserting national identity, whether it was danced in a Croatia controlled by the communist Yugoslavian government or in Chile amongst Croatian immigrant communities. Klein (2006) suggests that dance provides a conduit through which the fragmented Maltese community in Australia may become more unified, while Tabar (2005) posits that through alignment with the Lebanese community in Australia through dance, people are able to provide themselves with some protection from “others” outside of that community.

The music (or dance) may be linked with novel locations (Tomell-Presto, 2003), thus building additional layers of affect into the emotional experience bound up in the music. It may also undergo a process of enhancement, allowing people to forge emotional synapses between long-held traditions and present realities (Shelemay, 2006). The Polish dance *Po Goralsku*, as described by Wrazen (2005) serves the specific purpose of creating and maintaining a transnational connection with Poland for immigrants living in Canada. Finally, a completely new meaning may be developed. Amongst Mexican immigrants living in the greater Los Angeles region, the introduction of mini-skirts as part of the performance costume has been noted. The movements performed are parodies of the original dance movements, resulting in a humorous characterisation of new socially constructed identities in response to their more urbanised location, through which group members can negotiate the experience of immigration (Cruz-Manjarrez, 2008).

### **The influence of the dominant culture on dance practices**

As a group settles into their new surroundings, it is influenced by the majority group and its values. This influence is often more marked amongst younger group members, who are the most likely to have regular contact with people belonging to the dominant culture or to other immigrant groups. Knudsen (2009) remarks on this influence within the Chilean dance community in Oslo, Norway. Younger dancers may be exposed to Western dance forms, ranging from classical ballet to hip hop, which they may not have encountered in their previous home setting. They are then motivated to fuse aspects of these genres with the traditional dance and music styles, leading to possible dissonance with older members of the

group (Knudsen, 2009; Nahachewsky, 2002). A lack of acknowledgement of the value of culturally-specific dance and music traditions within the media in the country of adoption may lead to waning interest in those traditions amongst younger dancers, who wish to be accepted by those outside of their cultural heritage group (Knudsen, 2009).

Western social influence may embed itself in traditional practices through a shift in focus from the community to the individual, as younger dancers absorb a view in which the past is associated with a lack of individual freedoms, and therefore not something for which to be yearned (Ram, 2000a). The desires of the individual dancer in Western genres may be more important than the desires of the dance group as a whole, or of the wider community. This may lead to conflict between dancers and the community leaders in both civil and religious spheres (Shay, 2006).

Audience expectation must also be taken into account. Once an ‘outsider’ is present, the nature of the performance context has been altered: “the dance event itself is not so much ethnic as *our perspective* is ethnicizing. We bring the ethnic salience to our discussion of the dance because of our position as later analysts from the outside” (Nahachewsky, 2012, pp. 37-38; italics in original). Public performances may more accurately reflect what each audience *wishes* to see, or even what the performers *believe* that those audiences wish to see. Ram (2000b) believes that processes of commodification occur in order to provide a means of easy access to Indian culture for Anglo Australian audiences. In a similar vein, Tabar (2005), writing about performances of the Lebanese *dabki* dance in Australia, contends that the end product may often be a spectacle designed for rapid consumption by the audience. Packaged performances may contain only an obscure connection with past practices (Senay, 2009). This concept is explored further in the final section of this chapter, “Dance Performances and Festivals”.

The negotiation of changes made to traditional artistic practices within the context of an adopted homeland is complex. The existing body of knowledge reveals the need for a wide variety of stakeholder opinion to be sought in order to capture and interrogate multiple channels of change, to seek emerging meaning held within the dance practices. A multi-sited research project has the potential to most fully capture the experiences of immigrants within their new contextual situation (Mooney, 2008).

### **Dance Performances and Festivals**

Performances which are enacted outside of a specific cultural community were discussed very briefly in previous sections. They involve the performers who adopt an

identity for the purpose of involvement in the relevant event, and those who are consumers at the same event. Valentine's (2008) notion of "zones of encounter" (p. 333) between people of different backgrounds is useful: the public staging of traditional dance may be considered to represent an intercultural "zone of encounter", of particular relevance to this study. Some scholars believe that performances of music and dance involve a risk of essentialism or, at the very least, inaccurate and/or inappropriate representations. Songs in the Sing Singapore Festival which were popular amongst each community were deemed as also being representative of that community, a situation which is not necessarily true. Thus, instead of celebrating the multicultural nature of Singaporean society, the festival resorts to stereotypical images and tokenism, with the end result being little more than a politically-charged form of entertainment (Tan, 2005). In Australia, it has been argued that selected aspects of other cultures are put on display for hedonistic consumption by the majority group (Hage, 1998; Povinelli, 2002). It is argued that, during the 1970s and 1980s "performers of different immigrant groups were encouraged to display their differences from mainstream Anglophone Australian culture as colourfully and entertainingly as possible" (Sorice Keller & Barwick, 2013, p. 78).

The remarks of these scholars have been made within situations where the majority of the population belongs to an English-speaking dominant cultural heritage group and where the musical and dance foci of the general populace are Westernised, whether in relation to classical music, opera, classical ballet, modern dance or popular music. Concepts of "otherness" and marginalisation of unfamiliar artistic genres are not found exclusively within the English-speaking world. Immigrant groups who have settled in non-English speaking societies are likewise subjected to prejudice and marginalisation. Some examples include Central Asian immigrants in the Czech Republic (Honzlová, 2012), immigrants from the former republic of Yugoslavia in Vienna (Hemetek, 2012) and Chilean immigrants in Oslo (Knudsen, 2009). While the remarks made concerning the sentiments displayed by the Anglo-Australian majority may be valid, the English-speaking world cannot be exclusively attributed with attitudes of musical and choreological marginalisation.

Festivals, whether large or small, involve performances by as many groups as possible, in the interest of fairness. This usually means a maximum performance timeslot of 20 to 30 minutes, although situations where a five-minute slot is allocated have been recorded in Australia (Winarnita, 2014). By producing a condensed performance several outcomes may arise. The performance may be considered to have lost its significance as a witness to the narratives of group members (Klein, 2005) or it may lead to a form of essentialism which

leaves the music and dance frozen in time past (Senay, 2009). Another point of concern is that the critics cited above do not seem to have asked festival performers how they felt about being asked to perform and the way the performance was organised. More recent literature suggests that performers are eager to show their cultural traditions to a wider audience (Mackley-Crump, 2013; 2016; Nahachewsky, 2006; O'Hagin & Harnish, 2006), suggesting that the performers themselves are both willing and keen to share their traditional practices with people outside of the particular cultural group which is performing.

First generation immigrants (especially from European countries) have been accustomed to multiple performances taking place, involving folkloric dance and music groups from the host region and nation as well as from elsewhere. Therefore, it may not seem strange to them to be asked to participate in a festival, whether it be the Shell Folkloric Festival or one put on by the local government authorities (Mackley-Crump, 2016). Performers are likely to be aware of the means through which their group is being represented, and the degree of accuracy involved in that representation, since they are “active agents consciously developing the overall design of musical activities as their own *self-presentations* whose constitutive elements are planned in advance” (Honzlova, 2012, p. 371, italics in original).

A final point about the academic criticisms is that most of them were made within a particular period in history: 1970s to 1990s. Admittedly, this was the era of the large multicultural festival such as the Shell Folkloric (Kapetopoulos, 2010), but it must be noted that both actor and consumer attitudes may have changed. Market research evaluating the National Multicultural Festival held in Canberra (Department of Community Services, A.C.T., 2010) shows that 92% of attendees state that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the festival causes them to feel that Canberra is a city which values diversity. Unfortunately, those evaluating this event did not include performers' assessments and perceptions. Further festival research within an Australian context which asks the dancers, the choreographers, teachers and audience members about every aspect of the performance experience and its meaning in their lives, is sorely needed. In analysing a performance, “it is only those within a culture who are able to determine what resonates for them, and what best represents them” (Hill, 2013, p. 58).

### **Places and Spaces for Performances of Dance**

Dance and music displays take place in physical locations. Shelemay (2012, p. 212) concludes that parallel studies of place-making and music-making may reveal the “surprising

role of music in place-making”. Musical and choreological place-making may take place within a macro-environment, for example, in the large festivals of Pacific Island culture. Mackley-Crump (2013) believes that these festivals become “spaces in which [the participants] collectively celebrate, perform and reaffirm notions of Pacific identities” (p. 27), and that it is possible to understand how these events act to produce a “multilocal mapping of place” (p. 34). Micro-environments such as local council events and private functions are useful to examine the localised relationships between cultural groups and the communities in which they have settled, and are therefore equally fruitful sites for exploration into musical place-making. Location-specific nuances may then be revealed (Duffy, 2005; Permezel & Duffy, 2007).

Some scholars have developed various means of categorisation of performance spaces. Ethnomusicologist Kay Shelemay (2012) bases her categories on previous work by a cultural geographer. “Ethnic institutions” (p. 211) are the religious and civil occasions contained within a cultural community; “sociocommerscapes” (p. 211) describes the use of businesses owned by members of the cultural group as social meeting places; “transient ethnic places” (p. 211) are temporary spaces located in parks or community halls, and “intangible ethnic places” (p. 211) includes all forms of electronic media.

Another ethnomusicologist, Zita Honzlova (2012,) uses a somewhat different taxonomy. “Impressive musical fusion” (p. 372) is a hybrid of the performers’ own cultural heritage style with another style which is perhaps perceived by the performers as adding an element of glamour to the performance. The audience at these performances is usually drawn from the population at large, and the performance is designed to impress people from diverse backgrounds. Next there is “music of invisible enclaves” (p. 372) within the context of community-specific functions. Honzlova has observed “ethnic music for entertainment” (p. 372), where there is some sense of familiarity with the rhythms and style of the dance amongst the audience, but not sufficient to encourage audience participation. The performance is designed to contribute to the ambience of the venue. Finally, there is “exotic’ music as an example of multiculturalism” (p. 372), where music, dance, costume and food are displayed briefly and the emphasis is on the ethnicity of the performers rather than individual identities.

A final typology of performance has been formulated by Hemetek (2012, pp. 276-278). Categories are a) “internal practices” (p. 276) such as weddings, b) “Folkloristic practices” (p. 277) such as music and dance groups, c) “public ghettos” (p. 277), for example, cafes and restaurants, d) “world music creative exchange” (p. 277), where conscious comparative and

collaborative actions are entered into with artists from other cultural groups, and e) “mainstream music activities” (p. 278), where a member of a cultural group performs classical or popular music or dance genres. These three taxonomies have taken slightly different viewpoints, but may be combined to demonstrate the multiplicity of possible performance places and spaces.

The following table, Table 2.1, combines these modes of categorisation under three general headings. The polarities are activities which are solely contained within the relevant cultural community, or performances which are in identifiably public places. In between there is a zone of fusion, where the audience and location may reflect degrees of exposure to those outside of the cultural community (designated “examples of cross-cultural activities). The nature of the spaces within which a dance group performs is likely to reveal much about their self-assigned positioning within a multicultural society such as Sydney, the performances which they mount will be assessed, according to this table, in the analysis chapters of this thesis.

Table 2.1

*Taxonomies of performance types in diasporic locations*

	<b>Within cultural community only</b>	<b>Examples of cross-over activities</b>		<b>Public performance spaces</b>
		<b>More internal than external</b>	<b>More external than internal</b>	
Relevant to this study	Ethnic Institutions (Shelemay, 2012)  Music of invisible enclaves (Honzlova, 2012)  Internal practices/ Folkloristic practices (Hemetek, 2012)	Sociocommerscapes (Shelemay, 2012)	Public ghettos (Hemetek, 2012)  Ethnic music for entertainment (Honzlova, 2012)	Transient Ethnic Places (Shelemay, 2012)  “Exotic” music as an example of multiculturalism (Honzlova, 2012)
Not directly relevant	Intangible ethnic places (Shelemay, 2012)	World music creative exchange (Hemetek, 2012)	Impressive musical fusion (Honzlova, 2012)	Mainstream music (Hemetek, 2012)

**Strategies of Self-representation in Dance Performances**

The mode of representation adopted by a particular immigrant dance group provides an important link between notions of identity and choreographic choices, and may be affected by multiple influences from both within and outside of the group. For example, festival organisers wield a large measure of power in the representational strategies bound up in their particular event (Malek, 2011). Hemetek (2012) believes that the result of a constant emphasis on alterity will be that group members will place stress on markers of difference in their self-representational strategies. Participation is framed in terms of ethnicity rather than simply being one of many dance groups operating in a local government area. Another criticism may be that the performance is little more than a collection of curiosities and

artefacts which have been selected as being supposedly typical of the country being presented to the attendees (Honzlova, 2012).

Performances may be intended as tools to promote a more positive image of the cultural group with the general population and to create an avenue of connection (O'Hagin & Harnish, 2006). Images conveyed may be deliberately depoliticised, in an attempt to reduce the level of mistrust which the group perceives in the community around them (Bramadat, 2005; Malek, 2011). Tabar (2005) describes the bridge-building functions of the Lebanese *dabki* dance in the context of a social gathering such as a wedding, when Anglo-Australian guests may join in the dance alongside the Lebanese Australian community members. Lebanese immigrants feel that not only is this a means by which boundaries between the two groups can be erased, but that it also effects a sense of the Anglo-Australians being temporarily dependent upon the immigrants who are the experts in the dance genre.

Some groups may wish to enhance their position in wider society (Bramadat, 2005). They want to strengthen their felt presence in the community to gain economic benefits from the government (Parzer & Kwok, 2013). Conversely, they may desire to display their cultural traditions. In his study of festivals of Pacific Island culture in New Zealand, Mackley-Crump (2013, p 24) spoke with a woman of Pacific Island origin who became the first person of that background to be elected to local government and who was instrumental in establishing festivals. Her express aim was to provide a forum within which Islander people would be able to “display our culture”. Alternatively, the performance may be overtly self-exoticised for the purpose of encouraging tourism to the country of origin, as in the case of the Indonesian dance performance in Perth which Winarnita (2014) describes. Finally, cultural heritage may be used as a form of marketing tool. A useful model of strategies has been recently developed by Parzer and Kwok (2013) who examined the methods employed by three immigrant communities in Vienna. Three strategies outlined by them apply to performances outside of the relevant cultural group. They are “merging cultures” (p. 267) which aims to blur distinctive cultural features, and which appeals to members of the dominant culture, “bridging cultures” (p. 267), where emphasis is placed on retention of traditions as markers of authenticity, and “dissolving cultural boundaries” (p. 267) where the performers wish to be recognized for the proficiency rather than the cultural content of their performance.

The degree of agency of the performers in designing their performances reveals much about performers' relationships outside of their own heritage group. Folkloric performances may possess an equalizing effect between the two population sectors, through demonstration of the virtuosity of the performers (Senay, 2009). In a similar way, immigrants may want



their history and traditions to be recognised and appreciated by a wider audience within an Australian multicultural context (Roy, 2012).

Public performances, for those outside of the cultural group which is performing, embody the group's cultural identity as it exists within the new geography. Bramadat (2005) points out that performances may not be intended to portray life in the homeland, but rather, life for immigrants from that homeland who now reside in Canada. He writes that "it matters very little whether or not the dances or food are integral parts of the contemporary Greek (national) society...the point is that this is the way Greek culture looks, smells and tastes in this Canadian context" (p. 11). Mackley-Crump (2013) agrees with this notion, indicating that through performing, Islander people may "represent (re)creations of Pacific-ness informed by the New Zealand places in which they occur" (p.31). In Australia, Duffy (2005) believes that performances have allowed a particular group to express their "Asian-ness within an Australian context" (p. 682). These comments suggest that there are benefits for the performers in terms of their relationship with their new location and others in their local communities when they can express their heritage within the new context.

### **The Role of the Audience at a Dance Performance**

The role of the audience is also salient in this discussion, since it is audience appreciation which drives demand for particular genres (Aubert, 2007). Performer-audience interaction may be considered from two perspectives: conscious decisions on the part of the performers, as they seek to influence audience reactions, and the effect of audience expectations (either real or perceived) on the performers. Performers wish to convey meaning through their performances, and hope that the audience reaction will be positive (Alvarez, 2012); therefore the performance is designed to maximise audience appreciation (Reason & Reynolds, 2010). Audience emotions may be influenced through paraphernalia such as posters, tickets and programs, which suggest ways of understanding and self-positioning through witnessing a particular performance (Duffy, 2005). Senay (2009) describes the program cover for a Turkish music conference as a tool for focusing audience attention on Istanbul as a mystical and romantic representation of Turkey as a whole, in spite of the disparate origins (within Turkey) of the musicians involved. Similarly, Nahachewsky (2006) describes the establishment of an "imputed setting" (p. 164), that is, a setting of the imagination, through means such as backdrops, lighting, and voiceovers used during a performance. The nature of the performance venue is often beyond the control of the performers, yet the physical placement of stage and seating may have a bearing on the level of intimacy between those on the stage and those in the audience (Alvarez, 2012). Within the

context of public festivals, a stage setting imposes great physical distance between performers and audience, allowing many people to witness the performance simultaneously (Baron, 2010).

Sometimes performers may present what they perceive the wider audience (especially the dominant group) want to see (Duffy, 2005; Katarinčić, Niemčić & Zebec, 2009; Shay, 2006). In an Australian context, this may result in a performance focused on differences existing between the performers and the predominantly Anglo-Australian audience members rather than commonalities (Duffy, 2005). The failure to do so may result in unwanted responses. For example, during the 1970s and 1980s in Australia, audience members who were not of Italian heritage are reported to have become unhappy at performances by a band playing traditional Italian music. Sorce Keller and Barwick (2013) postulate that this resulted from the band playing songs which did not seem congruent with the audience's stereotyped image of what constitutes Italian music.

Audience members may seek either a form of escapism or heightened sensory and kinaesthetic experiences. The effects of a performance from another culture may be complicated by a variety of factors resulting from the interplay between the cultural background of the audience and the cultural background of the performers. The deep level of nuanced understanding which may be missed by those audience members without insider insight (Kaepler, 2004) has already been discussed. This lack of inside knowledge, it is thought, is the reason many audience members may not appreciate a performance in a style which they have not previously experienced (Reason & Reynolds, 2010).

Examination of similarities and disparities between audience members from inside of the relevant cultural group, as opposed to those external to the group, have also been undertaken. In Roy's (2012) analysis of a performance by the Slovakian dance and music group *Lúčnica*, just over ten percent of audience members were surveyed. Anglo-Australian members of the audience were the only group to register ratings of relative disapproval for the singing. Roy attributes this to a lack of exposure to singing techniques which are common among the countries of Eastern Europe; in contrast, other audience members were not as critical of the singing. Less contrast was found between the groups in relation to the dance component of the performance, but the Anglo-Australian members still recorded lower rates of approval of the dancing they had seen, compared with the rest of the audience. Delbosc (2008) investigated motivation for attendance at ethno-specific festivals held at the Immigration Museum in Melbourne. The prime reason for attendance amongst those outside of the cultural group on display was to meet people from that cultural group, and to learn

about that particular group. However, she also found that almost all of the “outsiders” who chose to attend had some form of regular contact with a member of the relevant cultural group: a partner, a neighbour or a work colleague. There was, in other words, very little new inter-group contact being made through the events being held (Delbosc, 2008).

These studies (Delbosc, 2008; Roy, 2012) seem to indicate a lack of interest, on the part of Anglo-Australians, in attendance at performances of traditional music and dance. Osborne, Wheeler and Elliott (1999) conducted a survey of one thousand people for the Australia Council, and found that the only successful performance in Australia within that particular genre has been *Riverdance* (Osborne, Wheeler & Elliott, 1999). It is possible that the poor rates of attendance at such performances may be due to a perception that traditional forms are, in a sense, lacking in professionalism and therefore not as highly regarded as opera and ballet. In the consciousness of the Australian public, art forms described as being traditional or of non-Western origin are assumed to also be of amateur status, and therefore of less worth as a performance (Idriss, 2016).

The deliberate design of performances and the preconceived notions of audience members are woven together whenever an artistic performance of any genre is mounted, and provide a deep pool within which a researcher may probe. Certainly, more research into performer-audience relationships within an Australian context, particularly in relation to displays of culturally-based arts, would make an important contribution to performance scholarship.

The main focus of this section has been on culturally-based performances for the broader, general population. Critics have been concerned with issues of essentialism, trivialisation and tokenism; supporters have spoken of opportunities to negotiate and contest identity within new local and global contexts as performers seek to express aspects of the past using the framework of the present reality. Recent scholarship shifts agency from the audience to the performers. If the participants do not believe there is a problem, it is not anyone else’s job to create a problem for them, as encapsulated by Ramnarine (2007c): “diasporic music-making can be understood in the ordinariness of creative production, as musicians working as individual agents in their everyday environments, making musical choices that suit them and their audiences” (p. 7).

## **Conclusion**

Multicultural studies demonstrate the stark change in situation for many immigrants to Australia. Immigrants have left a place in which they were, perhaps, part of a largely

homogeneous population and found themselves in the minority in Australia. The number of potential encounters with individuals and groups who are culturally different has, most likely, increased following migration. People from the same geographic place of origin often cluster themselves together following migration, thus forming a diaspora group. Being a member of a diaspora group within a multicultural society such as Australia necessitates a re-formulation of personal and group identity. Individuals and collectives must negotiate their positions within the new society as they negotiate situations of cultural specificity in the home and immigrant community, and cultural heterogeneity outside of the community. As part of this negotiation process, diasporic behaviours may include both formal and informal modes of connection to the former place of residence and its customs. Emotional connections or nostalgic reminiscences are also observable, as immigrants attempt to reconcile past and present, memories and plans, places and spaces.

Consequently, immigrants may choose to continue some of the traditional practices from their ancestral home, while at the same time seeking to forge ahead with the processes of acclimatisation and acculturation. The perpetuation of traditional dance may serve two functions: it may be a means of embodying connections with the former homeland and its places and people, as well as being part of working out an individual's cultural identity as a member of a diasporic community within multicultural Sydney. The link with the past may be considered to represent a searching for the "ontological security" described by Giddens (1990, p. 92), where there is a continuity in the environment, both material and interpersonal. This searching can be unconscious, as Giddens believed, but it can also have a conscious element in the form of collective action towards the attainment of security. Traditional practices, whether in private or public spheres, contribute to this search in the context of immigration and resettlement.

The continuation of dance may involve some modes of adaptation as it is reinterpreted within its new context. Public performances, in particular, may include changes in space, place and choreography in order to reconcile the old dance form with the new location. Whether the performance is private or public, the performance spaces "reflect significant places of the past, places through which [the group's] identity was formed" (Main & Sandoval, 2015, p. 83). To achieve this linkage of identity with places and spaces in both former and current locations, the maintenance of cultural identity within traditional arts praxis must be contingent upon perpetuation of active connections with the relevant genre in the homeland context. Thus the identity of the genre, and the dance group performing it, continues to be inexplicably linked with that homeland in the minds of both the members of

the relevant cultural community and those outside of it who may witness a performance. The genre identifies the location of the group's past; the place identifies its present and future.

As dances are performed, the multisensory experiences of the performers and audience members alike serve to provide emotional links with family and friends in the former place of residence. These links, or remembrances, are all modes of connection with the former place of residence which are maintained in spite of the simultaneous processes of acculturation in the new homeland.

The topics covered in this literature review are intended to complement and expand upon the theoretical framework of transnationalism as presented in the previous chapter. There, transnationalism is broadly described as being the multiple and varied social fields within which individuals and groups form and maintain connections between sending and receiving societies. This review provides, in relation to the Irish and Croatian communities in Sydney, context about their current situations, through a description of multicultural Australia and the nature and patterns of diasporic groups. In the sections on identity and nostalgia, it has explored some of the salient aspects of life for immigrants who are content in the new surroundings while maintaining affective connections with the previous location. Finally, through examining innovation and change in dance following migration, and the nature and function of dance performances in multicultural societies, a foundation has been provided for the study of Irish and Croatian traditional dancing as a means through which transnational connections are formed. From this literature-based conceptual foundation, the thesis now moves to a description of the chosen methodology, in the next chapter, followed by three subsequent chapters which explore divergent transnational spaces within which Irish and Croatian immigrants in Sydney are operating.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

As previously discussed, the framework adopted for analysis of data in this study is transnationalism: the ways in which people may be connected with a former place of residence across national borders. Transnational theorists state that immigrants may form a variety of connections, which constitute transnational spaces or fields (Levitt, 2001). Transnational processes are affected by both internal (personal) and external (political and social) factors (Levitt, 2002; 2009). When transnationalism has been applied to studies of music and dance amongst immigrant communities, understandings of migration and the interaction of immigrants with other members of multicultural societies have been broadened (Sorce Keller & Barwick, 2013).

The framework is one which foregrounds the subjective and experiential, seeking to explore the multiple gradations of experience found, both between and within different immigrant groups and between various individuals within those groups. Therefore, this study employs qualitative methodologies and has its foundations in a constructionist epistemology, so that the participants' voices are privileged, multiple viewpoints are included and nuances of experience are explored.

#### **A Constructionist Epistemology**

Any research study is based on an epistemology, which is developed from a "way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). Crotty (1998) explains that epistemologies may be divided into two broad categories: objectivism, which states that knowledge exists outside of human intervention, and constructionism, which holds that human intervention is implicit in the construction and interpretation of knowledge. Constructionist epistemology assumes that meanings are products "of linguistic, social and cultural practices" (R. Hall, 2008 p. 53); they are "embedded in a social web of interpretation and re-interpretation" (Kitzinger, 2004, p. 128). Constructionism is predicated upon the revelation of participants' worlds by the participants themselves; it assumes that these worlds are complex and require much time and effort to achieve an understanding of them (D. Silverman, 2006).

In this study, the constructionist epistemology supports the theoretical framework. Transnationalism, with all its strands, seeks to explain the subjective, lived experiences of people who maintain connections across geographical borders. These connections are

multiple and varied, and are bound to the respective cultural communities included in this study. The notion of constructed realities is a recurring theme within literature on transnationalism (Dahinden, 2010; Dunn & Ip, 2008; Levitt, 2009) as well as in other pertinent fields such as cultural identity studies (Bhatia & Ram, 2009). It is also salient in dance studies (Thomas, 2003; A. Ward, 1997); according to Pakes (2011), “dance is actively constituted as it is experienced” (p. 38). By adopting a constructionist stance, I endeavoured to give agency to all participants and their individual experiences as being equally authoritative parts of the whole study. Constructionism disempowers any notions of homogeneity of experience or the existence of a solitary truth about the formation and perpetuation of transnational links; “there is almost inevitably no consensus of interpretation that the ethnographer can publish nor one truth to be established” (Buckland, 1999, p. 197). Constructionist epistemologies also govern methodological choices; participants should be encouraged to create and relate their realities for data collection. The epistemology led, therefore, to the choice of ethnography for use in this study.

## **Research Design**

### **Ethnography**

Ethnography is described by D. Silverman (2006) as “social scientific writing about particular folks” (p. 67), a definition which refers back to the work of early researchers who would immerse themselves in various communities, often outside their own national boundaries, for prolonged periods of time. The concept of culture remains central to ethnography (Thomas, 2003) but the method is now applied in a wider variety of situations within the local environment of the researcher, such as workplaces and schools (Saukko, 2003). According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), the characteristics of ethnography include research in everyday contexts, a range of information sources, data categories which are not pre-determined, and analyses which focus on human activities and their meanings.

Ethnography, with its long period of fieldwork, is able to record the evolution of a group over time and to capture events in the group as they unfold (Punch, 2005). The researcher takes part in the activities of participants in the field, employs the senses to record as much as possible about the field and the activities within it, and asks pertinent questions of participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It also allows for comparison of multiple groups over the same period of time (D. Silverman, 2006). Ethnography also emphasises polyvocality: Saukko (2003) argues that ethnography should include perspectives from multiple stakeholders, to help “overcome the temptation to think of a particular lived

experience as the ‘truth’” (p. 65). Thus, the specificities and particularities of individual experiences can be accounted for within an ethnographic study. Ethnographies do not claim to be definitive; the possibility for further research is always acknowledged. Clifford (1986) acknowledges that ethnographies have received much criticism concerning their veracity; they do not purport to present an absolute truth, but they can accurately describe a cultural group and its activities in a given set of circumstances. Taking this further, Hammersley (2011) argues that no study can capture a phenomenon completely, but it can provide answers to certain questions and, through those answers, represent the phenomenon in a truthful manner.

Ethnographic studies have been employed to good effect in dance research so that dance may be understood “within its cultural context” (Foley, 2012, p. 149) or “in the contextual web of social relationships, environment, religion, aesthetics, politics, economics and history” (Sklar, 1991, p. 6). More recently, Foley (2013) states that such studies offer “the opportunity to encounter, to examine and to draw attention to different dance or human movement practices, lifestyles, belief and value systems, modes of thought and experiential opportunities” (p. 5). Many other renowned dance researchers have employed ethnographic methods in their work (Dankworth, 2014; David, 2014; Dunin, 2006; Niemčić, 2014; C. Silverman, 2012).

This study employs methods of data collection and analysis which have been successfully used in existing ethnographic work, including the dance ethnographies which have been referenced in this section. However, the current research is focussed on two immigrant communities in Sydney, and three dance groups within each of those communities. Hence, while utilising ethnographic methodologies, it is, by design, a case study.

## **Case Studies**

Case studies, by definition, imply that each case is a bounded and discrete unit which provides an example of the phenomenon under investigation (Punch, 2005). A case study is an expedient means of providing “a unique example of real people in real situations” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 289). One method of categorising case studies is that developed by Stake (1995), who outlines the usefulness of including various specific examples, or cases, in which the variations and nuances of a given phenomenon may be captured and analysed. The current study is not an “intrinsic case study” (p. 3) where the interest is in a case *per se*; it is an “instrumental case study” (p. 3), in which the aim is to learn about a particular phenomenon. The phenomenon to be examined is traditional dance and its role in the lives of



members of the Irish and Croatian communities in Sydney. More than one case is included in this study and each case is analysed in its own right (Punch, 2005). As multiple cases are included, this study also fits into Stake's (1995) definition of a "collective case study" (p. 4), where ethnographic methods are applied to multiple instrumental cases and the resulting data are compared.

The advantage of a collective case study design is that there are multiple sources from which to collect data, leading to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Punch, 2005; Stake, 1995). Multiple facets may be observed in each case, but the nature of the facets may vary between cases; for example, each case may have a history, a physical context and a constitutional character, but the nature of the history, context and character may differ. Thus, comparisons across the multiple cases may be determined (Cohen, et al., 2011; Stake, 2008). It also leads to a more nuanced comprehension of a phenomenon since multiple aspects of that phenomenon are likely to be uncovered in a multi-site study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Flick (2009) cautions that methodological design in collective case studies needs to be rigorous: purposive sampling is required to ensure that the cases are indeed comparable, and the methods of data collection and analysis should be consistent across all the cases. These criteria are addressed in subsequent sections of this chapter, beginning with the next section in which the individual cases are introduced the sampling techniques are described.

### **Approaching the Field**

This section describes the specific ways in which research participants were recruited for the study. It commences with some background information concerning my history and how I came to be interested in conducting this research. Next, the cases, or dance groups, are introduced, so that the variations in recruitment process may be understood as being case-specific and appropriate for each specific situation. Finally, the processes of seeking individual participants within each dance group are explained.

### **The Cases in this Study**

The purpose of this study is to record and analyse information about the transnational activities of members of traditional dance groups in two immigrant communities in Sydney. The comparisons resulting from the fieldwork exist at both a macro level, where the two communities are compared, and at a micro level, where distinctions between cases within the same community are explored. The two immigrant communities in this study are the Irish and the Croatian communities. The decision-making process is important; choices about which

cases to include and exclude reveal information about the context (Sydney), the communities which are chosen and the researcher's personal interests and biases. The choice of cases reflects my background and interests, so some pertinent information is needed to illuminate the ways in which these have shaped my study.

I have had a lifelong interest in traditional dance, especially from European countries, since my childhood in Melbourne when I participated in calisthenics classes.<sup>10</sup> As an adult, I began recreational folk dancing in the early 1990s. I am at present a teacher of a community class and have taught folk dance in schools, universities and centres for people with disabilities. Most of the material I teach comes from workshops run by Folk Dance Australia<sup>11</sup>, and there is a definite bias within that material towards dances from Europe.

I have two daughters, and in late 1994, I saw an advertisement for an Irish step dancing school in my local area. Having distant Irish heritage and being fond of traditional dance, I enrolled my older daughter; later her sister also joined in this activity. Not only did my girls enjoy it, but I became fascinated and was involved not only as a parent but as a class helper, overseer of public performances when needed and stage manager for annual concerts. Even though my daughters have retired from dancing, I continue to attend the New South Wales Championships each year as well as the competition organised by the school's teacher, where I present a perpetual trophy in the 13 years girls' championship in honour of my late mother.

The choice of the Irish community was, therefore, somewhat inevitable and so can be considered a convenience sample (Cohen et al., 2011). However, it is also a purposive sample (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). When I decided to undertake a comparison between two immigrant communities, I chose the Irish community because its settlement history dates back to British colonisation in 1788, as described earlier in this thesis. A simple online search revealed multiple Irish dance groups covering all genres (step, set, céilí and sean nós, which are described in Chapter Four) and which included, collectively but not necessarily within the same dance group, both children and adults.

I then sought a second community, one with a more recent timeframe. I considered European communities where most immigrants came following the Second World War to fulfil labour shortages, as described in Chapter Two. Then I undertook further purposive sampling: I conducted an online search to find the community with the most operational

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<sup>10</sup> "Calisthenics" has a variety of connotations. The calisthenics in which I participated is an Australian invention. Calisthenics clubs are for girls only. Teams compete in a variety of exercise forms, figure marching, balletic dance, songs with dramatic actions and traditional folk dancing.

<sup>11</sup> [www.folkdanceaustralia.org.au](http://www.folkdanceaustralia.org.au)

dance groups in Sydney. I was looking for a community with multiple dance groups so that I would be able to adequately compare it with the Irish community with its multiple groups covering children and adults. The Croatian community fitted this requirement: there are multiple children's groups and two adults' groups in existence in Sydney, which provided me with choice and flexibility when seeking out case studies within that community.

Having chosen two communities, I sought cases which are typical of dancing within the Irish and Croatian communities, following the advice of Schofield (2009, p. 78) who states that "the researcher who has decided on the kind of institution he or she wants to study... should try to select an instance of this kind of situation that is, to the extent possible, typical of its kind". The cases chosen within each community were designed to provide a broad scope both in terms of dance genres and age range of participants. Inclusion of multiple cases allows for the maximum number of disparities to be included, thus achieving results which are more robust than those obtained from homogeneous sites (Schofield, 2009).

### **Accessing the Field Sites**

The process of negotiation to enter the field in which each case was situated began with locating an appropriate gatekeeper. D. Silverman (2006) describes field sites as "closed settings" (p. 81) into which a gatekeeper can provide access; the gatekeeper must possess the requisite position of authority within the site to be able to allow the researcher to enter. In every case, the gatekeeper informed group members about my research and advised them that they would retain the right to withhold consent as individuals. I was allowed, by each group's leadership, to be present in the group, but individuals were then able to exercise their choice to be excluded from photographs, video footage and formal interviews.

Entering a field site affects both the researched and the researcher. Each case can be considered to be an institution (Flick, 2009); the entrance of a researcher is an intrusion into the life of that case and this may be viewed as threatening. The researcher may also be positioned somewhat differently in different cases (D. Silverman, 2006). Across the six dance groups I was in a variety of positions, ranging from familiar insider in *Bláth* step dance school<sup>12</sup> to semi-familiar in *Harp* and Sydney Irish Céilí Dancers (*SICD*), to minimal

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<sup>12</sup> The two children's groups, one from each community, have been assigned pseudonyms at the request of the leadership of each group. *Bláth* and *Cvijet* are, respectively, the Irish and Croatian words for "flower". [The second language of Ireland is often referenced as "Gaelic". However, in *Ireland* it is known as "Irish" (SIL, 2017) and so that term will be employed in this thesis.]

Anonymity is possible in both cases since there are multiple children's groups in each community in Sydney. No such request was made by the adults' groups; the only group which would be possible to anonymise is *Harp*. The other three groups are unique in Sydney and would be recognisable immediately even with a pseudonym.

familiarity in *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* and finally complete outsider at *Kumpanjija*. These positions are explained as I describe each group.

### **Bláth**

*Bláth* is one of many competitive Irish step dance schools in Sydney. The school has multiple classes each week at several different locations. The school has solo and team dancing classes for children aged from four years to late twenties. The majority of students are female.

I began fieldwork with the *Bláth*, following the path from the very well-known to the completely unknown. I had not only been a parent in this school; I was someone who had been at this dance school since its inception in 1994. I had worked backstage in tandem with the teacher at every end-of-year concert, which required my attendance at every rehearsal. I had assisted with beginner and primary level classes, and had overseen public performances in the teacher's absence. This was an extraordinary level of insider status, which I believed would enable the teacher, students and parents at the school to feel comfortable with my presence as a researcher. I also believed that the status of insider would allow me to begin the more in-depth aspects of ethnographic research within a shorter timeframe than in groups where I had not been previously familiar to dancers and parents. I could begin interviewing participants straight away, rather than waiting for several months until I had developed sufficient rapport. I began fieldwork in February 2014 and was able to conduct the first interview in the same month.

I was asked to restrict the research to advanced dancers, the majority of whom are aged over eighteen years. The teacher sent out an email to all parents, since I would be seen by parents during class changeover times and at special events. She explained that I would be carrying out research and that she, as teacher, had given her permission for this to be done. Moreover, my being known to most of the parents meant that if there was someone I encountered to whom I was not previously familiar, there were plenty of people who readily vouched for my character and intent. A comment such as "This is Jeanette; she's been around here for ever" did much to instil confidence that participation was not going to be detrimental to any participant.

### **Harp.**

Having some knowledge of Irish step dancing was at least a point of common ground when approaching groups practising other forms of Irish dancing. I knew, from my FDA

connection, that two groups list their classes in the FDA newsletter. One group is *Harp* set dancers. Only adults attend; the majority are female. I was able to make contact with the teachers and emailed the necessary paperwork (letter of introduction, Participant Information Statement and Consent Form).

### **Sydney Irish Céilí Dancers (SICD).**

The other group of which I had some prior knowledge was *SICD*. At a céilí<sup>13</sup>, I was able to make contact with the leader of *SICD*, which has been in existence for over fifty years. There are two classes each week; the first is old style step dancing, There are some teenage girls in this class; the others are adult females. This is followed by the céilí and set dancing class, which is composed entirely of adults, of whom around two thirds are female. There is a group of about six musicians who play for each class; making this the only Irish dance group with live music. Again, having some knowledge about Ireland and its dance forms proved beneficial in establishing rapport with both the teacher and group members.

While I had considered myself, prior to fieldwork, to have insider status with the Irish dance community, and while it was certainly the case with *Bláth*, there was still perceived to be a measure of outsider status with *Harp* and *SICD*. The first reason for this was that I was a complete novice at set dancing and a relative novice at céilí dancing. I knew some of the céilí dances used in competitions by step dance schools but that canon of dances is rarely used by *Harp* or *SICD*. Having a strong link with step dancing in Sydney proved to be positive in most cases, and a source of some good-natured scorn in others, as jokes about which genre is the “true” form of Irish dancing were recounted. My strongest asset as a newcomer was the fact that I started attending the group in February, and was going to be visiting Ireland in April. This provided a small piece of common ground from which to develop rapport. Many conversations about my impending visit to Ireland took place, and I believe this was an important factor in gaining acceptance in this group.

### **Kumpanjija<sup>14</sup>.**

The first Croatian dance group I contacted was the *Kumpanjija* group in the northern suburbs of Sydney. This group is the only group in the world, outside of Croatia, which

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<sup>13</sup> Here, this word means a social gathering involving dance. Céilí dances are danced in pairs or in sets with multiples of two: six, eight and sixteen people are common numbers. These dances are also danced by step dancers in competitions; this is called “team dancing”.

<sup>14</sup> The word may also be spelled ‘kumpanija’ but the spelling used in this thesis reflects what is used on the Blato kumpanjija groups’ website (Viteško udruženje Kumpanjija Blato, n.d.) which is the preferred spelling in that town (Dunin, 2015).

performs the sword dance indigenous to Blato on the island of Korčula. It was fortuitous that I made contact early in the year, since the dance is only performed at the festival of St Vincenca, patron saint of Blato, held each year on April 28. The group commences rehearsals in December or early January, and finishes at the festival, meaning that the window of opportunity for fieldwork amongst this group would be limited as compared with the other groups. During this period this group meets weekly. I initially met with the club president and the group leader; they then informed group members about the research.

### **Vukovar.**

*Vukovar* is a dance ensemble for adults, mostly between 25 and 45 years of age, and has been in existence since 1984. Members of the ensemble meet weekly and learn dances from all over Croatia. About three quarters of the group is female. In addition to the dancers, there are a number of musicians playing various sizes of the *tambura*, a Croatian instrument similar to a classical guitar. The leader of the *Vukovar* group responded to my email very positively, expressing great pleasure that I was interested in Croatian dance. The leader discussed my request with the committee and approval was then given.

### **Cvijet.**

*Cvijet* is a junior version of *Vukovar*. There are about one hundred children divided into four groups by age range. The very small children learn musical games then progress to basic dance steps. The teacher is also a dancer in *Vukovar*. There are multiple other Croatian children's groups in Sydney and they have a loose association. As part of *Cvijet* there are also three musicians who play piano accordion, guitar and double bass.

I emailed the Secretary of *Cvijet*, whose name was listed on the internet as the contact person. She asked to meet me in person, which we arranged to do at a shopping centre halfway between our respective homes. She was then able to ask me further questions about the research and what my visits to *Cvijet* would entail. This personal contact facilitated my entrance into visiting Group Four of *Cvijet*, involving children aged between twelve and eighteen years; the committee asked that I only conduct my research with that age group, rather than include those aged from four to twelve years.

In this sub-section, a brief description of each case, or dance group, has been given. Once contact with the leadership of a group was established and their permission for the fieldwork had been obtained, I sought to recruit individual participants within each dance

group, since the leader could not speak for individuals in the groups. The following section explores the various sampling techniques I employed in the participant enlistment process.

### **Sampling techniques within each case**

The techniques of sampling should ideally be designed to increase the “theoretical importance” of the phenomenon being investigated (Bernard & Ryan, 2010, p. 369). Purposive sampling was used to achieve a representative sample from within each case (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007): to understand immigrant dance practices, I sought people who have some form of connection with traditional dance in either the Irish or Croatian communities. In some situations, as will be explained in the following section, convenience sampling was employed: I started the study with people I already knew or who were easy to access (Cohen et al., 2011). From this starting point, snowball sampling was used and often initiated by participants themselves, who would make suggestions as to who would be able to provide relevant information for the study.

Where gaps in the data were located, theoretical sampling allowed me to seek out and engage people who are likely to make important contributions to knowledge about the topic (Charmaz, 2006; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Theoretical sampling is an intrinsic part of grounded theory analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 2008); as themes emerge, the researcher can then look for participants who are most likely to be able to develop and expand those themes. These participants are “key informants” (O’Leary, 2005, p. 82) who have “insider or expert knowledge” (p. 83) which can be used not only to generate new data but also to develop contextual information and to confirm the accuracy of previously-collected data.

#### **Special participant sub-groups**

##### ***Participants who are not immigrants.***

While all three dance groups from the Croatian community consisted only of first and second generation immigrants from Croatia, people with a range of cultural heritage backgrounds are present in all of the participating dance groups from the Irish community. This may be attributable to this community’s long history of settlement in Australia, as stated in the Introduction, but the contribution of popularised Irish culture, especially dance and music, cannot be discounted. The presence of this amalgam fits with the theoretical framework: Hickman’s (2012) notion of “transethnic alliances” (p. 40) between immigrants and the broader population is acknowledged. It is also methodologically sound: through the

inclusion of all consenting participants rather than only those fulfilling certain criteria, a fuller description of the relevant contexts is furnished (Geertz, 1973; Niemčić, 2014). The phenomenon of “transethnic alliances” as described by Hickman (2012) will be explored further in Chapter Seven.

### *Dance Experts.*

In the preparatory stages of this study, the literature brought to my attention the names of scholars from Ireland and Croatia. In addition to reading widely within their respective authorships, I began to grasp the potential usefulness of including dance scholars amongst the body of research participants.

#### *Ireland.*

I had met the ethnomusicologist Aileen Dillane in Sydney in 2013, while she was on sabbatical in Australia, and heard a lecture given by her at the Global Irish Studies Centre, University of New South Wales. Her lecture focused on representations of Irish culture in music both within and beyond Ireland. I felt that her insights would be valuable. I had also asked Aileen about a young musician who had come from Ireland to Australia several years ago to play music at several step dancing competitions, and whom I had met at that time. Francis Ward is a registered step dance teacher currently teaching in the Limerick region. He is also a fellow doctoral student, based at the Irish World Academy for Music and Dance at the University of Limerick where Aileen Dillane is a lecturer. From my reading, I had come across much work by Catherine Foley about Irish step dancing, in particular; I emailed her, introducing myself and my research and requesting an interview, which was granted. Finally, I also emailed Breandán de Gallaí, former lead dancer in *Riverdance* and currently a dance scholar himself. During a trip to Ireland in 2014, I was able to conduct interviews with all four academics, who were able to provide varied perspectives on traditional Irish dance and music in Ireland and elsewhere in the world.

#### *Croatia.*

With an array of Irish dance scholars as resource material, I needed an equivalent group with expertise in Croatian dance traditions. The 2014 Symposium for the Ethnochoreology Study Group of the International Council for Traditional Music was held on the island of Korčula, Croatia. This conference provided me with many useful contacts in the world of dance research; of particular relevance to this study was the contact with scholars from the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb, namely Tvrtko Zebec, Iva Niemčić and Joško



Ćaleta. I was able to conduct a group interview with these three scholars during the conference, having emailed them prior to the conference. Joško Ćaleta, having lived for some years in Vancouver, Canada, was an especially useful contact as he understands the diasporic experiences of traditional dance groups. In addition, I met the Croatian-American dance scholar Elsie Ivancich Dunin (Professor Emerita, UCLA), who has conducted research in the United States, Chile and even very briefly in Sydney. In December 2014, I was able to interview Dunin using Skype.

Table 3.1 shows the number of participants in each case, and Appendix A provides further details about each informant. There are two levels of participation status in this study. The first level consists of those who signed consent forms allowing me to spend time with them in their dance activities and take photos and videos. The second group, the interview participants, is a subset of the first, and is made up of those who were prepared to be interviewed. Interviews are discussed further in the next section of this chapter.

Table 3.1

*Number of participants by dance group*

<b>Dance Group</b>	<b>Total Participants (Observation, Photography, Videography, Informal Conversations)</b>	<b>Participants who were interviewed</b>
<i>Bláth</i>	40	23
<i>Harp</i>	20	10
<i>SICD</i>	17	10
<b>Irish Community Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>43</b>
<i>Vukovar</i>	35	14
<i>Cvijet</i>	42	21
<i>Kumpanjija</i>	22	14
<b>Croatian Community Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>49</b>
Scholars of Irish Dance	Not Applicable	4
Scholars of Croatian Dance	Not Applicable	4
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Ethical Approval**

Ethical approval was granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Sydney (Number 2013/895). Documentation which was prepared for distribution included an introductory letter, flyers for distribution to dance group members and adherents, participant information statements and consent forms (all of which are located in Appendix C). A current Working with Children certificate was also obtained<sup>15</sup>. The participant information statements and consent forms were produced in two modes: one for adults and one for children.

All dance participants in Sydney are anonymous; pseudonyms have been applied to individuals and to the two children's groups in the study, as requested by those groups' teachers. Parental consent was obtained for participants under eighteen years of age, but specially adapted participant information statements and consent forms were developed for children, to assign them agency in both the consent process and the research.

The nature of participation and consent was also delivered verbally: in five cases, I was asked to address the group (or group of parents) at the beginning of the fieldwork phase. The sixth case's teacher emailed all parents and explained my presence. I verbally repeated the nature of consent each time I intended to take a photograph or use the video camera, since I wished to allow participants to withdraw temporarily, in cases such as a dancer not being confident in their knowledge of the dance I was to video. Before interviews, I reminded respondents that they could choose to decline to answer any question or they could request cessation of the interview at any time.

A number of dance scholars consented to interviews for inclusion in the study; their participant information statements and consent forms asked them to consent to the inclusion of their names in the study, given their academic standing and comprehension of research processes. Having attended to the ethical requirements for the fieldwork, I now outline, in the following section, the various modes of data collection which were employed across the six dance groups in the study. It also describes the ways in which these methods were adapted for particular cases, or specific situations, within the fieldwork process.

## **Data Collection Methods**

### **Participant Observation**

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<sup>15</sup> This certificate is issued by the New South Wales government and certifies that the bearer is not on the list of registered sex offenders and is therefore able to work with children.

Participant observation is one of the principal methods of data collection in ethnographic studies (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2007; Flick, 2009; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; O’Leary, 2005). The aim is for the researcher to learn about the phenomenon being researched from an insider’s perspective (Flick, 2009). The researcher should be as unobtrusive as possible, allowing group members to “go about their business as usual” (Bernard & Ryan, 2010, p. 41). This internal positioning in the group’s activities is carried out over a prolonged period of time (O’Leary, 2005) and allows the researcher to pay attention to details, contextualise each piece of collected data and include multiple events in the life of the group within the total data set (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; D. Silverman, 2006). Flick (2009) describes participant observation as a method which allows the researcher to be both flexible and opportunistic: unexpected events are more likely to be observed and recorded from the insider position. The prolonged timeframe and the insider position also provide the researcher with opportunities to develop rapport with participants, which is beneficial for both casual conversations and in-depth interviewing (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Flick, 2009; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Participant observation allows the researcher to acknowledge and utilise his or her own situated knowledge (Thomas, 2003). The researcher can follow a process from description of multiple aspects of the case to more focused recording of the most important facets to highly selective data collection (Flick, 2009). Observation lasts until a point of saturation has been reached, where no new data are observed. Observational data can be triangulated against other methods such as casual conversations and interview transcripts (O’Leary, 2005).

In this study, immersion in all aspects of the culture was sought. This involved not only my taking part in the classes wherever possible but also observation of the dancing in its multiple contexts such as classes, competitions and performances (see Appendix B) and asking questions about all aspects of the dancing and dance events (Kaepler, 1999). The definition of “taking part” varied across the spectrum of cases in this study; there was a “continuum of possibilities” (Punch, 2005, p. 182) for my level of participation in each group’s regular practice sessions, ranging from pure observation of the dancing to full participation as a group member for the duration of the fieldwork. At formal events, I was always, as a member of the audience, purely an observer of the dancing. My positioning along the continuum described by Punch (2005) is discussed in the next section.

### **Embodiment in data collection**

One notion which has come to prominence in recent years in dance research is that of “embodied ethnography” (Dankworth & David, 2014, p. 7). This practice involves the researcher’s immersion in the field through actually learning the dance, and therefore involves usage of the self as a research tool (Skinner, 2010). This method has been employed not only by researchers of classical ballet and other theatrical dance styles (Block & Kissell, 2001; Fensham & Gardner, 2005), but also by those studying traditional dance forms (David, 2013, 2014; Dankworth, 2014; Foley, 2013). While embodied practice allows the researcher to experience the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of the dance movements, and to promote participant relaxation in the presence of the researcher (who, after all, is prepared to join in and learn a new skill, thus putting herself in a position of learner rather than expert), there are some instances where this research tool is inappropriate.

Issues of gender and cultural sensitivity may prevent researcher participation. This prevented my participation in the male-only *Kumpanjija* group, where a centuries old continuum of masculinity was unbroken<sup>16</sup>. This study also included two children’s groups, Bláth and Cvijet, into which a researcher is unable to be positioned unobtrusively; in both cases, only observational methods were employed. Even where a researcher may usually be able to join in the dancing, particular circumstances may prevent this from happening. Such was the case with *Vukovar*, where the group’s focus is always on the next performance and the necessary stage positions and choreographies. The intrusion of an outsider would have been unwelcome in that situation.

So, while I agree in principle that embodied participation allows for the fullest degree of experiencing what the participants feel in their dance practices, I believe that regular observation of classes accompanied by attendance at social gatherings and performative events still results in “deep involvement and personal engagement” (David, 2014, p. 26). Following a range of practices along a participatory continuum, I was able to foster the necessary trust and participant cooperation to enable a deep level of engagement in both informal conversations and formal interviews (Tierney, 2002). The group dynamics, or the ways in which dancers interact with the leader and each other, were drawn out through comparison of video footage with thorough field notes.

Staged dance performances are loci for participant observation of a different nature, since the researcher is participating as an audience member rather than a dancer. Wood (2012) describes methods which I employed in this research: the taking of notes about

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<sup>16</sup> Further discussion of the group’s gendered nature is located within Chapter Four.

performances as they are taking place, and including observations of the performers, members of the audience and my own responses to the performance; short interviews at performances, seeking to explore emotional responses, and longer interviews to examine the means through which participants express their heritage. Written notes provided details of practicalities such as choreographic styling, costume choices, and effects of the particular venue in which the performance had taken place, as well as the opportunity for researcher reflexivity as I recorded my own responses to what I was seeing, hearing and feeling.

### **Field Notes**

Field notes are a record, made as soon as is practical after a field site visit, of what took place during that visit (Flick, 2009; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). According to Emerson et al. (2007), field notes have four characteristics. They are a form of “representation” (p. 353), where data are recorded in a form which can be reviewed at a later time. They are “selective” (p. 353), in that they can never contain every aspect of an event, but record what was deemed important by the researcher. The notes are “descriptive” (p. 353), since they include a measure of interpretation as well as factual information. Finally, they are combined with other field notes to form a “corpus” (p. 353) of material which may be used in the data analysis.

Extensive and detailed field notes were made, usually immediately after a field visit. I attempted to be as natural as possible during site visits, avoiding visible note-taking wherever possible in the field, as I felt this would increase the self-consciousness of participants. Instead, I tried to record, as faithfully as possible and immediately after each field visit, the physical and social attributes of each class and event, also noting my emotional responses to the event (Emerson et al., 2007). I recorded responses to informal questions posed by myself, as well as casual asides made by participants both to me and in dialogue with each other (Niemčić, 2014). I also noted down ideas which occurred to me either during the observation period or during the writing up process, so that I would have a comprehensive record of my own thoughts as well as what I’d seen and heard (Barz, 1997). As the fieldwork progressed, I habitually reviewed my field notes before returning to each field site and made memos to myself if there was anything which I needed to explore further during subsequent field visits. Memos were also useful to draw themes from the notes for comparison with themes which emerged from other data collection methods.

### **Photography and Videography**

The use of photography and video recording within ethnographic studies has become increasingly popular over time, partly because they enable the reader to view and hear the phenomenon as well as reading about it, and partly because they are considered to be somewhat more objective methods of data collection than field notes (Ball & Smith, 2007). The researcher can “register on-going activities in a very detailed way that preserves its sequential organization” (Knoblauch & Schnettler, 2012, p. 337). Both forms have been widely used in dance research to convey the richness of the costumes, music, motifs and choreographies in greater detail than can be provided through textual reporting alone (Dunin, 2006; Foley, 2013). However, both methods provide “a record of a particular performance, rather than a record of a particular choreography in its pure state” (Royce, 1977, p. 53). Furthermore, the choice of what to record is subjective and reflects both the focus of the study and the biases of the researcher (D.Silverman, 2006). When this understanding of pictorial data is applied, positivist notions of the captivity of an event for later deconstruction and analysis are avoided (Bakka & Karoblis, 2010) and the constructivist epistemology is foregrounded. In this study video footage and photography were used to capture elements of the various cases: class composition, pedagogical style, interactions between dancers or between dancers and teachers, to gather examples of the dancing genres as practised in Sydney and to record dance performances. No interviews or casual conversations were captured on video; they were either audio-recorded or written into field notes.

I used a variety of tools: mostly a handheld video camera but also an iPad and an Android phone. There were a number of videoing styles used, depending on the situation. When I was participating in a class, I set the camera in an appropriate location so that it could capture the dancing without obstructing group members. When I was observing a class, I held the camera and positioned myself where I could best capture the dancing. At performance events, I often had to be positioned in a pre-determined location, for example due to numbered seating, so I recorded the event as best I could. Sometimes my husband was present at performance events and he took still photos while I videoed, or vice versa. Levels of participant consent in different field sites posed a variety of issues with visual data collection, and I discuss these issues later in this chapter. Some ethically-based editing has been applied to video footage in some instances. On occasions, only participants for whom consent was provided were videoed, but their faces have been blurred in the footage to preserve anonymity. At other times, where it was impossible to avoid inclusion of non-

consenting dancers in video footage, the dancing was filmed from the waist down so that the totality of the dance event was recorded without revelation of individual identity<sup>17</sup>.

### **Casual Conversations**

An ethnographer in the field will engage with participants in a variety of conversations which are not audio-recorded, although they may be recorded later in the field notes (Saukko, 2003). These conversations form part of the process of constructing the field in conjunction with research participants and allow for the recording of the ideas and views of many more participants than those who consent to formal interviews (Emerson et al., 2007; Saukko, 2003). Such conversations only took place with people who had provided written consent but, as may be seen from Table 3.1, the interview participants were a subset of the overall participant cohort. Some conversations, such as those which focused on how long it took to get to the class because of the heavy traffic, were unrelated to the research but helped to establish a relationship with participants. Other conversations were spontaneous but related directly to the research: for example, new costume items were produced and I was able to find out who bought them, where they were bought and who had obtained the original items which were being replaced. Finally, some conversations were directed towards the discovery of specific information about a phenomenon which had just been observed in the field.

### **Interviews**

The purpose of the interview is “to explore not to interrogate” (Charmaz, 2002, p. 679); interviews should be designed so that interviewees can “explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds” (Heyl, 2007, p. 369). Semi-structured interviews, as used in this study, are tools which simultaneously bestow agency to the respondent and allow for comparisons to be made between individual interviewees, since the same topics are explored in each interview (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Semi-structured interviews allow idiosyncratic tangents to be explored within each interview while maintaining a cohesive set of interview directions (O’Leary, 2005).

The value of participant interviews in providing deep, personal and culturally-relevant data has already been discussed by various dance researchers (Kaeppler, 2006; Sklar, 2006; Wulff, 2009). Shelemay (2006) urges researchers to achieve far more than merely the documentation of verbalisations made by research participants; she believes that ethnographers should encourage both the evocation of memories and the framing of personal

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<sup>17</sup> Some video samples were taken from existing footage on YouTube. In these samples, blurring was not used as the videos were already in the public domain.

and collective histories. Warburton (2011) contends that through the combination of questioning dancers about what they experience when they dance, and experiencing the dancing first-hand, a researcher will be able to comprehend the nature of dance and the sensory experiences which result from performing dance.

In this study, interviews were undertaken with a variety of participants, including dancers, teachers, parents and musicians, (see Interview Schedules in Appendix D). Almost all interviews took place at the location of the practice classes. Five participants invited me to their homes for the interviews as this was the most suitable arrangement for them. Three interviews took place by phone; one international interview was by Skype. In carrying out the interviews, I endeavoured to encourage participants to relate not only their experiences but also their emotional responses to those experiences (O'Hagin & Harnish, 2006; O'Leary, 2005). Most of the interviews were conducted with individuals. Three of the younger males and three females at *Kumpanjija* were, respectively, interviewed together since they were not confident about being interviewed individually.

At *Cvijet*, finding time for interviews was problematic. The children were either dropped at class and picked up straight away after class or were brought by parents of other dancers. Also, the club building was closed as soon as the dance class finished. Two group interviews were conducted at times when either the teacher was absent so a substitute teacher ran the class but finished early or there was such poor attendance that the teacher finished the class early. Over time, I was able to initiate multiple casual conversations with these participants both individually and in groups and gather more information, directed by the data I already had from them, as they discussed their thoughts with me and with each other.

Interview participants were also categorised by generational status in keeping with the theoretical framework of transnationalism and its variations across generational divides. Table 3.2 provides a breakdown of the interview participant cohort by generation and gender. Within both communities the level of participant representation from each generation was determined firstly, by the ratios of first and second generation immigrants in each of the dance groups, and secondly, by the willingness of individuals to participate in personal interviews. The Croatian groups only contained participants who are either first or second generation Croatian Australians/immigrants. The male and female proportions amongst those interviewed reflect overall gender ratios within the dance groups included in this study.



Table 3.2

*Sydney-based interview participants by generation and gender.*

	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>First generation Irish immigrants<sup>18</sup></b>	3	6
<b>Second generation Irish immigrants</b>	1	8
<b>Third generation or over Irish immigrants</b>	5	7
<b>No Irish heritage</b>	1	12
<b>First generation Croatian immigrants</b>	6	4
<b>Second generation Croatian immigrants</b>	14	25

Thus, a variety of personal data was collected from each case (dance group) and from individual members within each of the groups. In order to provide historical information about each immigrant community, and to supply additional evidence of the transnational practices of the research participants, an archive of documents was compiled.

### **Documents**

Documents enable dance to be contextualised within the historical, social and political realities of the culture in question (A. Ward, 1997). It is necessary to collect and analyse multiple forms of textual materials, which “draw on particular discourses and provide

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<sup>18</sup> In this thesis, “first generation” is taken to mean a person who has active memories of life in Ireland or Croatia. A person who was born overseas but came to Australia as a baby or young child is classified as second generation in this study. Within the participant cohort, people had either come to Sydney at an age of five years and under *or* had come as a teenager or older, so this differentiation was both possible and definitive.

accounts that record, explore, explain, justify or foretell actions” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 35). Foley (2013) employs document analysis of historical records, diaries and photographs to develop a sense of the cultural significance of dance in times past, and to track any developmental changes over the course of time. Some of this material pertinent to this study was obtained through searches of catalogues at institutions such as the National Library of Australia, Canberra, the National Archives of Australia, Canberra and the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney. Other items were collected through personal contact with participants. Each document was assessed to be of genuine origin and free of distortion (Flick, 2009).

The types of documents (with an example of each type) which have been analysed in this study include:

- Photographs from books and other historical sources: this includes books such as O’Farrell (1986) and copies of ships’ doctors’ records of convict activities, which included dancing.
- Photographs obtained by permission from participants: including photographs of them as children or of events such as the Shell Folkloric Festival.
- Printed programs from events such as concerts and competitions: for example, *Vukovar*’s thirtieth anniversary concert program and the New South Wales Irish Dancing Championships program.
- Newspaper articles: articles about, and photos of, Irish step dancers who have won major competitions.
- Advertisements for events: céilí flyers; brochures for *Vukovar* events.
- Information letters, which are internal documents providing information for dance group participants (usually from the group teacher or leader): emails from the Irish step dance teacher to parents about competition etiquette.
- Websites pertaining to dance genres in this study: the Australian Irish Dancing Association website; the Facebook pages of groups, where applicable.

Each document was located within its historical, social and interpersonal contexts. Connections with participants and current dance practices were made, where possible, through both formal interviews and informal conversations, so providing data triangulation. The documentary analysis process employed the same codes as those applied to the verbal and visual data (Bowen, 2009). This process is further explored later in this chapter.

A wide variety of source materials and collection methods was employed in the current research. As Sklar (1991) observes, “dance writing that is ethnographic calls upon local contextual information about social values, religious beliefs, symbolic codes and historical constructions to illuminate the significance of a dance event” (p. 6). The current study has involved observing events, conversing with participants about those events, and collecting material produced by other authors about similar events in other times and places. The following section describes the ways in which the collected data were organised and analysed.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis means that the researcher is “engaged in a systematic cognitive process” (LeCompte & Schensul, 2012, p. 90), during which emergent themes are teased out and developed. In keeping with both the constructionist epistemology and ethnographic methodology of this study, where no pre-existing hypotheses are being tested and participants’ subjective experiences are foregrounded, the data have been analysed using grounded theory. This analytical method ensures that generated theory is grounded in the data derived from the participants’ views about their worlds (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Punch, 2005). It follows a process which begins with data collection then flows on to development of ideas about the data, which are then formalised and formulated into precise descriptions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The strategy of grounded theory is to “seek data, describe observed events, answer fundamental questions about what is happening, then develop theoretical categories to understand it” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 25).

The multiple forms of data collected in this study needed to be organised for analysis immediately after collection. The interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after they were carried out. The online program Dedoose<sup>19</sup>, which allows for multiple data sources to be uploaded and coded, was used in conjunction with manual analysis of data. This binary approach served to ensure that no data were omitted, since the data were analysed using both manual and electronic means. Dedoose has a built-in means of assigning sub-categories to existing codes, to allow for deeper differentiation of data. Codes may also be added, modified or deleted throughout the analysis phase.

A basic tenet of grounded theory is constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 2008), in which new data are compared with what has already been collected and concepts may be identified and catalogued. The cyclical nature of constant comparison involves appraisal of new data along with data which has already been analysed and coded; “there should be

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.dedoose.com>

movement back and forth between ideas and data” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 159). Results of the comparison direct the researcher about ongoing data collection, so that “conceptual gaps” (Charmaz, 2003, p. 312) may be filled and questions answered. As “you put your sensitizing concepts and theoretical codes to work in the theoretical framework” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 169), that framework is established and operationalised (LeCompte & Schensul, 2012).

In analysing data for this study, classical grounded theory coding techniques were applied (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). First, *open coding* was carried out through fine reading of the interview data (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Charmaz, 2006), breaking down the text into portions. A process of labelling these portions was carried out (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The labels or codes enabled data to be named, described and classified (Flick, 2009). The coding system was provisional at this stage and was largely drawn from readings within extant literature, as discussed in the Literature Review. Over time, refinement of existing codes and creation of new codes in response to emerging themes took place (Punch, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Next, *axial coding* enabled the main categories to be connected, and subcategories were created as the causes, conditions and consequences surrounding the main categories were identified and linked (Flick, 2009). Finally, *selective coding* was employed to fill in the categories which needed further refinement and draw the code system together into a collective entity (R. Hall, 2008; D. Silverman, 2006). Following Punch’s (2005) advice, the central theme according to the participants was noted and developed to its fullest capacity from all data sources. Further examples were thus able to be added to this category until theoretical saturation was achieved. The processes of grounded theory were applied from the commencement of data collection and continued until the data gathering ceased (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

While the processes described in the previous paragraph apply to written data (interview transcripts and field notes), visual data (documents, photographs and video footage) were catalogued to include date, location and a description of what was taking place in the footage. Visual materials were then reviewed “incident by incident” (Charmaz, 2006, p.53), constantly compared with other data and themes identified. This identification informed ongoing visual data collection until gaps were filled and data saturation achieved.

Thus, grounded theory was able to provide a more complete picture of the whole setting within each case and in each community, as data were compared with other data. It provided a broad picture of how the subjective, lived realities of individual and dance groups are constructed (Charmaz, 2006). It also supported the constructionist paradigm of this study to

reveal the primary theoretical framework which emerged from the data: transnational links with Ireland or Croatia as expressed through dance.

Analysis of data, when carried out thoroughly, provides an excellent basis from which the processes of elucidation may be undertaken. However, a researcher must take steps to ensure that the interpretation is worthy and able to be considered as a sound explanation of the data. Some steps concern the collected material itself, while others concern the researcher and acknowledgement that personal histories and experiences may influence the way a researcher conducts fieldwork and interprets the resulting data. These aspects of the research process are discussed in the next section.

## **Methodological Soundness**

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness means that the findings are sound, and the research is able to withstand scrutiny by others. Data have been continually worked and reworked through a method of constant comparison, and all examples, including deviant examples, have been included (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003). Triangulation or the existence of multiplicity in one or more dimensions of the study design, further serves to fortify trustworthiness. Triangulation may be achieved through the employment of multiple sites, multiple methods or multiple investigators within a research project (Cohen et al., 2011). This study included multiple sites and multiple methods of data collection; the latter is the most commonly discussed form of triangulation in qualitative research (Flick, 2009). Stake (2008) writes that triangulation is “a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (p. 133). A variety of data sources, where similar data are gathered from multiple sites, has been used in this study. Data are “never to be taken at face value”: the aim of triangulation is “discovering which inferences from those data seem more likely to be valid” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 184). The current study has sought to faithfully represent the experiences of the research participants, articulate the epistemological and methodological prisms through which the investigator has interpreted the data, and locate the findings within the socio-political context of the phenomenon under investigation (Saukko, 2003).

### **Generalisability**

Research is generalisable if the results may be expected to be applicable in other congruent situations; the idea is similar to the concept of reliability in quantitative studies.

Small (2009) states that the researcher should strive for “logical rather than statistical inference, for case- rather than sample-based logic, for saturation rather than representation” (p. 28). The investigator should “reflect upon the data, information and knowledge discovered or constructed during the research endeavour and make judgements or take action regarding what to do with what they now know they have confidence in knowing about the phenomenon under study” (Chenail, 2010, p. 6). Put another way, the researcher can “point out the factors that led to their confidence in putting forth the findings that they did” (Chenail, 2010, p. 7) This may be achieved through consistent data collection, systematic and wide-ranging analysis, provision of evidential support of data interpretation and inclusion of multiple perspectives (Flick, 2009; Lewis & Ritchie, 2003).

### **Reflexivity**

The ethnographic researcher is the primary instrument of data collection (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) and is implicated within her own research practices (Berry, 2011), so a brief discussion of reflexivity is pertinent. Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) contend that reflexivity “implies a recognition of the extent to which researchers shape the phenomena they study” (p. 191). I, as the researcher, am part of the research and I acknowledge “that [my] interpretation of the studied phenomenon is itself a construction” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 187). I have outlined in this chapter how I came to choose the Irish and Croatian communities for inclusion, making this project one which is based on personal history, knowledge and interests. Furthermore, there is one dance group with whom I have had a connection for many years. The cases chosen for the study immediately created a dichotomy between emic (*Bláth*) and etic (all other cases) positioning for me as the researcher. I adhered to the same ethical standards and procedures in *Bláth* as with the other groups, but I acknowledge that existing relationships with research participants can cause partiality in both collection and analysis of data.

Two factors served to ameliorate this bias. The first is that for some years prior to the beginning of the fieldwork, I had not been involved at *Bláth* as a helper or stage manager. If I had still been helping with classes, concerts and performances, my position as researcher would have been more difficult to define. Having put some distance between the self as “parent and helper” and, now, myself as “researcher”, I was able to locate this case more consistently alongside the others. The other factor is that my focus in this study is on first and second generation immigrants from Ireland and Croatia. Choosing such a focus places me as an outsider with respect to all of these participants when considering the primary theme of this study, transnational practices of immigrants, as I have never migrated across national

borders. I am, however, a member of the “third generation or over” Irish heritage group, according to the categories provided in Table 3.2.

I have already stated that possession of a measure of insider status at *Bláth* was fortuitous in that it allowed me to begin formalised data collection, especially interviews, at the beginning of the fieldwork phase since I already had sufficient rapport with the participants. I endeavoured to maintain consistency in data collection through, for example, sometimes asking questions in interviews to which I already knew, to some extent, the answers. The same questions were asked of all participants in the study so that their responses, not mine, filled the gaps in the data: participants’ voices, experiences and feelings were foregrounded instead of my insider knowledge.

With the Croatian dance groups, I was a cultural outsider. It is likely that if a researcher with Croatian heritage were to conduct a similar study, it would provide different perspectives due to emic understandings of contexts and interactions. However, my outsider perspective was welcomed by many within the Croatian community who were appreciative that someone outside of their community was interested in their traditional dancing. Nevertheless, I strove for consistency in data collection across all cases, to minimise the conflict of insider and outsider positioning.

I have, to the point of writing, maintained friendly relationships with most of the research participants, who proved to be most generous givers of their time, knowledge, experiences and artefacts. I have continued connections through occasional visits to classes and attendance at more formal events such as concerts. In the Participant Information Statements, it was explained that feedback during the data analysis phase would be made available on request. Most participants did not select this option when filling out their Consent Forms. Of those who did ask for ongoing feedback, contact has been made through follow-up conversations, either face to face or by telephone, or emails. Some of the documentary material has been sent for participants’ perusal and feedback. Reciprocity was thus introduced and perpetuated with any participants who wished to avail themselves of the offer.

### **Summary**

The methodological choices described in this chapter were informed by the choice of transnationalism as the theoretical framework for this study. Adoption of a constructionist epistemology and the employment of ethnographic methodologies were the result of a desire to focus on the subjective and experiential accounts of the research participants about the

ways in which they forge links with their former homelands through practising traditional dance in Sydney. The selection of the Irish and Croatian communities allowed for comparisons to be made between two groups of immigrants, while the variety of cases which were included within each community reflected a desire to highlight the heterogeneity of each community rather than essentialising them. This is congruent with transnational theorists' urgings to provide breadth of perspectives and to foreground the nuances of experience which may be observed and recorded amongst immigrants who practise transnational activities.

Ethnography, with its multiple methods of data collection, allowed me to collect a large array of information at a number of levels. Table 3.1 in this chapter shows that while there were those who consented to a personal, directed conversation in the form of a recorded interview, many more participants were able to be included through photography, video recording, casual conversations and participant observation. The keeping of detailed field notes provided a way of noting these informal exchanges as well as contextual information and my own feelings and reactions to events in the field. Documentary analysis complemented data collected *in vivo* during fieldwork visits.

I chose one case as a starting point: this case had been previously known to me and so permitted me to begin the deeper methods of data collection, such as interviews, at an earlier stage in the fieldwork period than what was possible with the other cases. The other cases were located and added, and rapport was developed until personal stories were able to be elicited. The opposition of emic and etic positions for me as the researcher in the various cases were reconciled through consistency of methodological tools, especially the questioning processes in interviews.

Through the analytical process, application of the deductive methodology of grounded theory, the primary theme which emerged was participants' transnational connections, in multiple ways, with their ancestral home, whether choreographically, musically, personally or emotionally. The following chapters explore these connections in depth. This thesis has, therefore, been produced as a result of a symbiosis between a theoretical framework and a research methodology with shared emphases: multiplicity of phenomenal variations and polyvocality of experience.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Irish and Croatian Immigrants in Sydney: Demographic and Descriptive Data**

The content of this chapter provides contextual information concerning the Irish and Croatian dance groups in this study. Within each immigrant community, a historical overview of immigration to Australia sets the scene, before a detailed view of the participant cohort is provided. This is followed by descriptive details of each of the dance genres, their histories in the former homelands and their respective practices in Australia. While a comprehensive account of the histories of the various genres and groups is provided in Chapter Six, some preliminary contextualising material is offered in this chapter. Finally, each dance group is introduced to round out the narrative concerning the various forms of Irish and Croatian dancing which are practised within the population of participants in this study. The material presented in this chapter forms the foundation from which analysis of the dance practices is mounted, in Chapters Five, Six and Seven of this thesis.

#### **Part One: Irish Immigrants and Irish Dancing in Sydney**

##### **Irish immigration to Australia**

Irish immigrants have been present in Australia since the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, as explained in Chapter One. Throughout the colonial era in Australia, both convicted felons and free settlers from Ireland continued to arrive for a variety of reasons, whether to escape the famine in Ireland or to seek gold in Australia (McConville, 1987; O'Farrell, 1986). Their lot in the new land was never easy; aside from the arduous physical work required in a

harsh environment, the social milieu was also unwelcoming (O'Farrell, 1986; Stratton, 2004). Since most of the Irish immigrants spoke Irish, practised Catholicism and had cultural practices which differed from those of the English immigrants, they were subjected to marginalisation and derision (D. Hall, 2014; Stratton, 2004).

O'Farrell (1986) notes the social and political forces which, in keeping with the practices of the British administration, restricted Irish immigrants to the fringes of acceptable society. Only in the early twentieth century, in a process which mirrored the situation in the United States, were the Irish counted in the majority population sector along with people from England, Scotland and Wales (Ignatiev, 1996; Stratton, 2004). As O'Farrell records, "by the 1950s the old Irish Australia, that of heritage and sentiment, had been almost totally absorbed in its Australian concerns" (p. 307). This brief history of Irish immigration leads to the present situation and the current status of Irish immigrants in Australia, as provided by government statistics.

### **Census Statistics**

Data from the most recent Census in 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013), show that in answer to the question "What is your ancestry?", the third most common answer was "Irish": 6.6% of the total population of Sydney, and 7.5% of the Australian population provided this response. Given that "Australian" was the second most common answer (after "English") and that "Australian" may include people with distant Irish ancestry, the sector of the total population with some Irish heritage is likely to be second only to those with English background. As stated in Chapter One, self-identification as "Irish" may be made by former residents of both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, so those people who listed their ancestry as "Irish" may have originated in either of these countries.

However, place-of-birth statistics are demarcated by national boundaries; those born in Northern Ireland are listed separately from those born in the Republic of Ireland. At the time of the Census, 22,593 Northern Ireland-born people were living in Australia. Just over half of this group is aged 55 years and above. The majority group in this population's workforce consisted of professionals, followed by clerks, administrators and managers. The average weekly income of people born in Northern Ireland was higher than for all overseas-born Australians and all Australian-born residents (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

In 2011 there were 67,315 people who were born in the Republic of Ireland residing in Australia. Of these, 40.8% were aged between 25 and 44 years, while another 20% were aged 65 and over. As a collective, the Irish-born are economically successful: the largest sub-group in the workforce was that of professionals, followed by technicians or trade workers and

managers. The average weekly income of Irish-born immigrants was higher than that of both all overseas-born people and all Australian-born people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Currently, the situation for Irish immigrants in Australia, whether from Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland, is markedly different from their predecessors; they now claim high economic status and enjoy the privileges of membership of the majority sector of the Australian population. Having described the overall population of Irish immigrants, the following section provides information concerning specific participants in the current study.

### **The participant cohort**

The number of participants from the Irish dancing groups is provided in Table 3.1 in Chapter Three. For the most part, this study is concerned with the first and second generation immigrants, to allow for direct comparison with the Croatian participant cohort, which consists solely of those generations. However, some consideration of the remainder of the Irish dancing respondents, especially those who do not have Irish heritage, is provided in Chapter Seven.

A picture of the first and second generation participant subset may be drawn by noting responses to the question “Why did you<sup>20</sup> decide to leave Ireland and come to Australia?”

Only two families reported that there was any dissatisfaction with Ireland. Two women were brought to Australia as children during “The Troubles” (P. O’Connor, 2005, p. 73), the period of intense unrest and violence in Northern Ireland, which peaked in the 1970s:

[My parents] came here because of “the Troubles” ... they just wanted to come to a country and live their lives with their family. (Jessica, interview, February 26, 2014)

It was hard for my Dad, being a Catholic[in Belfast]...you’d work somewhere for a year or two, then you’d get the bullet [put] in your pocket, and it was time to move on. (Carol, interview, June 26, 2015)

Several others explained that they had been allowed to enter Australia temporarily as long as they were under the age of 26 years:

I came here in 1996. Just me (sic) and a friend came on a working holiday visa. (Deirdre, interview, March 18, 2014)

I took a year off work and came out to see what it was like...and decided to stay. (Oliver, interview, October 29, 2015)

I wanted a bit of adventure... (April, interview, October 15, 2015)

Having experienced Australia, these participants either stayed on permanently or returned to Ireland before applying for permanent immigration and residency in Australia. None of the respondents reported unemployment in Ireland<sup>21</sup>, nor did anyone state that they

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<sup>20</sup> Second generation immigrants were asked why their parents had left Ireland for Australia.

<sup>21</sup> Lack of employment opportunities became a major factor for recent emigrants from Ireland, especially following the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland, 2015).

struggled to find work in Australia. Economically, it appears that the entire participant cohort within the Irish dance groups is financially viable and secure.

Overall, the Irish immigrants in this study have voluntarily chosen Australia as their preferred place of residence; even those whose families emigrated to avoid the situation of conflict in Northern Ireland migrated in conditions of choice and relative comfort. In a previous study of 203 Irish immigrants in Melbourne, Australia, P. O'Connor (2005) found that the primary motivation for migration was chain factors (19%), where participants already had family in Australia, followed by economic reasons (18%) and "informed migration" (18%; p. 172), where information had been gained from documentaries, previous visits to Australia or reports from relatives or friends who had visited Australia. Whilst no direct comparison with P. O'Connor's findings can be made due to the disparate sample sizes, her results support the findings from the first and second generation immigrants in the current study: that the majority of Irish people in Australia have come by choice rather than necessity.

The topic of return visits to Ireland was not addressed directly during the interviews. Only one participant, Oliver (Interview, October 29, 2015) stated "I spend about five or six weeks a year in Ireland." There was some evidence of various rates of dance-related tourism, which extended to the participants who do not possess Irish ancestry. Michelle (Interview, November 10, 2015) and her husband attend dance workshops in Ireland every year, while several others have travelled two or three times to attend workshops or to compete in step dancing competitions, but the overall level of travel to Ireland was low. Thus the notion of Ireland as a physical place is more imagined than concrete within this group of research participants.

The remainder of the 43 interviewees had either distant Irish heritage (third generation or above) on either one or both sides of their family (12 out of 43), or no Irish heritage at all (13 out of 43). Of these 25 participants, all except one have an ancestry which is either distant Irish or British; the sole exception has a father who was born to Croatian immigrants. They are located within the majority population sector who were raised speaking English. Discernment of their socio-economic status was also achieved through casual conversations: all participants come from families with solid employment histories, who are economically secure. This position of fiscal security is noteworthy, since it contextualises various dance-related costs as described briefly later in this chapter and in greater detail in Chapter Six of this thesis. Having described the migration history of Irish immigrants and located the

participants within the upper socio-economic strata of the wider population, the next section focuses on Irish dancing itself, in both Ireland and Australia.

### **What is Irish Dancing?**

The term “Irish dancing” encompasses multiple dance practices, histories and social contexts. Analysis of the constituent genres contained within the descriptor “traditional Irish dancing” is needed, before embarking on a description of the history and development of Irish dancing in Sydney. The relevant forms are: *sean nós* dancing, the step dancing more commonly found in the western regions of Ireland (Brennan, 1999; Foley, 2013); set dancing, a form of social dancing which developed mostly from the French quadrilles (Murphy, 1996); *céilí* dancing, another form of social dancing; and competitive step dancing (Foley, 2013). These dance types are elucidated, and placed within their historical and political contexts in Ireland, in the following section.

#### **Dancing in Ireland.**

Step dancing is practised right across Ireland, as well as in the Irish diaspora<sup>22</sup>. A process of appropriating cultural practices such as dance for the nationalistic movement was initiated in Ireland by the Gaelic League towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (De Gallaí, 2013; Foley, 2013; Ni Bhriain, 2006). This is what Hobsbawm (1983) describes as an “invented tradition” (p. 1), which is “a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition” (p. 4). The establishment of the Gaelic League was designed to foster nationalism through the promotion of music, dance, sporting activities and language amongst the populace (Foley, 2001; 2013; Ni Bhriain, 2006). Eventually the Gaelic League recognised that step dancing needed its own administrative body: the final formalisation of solo step dancing was achieved through the creation of *An Coimisiún le Rinci Gaelacha*, the Irish Dancing Commission (IDC<sup>23</sup>), in 1929 (Foley, 2001).

*Sean nós* dancing is also a percussive dance form (Brennan, 1999), but the feet are kept close to the floor, in contrast to the elevation from the floor which is required in modern step dancing. Some slight movements of the arms may be observed in this style of dancing (Brennan, 1999). Competitions have also been an integral part of *sean nós*, but are organised in a different manner from IDC competitions: males and females compete together, dancers

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<sup>22</sup> This genre is also the most publicly recognised, since it is from step dancing that *Riverdance* and other stage shows developed. This is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

<sup>23</sup> In this thesis I employ the acronym IDC from the English name of this organisation, Irish Dancing Commission.

request certain tunes and tempos from the musicians, there is an open and obvious synergy between dancer and musician, and special costumes are not worn by the dancers (Ni Bhriain, 2008).

*Céilí* dancing is the Irish social dancing prescribed by the Gaelic League; they are partnered dances with two, three, four or eight couples and the formation may be a square set, a longways set or a circle. These were also taught by the nomadic dance masters, along with step dancing (Breathnach, 1996). The Gaelic League collected dances which they deemed suitable for public consumption: the dances they chose supposedly stood for the purity of Irish culture, as opposed to the set dances which had been developed from French influences (Foley, 2000). *Céilí* dancing is also taught by IDC dance teachers and is often referred to by the name “team dancing”; within IDC competitions, there are sections for both girls’ and mixed gender teams.

Set dancing has been practised for about five hundred years, and developed from the French cotillions and quadrilles, which were initially danced exclusively by those in the upper echelons of society, before being taken about by the itinerant dance masters and having localised forms and idiosyncrasies applied to them (Breathnach, 1996; Murphy, 1996). A predetermined number of figures form one dance, which is executed by four couples facing each other, thus dancing in a square set. During the 1970s there was a revival of interest in set dancing in both Ireland and the diaspora, which led to the formation of multiple dance groups. This dance form is also regulated on a global scale in that there is a fixed archive: the same dances are taught around the world (Foley, 2011).

### **Irish Dancing in Sydney.**

The First Fleet contained Irish prisoners, often convicted of the most petty of offences, to which they had been driven as a result of extreme poverty (O’Farrell, 1986). While exact details have not been recorded, it is known that when the convicts were allowed their exercise time, dancing was one activity in which the convicts participated (McMahon, 2011). Since the majority of the convicts were from Ireland, it is most likely that the dance was some form of Irish dancing. Free settlers are also recorded as having danced during the long sea journey to Australia (McConville, 1987). Morrison (2001) notes that dance was an integral part of daily shipboard life for those emigrating from Ireland to the United States, serving as exercise in addition to being a means of coping with longings for home and the tedium of the voyage.

A Sydney newspaper provides the first record of “an Irish dance master, carrying on his profession in Kent-street”<sup>24</sup> (Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 1829, August 8). Dances such as the *Irish Trot* appear in the programs of social events held in Sydney from the beginning of the nineteenth century, while some dances which originated in Ireland, such as *The Waves of Tory*, *The Walls of Limerick* and *The Siege of Ennis* still appear in lists of dances to be performed at bush dance<sup>25</sup> events (Andrews, 1978; Cullinane, 2006). Irish dancing also played a major role within the early cultural gatherings of Irish immigrants; for example, meetings of the Irish National Association and Catholic Church social events were accompanied by music and dance (Cullinane, 2006; O’Farrell, 1986). All of these activities mirrored those recorded in other Irish diasporic communities, such as Chicago (Flanagan, 2009).

Competitions in step dancing have existed in Australia since the mid nineteenth century, often within the context of Irish sporting festivals and gatherings (Cullinane, 2006). For example, the Freeman’s Journal (1926, November 18) features a full list of prize winners at a *feis*<sup>26</sup> which was held in Sydney. Competitions were also held in other states of Australia but they were organised at a local level and it appears that there was little coordination amongst the convenors (Cullinane, 2006). Throughout the 20th century, competitive dancing continued to expand in Australia and greater cooperation developed between the organisers. Teachers became accredited with the IDC, and dance schools were established, mainly in capital cities such as Sydney and Melbourne. While national championships were held prior to the formalisation of an Australian governing body, the Australian Irish Dancing Association (AIDA) formed in 1969, took charge of step dancing at local, regional and national levels. AIDA is the body which answers directly to the IDC; each state then has a local branch of AIDA. While much growth and organisational structuring occurred throughout most of the 20th century, dance participants were still drawn from within the population of the Irish diaspora. (Cullinane, 2006).

### **Three Irish Dancing Case Studies**

#### ***Bláth***

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<sup>24</sup> A street which still exists in the Sydney Central Business District.

<sup>25</sup> The name given to the revived social dance groups of the 1950s, which actually were more often located in cities than in rural Australia, which is colloquially known as “the bush” (Davey & Seal, 1993).

<sup>26</sup> The Irish word for a competition, which is still used in step dancing in Australia.

This dance school (see Video Sample 4.1<sup>27</sup>), is one of a number of step dance schools located around the Sydney metropolitan area, all of which operate in a similar manner. Step dance schools which are affiliated with the IDC follow a curriculum of prescribed dances. The dances may be divided into two broad groups. Soft shoe<sup>28</sup> dances are performed in shoes which are moulded to the feet and make no noise when in contact with the floor. There are two basic soft shoe metres: the reel, in 4/4 time, and the slip jig, in 9/8 time, although beginners dance a soft shoe jig in 6/8 time. Hard shoes have fibreglass tips under the ball of the foot and the heels, and make loud percussive noises when striking the floor. Dances in hard shoes are either jigs in 6/8 time or hornpipes in 4/4 time. Step dance schools also teach the list of *céilí* dances approved by the IDC, as well as own choreography sections for two, three or four dancers, and the figure dance which is a dance drama and must feature at least 12 dancers (An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha, 2016; Australian Irish Dancing Association, 2017).

A number of attributes mark *Bláth* as different from all of the other cases in this study. The teacher of *Bláth* is the only one for whom teaching is her primary source of income. She is also the only group leader who is required to complete a formal teaching qualification. The IDC regulates teacher examinations, which are held in Australia every two years. *Bláth* is also the only case for which multiple weekly classes are held regularly, and in which competitions are the current focus of the school. Both of these characteristics are responsible for the higher level of fees required for enrolment: current fees are over \$300<sup>29</sup> per 10-week term for an advanced dancer, with extra fees required for registration with AIDA and team dancing classes. Three classes a week are offered in solo dancing, with venues in different locations being hired for each class. Team classes are held once per week, but only in terms two and three of the school year. Recorded music is used for classes and for regional competitions; live musicians are provided only at State and National championships.

The gender balance in step dancing is skewed towards female dancers; this pattern is found not only in Sydney but on a global scale within the genre and has been the case throughout the history of step dance schools (Cullinane, 2006; Wulff, 2009). Within the participant cohort in this research, only two males, both of whom are “third generation or

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<sup>27</sup> Video Sample 4.1 has three parts: warm up exercises, solo class and team class.

<sup>28</sup> In Australia, the terms soft and hard shoes are used most often. Alternative terms are light and heavy shoes. Sometimes soft shoes are known as “pumps”.

<sup>29</sup> All costs in this study are given in Australian dollars.



over Irish immigrants”, came from *Bláth*. Consequently, male sections in competitions are much smaller than female sections.

### **Harp Set Dancers.**

This group takes its name from the original location of the classes, the Harp Hotel in Tempe, an inner-western suburb of Sydney. The leaders of the group had participated, between them, in set, céilí and step dancing before establishing *Harp* in the late 1990s. Currently, the group meets in a southern suburb, close to where the leaders live. It meets weekly during school terms; a fee of \$7 per person covers the venue hire and other costs such as advertising in the local newspaper. The class time is divided into one hour of set dancing followed by a half hour of *sean nós* (see Video Sample 4.2<sup>30</sup>). The teachers use recorded music for both dance genres. Currently, around 12 dancers attend each class; the highest number seen during fieldwork was 18 dancers. A somewhat distinctive feature of this group, compared with other set dance groups, is that whilst other groups dance with a skipping step, many *Harp* dancers wear leather-soled shoes and perform “battering” steps at the same time as dancing the figures of the dance. These steps are percussive but are performed very close to the floor, allowing them to simultaneously dance the required figures of each set dance. There are more women than men in the class, and all are adults.

### **Sydney Irish Céilí Dancers (SICD).**

SICD has been operating since the 1950s, although the founding teacher has since passed away. The current leader had learned step dancing as a child, then had attended social dances at the Gaelic Club in Sydney, where she acquired a passion for *céilí* and set dances. The group meets each week in the south west of Sydney, and participants pay \$7 per class, which covers hall hire and advertising costs. Most weeks there are around 15 to 20 dancers who attend, and the group dances to live music provided by the Coast Céilí Band. There are more women than men learning *céilí* and set dancing, and they are all adults.

In addition to the social dancing, the teacher also runs a class in solo step dancing which is held immediately prior to the group class. The dancing she teaches is what she learned as a child; it is step dancing as it was prior to the alterations which began creeping in to the genre in the 1960s (Cullinane, 2006). This class is attended by around 10 females, including several teenaged girls. These girls, or their parents, do not wish to be involved with

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<sup>30</sup> Video Sample 4.2 has two parts: set dancing and *sean nós* dancing.

the IDC style of step dancing; they cite either the expense or the acutely competitive nature of IDC dancing as being prohibitive to their participation (see Video Sample 4.3<sup>31</sup>).

This first section of Chapter Four has been concerned with Irish immigration to Australia, the development of Irish dancing in both Ireland and Australia, and the three case studies in Irish dancing which are included in the current study. Therefore, it provides the foundation for analysis of Irish immigrants' experiences and dance practices in Sydney. In addition, the data will serve to contextualise comparisons between the Irish and Croatian communities.

## **Part Two: Croatian Immigrants and Croatian Dancing in Australia**

### **Croatian Immigration to Australia**

The history of immigration from Croatia to Australia is somewhat clouded by the fact that Croatia was once a part of the Republic of Yugoslavia; the period immediately following the Second World War was one in which many Croatian people came to Australia, but they are recorded under the heading “Yugoslavian”, which, of course, also includes immigrants from other states of that former republic. Prior to this, the nationality of people from Croatia may have been listed as “Italian” or even “Austrian”, depending on the political situation during the period of migration (Kosovich, 2014; Stoffel, 2009). Croatia, in its current form as an independent nation, has existed only since 1991 when independence was declared following the war in the Balkan region of Europe (Lalich, 2013).

Croatian immigrants first came to Australia, along with many others, during the period known as the “gold rush” in the mid nineteenth century, when many came to seek their fortunes in the gold mines. After World War Two, there were many who came to Australia as displaced persons, often seeking escape from the communist influence which had settled over their home region (Šutalo, 2014). A second wave migrated in the 1960s as a result of high unemployment in the former republic of Yugoslavia and the Australian government scheme designed to attract skilled workers from Europe to fill the labour shortage in Australia (Budak & Lalich, 2008).

The particular pattern known as the “push-pull” effect (Forrest & Kusek, 2016, p. 236) is noted in the Croatian community. This term describes a situation where a combination of difficult circumstances in the former location and the promise of greater opportunities for a

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<sup>31</sup> Video Sample 4.3 has two parts: set dancing and older style step dancing. Footage of SICD performing a *céilí* dance will be referenced in Chapter Five.

comfortable life elsewhere may lead people to change their country of residence. Another observable trend is point-to-point migration (Žabčić, 2014). For example, the Croatian community in the northern suburbs of Sydney has a very high proportion of people from the town of Blato on the island of Korčula, and immigrants from this town were amongst those who began to settle in Australia in the middle of the 19th century. Žabčić (2014) outlines multiple factors which may have been possible influences, either individually or in combination, on those who have left the town and settled in Sydney. In Blato itself, there was political unrest and economic difficulties, whereas Australia has been a stable place with a high general standard of living. Not everyone who left Blato came to Sydney; some went to the United States (Žabčić, 2014) or New Zealand (Stoffel, 2009) but Sydney has, it seems, the largest concentration of former residents of Blato, and their descendants, in the world.

### **Census Statistics**

As discussed in Chapter One, those who self-identify as “Croatian” may have been born in either Croatia or in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Statistical data have been collected based on national borders, so must be presented here in the same manner. The 2011 Census showed that there were 48,828 people in Australia who had been born in Croatia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). In the Greater Sydney region, there were 14,820 people who had been born in Croatia: 62.8% of these people are over the age of 55 years, while only 4.3% are under the age of 24 years. The largest employment group amongst this Croatian-born cohort is that of technicians and trade workers followed by labourers, professionals and office workers. The average weekly income of Croatian-born immigrants is almost identical to that of all overseas-born people and slightly higher than all Australian-born people. The Croatian-born sector of the population consists of those who have found employment and are providing themselves and their families with financial security in Australia.

There are also, according to the 2011 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013), 25,682 people in Australia who were born in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 30.6% of whom are aged 55 and over, while 14.7% are aged 24 and under. The employment pattern amongst immigrants is identical to that of Croatia. The average weekly income is slightly lower than for both other groups, all overseas-born and all Australian-born, but the difference is not substantial. Overall, then, the sector of the Australian population which identifies itself as having Croatian origins is economically secure. The next section provides more refined information about the subset of the Croatian community in Sydney who formed the participant cohort in this study.

## **The participant cohort**

The number of participants from the Croatian dancing groups is found in Table 3.1 in Chapter Three. All of the respondents in the Croatian community who were interviewed for this study are either first or second generation immigrants. The motivation for migration to Australia focuses on the possibilities for advancement in education, employment and a more relaxed life, which are perceived to be far greater in Australia than in either Croatia or Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of the first generation immigrants, most had been brought to Australia by their parents while they were still young children. Some related the difficulties faced by the previous generation under the government of the former republic of Yugoslavia:

It was hard living over there...you couldn't get ahead if you weren't in the Communist party. (Teresa, interview, June 16, 2015)

My grandparents said they were lucky if they got a potato a day. (Olivia, interview September 1, 2014)

Since life in the former homeland was unsatisfactory, those wishing to provide a more advantageous atmosphere for their families moved away: in the case of these participants and their families, to Australia, as described here:

There was a good promise for a better future for your kids. (Sandra, interview, March 4, 2015)

Australia has given me the opportunity to actually succeed, family-wise and career as well. (Meryl, interview, September 9, 2015)

There were better opportunities here [in Australia] for life. (Damien, interview, October 12, 2015)

Most participants in the study migrated to Australia in the 1960s and 1970s, a period during which the government of the former Republic of Yugoslavia permitted emigration due to high levels of unemployment in that country (Budak & Lalich, 2008), so many people availed themselves of the opportunity to live in countries which had democratic governments and advantageous education and employment systems. It was also the period during which the largest number of immigrants from Croatia arrived in Australia (Colic-Peisker, 2002).

However, several of the adult women related tales of escape: Stella recalled that her father had left Yugoslavia temporarily to work, then later “escaped to Italy at night illegally” (Interview, March 23, 2015), while two other women, of the first generation participants in this study who came to Australia as adults, had decided to leave in the early 1990s following the conflict in the Balkan region because they felt that Australia would be a safe place to live. There was also evidence of “chain migration” (Žabčić, 2014, p. 136), as discussed earlier in this chapter. One dancer migrated only a few years ago to be with his girlfriend, while two of

the girls in *Cvijet* reported that their parents had heard promising reports from siblings already living in Australia, and had decided to follow their relatives to Sydney.

Overall, then, the Croatian immigrants in this study have chosen, voluntarily, to live in Australia as their preferred place of residence. As stated earlier, high levels of unemployment drove the Yugoslavian government to permit, and even encourage, emigration from the 1960s to the 1980s; where the borders had previously been sealed, the period of open borders allowed many to seek shelter in countries with better economic situations. The subsequent collapse of the Yugoslavian government allowed for the exit of refugees from both Croatia and neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina during the early 1990s (Budak & Lalich, 2008). Hence, even those participants whose families emigrated as a result of the conflict in the Balkans were able to make considered decisions and bring multiple possessions with them. The immigration of almost all this group, was made in conditions of choice and relative ease; only the father of Stella had fled in secret.

Some data about return visits were obtained, both from incidental remarks during interviews or through casual conversations. Speaking in general terms, several participants indicated that many Croatian immigrants make return visits on a regular basis; for example, Camilla (Interview) stated “I would say two years seems to be a bit of a norm”, a statement which was validated by Clare and Olivia. One evening when I was at a *Cvijet* rehearsal, the teacher asked the group “Who’s going to Cro (sic)?” (Fieldnotes, 26 May 2014) because she often finds that she has fewer dancers available during the Australian winter as many families visit Croatia during that time. In the *Kumpanjija* troupe, not only had many dancers visited Blato several times but several had spent part of their childhood living in Blato because their parents had temporarily returned to the town. (Fieldnotes, 14 March 2014). So, even for second generation Croatian immigrants, conceptualisations of Croatia as a concrete place were strong.

Having established a picture of the Croatian dancing cohort in this study, attention must now turn to their dance practices. So, the next section outlines the history and social contexts of traditional dance practices in Croatia itself.

## **What is Croatian Dancing?**

### **Traditional Dance in Croatia**

Much useful background information about the history and development of traditional dancing in Croatia is presented by both Vitez (2008) along with Čaleta and Zebec (2017). An

organisation known as *Seljačka sloga*, or the Peasant Concord, was established by the political group, the Croatian Peasant Party in the 1920s (Vitez, 2008). At the time, the Peasant Concord was the leading political party, but following the assassination of its leader and the subsequent dictatorship imposed on Croatia, its interests were broadened (Leček, 2012). One of its assigned tasks was the conservation and perpetuation of all aspects of folklore: dance, music, poems, costumes and customs, which were deemed to be both intrinsic to the working class and in danger of repression by the middle class. Its work was interrupted in 1929 when dictatorship became the form of government, but was revived a few years later. Folklore festivals began in 1935, and just after the Second World War, in 1946, the first “Great Review of Croatian Peasant Culture”, featuring multiple dance and choral ensembles, was staged in Zagreb (Ivančan, 1988, p. 102). In the aftermath of the Second World War, the *Ensemble for Folk Dances and Songs of Croatia* was formed. Later, this troupe took the name *LADO*<sup>32</sup>, an old Slavic word which means “nice” or “good” (LADO, 2017). According to Shay (2002; 2016), *LADO* has always maintained a repertoire of dances drawn from all regions of Croatia, and sometimes from other parts of the former republic of Yugoslavia. *LADO* has managed to adapt itself to changing political and social contexts; it has managed to “strategically position itself to consistently represent the Croatian people in a way that the public finds relevant” (Shay, 2016, pp. 259-260). Its members are professional, whether they are dancers, musicians or administrative staff, and the group provides leadership for other Croatian dance groups in choreography, costuming and stage presentation (Shay, 2002; 2016).

With the absorption of Yugoslavia into the Communist bloc, companies of singers and dancers were established to ensure perpetuation of regionalised folkloric practices, and as an act of resistance against the dictatorial homogenisation processes being enforced by political leaders (Kuutma, 1998). Many *Kulturno Umjetničko Društvo* (KUD)<sup>33</sup> groups were formed at this time, and successfully attracted young people in urban areas to the ranks of those who were eager to perpetuate traditional Croatian dancing (Shay, 2016). The influence of the Peasant Concord waned after the Second World War when national focus shifted to industrial growth, but in the 1960s, interest in folkloric practices was reinvigorated and large festivals, such as the International Folklore Festival, first held in Zagreb in 1966, were established (Vitez, 2008).

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<sup>32</sup> The name of the group is always written in capital letters on its website, but Shay (2016) does not use capital letters in his chapter. Capitals will be used for the group’s name in this thesis.

<sup>33</sup> Translation: Cultural Artistic Society

The term “Croatian dance” encompasses a multitude of regional styles and idiosyncrasies. Leading Croatian dance exponent Ivan Ivančan (1988) divides the country into four regions: Alpine, Pannonian, Adriatic and Dinaric. There is, he notes, a particular choreographic lexicon for each region, with demonstrable variation in features such as dance formation, hand hold and sequence of steps, so that someone with insider knowledge would be able to identify the geographic origin of the dance through observation of its stylistic elements (Crvenkovic, 2005; Ivančan, 1988). Briefly, some of the regional idiosyncrasies include (Ivančan, 1988):

- Alpine: dances feature couples dancing in circles, with many turns during the dance;
- Pannonian: dances are performed in a closed circle, often with a back basket hold<sup>34</sup>.
- Adriatic: couples dance in a line and the dances feature sliding movements of the feet;
- Dinaric: dances feature high leaps and usually have six sections to them.

This is, admittedly, merely a brief outline of the geographic differences in dance styles, and serves to display the disparate natures of each locality. It is not the primary purpose of this thesis to analyse dance steps *per se*, but this information serves to illustrate the complexity of Croatian folkloric dance, which, in turn, contributes to the difficulties in continuing folkloric practices in a diasporic context.

In Croatia, dance may be linked with formalised events; in turn, these may operate at the level of the whole community, as in the case of seasonal festivals, or within a subsection of the community, for example, a family wedding (Ivančan, 1988; Vitez, 2008). Dance was, in the past, seen as a socialising event: it provided the opportunity to meet other young people, particularly those of the opposite sex (Dunin, 2001). While the events at which the dancing took place may have been formally organised, the teaching and learning methodologies were often informal. Dunin also describes the learning of dance by young men as primarily taking place within the home environment: the youth would practise with female members of the household in private, then, when it was perceived by those in authority in the community that his proficiency had reached the required level, he would be partnered by a female of great experience within public spheres, so as to perfect his technique and prowess.

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<sup>34</sup> The hands are placed behind the backs of the person on either side in the circle. Thus, each dancer is joining hands with the person who is second from them on either side.

Dance, as located within festivals and theatrical productions, was also a politically-infused activity: for example, Zebec (1996) describes the desire for demonstrations of identity which emerged following the establishment of the Republic of Croatia. Dance is also employed for the benefit of tourists: within the Dubrovnik region, dance has been presented for public consumption since 1948 (Dunin, 2009). Dance and music groups which perform in a formalised way, as opposed to informal dancing at village events, are separate from the social dancing occurring in the villages (Zebec, 1996).

### **A Regional Speciality: the *Kumpanija* of Blato.**

One region of Croatia has unique and specialised dance forms which are directly relevant to this study. Sword dances are found in various forms in the towns on the island of Korčula: Korčula, Zrnovo, Pupnat, Čara, Smokvica and Blato. While there are individual characteristics found within the dances of each village, there are many shared commonalities to be observed. The origin of these chain sword dances is believed to be found in the attacks from pirates endured by the island's population <sup>35</sup>(Marošević, 2000). According to the website of the Blato *Kumpanjija* (Viteško udruženje Kumpanjija Blato, n.d), the dance has a long pedigree: the town of Blato itself is found in a ninth century document, while mention of the “chivalrous society” can be traced to the 12th century. *Kumpanjija* dances vividly demonstrate their military origins, with a captain leading his men, called *kumpanjoli*, in the dance choreography, a corporal who presents a report to the captain and a demonstration of combative prowess by two ensigns. The captain, during the course of the dance, symbolically fights the last dancer in the formation (who represents the attackers); of course, the captain emerges victorious (Zebec, 2000). Historically, these men had a literal role to play in defending the villages and maintaining civic order; thus they represented values of honour, self-discipline and bravery to their fellow villagers. Other functions of the members of the “chivalrous society” included community building works, social aid and organisation of leisure activities (Marošević, 2000).

These dances are employed in maintenance of localised identity, since each town has a dance which is unique, and people do not learn the dances from other towns and as an attraction for tourists to the island (Dunin, 2012). Both of these roles, however, may be considered to have the same underlying motivation: continuity and prosperity of the island's inhabitants (Lozica, 2000). During the sword dance, the young women sit at the side of the

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<sup>35</sup> Sword dances are found in other regions of Croatia, such as the female *kraljice* of Slavonia (Zebec, 2000), and in other parts of Europe such as the *Ghillie Callum* performed by Scottish Highland dancers (Scottish Official Highland Dancing Association, 2008).



dance space and watch before joining the men in dancing the *tanac*, a partnered skipping dance which completes the ritual performance (Oreb & Oreb, 2000).

The dance practices in Croatia as described in this section consist of disparate regional styles even within the sphere of amateur folkloric groups. The addition of a localised and highly specialised dance such as the *kumpanjija* shows the choreographical breadth represented within a small geographical area in Europe, and which is now concentrated even further within the Croatian community in Sydney. The next section provides a historical overview of Croatian immigrants' dance practices following migration to Australia.

### **Croatian dance in Sydney**

An expansive and detailed history of the activities of Croatian immigrants in Sydney has been written by Lovoković (2010)<sup>36</sup>. He provides photographs of people in Croatian costumes, taken as early as 1953 but does not provide the name of any dance group; the participants are simply called “dancers”. Crvenkovic (2005) records that several amateur dance groups existed in Sydney prior to her parents' immigration in the 1960s. Their passage was sponsored in part by the National Catholic Welfare Council so that Ljubo and Vera Crvenkovic would be able to teach traditional dancing in Sydney. After failing to revive the existing group, a new troupe named *Koleda* was formed in 1967<sup>37</sup>. *Koleda* featured in many prominent events including the opening of the Sydney Opera House in 1973, and the Shell Folkloric Festival<sup>38</sup>, also held at the same venue (Crvenkovic, 2005).

Croatian folkloric groups all over Australia follow the same principles as the KUDs in Croatia, although they do not employ the term KUD in their groups' names. Generally, a group will have a repertoire which includes dances from multiple regions in Croatia, although the experience and geographical origin of the group's leader may influence the selection of dances. In the children's groups, games may be employed with the younger age groups as a means of introducing the children to songs and the rhythms of the music, before the teaching of dance begins in a formalised manner.

Thus, the Croatian immigrants in Sydney have managed to maintain multiple styles of dance across the dance groups which remain in existence at the time of the current research.

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<sup>36</sup> This reference is only available in Croatian. Translation of relevant sections was accomplished through the use of either Google Translate or personal interpretation by various research participants.

<sup>37</sup> The group was originally called *Hrvatska Folklorna Grupa* (Croatian Folkloric Group) but adopted the name *Koleda* in 1969 (Crvenkovic, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> A large multicultural dance and music festival held from the late 1970s until the early 1990s (Kapetopoulos, 2010).

In the following section, the three dance groups which were included in this study are explored individually, with information concerning their histories, nature of operation and performance practices being provided.

### **Three Croatian Dancing Case Studies**

#### **Cvijet.**

This group is one of many Croatian children's dance groups scattered around the suburbs of Sydney (see Video Sample 4.4). The children's dance groups have a loose association with each other but operate as independently-governed entities; there is no prescription of steps or dances to be learned, no competitions and no organising body to which the groups are answerable. Groups may learn dances from all over Croatia as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, although individual teachers are likely to have preferences which are reflected in their group's repertoire. While the teacher is responsible for choreographic and performative aspects of the group, there is a committee of management, consisting of interested parents, which oversees the organisational aspects.

*Cvijet* was founded in 1974 and currently has a total student population of around ninety children aged from four to eighteen years. The children are divided into four groups according to age; on practice nights, the youngest group has the earliest timeslot and the oldest group has the latest. The gender disparity varies slightly between age groups, but at least three quarters of the dancers are female. Parents pay fees (under \$10 per week and depending on the child's age) and from this the teacher and three musicians are paid gratuities for their work. Dancers' costumes are provided, and often produced by, members of the parent cohort and regular fundraising efforts such as raffles are held to raise funds for this purpose.

The group meets once per week during school terms. Three musicians attend and provide live music for both practice sessions and performances on a piano accordion and two tamburica, the traditional stringed instruments of Croatian music. One is a *bas*, the same size and structure as the orchestral double bass; the other is called either the *bugarija* or *kontra*, which looks similar to, and is played in the same manner as, an acoustic guitar. The teacher of *Cvijet* has learned traditional Croatian dancing since she was a child. There is no formalised training process for teachers, but she has availed herself of the workshops provided by the Croatian Heritage Foundation, an organisation which is sponsored by the government of Croatia (Hrvatska Matica Iseljenika, 2016). The teacher and musicians are given modest financial reimbursement for their efforts.

## **Vukovar.**

*Vukovar* (see Video Sample 4.5) was formed in 1984, when there was some disagreement amongst members of *Koleda*, founded in the late 1960s. The breakaway group (that is, the one which did not retain the founders of *Koleda* as its leaders) operated under another name for a while, but following the Balkan conflict in the early 1990s, decided to rename themselves *Vukovar* in honour of the town of the same name in the eastern part of Croatia, where a significant battle was fought and won by the Croatian army.

The teacher's parents previously ran the group and he has spent his life witnessing their teaching, research and construction of costume ensembles and choreographies. Along with the teacher of *Cvijet*, he has attended workshops in Croatia. There is also a teacher elsewhere in Australia who acts as advisor to teachers from many groups around the country; this man is available for consultations and will attend a practice session of *Vukovar* at least once per year. Several musicians, playing a variety of instruments from the *tamburica* family, attend rehearsals and performances. Neither the teacher nor the musicians receive any financial rewards. The dancers are predominantly adults aged from 18 to 40, and the majority are female.

## **Kumpanjija.**

Tucked away in the far northern suburbs of Sydney a group, which performs the *kumpanjija* of Blato. Performances began to be held in 1965, although there were sporadic performances in Sydney in the 1930s (Dunin, 2012). The Sydney community built their own club, the Dalmacija Sydney Croatian Club, which opened on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1965 (Lovoković, 2010), and it is in the ballroom that the annual performance of the *kumpanjija* takes place. The captain of the group is selected by the club president; both men then seek others to form part of the troupe. The young men then practise, usually from January until April but sometimes rehearsals have begun in December. The young women only attend the final two or three practices as the *tanac* is far less complex than the chain sword dance (see Video Sample 4.6<sup>39</sup>).

No fees are paid and the captain receives no money for leading the group. The costumes worn consist of a mixture of items which have been sent from Blato and others which have been manufactured in Sydney, with the Club providing the funds for the items. The captain's training takes place in the form of an apprenticeship; he is part of the troupe for

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<sup>39</sup> Video Sample 4.6 has two parts: the sword dance and the *tanac*.

some years then is selected to be captain. There is no privilege given to recent immigrants; one troupe member who danced in 2014 and 2015 was born in Blato and had been a member of the troupe there, but this Blato-based experience did not result in preferential treatment following his arrival in Sydney. The group rehearses without musical accompaniment, except on the final rehearsal night prior to the performance. While technically, the performance involves equal numbers of males and females, the rehearsals are mostly for the men only.

The second section of the chapter, containing relevant information regarding Croatian immigrants in Australia, is complementary to the first section. It provides material concerning patterns of immigration, traditional dance genres in Croatia, and the development of the various Croatian dance groups in Sydney which are included in the current study. The section, therefore, completes the contextualisation of both the individual participants in this research and the six dance groups to which they adhere.

### **Summary**

Irish immigrants have a long settlement history in Australia; they have had a presence here since the arrival of the first group of Europeans in 1788. Many were prisoners who were sent to Australia to serve their sentences, but many others arrived as free settlers. Currently, people with Irish heritage form a significant portion of the Anglo-Celtic sector of the population; in the 2011 Census, Irish ancestry was the third most common heritage background listed, after “English” and “Australian” (A.B.S., 2013). Irish immigrants, on the whole, have secure employment and experience fiscal security. Irish dancing has always reflected the historical, political and social environment in Ireland; it was appropriated as a tool of nationalism through the formation of both the Gaelic League and the IDC. Irish dancing has been practised in Sydney since 1788, with both prisoners and free immigrants turning to the dancing as a source of interpersonal bonding and community enjoyment. In both Ireland and Australia, step dancing has been the most commonly practised genre, and the one which has been subject to the most rigorous control by the IDC and its local agent, AIDA. While all forms of Irish dancing were contained within the Irish community until the late twentieth century, the advent of theatrical productions changed the nature of Irish dancing, particularly step dancing, and dissolved the boundaries of cultural exclusivity.

Croatian immigration to Australia may be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century, although the history is clouded due to the variegated nature of self-identification which was adopted by the immigrants at different periods in time. The largest wave of immigrants arrived in the 1960s and 1970s when Croatia was still part of the former Republic of

Yugoslavia. Croatian immigrants are generally successfully employed and experience financial security. Croatian traditional dancing has been used as a symbol of nationalistic pride. In particular, the period following the Second World War was one which was characterised by renewed interest in folkloric dancing and music. Croatian immigrants formed the first dance group in Sydney in 1967; currently there are multiple children's groups and one adults' group in Sydney, all of whom learn dances from multiple regions. There is also a group which performs the *kumpanjija* from Blato. Hence, there is a broad variety of dance genres being perpetuated amongst a small population of dancers in Sydney.

The data presented in this chapter, therefore, provide the basis from which comparisons and contrasts will be illustrated in the subsequent analytical chapters. Importantly, the material here will be employed to provide explanations for the patterns of dance practice within each community, and to illuminate reasons for disparity in dance experiences amongst members of the six dance groups included in this study. The chapter, therefore, both supports and contextualises the analysis which follows in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Identity, Emotional Transnationalism and Embodying “Home”**

This chapter contains the first strands of analysis of the ethnographic data through application of the theoretical framework of transnationalism, as presented and explored in Chapter One. It acknowledges the notion of the national, but moves beyond this concept to explore the “relational connectedness of nations” (Assman, 2014, p. 555) through the practice of traditional dance genres in Sydney. This chapter focuses on fields which primarily concern the “micro-level of the individual dancer” (O'Connor, 2013, p. 9), whereas Chapter Six examines the realm of groups and organisations.

Three themes emerging from research within the Irish and Croatian immigrant communities are discussed in this chapter. The first concerns cultural identity, and examines the self-assigned affiliations which were expressed by first and second generation immigrants during their interviews. The second explores emotional linkages with personal cultural heritage through membership of traditional dance groups in Sydney, demonstrating that this behaviour may be the practical expression of personal attachment to one's ancestry. The third theme, embodiment, provides a more differentiated discussion of the act of dancing in which

the somatic and sensory mnemonic cues about the former homeland, which are embedded in traditional dance practices, are discussed. Since this is a comparative study of two groups of immigrants, each group is analysed individually, with the Irish immigrants being discussed first, followed by the Croatian immigrants.

Initially, the participants' self-assigned cultural identities are explored. The notion of identity is generally defined in terms of affiliations, either completely to the former homeland, a hybridised identity or total alignment with the place of settlement, as exemplified in the studies discussed in Chapter Two (for example, Arasaratnam, 2008; Brockhall & Liu, 2011; Noble, 2013; Zevallos, 2008). Transnationalism theorists explore the same phenomenon but from a different perspective, identifying the extent to which people are active in various transnational social fields so as to better understand those people's processes of affiliation (Andits, 2015; Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Glick Schiller, 2012; Lewis, 2010; McAuliffe, 2008; Reynolds & Zontini, 2016). Hence, someone who is active in multiple transnational social fields of connection between Ireland and Australia may be assumed to be more likely to identify as either "Irish" or "Irish-Australian", whereas someone who has few ties with Ireland would probably be more likely to identify as "Australian". Hence, cultural self-definition should provide a foundation for further questions about specific transnational activities and attitudes.

Questions about cultural identity reveal that there is not "a multichrome mosaic of monochrome ethnic, racial or cultural blocs" (Brubaker, 2002, p. 164) in either community in this study. Noble (2002) describes a spectrum along which identities may be situated; a similar metaphor is the "calibration" offered by Ramnarine (2007c, p. 11) which, although developed in reference to diasporic music, would be useful here as it "moves away from bipolar models" (p. 12) of identification. During the interviews, participants were asked "Do you feel that you belong more to [country of origin] or to Australia?" The results of the current research show that even within a small collection of participants, multiple variations of identity construction may exist, as individuals' diverse life experiences coalesce to form the particular cultural identity which is self-assigned at the time of the interview.

The concept of identity was raised during the interviews so that the behaviours of the research participants, as described by them in response to subsequent questions about their dancing habits, may be fully understood. Rather than compartmentalise diaspora, identity and dancing praxis, deeming them to be separate entities, they may be considered as existing in a mutually-beneficial symbiosis, with each one exerting influence on the others (Um, 2005). The participants' behaviours, in relation to traditional dancing, reveal further

nuances in the complex interrelationship between the homeland of the past and the Australia of the present and future. In the interviews with Irish dance participants, questions about cultural identity were asked only of the first and second generation immigrants, to allow for comparison with the Croatian community participants, all of whom belong to those generations.

The second facet to be explored in this chapter concerns the transnational affective nostalgia which the immigrants seek to establish and maintain through their participation in dance. Dance is not understood as the only means through which members of the Irish and Croatian communities may forge emotional links with their ancestral homelands. Immigrants may play sport, attend language classes or spend their leisure time at culturally-specific venues. However, dance is the focus of this study and so its role in emotional engagement across the globe is addressed in this chapter. Participants were asked “What does the dancing mean to you?” and “What do you think the dancing means to your family?” Again, the focus in this section is on the first and second generation immigrants whose comments pertain to links with their heritage. Irish ethnomusicologist Aileen Dillane commented that

—the material practice of music and dance tells us—tells historians something, tells sociologists something, tells literary theorists something about lived culture in a particular kind of way and that’s why it needs to be studied and understood. These are the expressive facets of people (Interview, April 30 2014).

Likewise, Skrbiš (2008) posits that “emotional content pervades transnational relationships” (p. 232): indeed, immigrants have been observed to specifically turn to various folkloric practices in order to enhance their affective recollection experiences (Levitt, 2009). The sections about emotional transnationalism include discussion of the ways in which participants’ engagement with traditional dance genres may facilitate the development of strong personal memories of events and places in the ancestral homeland.

The final facet of transnational activity is concerned with discourses of embodiment, sensory engagement and emplacement. Embodiment is a key area of interest in dance research (Block & Kissell, 2001; David, 2012, 2013, 2014; Issari, 2011; Thomas, 2003; Warburton, 2011) as well as in studies concerning immigrants, where “embodied transnationalism” (Dunn, 2010, p. 4; P. O’Connor, 2010, p. 75) provides a new prism for social geography and related disciplines. Analyses of embodiment, therefore, represent a multidisciplinary nexus of information from which observations concerning the migration process of both individuals and dance genres may be made.

Embodiment is a universal human experience: our bodies are trained in a variety of tasks during our lives: to write our names, ride a bicycle, wash the dishes. Conger (2015) describes embodiment as being both “a purposive, active, learned and reflexive way of being in the world” (p. 13) and “a way to actively bring the world into focus” (p.35). Bodies also move, and dance, of course, is a collection of movements, whether those movements are pre-determined or spontaneous. So, by analysing dance, it is possible to comprehend some of the ways in which people are positioned within, and relate to, the world around them (Conger, 2015).

The interpretation of bodily movements may be mediated through an existing reservoir of knowledge which is dependent on one’s cultural heritage background (Connerton, 1989; Giuriati, 2005; Kaepler, 2004; 2010). The idiosyncrasies of the relevant cultural tradition are ingrained in the stylised components of each genre, hence a dance form which is unique to a given cultural group represents part of the “ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge” (D. Taylor, 2003, p. 19, italics in original) of that group. So, dancers who perform traditional dances are embodying culturally-specific memories through which the knowledge which belongs to that culture may be transmitted.

Since we perceive and react to our environment through the body’s senses, a study of embodiment should include the role of sensory input, not only from the five commonly acknowledged senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, but also kinaesthesia, the sense through which a body knows where its individual parts are located, and where the body as a whole is located in relation to other bodies and objects in our surroundings (Conger, 2015). These senses are put to use by both dancers and audience members; even while sitting and watching a dance performance, people can experience empathic sensations and imagine themselves performing the dance (Reason & Reynolds, 2010). As already stated, embodied practices such as dance are culturally-mediated, so it follows that the network of sensory stimuli which are present in a performance is also determined by cultural background. Therefore, members of that cultural group are able to discern specific meanings in the sensory stimuli presented in a performance (Howes, 2003). Sensory encounters, mediated by dance, are thus able to “serve as mnemonic devices of selfhood and belonging to the larger community” (Low & Kalekin-Fishman, 2012, p. 199). The complex interactions between bodies and senses serve to configure memories of place and space: as the dancers and audience members draw on their habituated senses, their bodies are connected to deeply-felt passions, perceptions and familiarities (Wise, 2010). The senses act



as referential markers which connect the home of the past with home in the present; put simply, they help people to remember.

A dance performance (whether private or public) may, therefore, be analysed by asking “what is seen, heard, felt (both touch and kinaesthesia), smelled and tasted during the dance event?” Although the senses of smell and taste may not be directly awakened through the dancing itself, they may be stimulated, for example, through specific foods which are habitually served on a particular occasion when dancing takes place. A consideration of the whole gamut of sensory input fleshes out the description of a dance event (Low & Kalekin-Fishman, 2012; Wise, 2010): when a performance of dancing is mounted, there is an integrated system of multi-faceted sensory mnemonics which turns the collective consciousness of immigrants towards, respectively, Ireland or Croatia.

The memories which are evoked through a dance performance will take different forms depending on the generational status of the individual who is experiencing them. First generation immigrants have the most extensive repertoire of memories upon which to draw, having experienced life in the homeland. They have lived there and so are able to recall places and people through the stimulation of their recollections through dance (Bottomley, 2002; Davidson & Garrido, 2014; Krumhansl & Zupnick, 2013). Second and subsequent generation immigrants may have limited experience of the sending society, particularly in relation to traditional dance, so may be drawing on a mixture of actual experiences and those which have been related to them by members of previous generations (Maghbouleh, 2010; Williams, 2012).

In the next section, which concerns the Irish immigrant community, the exploration of these aspects of their personal and dance-related experiences is described; the subsequent section concerns the same experiences but in relation to the Croatian community. The descriptions and analyses seek to foreground the stories of the people, so that “the individual’s meaning and interpretation of their dance experience” (Buck, 2012, p. 280) are privileged. By this means, this chapter explores “the ways in which the participants are “doing ethnicity’ transnationally, by exploring how this takes place at different levels including the emotional level and at the level of allegiance” (Reynolds & Zontini, 2016, p. 384) and reveals how “the global intersects with the local in the experiences of individual agents” (Andits, 2015, p. 327). Following the analyses of each community, some comparative discussion ensues, noting possible explanations for any observable similarities and disparities in experience.

## Part One: Irish Immigrants

### Cultural Identity

First and second generation respondents' comments in response to the question about self-assessed cultural identity fall into three categories: Irish, Irish-Australian and Australian.

#### “Irish”.

Two thirds of the first and second generation Irish immigrants deemed themselves to be “Irish”, which may be considered remarkable given that the first generation participants have lived in Australia for at least 20 years, although it is consistent with previous research into Irish immigration to Australia (P. O'Connor, 2004; 2005; 2010). However, there is considerable variation in the experiential factors which combine to determine identity construction, even amongst what is, admittedly, a small sample size. Two women were confident and assured in the simple declaration of Irish identity:

Oh definitely Irish, yeah I would still say, even when I'm seventy and I've been here longer, I think I'll always—yeah, you can't take that out of me! (Deirdre, Interview, March 18, 2014).

I think of myself as Irish—I do, through and through. (Naomi, Interview, July 6, 2015)

Another, who migrated at age 14, spoke of the identity change she has experienced over time (Zhang & Noels, 2012):

I always knew that I was Irish, came from an Irish background, but—am I not Irish because I don't live in Ireland? I definitely know now I am, but at the time, at 18 maybe, I don't know whether I would have answered it the same. (Jessica, Interview, February 26, 2014).

Oliver (interview, October 29, 2015) described his activities rather than providing an identity, but his affiliation may be inferred from his remarks:

I maintain very close contact with Ireland. I haven't got around to doing my citizenship yet, which is a little bit of a psychological barrier. I spend about five or six weeks a year in Ireland. I read the three main Irish papers every morning. I would spend probably two hours a week on the phone to Ireland; I watch Irish TV a bit.

Oliver's comments are illustrative of the changes in personal transnational practices which have been facilitated by modern technology (Kasinitz et al., 2002); he is able to read newspapers electronically on the day they are issued, speak by phone with relatives and friends, and travel to Ireland every year; Oliver, along with other immigrants, no longer faces the separation difficulties resulting from geographical distance (O'Flaherty, Skrbiš & Tranter, 2007).

The four second generation participants who identified as “Irish” have parents who are enthusiastic in maintenance of traditional Irish practices, such as step dancing. The presence of both multiple step dancing schools in Sydney and several social dance groups means that any Irish immigrants are able to participate in dance if they wish: the Irish community has a pre-existing organisational structure for establishment of transnational links through activities such as dancing (Jones-Correa, 2002; Levitt & Waters, 2002).

I definitely identify more with my Irish heritage. I find it easier to connect with the traditions and culture as half my family is Irish and I've spent most of my life around Irish things. (Andrea, interview, June 23, 2015)

Yeah, I'm Irish, it just becomes second nature, especially with my nan and my granny: they like to cook very traditional Irish foods like potato bread, soda bread, Irish pie, Irish stew every now and then and I feel like I've been brought up in an Irish community really. I would say that I was Irish even though I'm born in Australia—I'm just surrounded by Irish all the time. (Vivian, interview, February 18, 2014)

Irish, definitely. I've just had more to do with Irish things, like we celebrate St Patrick's Day more than we would Australia Day, we do Irish dancing, we want to travel to Ireland and dance over there, you know. I just feel more a part of the Irish. (Tessa, interview, June 10, 2014)

Yeah, probably Irish. (Hayley, interview, June 10, 2014)

Andrea and Vivian described their families as having multiple other traditional practices within their vernacular inventory; this constant exposure to Irish traditions has activated their identification with their Irish heritage. Hayley's somewhat non-committal attitude was most likely due to her younger age (mid-teens); she was at a point in her life where, perhaps, ambivalence is fostered by a conflict between family practices and the social influences of friends (Eckstein, 2002; Levitt, 2009). Conversely, Vivian has absorbed family practices which orient her towards Ireland and Irish culture; her parents' transnational activities have affected her as a second-generation immigrant (Eckstein, 2002; R. Smith, 2002). While Tessa referenced Irish cultural activities, her participation in the dancing was the strongest transnational space within which she takes part. With the passage of time, these young women may each elect to keep the “immigrant bargain” established by their forebears (R. Smith, 2002, p.146) by continuing to participate in specifically Irish activities along with their parents, or they may eventually let go of the Irish practices and move away from tangible links with their heritage. What is demonstrated here is that environmental factors, particularly familial factors, may exert a strong pull on members of the second generation.

A step towards hybridity was shown in the response of several participants who describe themselves as “Irish in Australia”, as exemplified by Roger

I'm one of the luckiest guys in the whole world because I'm Irish living in Australia.  
(Interview, October 20, 2015)

When compared with the responses in the next section, “Irish-Australian”, comments such as that made by Roger more clearly affirm retention of Irish identity whilst recognising the reality of the person’s geographical location. The respondents in the next section made claims to Australian identity rather than simply acknowledging that they reside in Australia.

### **“Irish-Australian”.**

The hybrid middle ground, where the participant seeks to assign loyalty to both former and current places of residence has been well identified in previous research (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Kivisto, 2003; Noble, 2002, Skrbiš, Baldassar & Poynting, 2007). The degree of hybridity may vary throughout the lifespan of one individual (Chacko & Menon, 2013; Noble, 2013) and be dependent on particular current circumstances (Clary-Lemon, 2010). Certainly, in the following interview excerpts, each respondent has a unique way of enunciating his or her position and feelings. This variety of response may be explicable by disparate influences, but it may also simply show the diversity of human experience and expression even within such a small cohort. In claiming this middle ground, dual loyalties may be seen as being advantageous or, conversely, the tension between binary identities is possibly felt to be difficult to handle:

I never really think of them [Irish and Australian identities] as, like, one higher than the other—I think it's nice to be, like, a part of both. (Sarah, interview, March 11, 2014)

A foot on each—like jumping off a boat and not knowing which way to go. I don't know whether to jump onto Australia and put down roots or go back to Ireland. (April, interview, October 15, 2015)

### **“Australian”.**

Only two participants, one from each generation, self-identified as “Australian”:

We're Australian now, I guess. (Vicki, interview, June 10, 2014)

I see myself as an Australian. (Dennis, interview, November 2, 2015)

Those who chose to identify as “Australian” tend to be less emotive in their descriptions; they did not use linguistic tools to embellish their cultural affinity, but simply state it in plain speech. Nevertheless, these participants are still actively involved in the perpetuation of Irish traditional dance genres; they may say “Australian” but their actions are indicative of the presence of at least some small degree of continued internalised attachment to Ireland, since they have chosen an Irish dance genre rather than one of the many other dance forms which

are available in Sydney. As Ward & Kus (2012) point out, the behaviours of immigrants are just as important as their attitudes; in the case of these participants, their dancing behaviours exemplify the presence of a measure of continued affective links to Ireland.

These two participants may be considered to be placed at the end of the scale of self-assigned identity, because they verbalised affinity to Australia yet have chosen Irish dancing as a hobby. In terms of the participants who are first and second generation immigrants, they are indeed in that position. Yet there are also the respondents whose Irish ancestry extends beyond the second generation and there are also those, particularly in step dancing, who have no Irish heritage at all. When considering the dancing cohort, the scale extends beyond the categories generated solely from within the participants who are first and second generation immigrants. The presence, activities and effect of this latter group, without genetic ties to Ireland, are addressed in Chapter Seven.

Overall, the disparity of cultural identity found within such a small group of participants demonstrates clearly that identity construction should not be conceptualised as being homogenous; this group of Irish immigrants is as heterogeneous as the small sample of Sri Lankan immigrants investigated by Arasaratnam (2008). The Irish immigrants in the current study are people who choose to participate in the culturally-specific activity of Irish dancing (Brockhall & Liu, 2011; Drodzewski, 2007; Waitt, Galea & Rawstorne, 2001). It is likely, then that this cohort has a higher overall degree of emotional attachment to Ireland than Irish immigrants who do not participate in Irish dance forms.

The immigrants who dance, it may be argued, do so simply because they have greater natural inclination towards dance as a leisure activity. Australian society offers a vast range of dance genres from which to choose, with lessons in ballroom, tap and hip hop and many others being available across Sydney, so these genres are equally accessible to the research participants. However, these particular participants have chosen to join a specifically Irish dance group; even those who identified as “Australian” have aligned themselves with an Irish dance genre. In this way, they have revealed that, to some degree, their past heritage remains in a position of some importance in their lives.

### **Emotional Transnationalism**

It is evident that thoughts of Ireland as home have long occupied the meditations of Irish emigrants, as the contents of personal letters included in Fitzgerald’s (2008) work on archival material from the Irish Emigration Database (1650-1950) demonstrate. The personal stories of emigrants included in a report published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and

Trade, Ireland (2015) are further evidence of deeply-felt affective links with Ireland. Amongst the current group of immigrants, there is much evidence of strong emotional transnationalism being nurtured through their participation in dancing. One term by which participants described the way in which Irish dancing is a means through which they form an affective link with Ireland (Rumbaut, 2002; Wolf, 2002) is “connection”, as exemplified in the following quotes:

There’s definitely, for me, a connection to my Irish heritage. (Andrea, interview, June 23, 2015)

I think for me it actually means I feel like I have a connection with my heritage. (Jessica, interview, February 26, 2014)

I remember the first day coming and hearing the music and I was just—oh, it was lovely and it was just a real connection to home, I guess. (Deirdre, interview, March 18, 2014)

Others employed expressions with similar meanings, such as “contact” (April, interview, October 15, 2015) and “keep the culture” (Sarah, interview, March 11, 2014).

These immigrants are maintaining emotional links with Ireland itself, their relatives and friends, and the way of life which they remember so fondly. There is, within this cohort, little differentiation between the first and second generations: both describe the existence of dance-based links with Ireland and their Irish heritage in emotive and passionate terms. There is a minor discrepancy between the data on personal identity and that concerning the use of dance as an emotional link, in that while not all participants identify as “Irish”, all of the first and second generation immigrants employ descriptors of affective connection with Ireland when providing the reasons for their participation in Irish dance groups. This aligns with Leonard’s (2005) findings that dance and music provide Irish emigrants with a means through which to affiliate themselves with Ireland. Even those who solidly self-identify as “Australian” still allow themselves to perpetuate a thread of Irishness through their dancing, thus illustrating the idea that transnationalism and acculturation are not mutually-exclusive practices (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Levitt, 2016; Tsuda, 2012).

The effects of participation in Irish dancing are not confined to those who dance; parents and grandparents’ pride in the dancing habits of their progeny was a major theme in the interviews:

They love it, because my mum's side; they're both Irish and my Dad's side, they're both Irish so they absolutely love it because they think they're carrying on the heritage and the culture of Irish dancing on to the grandchildren. (Vivian, interview, February 18, 2014)

It would mean a lot to [my grandparents] because they've done it all their lives. (Maeve, interview, March 29, 2014)

They're so proud—for my Mum and Dad it's a big...it's a big thrill for them. (Deirdre, interview, March 18, 2014)

I had the opportunity before Mummy and Daddy died to take some dancers out to their home—and I was able to show them some real Irish dancing and that was a lot of fun and tremendously satisfying for me, because Mummy took one look at the dancing—and she was very, very pleased. (Roger, interview, October 20, 2015)

While the focus of this section is on the first and second generations, it is noteworthy that some of the third generation dance participants also raised the notion of a link between their dancing and their distant Irish ancestry, with remarks such as:

There's definitely a connection to my Irish background; to my family. (Lucy, interview, September 16, 2015)

I think it's more of a cultural connection. (Alison, interview, June 15, 2015)

Thus, the Irish immigrants who dance in Sydney are conscious of the tradition-bearing role which their dance practices afford them and their Irish parents and grandparents' pride in the continued habit of Irish dancing holds great significance for them. They are influenced by previous generations' attitudes and practices, and take pride in the knowledge that they are perpetuating familial habits (Foner, 2002). This facet adds to those already discussed in this section, so forming a solid bridge of emotional transnationalism between the dancing participants in Sydney and Ireland, whether it is considered as a geographical place from an earlier phase of their lives or a metaphorical construct as realised through familial connections and heritage. Having discussed the role of the emotions, I move in the next section to explore the soma: the ways in which the body enables construction of affective links with the sending society.

### **Embodying Ireland: Bodies, Senses and Places**

As discussed in the introductory section of this chapter, embodiment is about bodies and their senses and movements. Here, the somatic sensorium is used as the foundation for discussing the various culturally-specific cues which are identifiable when Irish dancing is performed. The most prominent visual sign is the distinctive costuming, especially in step dancing. Competitive solo dancers have always dressed in costumes which, in some way, link them to Ireland (Cullinane, 2006). Such aspects of costumes include the colours, the adornment of a Tara brooch, or the embroidered knotwork which was inspired by the artistry of *The Book of Kells*. Step dancing costumes may currently appear to be more theatrical than traditionally-inspired, yet the vestiges of Ireland are still to be found in the embroidered

designs (Video Sample 5.1<sup>40</sup>). Social (set and céilí) dancers do not wear costumes except for public performances; the costumes of *SICD* feature always feature bright green garments (seen in Video Sample 5.2) a colour which immediately identifies them as Irish in the minds of audience members.

The physical formations of the social dances provide visual stimulation for notions of home and close community contact (see Video Samples 4.2, 4.3 and 5.2). Before the dance begins, the dancers may be standing in a square set, where every dancer is facing in towards the others, or in a longways set where a row of women face a row of men<sup>41</sup>. Such formations are intimate and inclusive; they foster a communal spirit. Once the dance begins, motifs with names such as “dance at home” and “house around” act as reminders of past times and serve to embed Ireland within the dancing (Foley, 2011, p. 56). The very names of dances serve as reminders of their Irish origins: the social dance names tend to reflect the names of geographical locations such as *The Mayo Lancers Set*, *The South Galway Set* and *The Siege of Ennis*, whereas the names of the tunes used for step dancing are reminders of Irish activities and stories such as *St Patrick’s Day*, *The Hurling Boys* and *Fiddler Round the Fairy Tree*.

The sight of individual dancing bodies also stirs the memory (F. Hall, 2008; Wulff, 2005, 2009). The presence of an upright torso and head, with the arms hanging by the side, is an immediate visual link to “Irish dancing” and indeed, these postural features have formed the basis for multiple caricatures in popular media<sup>42</sup>. However, the parodies are constructed from a basis in truth: for someone with Irish heritage, the sight (and feeling) of that particular posture, where the focus of movement is located in the feet while the rest of the body is still, can elicit thoughts of the former days in Ireland. Such musings may even extend as far back as those times when Irish people were subject to British rule and sought avenues, such as dance, through which to demonstrate resistance and independence (Wulff, 2005). Or, for recent immigrants, it may simply remind the viewer of their own dance lessons as a child in Ireland. In a modern context, the vibrant athleticism of the *Riverdance* performers “conjures up the image of Irish bodies on the move, conquering the world” (Wulff, 2005, p. 59). Irish

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<sup>40</sup> The original video was edited from its original format. Two of the four dancers shown are from *Bláth*.

<sup>41</sup> Gender numbers may be unequal in a group and it is usually the case that there is an excess of women, so some women may then need to dance in men’s positions.

<sup>42</sup> Popular television shows which have caricatured Irish step dancing include *Kath & Kim* (Australia), *Father Ted* (UK) and *Third Rock from the Sun* (USA). A simple Internet search leads to many sites with cartoons about Irish dancing, for example [https://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/m/michael\\_flatley.asp](https://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/m/michael_flatley.asp)



dancing bodies, with the postures, movements and the formations which coalesce into the choreographies, form a powerful visual *aide-memoire*: Ireland is there, in plain sight.

Another trait which is associated with step dancing is its percussiveness. What *Riverdance* achieved was a focus on the multiple ways in which the feet can be used in sonic production of the rhythms of Ireland. The older form of *séan nós* dancing (Moroney, 2007) was also based on a dancer's prowess in producing a rhythm and blending that rhythm with the musical accompaniment. In rural homes, a door would be taken down and placed on the floor so that the wood could enhance the sonic qualities of the moving feet (Breathnach, 1996; Brennan, 1999). A unique feature of the *Harp* set dancers is their use of the battering steps of County Clare, as described in Chapter Four (see Video Sample 4.2). In each of these situations, the pounding rhythms of moving feet, in either jig or hornpipe metre, is suggestive of only one place: Ireland. Additionally, Irish dancing of all genres is most often accompanied by music, whether live or recorded, and the unmistakable sounds of the tin whistle, accordion or fiddle speak of their use in dance accompaniment in Ireland.

The sonic scenery created by musicians and dancers may transform the arena, in which the dancing is taking place, into an Irish space. Sounds have the means of employing "our affective, emotional and intuitive selves" (Boyd & Duffy, 2011, n.p.), thus engaging both minds and spirits. The ability of human bodies to "sense rhythms and anticipate certain communicative patterns operates in ways that help sense a collective identity" (Duffy, Waitt, Gorman-Murray & Gibson, 2011, p. 19), so serving to unify participants at a dance event in their collective reminiscences, which have been stimulated through hearing the sounds of Ireland in the dance and its musical accompaniment.

Finally, the feeling of the dancing bodies further develops remembrances of Ireland. The formations described earlier such as the square set will often, during the course of a dance, come together into a circle of dancers, all of whom hold the hands of the people either side of them, or into a tighter circle with arms clasped behind neighbours' backs so that maximum spinning speed is more easily attained. The touch of the other dancers suggests connection, unity and community (B. O'Connor, 1997); it provides a concrete connection to others who share similar memories of places, people and events in Ireland. Bodies moving together, especially in synchronised rhythms, exert strong influence on the affective state of dancers and audience alike. As dancers seek unity in both rhythm and gradation of their movements, the sense of communion is heightened and the overall mood is raised (McNeil, 1995); dancing together with others becomes more enjoyable when movements are

synchronised. This explains the appeal of the long line of dancers in *Riverdance*, the enjoyment of a step dance class where steps and techniques are being drilled through repetition, as well as the community spirit fostered through the coordinated effort exhibited in set and *céilí* dancing. Again, audience members are not left out; they may share the enjoyment as their bodies experience “kinaesthetic empathy” (Reason & Reynolds, 2010, p. 50) whilst watching the dancing. Thus, for everyone present, the combined sensorial cues which are embedded in Irish dance genres serve as potent reminders of home and heritage.

### **Summary of Part One: Irish Immigrants**

Part One of this chapter presented data concerning, first of all, identity affiliations of the cohort of first and second generation immigrants. The majority choose to self-identify as Irish, although given that all of the members of this cohort elect to participate in Irish dance groups, all are seeking to a certain extent to maintain links with their cultural heritage. This notion is reinforced by the collection of answers from participants about their motivation for participation in Irish dance groups in Sydney: many participants seek to maintain cultural connections through Irish dancing.

Part One also presents evidence of the emotional and embodied transnational practices which are actualised when Irish immigrants participate in Irish dancing. The culturally-specific understandings (Giuriati, 2005; Kaepler, 2004; 2010) which are configured in the dancing are employed by the participant cohort to conceptualise Ireland, whether those participants have spent time living there or have simply made occasional visits. Numerous aspects of the dancing, including dance names, movements, costumes and rhythms, contribute to the overall embodied and sensorial linkages which the various genres of Irish dancing may represent. Irish dancing is, therefore, a conduit through which both first and second generation Irish immigrants may engage with their Irish ancestry. These three concepts are discussed in relation to the Croatian community in the next section of this chapter.

### **Part Two: Croatian Immigrants**

#### **Cultural Identity**

Before addressing the issue of identity within this community, some socio-historical contextualisation is required. Different groups of immigrants have been ostracised at various times over Australia’s post-colonial history and subjected to much pejorative speech (Jacobowitz, 2016; Tsolidis & Pollard, 2009). The main word needing clarification here,

before analysis of the responses of Croatian immigrants can commence, is “wog”. This word has been employed in various countries as a derogatory term, but the usage has varied between geographical locations. In the UK, the term has been applied to people with dark skin (James & Harris, 1993); however, in the Australian context, the word was employed by Anglo-Australians in the 1960s and 1970s to refer to people who had migrated from Southern and Eastern Europe (Jacobowitz, 2016; Tsolidis & Pollard, 2009).

As will be seen from interviewees’ comments in this section, the word “wog” is used by the participants in two distinct ways. The first usage is in reminiscences of the derogatory remarks, when they describe how hurtful it was to them for the majority population sector to vilify them in this manner. In direct contrast, the second mode of employment is in situations where participants use the word in a self-affirming manner. This turnabout was, to a large degree, facilitated by popular media such as the movie “The Heartbreak Kid”, released in 1992, which was one of the first Australian films in which non Anglo-Australian characters were featured (Aquila, 2001). The stage production “Wogs out of Work” and the movie “The Wog Boy”, in which the characters good-naturedly mock the habits and practices of their own cultural background, further served to alter the discursive usage of the word (Tsolidis & Pollard, 2009). Along with the emergence of the second and third generation of immigrants who were perceived as being more like the Anglo-Australian majority, this led to the popular usage of the term “wog” in a positive sense amongst the population sector to whom it been previously applied in a derogatory way. In view of this background information, the following section explores the data generated during the personal interviews.

### **“Croatian”.**

Just under half of the interviewees chose to identify with their Croatian heritage, yet only one of these people is a first-generation immigrant:

I’m Croatian. You *never* forget where you came from...but my home is here now.  
(Michael, interview, October 12, 2015)

Another respondent, Brian, was born in Australia but lived in Croatia from the ages of nine to 15:

I’m 100% Croatian: I grew up there... but in saying that, I live here now. Australia provides me with great opportunity and it’s a great country to live in. I’m Croatian but I live here now. (Brian, interview, April 17, 2015)

There was a very strong affiliation with Croatia amongst the second generation immigrants in the study, even though the remainder have not experienced life in Croatia to the extent that Brian has experienced it. As will be explored in more detail in Chapter Six, the Croatian

community in Sydney has a strong network of culturally-specific organisations and activities, including language classes and sporting clubs as well as the dance groups. Thus, participants' active affiliation with dance groups is one avenue through which they may privilege their Croatian identity. In addition, a high incidence of regular return visits to Croatia were reported by the research participants. Many of them visit Croatia at least every second year for a period of four to six weeks, which allows for considerable saturation with various aspects of life in that country. However, the "calibration", described by Ramnarine (2007c, p. 11), when applied in the context of cultural identity, is clearly evident even within this relatively small sample. First, there were those who provided definitive answers about their personal allegiance:

Croatian. It's where your heart lies, and my heart lies with Croatia. (Sharon, interview, April 10, 2015)

I find myself very proud that I'm Croatian, or of Croatian background; even though I do call myself Croatian but I was born here. (Greg, interview, May 4, 2015)

Others used descriptors which are somewhat mathematical in nature:

If you had a linear scale with 1 being Australian and 10 being Croatian, I'd say about a 7; I always feel as if I'm more Croatian than I do Aussie. (Matthew, interview, March 13, 2015)

Closer to the Croatian side. I don't know why, that's just the way it is. (Scott, interview, March 30, 2015)

Amelia responded in more emotive language as she pronounced Croatia to be her preferred place of residence:

If my parents came up to me right now and said "you're going to Croatia for the rest of your life" I would cry to miss my friends, obviously, but any day I would leave [Australia] to go to Croatia. (Interview, March 23, 2015)

Finally, Kerry gave an acknowledgement of the benefits of life in Australia while still staking her claim to Croatian identity:

I love Australia. It's made me who I am; however, I am all Croatian. I speak Croatian, I dance Croatian, all of my friends are Croatian—everything about my being is Croatian and I argue this with so many people: "Yes, I'm born here but my roots are Croatian". (Interview, July 22, 2015)

No matter the mode of expression, the strength of devotion to Croatian identity found amongst the second generation immigrants in the sample is high, in spite of their exposure to the English language and customs of Australian society. These respondents have clearly chosen to embrace the "immigrant bargain" (R. Smith, 2002, p. 146), and one means of achieving this is their participation in traditional dance groups.

### **“Croatian–Australian”.**

The next largest sector of Croatian immigrants, approximately one third of the total, present with hybridised forms of identity (Noble, 2002; Zevallos, 2008). Some were bluntly factual in their answers, such as Irene (Interview, September 16, 2015), who saw herself as “50:50”. Others, however, presented succinct, emotive means of describing the situation of “living in the between” (Duarte, 2005, p. 320):

It’s like your Mum and Dad having a fight—you love both of them.  
(Gary, interview, September 14, 2014)

To say that I’m Croatian would be disrespecting myself as an Aussie and to say that I’m an Aussie would be disrespecting myself as a Croatian. (David, interview, February 27, 2015)

I’m totally a lost generation; I’m torn between the middle of the two. (Teresa, interview, June 16, 2015)

The fluctuations which may characterise hybrid identities, as people feel the pull of both the past as described and honoured by their parents and the present as represented by friends, school, work and other activities (Noble, 2002) were also described by several respondents:

I sit in the middle and I kind of hover, and I meander up to the Croatian; meander down to the Australian. (Sandra, interview, March 4, 2015)

In the last World Cup [soccer] where Croatia played Australia we made up T shirts—half Australia, half Croatia—it was the most difficult thing I’ve ever had to watch. (Terry, interview, March 25, 2015)

I’m quite fortunate to have the different backgrounds. I will always say “I was born in Australia, I’m an Australian citizen”, but at the same time I always say that I have Croatian background. (Julia, interview, April 10, 2015)

These three respondents eloquently describe the continuum along which their cultural identities move, providing further evidence that there is a scale of identities rather than simple polarity. There is a genuine expression of dual allegiance to both Croatia and Australia as they vocalise their attachment to their cultural heritage while simultaneously acknowledging the personal advantages of their Australian residencies (Levitt, 2016; Zevallos, 2008). This bifurcated affective connection was even more succinctly enunciated in the following remarks:

When I was flying over the Croatian mountains when I went in 2013, there was like a sense of coming home. I love the country; I would love to live there, but I can’t deny where I’ve grown up, and what I’ve done in this country with the culture that I have. I’d say I’m split pretty much in the middle, right now. (Joel, interview, June 17, 2015)

It's interesting that when we go on holidays we say that we're going "home" and then we go and then when it's time to come back to Australia, "Oh, we'd better start packing up, we're going home". Home is here and home is over there, but reality is here. (Meryl, interview, September 7, 2015)

Overall, the responses of the Croatian immigrants illustrate the perpetual tension between the heritage of their forefathers and the realities of their Australian lifestyle; they acknowledged both as being positive influences on their lives, even if the duality results in some division of loyalty. As Vertovec (2009) points out, "belonging, loyalty and sense of attachment are not parts of a zero-sum game based on a single place" (p. 78); both places, for these immigrants, are important parts of their lives.

### **"Australian".**

Other participants identified themselves clearly as being "Australian". Some of the remarks were unqualified:

I'm an Australian; I tell my kids they're Australian. (Clare, interview, June 2, 2014)

I am certainly, without any doubt, a great and patriotic citizen of Australia. (Peter, interview, June 20, 2014)

Several participants comment about the influence of time, and participation in traditional dance or other culturally-specific activities (Jones-Correa, 2002; Levitt, 2002), on their personal identity affiliation:

When I was younger and probably when I started [dancing], I would have said more to that higher end of Croatian scale; now I don't really consider myself very Croatian. (James, interview, March 6, 2015)

I'm more Australian, except when I'm dancing or I go to a Croatian event. (Samuel, interview, March 6, 2015)

The comments concerning the presence of heterogeneity within the participant cohort, which were made in the section about Irish immigrants earlier in this chapter, also apply to the Croatian immigrants. It may also be true that this group has chosen to dance because that is an activity to which they are drawn; for example, they may have chosen to dance rather than play soccer, another popular pastime within the Croatian community in Sydney. However, there are several notions which are raised within the comments of the Croatian immigrants which reveal differences in the immigrant experience when compared with the experiences of the Irish immigrants, and which demonstrate the effects of both a more recent settlement timeframe and the greater contrast in cultural practices between the Croatian community and the Anglo-Australian population.

The first generation immigrants in this study were forced to contend with the marginalising practices of their Anglo-Australian peers; unlike the Irish participants in this study who arrived well after the period during which Irish immigrants in Australia were ostracised, the Croatian immigrants in this study remember being marginalised due to their lack of English language skills and a cultural habitus which is unfamiliar to Anglo-Australians. Some respondents reveal the difficulties of being an immigrant, or the child of immigrants, who have come from somewhere which does not share the language and cultural traditions of the Anglo-Celtic majority in Australia. Clare explained how she arrived at her current definitive status of “Australian”, as referenced earlier from her interview transcript:

When I went to school it was still the “wog” connotation so I tried to get in and be the Aussie girl. (Interview, 2 June, 2014)

The pressure from peers exerted its influence and so she emulated the Anglo-Australian girls with whom she was interacting, to be more accepted by them and to prevent the pejorative speech from continuing. Others sequestered themselves with fellow immigrants at school:

—my circle of friends [at school], we were classed as “the wogs”; we had Italian, Croatian, Polish. (Kerry, interview, July 22, 2015)

Yet, Kerry identified as “Croatian”, so the marginalisation experienced by these two women has produced opposite results in their adult lives, suggesting that there may be other psychosocial factors, beyond the scope of this thesis, which influence personal identity construction. What is shown by the current study is that Croatian immigrants have personal experience of the dichotomous private and public lives described by Zhang & Noels (2012), where pressures at school and work to become more “Australian” may stand in opposition to the standards of the home, where perpetuation of the Croatian language and customs are honoured and where participation in Croatian community events is privileged (Budak & Lalich, 2008; Glasgow, 2012).

Interestingly, the younger participants (under 18 years of age) have not experienced use of the term “wog” in a derogatory manner. During the interviews, some of the children did not use the term at all, while others suggested that it is no longer a term of offence:

When someone says I’m a wog—thank you! (Megan, interview, March 23, 2015)

[“Wog”] is such a compliment for me. (Amelia, interview, March 23, 2015)

The younger respondents, then, seem to have benefitted from a change in attitude amongst the general population; they view alterity as being advantageous rather than shameful.

Conversely, the situation for groups with very recent immigration histories, or who come from countries which are viewed with suspicion by much of Australia’s populace, may be

very different if attitudes of prejudice are exhibited by the majority of the population. This prejudice may be heightened against immigrants who are physically dissimilar from the majority of the population (Berry, 2013; Jurva & Jaya, 2008; Wiley, Perkins & Deaux, 2008; Zevallos, 2008). It is possible, then, that the majority population sector has grown accustomed to the presence of European immigrants, and that remnants of the philosophy that people from European countries are more “compatible” with the Anglo-Australian majority, which was discussed in Chapter Two, are still operational in the broader populace.

The range of self-assignments identified in the current study reflects the diversity within the Croatian community as acknowledged by Šutalo (2010). As with the Irish immigrants, it is possible that these people simply enjoy dancing *per se* more than other people within the Croatian immigrant community but because their dancing is Croatian, the transnational connections with the former homeland, through the channel of dance, are both concrete and visible. What can be concluded definitely is that the dancing practices of this group of immigrants are behaviours which contribute to processes of identity construction (Ward & Kus, 2012), and that for many, cultural identity is a fluctuating construct (Chacko & Menon, 2013) upon which their dancing habits, in addition to multiple other factors, exert an influence.

### **Emotional Transnationalism**

In this section the strength of personal emotive connections with Croatia, which are actualised through membership of a traditional dance group in Sydney, is explored. Emotional links with the sending society are mediated by dance for members of both generations. The first generation immigrants in the study made comments such as:

—there was a yearning to be involved with the culture and heritage of my Croatian background. (Damien, interview, October 12, 2015)

When someone asked “Why the hell are you still doing this?” I answered “Because I love it. Simple: it’s in my blood”. (Peter, interview, June 20, 2014)

The remarks of the second generation were congruent and also concern the connections with Croatian heritage through participation in traditional dance groups:

It means you can be with people from your culture; you can be with your culture and learn more about it—and you can go around and socialise with other groups, and see what they think about it as well. (Jack, interview, August 4, 2014)

We’re not here to become professional folkloric dancers, we’re here to be with Croatian people, meet new people, learn about our culture. (Hannah, interview, March 23, 2015)



I love learning about my culture, and the songs especially. (Megan, interview, March 23, 2015)

A prominent feature amongst the Croatian dance participants is the desire to preserve the Croatian cultural traditions and to foster a love for Croatian folklore amongst members of subsequent generations. The desire for preservation was expressed thus:

This is what we tell these parents: that if you want your children to socialise, and at least hear some of the culture, then this is it. (Stella, interview, March 30, 2015)

We should never forget our own backgrounds, where our parents have come from and so on. I suppose this is a way of cementing that within us and also teaching our own children in that respect, so they know what their own roots are. (Damien, interview, October 12, 2015)

That's what I say to my kids, "it's culture, you're learning culture, as well as the language" because through the songs they're learning the language as well. (Miriam, interview, September 14, 2015)

One night when I was dancing, everything became blurry, and through the dance I could see these three little girls holding hands and they were, like, looking at our feet and they were trying to copy our steps and I swear to you from the deepest part of my heart I heard God say "You see that? That's why you do it! You do it for the next generation". (Sandra, interview, March 4, 2015)

Similar notions were exposed in other studies (Knudsen, 2009; MacLachlan, 2014; Ram, 2005), where immigrants expressed the need for the continuation of music and dance practices in order to retain awareness of cultural history in the group.

Some participants felt that the practice of traditions such as dance is an expression of an aspect of Croatian culture which is personally advantageous for them:

I think Australia's a pretty uncultured country, not surprisingly though because you were only formed in the 1700s. So that's why I like to come [to dancing] to practise my culture. (Henry, interview, August 4, 2014)

My kids are better kids for their involvement with Croatian folkloric dancing, and I think there's a lot of parents out there who recognise that. (Gary, interview, September 14, 2014)

[The dancing] is something that's been kept here and implemented to keep a social aspect for the general youth here - to keep families knowing each other; to keep the general youth just being with one another, friends, circulating around those traditions and values. (David, interview, February 27, 2015)

Others were somewhat critical of their compatriots who, they believe, are losing sight of their cultural heritage and allowing their background to be overshadowed by aspects of their new lives in Australia:

I don't know that you can actually be a complete person if you discard who you are, who your background is, who your parents were—I just can't see how those people can have a fulfilled life, living only part of who they are. (Terry, interview, March 25, 2015)

We assimilated—and although we didn't lose our own culture, we sort of put it on the back burner, and now it's an opportunity not just to teach my own children about the Croatian heritage - different dances, different music. (Damien, interview, October 12, 2015)

The additional importance of maintenance of traditions such as dance within the diasporic community was highlighted in the following comments:

We in the diaspora, we wanted to keep and carry on, we felt we had to carry on the tradition. (Clare, interview, June 2, 2014)

I saw that the folkloric group is one of the best learning places about Croatia. (Michael, interview, October 12, 2015)

It's a commitment to heritage but also a commitment to keeping our community alive and keeping that culture alive. (Olivia, interview, September 1, 2014)

I still want [my children] to have instilled in them those traditions of their background, so that they know...where their grandparents are from. (Bronwyn, interview, September 14, 2015)

Dancing is one channel through which familial pride may be engendered; many participants related how their dancing practices foster enjoyment amongst parents and grandparents:

[My parents] are happy that I am doing [dancing] and keeping with the culture...I guess they are a little bit proud of me. (Joel, interview, June 17, 2015)

[My parents] are very proud of me to [dance] and to see that I've taken the heritage on board. (David, interview, February 27, 2015)

...my grandparents are proud of it, same as my Dad. (Andrew, interview, March 13, 2015)

It's kind of like, you know when you say that when your parents told you stories from overseas when they were little, it's kind of like they're watching you experience that, like not the whole thing but kind of like the culture side to it. (Brooke, interview, August 4, 2014)

The pleasure of the first generation, as related by these participants, is understandable when the effort of that generation to establish Croatian community organisations and activities is taken into account:

It was very very hard to come [to Australia], which is why I think it meant so much to my parents' generation to build these Croatian clubs to keep that culture alive and it was their connection to the old country. (Clare, interview, June 2, 2014)

For my Mum, she's always tried to keep our Croatian heritage, like speaking Croatian at home...I guess to her, because she's born over there, she has that connection. We

hang around Croatian people...that's important to her. (Matthew, interview, March 13, 2015)

We went to Croatian church, Croatian school, danced at Croatian groups, played football at Croatian clubs, went to the Croatian Club. (Scott, interview, March 30, 2015).

Across the entire cohort of participants in the current study, employment of traditional dance as one means of constructing emotional connections with Croatia was present, as exemplified in the comments quoted in this section. The responses correlate with those collected from Croatian immigrants in traditional dance groups in Auckland, who choose to dance as part of their identity construction and to perpetuate familiarity with their cultural background (Simon, 2014). Conversely, the findings here do not align with the observations of Colic-Peisker (2008), who writes that Croatian immigrants in Western Australia feel that any accentuation of cultural traditions is irrelevant to their current lives in Australia. However, the respondents in the present study are all drawn from dance groups, whereas those in Colic-Peisker's (2008) study were not from a specific subset of the Croatian community. The immigrants in the current study, who are affiliated with dance, are continually choosing to juxtapose their cultural heritage and their Australian way of living, so constructing an emotional transnational space through their dancing.

### **Embodying Croatia: Bodies, Senses and Places**

Before embarking on the analysis of the various dance genres, the title of this section requires further teasing out. The title "Embodying Croatia" brings to light an important change which has happened within the space of only several generations and so it provides a counterpoint to the situation found within the Irish dance groups. Traditional dancing in Croatia was, for many years, highly localised; only LADO would perform dances from multiple regions. Even now, the emphasis for amateur groups is the local rather than national (Shay, 2016; Čaleta & Zebec, 2017). Dance groups in diasporic locations, no matter the cultural background, may be required to rapidly become nationally rather than locally representative (Giuriati, 2005; Scott-Maxwell, 2013; Shay, 2006); certainly, this phenomenon is noted in the Croatian community in the USA (Johnson, 2009). Thus, *Koleda* was established from its inception as a nationally-representative group (Crvenkovic, 2005), and others such as *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* followed the same pattern. The situation with the *kumpanjija* is somewhat different, since the dance cannot be divorced from its locational

specificity. Yet, participants with this group did not, in the previous section, identify as people of Blato but as people of Croatia; so for them, the sword dance embodies “Croatia” in the same way as the other groups’ dances do for their adherents. Again, the sensorium is employed as the basis for analysis, with each facet being explored with relevance to the *kumpanjija* and to the multi-regional groups *Vukovar* and *Cvijet*.

One of the particular characteristics of the chain sword dance is the unity which must be exhibited by the dancers, who strive for consistency, both in height when lifting the feet and stride length when moving around the performance area (see Video Samples 4.6 and 5.3). Of course, this synergy is something which is sought in other Croatian dance genres (and indeed in Irish dance forms), but nowhere in this study is it better exemplified than within the chain sword dance. Synchronicity and its effects on group members has been studied widely within both science and humanities disciplines. One of the earliest observers of this phenomenon was Durkheim (1964) who writes that “it is the homogeneity of these movements that gives the group consciousness of itself and consequently makes it exist”. (p. 230). Other theorists have more recently commented on the relationship between synchronised movements and unity between group members. McNeil (1995) writes about the relationship between drill, dance and battle, three notions which are intrinsic to the *kumpanjija*. McNeil’s own experience in the US army caused him to employ the term “muscular bonding” (p.2) to encapsulate the collectivity generated through rhythmical and simultaneous movements. Specifically referring to ceremonial activities, R. Collins (2004) observes that “at the centre of an interaction ritual is the process in which participants develop a mutual focus of attention and become entrained in each other’s present bodily micro-rhythms and emotions” (p. 47) and so concludes that “rhythmic synchronization is correlated with solidarity” (p. 76).

Other more subtle effects spread through groups of moving yet synchronised bodies: for example, individuals’ abilities to discern their own actions from those of others in the group diminishes, especially when the overall performance is considered of more importance than each person’s own role in that production (Sebanz, Bekkering & Knoblich, 2006). There is also the concept of emotional synergy, which is a “tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize facial expressions, postures and movements with those of another person and consequently, to converge emotionally” (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson, 1994, p. 5). This idea links back to McNeil’s (1995) notions; he posits that through muscular bonding, there is a “blurring of self-awareness and the heightening of fellow-feeling” (p. 8) which occurs regardless of the lack of other forms of interconnectedness between participants, who may be

drawn from disparate social, geographical, economic and vocational strata. The unified movements continue to “enhance...emotional vibrancy” and provide a “fundamental cement” of camaraderie amongst the young men who perform (McNeil, 1995, pp. 155-156). In a similar manner, Conger (2015) concludes, speaking specifically about dance, that “moving with someone leads to a particularly intimate form of empathy” (p. 202) with that person.

Synergistic movements are, likewise, important in the repertoire of dances performed by both *Vukovar* and *Cvijet*. *Vukovar* has a solid reputation within the Croatian community (Budak & Lalic, 2008) and hence members strive for a high standard in their performances. The synchronicity achieved is shown in a video in which *Vukovar's* dancers perform a choreography from the region of Zagorje in the northern part of Croatia (Video Sample 5.4). Thus, the principles of “muscular bonding” (McNeil, 1995, p. 2), and a convergence of movement which serves to suppress individual agency (Sebanz, Bekkering & Knoblich, 2006) and coalesce emotions (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson, 1994), are equally applicable across the three Croatian dance groups in this study.

The smell of perspiration which ensues from rigorous practice sessions of the *kumpanjija* acts as a symbol of friendship and common purpose; one sword dancer exclaimed that he enjoyed the fact that when the young men dance, they are all “sweating together” (Fieldnotes, March 14, 2014). The smell of the perspiration operationalises both affect and memory (Low, 2013), so forging an emotional link between members of the Sydney troupe and reminding them that they are engaging in the same activity as the troupe in Blato. Dance events within the Croatian community in Sydney often include traditional food, such as fish cooked in the special method employed in Blato, or Croatian *ćevapi* (sausage) and *kruskovac* (pear liqueur). Thus, the senses of smell and taste may be engaged through ancillary activities even if not directly through the dancing itself. Tactile input comes, in the *kumpanjija*, from holding the swords and reminds the dancers of their connections with each other and their shared ancestry. Other Croatian dance genres reflect regional specificities through their hand holds, so stirring the sense of touch in a manner which is uniquely Croatian (see Video Samples 5.4 and 5.5).

The sense of sound is engaged in multiple ways through dance performances. Sound is generated by voices, bodies and musical instruments, but it is also generative, especially in diasporic locations: it is directly involved in the constructed ambience of the performance. The *kumpanjija* is accompanied solely by the *tamburlin* because, currently, there is no one who is able to play the *mišnjice* (see Video Sample 5.3). This signifies a substantial difference from the usual practice in Blato, where the sword dance is accompanied by the

*mišnjice* (Marošević, 2000; Video Sample 5.6). A CD recording of the *mišnjice* is used in Sydney for the *tanac*, the partnered dance. Thus, the auditory memory which is stimulated by the *mišnjice* is preserved; its unmistakable sound is still a component of the overall event. The beating of the drum and the sounds of the men's shoes on the parquet floor, which are continuous for around 25 minutes, connect the sense of audition with the synergistic body movements of the dancers which are described earlier in this section. A repetitive rhythm is able to engage the affect, the emotions and the body, eliciting feelings of community and belonging (Duffy, Waitt, Gorman-Murray & Gibson, 2011).

Many similar soundscapes are produced in the performances of *Vukovar* and *Cvijet*. These groups are fortunate enough to have multiple, highly proficient musicians accompanying the dancing, even during their regular rehearsal times. The variety of instruments played by the musicians allows for regionally-specific sonic pictures to be drawn, thus localising the sounds within familiar geographies for both dancers and audience members. In each and every performance of Croatian dancing, no matter the genre, sound is employed to both “stitch bodies together” (Doughty & Lagerqvist, 2016, p. 60) and contribute to the shared “affective contagion” (Boyd & Duffy, 2011, n.p.) of the event. In the performances, somatic synergy develops from the foundation provided by musical accompaniment, which for both of these troupes is provided by live musicians who are able to guide and inspire the dancers in their performances (see Video Samples 5.4 and 5.5).

Finally, visual cues are formulated through the avenues of choreography and costuming. The *kumpanjija* performance contains motifs which are identical to those which are danced in Blato, so reminding immigrants of performances they have witnessed in that town<sup>43</sup>. The two other groups, *Vukovar* and *Cvijet*, operate in similar ways to their counterparts in Croatia in that the choreographies are subject to individual variations as prescribed by the groups' leaders. Thus choreographical variation is found within Croatia itself and so is not a phenomenon which is only induced by immigration. However, the steps and motifs are faithfully reproduced so that audience members from within the Croatian community may see a given dance and recall performances of the same dance in its location of origin in Croatia.

Costumes are most likely to be representative of place, as the unique features of each region are visually reproduced (Knific, 2009). The costumes worn for the *kumpanjija* jubilee

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<sup>43</sup> The sequence of motifs is not identical to that which is performed in Blato; the nature of this phenomenon and reasons for its emergence are discussed in Chapter Seven.

performance in 2015 were a mixture of items which were made in Blato and sent to Sydney, and those which have been manufactured in Sydney from local materials (see Video Sample 5.3). The town of Blato sent new hats for the young men to wear for the fiftieth anniversary; the sight of those hats thus validated the Sydney performance and visually realised its transnational connections with those still residing in Blato and the many second-generation immigrants who reported having visited Blato and who have seen the *kumpanjija* there. The other dance groups adopt similar faithful adherence to original costuming, and amongst both those who grew up in Croatia. *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* have a large selection of costumes from multiple regional areas of Croatia, many of which have been manufactured there. Yet, even through the costume items which are manufactured locally, the group seeks to provide continued and faithful visual representation of the familiar costumes of the various regions of Croatia<sup>44</sup>. The loss of many sensorial components of the original performance surroundings means that whatever *can* be reproduced is of vital importance in the construction of sensory remembrances.

The nature of the performance space (Main & Sandoval, 2015; Nahachewsky, 2006)) and the various ephemera associated with dance events (Duffy, 2005; Senay, 2009) also draw the minds and senses of participants towards Croatia. In the case of the *kumpanjija*, there is nothing in the physical structure of the ballroom which marks it as belonging to Blato, so the club members have added their own visual reminders. Several large painted murals adorn the walls of the ballroom, the largest of which hangs on the wall towards which most of the audience is oriented during the performance. The middle panel is shown in Figure 5.1. This panel is a pastiche of significant scenes from Blato (the church, the piazza, houses and olive groves), Sydney (the Harbour Bridge, the Sydney Opera House, a kangaroo and a koala) and the migratory experience (aeroplanes and a ship). Together, these murals pictorialise the connections with Blato, personalise the performance and link the two locations.

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<sup>44</sup> Further discussion of costumes and their location of manufacture is located in Chapter Six.

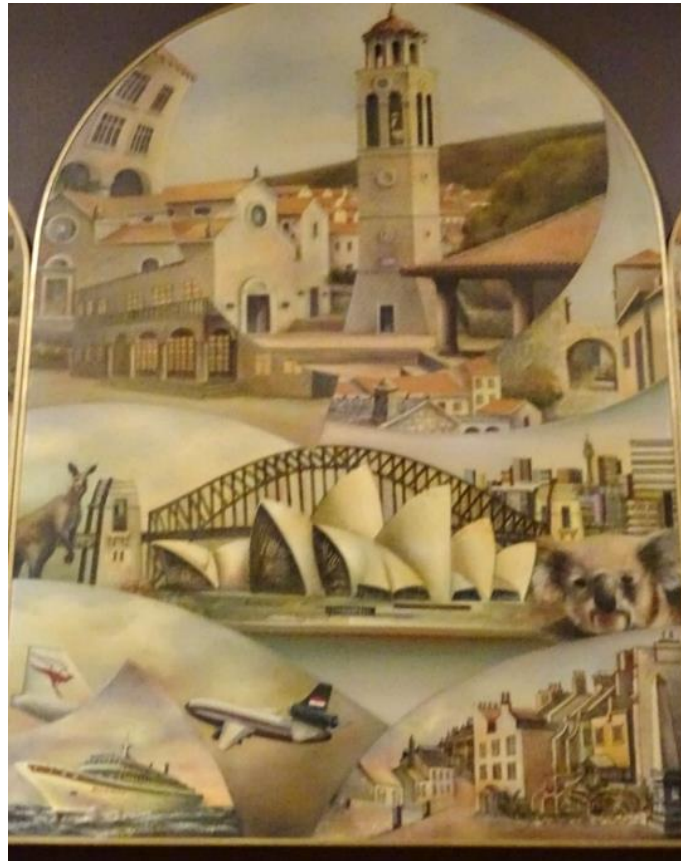
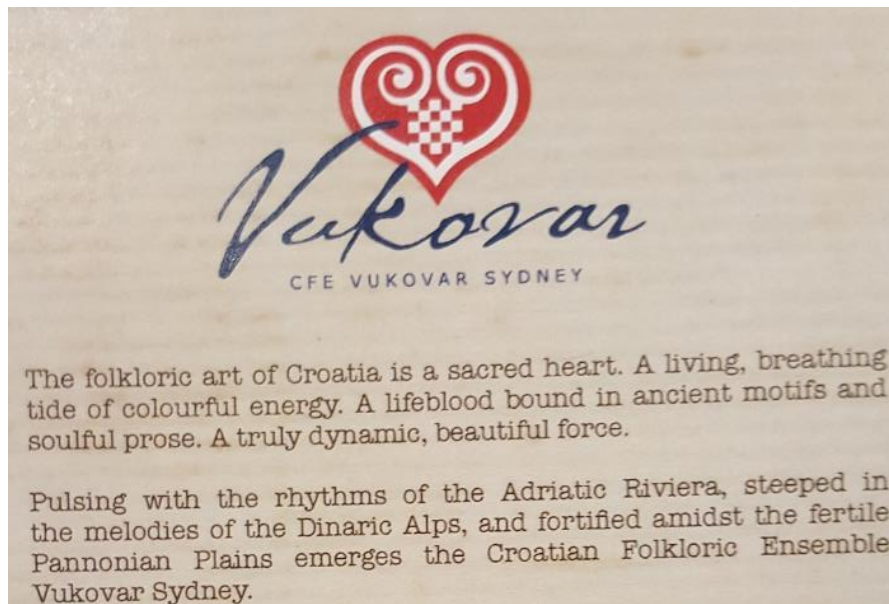


Figure 5.1. The main mural in the ballroom, Dalmacija Sydney Croatian Club

In 2014, *Vukovar* celebrated 30 years of dancing with a concert at the National Institute for Dramatic Art in Sydney. Each item in the program was performed in front of a photograph of the region from which it originated; for example, a large background image may be seen in the performance of a choreography from the region of *Zagorje* (see Video Sample 5.4). The concert program itself is full of visual reminders which locate each performance within its Croatian heritage: a double-paged map locates the regions from which the various dances in the program have originated, while the poetic language of the introduction and dance descriptions is a potent example of the use of language to encourage transnational nostalgia. The opening lines in the souvenir program, written by a member of *Vukovar*, are an excellent example of this, as shown in Figure 5.2. These lines succinctly draw the mind of the reader to Croatia, to traditional practices and to the intrinsic beauty of those practices; the emotions are engaged and Croatian heritage is acknowledged and privileged.





*Figure 5.2* Introduction to concert program for *Vukovar*'s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert, November 1, 2014.

Thus a multiplicity of embodied mnemonics are situated within the various Croatian dance genres included in the current study. Each one has the capacity, both individually and in combination with the others, to draw the consciousness towards reminiscences of the Croatia of their memories, whether those memories were constructed through having lived there or through short visits. The dancing allows the Croatian community to connect with their past while still being active in their present realities.

### **Summary of Part Two: Croatian Immigrants**

Part Two of this chapter concerns the analysis of data obtained from the first and second generation Croatian immigrants in the current study. Questions concerning cultural identity revealed that the bulk of the participants identified as "Croatian", even though this majority contains only one first generation interviewee. Respondents who choose a hybridised identity relate the difficulties which result from divided loyalties; they recognise the privilege of their cultural heritage as well as the benefits they have received from residence in Australia. Others choose to affiliate with Australia, although their participation in Croatian dancing indicates a desire to retain a small link with Croatia. The articulation of strong emotions when describing their reasons for dancing is striking; the participants are motivated to perpetuate their traditional dancing and to foster a love of the dancing in subsequent generations.

Each of the Croatian dance genres represents Croatia in embodied and sensory modes. The multisensorial stimulation through costumes, musical instruments, choreographical motifs and additional paraphernalia such as concert programs all provide strong mnemonic links to Croatia for dancers and audience members alike. Multiple, culturally-specific cues draw the psyche towards Croatia as it is depicted through the various forms of traditional dancing in Sydney.

### **Part Three: Comparing the Communities**

Data obtained from the two groups of immigrants, as shown in this chapter, provides insight into the role of dance in the lives of individual immigrants and in diasporic communities in Sydney. Through the foregrounding of the perspectives of the research participants, using the “biographical approach” espoused by Wessendorf (2013, p. 31) the temporal and spatial relations of both groups of immigrants are revealed. The exposure and examination of participants’ “transnational feeling or belonging” (González-Rábago & Blanco, 2016, p. 862) provides insight into the motivation of the cohort of participants for continuing their dance practices in Sydney. The intimate connections between cultural heritage, nostalgia and identity (Marschall, 2017) in the lives of these immigrants, is exposed and explored, revealing the complex and multi-faceted symbiosis between identity construction, diasporic behaviours and the transnational fields of emotion and embodiment. This section provides a comparative analysis of each immigrant community.

#### **Cultural Identity**

A dominance of identification with past cultural heritage is present in both groups of participants and it is possible that this is due to the participant sample having been drawn from those who regularly participate in the culturally-specific activity of traditional dancing (Sullivan, 2012). Certainly, the perpetuation of various folkloric arts may be an important facet of identity construction processes for immigrants (Gonzalves, 2010). The first generation immigrants are, naturally, relying on their own memories of life in the sending society, while amongst the second generation respondents, strong personal connections with former homelands are likely to result from the “family habitus” (Reynolds & Zontini, 2016, p. 383) of transnational fields. Within this cohort, this habitus relates especially to participation in culturally-specific activities such as dance, but other influences are also noticeable, such as the high frequency of short-term visits to Croatia reported amongst the participants from that immigrant community in this study.

The high incidence of identification with the sending society suggests that these immigrants feel comfortable in expressing this allegiance. Halter (2000) suggests that third and subsequent generations of immigrants are sufficiently acculturated, and hence secure in their position as members of the receiving society, to feel that they can express alterity without fear of recrimination. In the current study, only first and second generation immigrants are compared with respect to identity construction, but their words, as quoted in this chapter, suggest that Halter's (2000) observation is valid. They feel at ease in aligning themselves with either Ireland or Croatia, indicating that they perceive no threat from broader Australian society as a consequence of their chosen affiliation (Berry, 2005; Berry et al., 2006; Liu, 2007; Zhang & Noels, 2012). Participation in dance groups, then, is part of the process of their identity construction (Sullivan, 2012), even for those who choose to categorise themselves as "Australian". The inclusion of behaviours (dancing practices) as well as attitudes (self-assigned cultural identity) exposes the variegated assignments of identity within the small cohort of participants (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Ward & Kus, 2012).

During the fieldwork, one of the members of *Vukovar* was observed wearing a pullover which is shown in Figure 5.3.



*Figure 5.3* Pullover worn by a second generation Croatian immigrant (member of *Vukovar*<sup>45</sup>).

This item of clothing illustrates the notion of "differentiated belonging within an Australian multicultural framework" (Voloder & Andits, 2016, p. 313) and provides another means

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<sup>45</sup> Clothing which states "Australian Grown with Irish roots" is also readily available. See <https://fantees.com.au/au-irish>.

through which identity may be illustrated: the roots may be hidden from view but they provide the sustenance for the growth of the tree. In this way, both sending and receiving societies are acknowledged as making valuable contributions to the life of an individual; both identities coexist, but the individual may choose the level of exposure of the roots. Traditional dancing in Sydney is one means through which those roots may be brought to light.

### **Emotional Transnationalism**

Emotional transnational spaces, as facilitated by participation in traditional dance groups, are constructed by both Irish and Croatian immigrants in Sydney. As described in Chapter One, dance is a channel through which participants can find expression for all facets of their lived experiences; by this means they are able to concurrently situate themselves within both the past and the present aspects of their lives (Finnegan, 2003). Through dancing they have all been able to maintain some form of link with their respective cultural heritage backgrounds while still acculturating themselves into Australian society (Pourtova, 2013).

The particular mode of nostalgia which is revealed in the comments quoted in this section is that of reflective nostalgia (Boym, 2007). The participants have chosen to live in Australia, yet they have also opted to assign an important role in their current lives in Sydney to traditional dance practices (Ram, 2005). Put another way, they are enacting binary facets of belonging: “locating the idea of belonging between both ‘being’ and ‘longing’ draws out the complex connections with memory and nostalgia” (Bonnerjee, 2013, p. 432). The participants’ comments cover a variety of topics through which the memory may roam during dancing, including place (Cohen, 2014), people and events (Davidson & Garrido, 2014) and deep longing for the homeland (Duarte, 2005).

For members of the first generation, dance activates individuals’ memories of their youth in the former homeland (Krumhansl & Zupnick, 2013), while for the second generation, dance acts as the “nostalgic touch-point” with the inheritance they have received from their parents, as described by Maghbouleh (2010, p. 213). As discussed in Chapter Two, nostalgia is linked with cultural identity. In accord with the ideas of C. Williams (2012) and Mazrui (2013), the participants in Sydney assign relevance and importance to their cultural heritage practices, in spite of being active members of Australian society. This is true even for the participants who identify as “Australian”; they have not completely turned away from the traditions of their forebears.

An important difference between the Irish and Croatian communities is that the Croatian immigrants expressed a sense of urgency in the perpetuation of traditional dancing amongst the children in their community, whereas none of the Irish immigrants verbally indicated active effort in this area. It is possible that the reaction of the Croatian respondents results from the more recent employment of traditional dancing in Croatia as a signifier of national identity (Shay, 2006; 2016). The continued funding of the national ensemble, LADO, signifies its status of importance to the people of Croatia and hence the continuation of traditional dancing in the Croatian diaspora may be seen as a public expression of a sense of continued loyalty to Croatia (Simon, 2014; Vitez, 2008). It may also be that since the Croatian community is less similar to the Anglo-Australian population sector than the Irish community, there is a desire to ensure that indicators of alterity, such as traditional dancing, are retained as a matter of community pride.

### **Embodiments of Ireland and Croatia**

As Lewis (2015) observes, “dancing can provide a way of embodying home” (p. 55) and for immigrants this may lead to a feeling of “spatial and practical control which in turn creates a sense of security” (Hage, 1997, p. 103); they may, through their dancing, “pursue a unique belonging in an adopted home” (Lau, 2007, p. 139). The dance groups are loci for negotiations of individuals’ connections with both the present reality of Australian society and the specific features of the culture of the past (Lewis, 2010). Every dance genre included in this study contains cultural heritage markers of some kind, which serve to stimulate memories and promote the formation of transnational emotional spaces.

The processes of cultural embodiment are congruent in both immigrant communities: the corporeal stimulation afforded by traditional dance performances in Sydney enables participants, whether dancers or audience members, to engage with people, objects and activities which are imbued with meaning (Warin & Dennis, 2005), so evoking memories of a former home. These performances are, in a sense, a means through which to visit the ancestral homeland without physically leaving Sydney: just as an actual visit entails engagement with cultural practices and sensory stimulants (Marschall, 2017), so does a performance of dance, no matter its location. The emotional responses, which may be elicited through the dance event, contribute to the process of construction of affiliations and belongings (Cox, 2015). Dance performances, then, serve to symbolically contract the spatial distance between Sydney and the previous homeland.

For the immigrants, the dance event links with other embodied experiences which they have had: first, the movement of bodies across the globe in the process of migration and second, the modes of connection between bodies in Sydney and bodies in Ireland and Croatia, which Dunn (2010) describes as “embodied transnationalism” (p.1). Indeed, Dunn (2010) states that one of the findings that an embodied approach has brought to migration research is that “bodies are simultaneously mobile and emplaced” (p.5), a notion which has been exemplified in the current study. The perspective of embodiment also ties the current research to diaspora studies, since “diasporas are neither discrete nor preformed, but function as historically and politically produced formations that are emplaced, embodied, interactive and performative” (Gilbert & Lo, 2010, p. 156). The immigrants refashion the spaces in which they dance “to reflect significant places of the past, places through which their identity was formed” (Main & Sandoval, 2015, p. 83). The complex interactions between bodies and senses serve to configure place memories; participants are more aware of their deeply-felt passions, perceptions and familiarities (Abdullah, 2012; Wise, 2010). Thus the performance spaces are transformed so that Ireland and Croatia may, respectively, be remembered and re-constructed in Sydney, albeit temporarily.

The performing bodies and stimulated senses are the catalysts: commemorative enactments prove to be celebratory only through their “performativity [which] cannot be thought without a concept of habit; and habit cannot be thought without a notion of bodily automatisms” (Connerton, 1989, p. 5). The performance is bereft of the concrete geography of Ireland or Croatia, yet, the combination of bodies, senses and places is potent: “bodies and senses and their interaction with the environment play an enormous part in this rendering of place memories” (Wise, 2010, p. 932). The place-making which is achieved through traditional dancing acts to “reify both ... individual and collective identities” (Farrar, 2011, p. 725) and to signify communities (Alexander, 2013), and these purposes are served through the perpetuation of all forms of Irish and Croatian traditional dance in Sydney.

While the stimulation of memory may apply most directly to those who grew up in Ireland or Croatia, the second generation is not bereft of the ability to generate nostalgia through somatic and sensory stimulation, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter. For them, too, recollections are stirred, whether those memories are concrete within the participants’ personal experiences or have been retold by members of the first generation (Maghbouleh, 2010). There was a stronger sense of personal mnemonic connection amongst the second generation Croatian cohort, all of whom have visited Croatia on multiple occasions and often stayed for lengthy periods. However, for all of the second generation

immigrants in this study, the sensorial stimulation provided through dancing affords them the opportunity to temporarily align themselves with people and places lodged in their memories (Mazrui, 2013; Williams, 2012).

The immigrants who dance in Sydney are “the individuals who share in collective images and narratives of the past, who practice mnemonic rituals, display an inherited habitus and can draw on repertoires of explicit and implicit knowledge” (Erl, 2011, p. 12). This observation does not mean that memorialisations and emotional connectivities are the sole reasons for participation in dance groups in Sydney. Indeed, a number of other motivational factors were cited during the interviews and informal conversations with participants who are first or second generation immigrants, including physical exercise, socialisation with friends and the opportunity to meet new people. However, the primary theme which emerged was the nurturing of mnemonic links and these connections have been the focus in the current chapter.

Migrants’ memories are important to them; the comments of those who were interviewed attest to this: Irish and Croatian immigrants in Sydney have been able to weave nostalgia into their experiences of resettlement. Hence, this nostalgia should be “valued as potentially democratic, opening up new spaces for the articulation of the past and acting as a mode of assimilating this to the rapidly changing modern environment” (Pickering & Keightley, 2006, p. 923). The process of migration, no matter which era, is a rupture of the continuity of life: the psyche searches for the familiar and the beloved, and finds comfort in the shared memories of home, which are brought to life, or embodied, when people dance. Dance is a nexus of past and present, memory and currency; it is a way of retaining links with the former life while simultaneously working out a new identity in the current circumstances of life (Fortier, 2000).

## Chapter 6

### Structural and Functional Transnational Fields:

#### Organisations, Pedagogies and Materials

This chapter, in congruence with Chapter Five, presents three transnational fields within which the dance groups in the current study are active participants, yet there are important differences between the information which was presented in the previous chapter and that which is explored here. The domains which were explored in Chapter Five operate at the level of the individual more than the group, whereas the fields which are discussed in the current chapter concern the group more than the individual. Dance networks also function “at a macro-level by organisations and institutions who can determine the predominant meanings of dance and regulate and control dance practice” (B. O’Connor, 2013, p. 9). Hence it is the “macro-level” of dance praxis upon which this chapter focuses.

The differentiation between Chapters Five and Six may be understood through several further prisms and while the previous chapter is concerned more with the subjective, private sphere, the current chapter focuses on the public sphere and objective information (Gonzalez-Rábago & Blanco, 2016). Much historical material is introduced in this chapter, particularly with reference to the Irish community with its long settlement timeframe in Australia. Archived newspaper reports are primarily employed, along with various other documentary data, mostly from the websites of cultural and choreological organisations. Finnegan (2016) states that “without also attending to those who now or in the past realised and enacted musics in new and old settings we miss the full picture” (p. 235), so the historical data make a significant contribution to the study of the translation of dance practices across both spatial and temporal fields, and complement current constructions of immigrant identities in Sydney. Engagement with history also means that more emphasis is placed on activities in the sending society than in the previous chapter, thus highlighting the simultaneity of activity, in both home and host locations, which is intrinsic to transnational activities (Tsuda, 2012). In combination, then, Chapters Five and Six demonstrate that transnationalism, amongst the dancers and dance groups in this research, is a “multidimensional concept present in many areas of the immigrant’s life” (Gonzalez-Rábago & Blanco, 2016, p. 872), including historical, political, economic and socio-cultural.



As with the previous chapter, I discuss the Irish community first, followed by the Croatian community, and within each section, I explore the three strands of transnational connections. The phenomenon of trans-border exchanges has been identified in the discourses surrounding the flow of money, goods, information, technology and social and cultural capital (Cave & Koloto, 2015; Conway, Potter, St. Bernard & Rodman, 2015; Santamaria-Alvarez & Śliwa, 2016). These works often draw upon theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu (1993), whose notion of social fields illuminates the role of transnational spaces which are created by, and depend on, the financial, social and cultural capital of their participants (Hassrick, 2012).

Organisational transnationalism concerns the intra-community societies and associations which are formed within immigrant groups. It is based on characteristics of the particular community in question and, therefore, may reflect culturally-specific religious or political affiliations (Dahinden, 2010; Levitt, 2001). Organisations are often founded quite rapidly following immigration, especially when the immigrant group is large in size and well-resourced (Chaudhary & Guarnizo, 2016). There are also more specialised, dance-related organisations with which some of the groups in the current study are affiliated. The organisational fields in which the dance groups operate provide the structural framework within which other forms of international cultural flows operate (Hassrick, 2012), including the pedagogies and material goods which are the subjects under consideration in the remainder of the chapter. Organisations, therefore, provide the “infrastructure for cultural retention” (Dunn & Ip, 2008, p. 91) within immigrant communities.

The second section is about pedagogies, including the specific links between teaching practices in both home and host societies and also the similarities and differences in those teaching methodologies. The exchange of information such as dance knowledge across borders (Conway et al., 2015) could be considered as a form of material transnationalism but since it primarily relates to teaching practices in this study, it is included in the pedagogical discussion. This section also examines any changes which have appeared in pedagogies over time (Harris Walsh, 2008; Nahachewsky, 2002; Wrazen, 2005) since the establishment of the various dance groups in Sydney.

Finally, material transnationalism concerns various circuits through which financial capital flows (Kivisto, 2003), and involves the transfer of either money (Levitt, 2001) or various kinds of merchandise, especially goods which are only manufactured in the former homeland, across national borders (Scully, 2012). It refers to the movement of physical items which may then be of practical benefit within the receiving society location or which are

employed as symbolic signifiers of the sending society (Boym, 2001; Cave & Koloto, 2015; Penman & Omar, 2011). It may also include monetary exchanges, which usually flow from the diaspora to the homeland (Lee, 2011; Levitt, 2001). When applied to ethnochoreological research, material transnationalism is mostly about the transfer of goods, especially items of costuming, between either Ireland or Croatia and dance groups in Australia (Gowricharn, 2009; Wilcox, 2011; Wulforth, Rocha & Morgan, 2014). Costumes worn for performances provide symbolic links to the sending society (Falcone, 2013; Kolb, 2013) and are important in establishing mnemonic connections with the location of origin through a dance performance (Nahachewsky, 2012).

## **Part One: Irish Dancing**

### **Organisational Transnationalism**

From the early days of European settlement in Australia, one of the main organisations to which new Irish immigrants in Australia turned was the Catholic Church<sup>46</sup> which, in the diaspora, followed the patterns instituted in the former homeland. Religious organisations are amongst the most dominant institutions to be established by immigrant groups (Shelemay, 2012), including the fledgling Irish community in Sydney. Much of the foundational work of the Catholic faith in Australia was undertaken by other Irish priests such as Father John Therry and Father Philip Connolly (Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, 1999-2017). Before long, plans for a chapel in Sydney were made and the foundation stone was laid on October 29, 1821 by the governor, Lachlan Macquarie (Catholic Enquiry, 2017). The Catholic Church's influence in the young society was widespread, with the establishment of both educational facilities and social welfare organisations. One prominent organisation was the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, founded in 1880, which provided an early form of health insurance and which aimed to "cherish the memory of Ireland and to foster loyalty to Australia, their adopted home" (Catholic Enquiry, 2017, n.p.).

The political organisations which were inaugurated also aimed to support the movement towards an independent Ireland. In 1875, a meeting was held with the purpose of setting up a Celtic Club in Sydney. An article in the *Freeman's Journal* (1875 February 27)

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<sup>46</sup> Protestant immigrants formed a branch of the Orange Lodge in Sydney. The *Sydney Morning Herald* on July 24, 1846 reveals the existence of this group in Sydney. However, while the existence and activities of Irish Protestants is part of the overall narrative of Irish migration to Australia, it was the Catholic faith which was closely entwined with the movement for Irish independence and the revival of Irish cultural practices, including the Gaelic language, music and dancing.

which was written by one of the men who were instrumental in founding the organisation, states that “I believe there exists sufficient patriotism amongst Irishmen and their descendants in New South Wales, to give practical proof of their undying love for Ireland” (p.9). He goes on to state that the club would support Home Rule in Ireland and that monetary contributions were to be collected and sent to Ireland to assist that movement. This love for Ireland was characteristic of several other organisations which arose from within the Irish community in Sydney. The Irish National Foresters’ ball finished with a toast to Ireland (*Freeman’s Journal*, 1892 September 10) and the Irish Relief Fund collected donations which were sent to Ireland to assist people in dire need (*Sydney Chronicle*, 1846, December 30). The Irish National Association (INA), formed in 1915 (Irish National Association, 2015), is one of the newer organisations, and is still in existence, with premises close to the Central Business District of Sydney.

These organisations were vital in establishing community cohesion amongst both former prisoners and free settlers, whose experiences were different but who shared a common heritage. The associations understood the needs of their members (Gerstnerova, 2014; Lacroix, 2014) and provided a locale for emblematic representations of the former homeland (Skrbiš, 1999). In this way, they acted as agents of cultural mediation, positioning the immigrants in social spaces (Van Gorp & Smets, 2015). The Gaelic Club Sydney (n.d.), in which the INA has its current base, and the Penrith Gaels Cultural and Sporting Association (2008) in the western suburbs of Sydney are examples of Irish clubs which are presently operating in Sydney, but their focus is more socio-cultural than political or economic.

In Chapter Four, the role of the Gaelic League in encouraging people in Ireland to participate in Irish traditional dancing was described, and in Australia, the same organisation became instrumental in the coordination of Irish step and *céilí* dancing. The first record of the Gaelic League in the Australian press was in the *Freeman’s Journal* on March 24, 1894, when a small article reports on the organisation’s founding in Dublin “for the preservation of the Irish language” (p.7). Slowly, this organisation spread through the various Irish diasporic communities. A branch in London was formed in 1896 (*Catholic Press*, 1896 November 28) and in the USA in 1899 (*Catholic Press*, 1899 April 29). *The Sydney Morning Herald* (1900 October 15) contains a small item which reports that “a meeting of gentlemen interested in the Irish language” (p. 6) was convened and that a branch of the Gaelic League was to be established in Sydney. *The Evening News* (1908 March 30) describes an Irish community gathering at Hunter’s Hill, a suburb of Sydney, at which Cardinal Moran spoke of Irish

dancing as “enjoying a renaissance owing in great part to the influence of the Gaelic League” (p. 4). This particular article is significant because it illustrates the nexus of Catholicism, the Gaelic League and Irish traditional dancing in Sydney.

Many references to the Gaelic League and the INA, in relation to Irish dancing competitions, are located within the canon of archived newspapers from Sydney. For example, in 1916 the INA is recorded as being the coordinating body for step and *céilí* dancing in Sydney (*Catholic Press*, 1916 February 3), while the Gaelic League placed an advertisement to attract pupils for its Irish dance classes (*Freeman’s Journal*, 1925 January 8). However, the two associations do not appear to have competed for the loyalties of the Irish community in Sydney. The *Freeman’s Journal* (1931 April 30) contains a notice about a social dance which was organised by the Gaelic League yet was held in the INA’s premises. Whichever organisation was involved in a particular event, Irish dancing was part of the cultural nurturing offered to the community of Irish immigrants<sup>47</sup>.

Evidence of the Gaelic League’s strengthening global control of Irish dancing is found in a brief note in *The Sun* (1951 April 10). The City of Sydney Eisteddfod’s rules about the section for the eight-hand reel, a *céilí* dance, were to be amended. The writer reports that “the dances will be in precise character with the standards laid down by the Gaelic League instructions [which] have just been received through the *Leagaidacht na Eireann*<sup>48</sup> at Canberra” (p. 1). The 1950’s was also the era in which the founding members of the Australian Irish Dancing Association (AIDA) were learning and competing. The results of the Irish dancing section of the City of Sydney Eisteddfod, published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on September 20, 1952, list a young woman called Janice Currie as having won several prizes. That same dancer is now the Patron of AIDA (Australian Irish Dancing Association, 2017), thus making her a connection between the era prior to the formation of AIDA, and the current period when AIDA adheres to the guidelines laid down by the Irish Dancing Commission in Dublin.

The syllabus for the 2017 Australian Championships clearly states that “these Championships are conducted under the rules and regulations of An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha (CLRG)<sup>49</sup>, Dublin, and the Australian Irish Dancing Association Inc. (AIDA Inc.)” (Australian Irish Dancing Association, 2017). This statement both establishes the authority of

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<sup>47</sup> Set dancing had yet to be revived either in Ireland or elsewhere. It was not until the 1970s that this genre emerged to be included within the canon of Irish dancing (Murphy, 1996; Foley, 2011).

<sup>48</sup> Irish Legation

<sup>49</sup> In this thesis I have used the acronym IDC from the English name of this organisation, Irish Dancing Commission.

the IDC and validates the diasporic authority of AIDA as the agency of control in Australia. The rules for the championships take up most of a 12 page document, and detail every aspect of both solo step and team *céilí* dancing, including steps, music, costume and make-up. Teacher registration, identification of students for competitions, competition structure, student and teacher examinations and regulations concerning are also subject to IDC control (Brennan, 1999; Cullinane, 2003; F. Hall, 2008; Ní Brhíain, 2006). Indeed, “the production of modern Irish dance mirrors precisely the classical organizational form of modern economy and administration: standardized, efficient and quality controlled mass-production” (Kavanagh, Kuhling & Keohane, 2008; pp. 735-736). The organisational transnationalism forged by the IDC is both potent and effective in multiple geographical locations, as there are more qualified teachers and registered students outside of Ireland than within it (Cullinane, 1994). Step dancers are linked through adherence to a genre which has been disseminated from, and continues to be controlled by, Ireland. It is not a community marked by a multi-directional circulation of ideas and innovations (Ramnarine, 2007a), as the overall direction of dancing praxis emanates *from* Ireland, as the hub, to all other locations.

The social dancing from Ireland is also globally regulated but with less rigour than what is applied to step dancing. The dances have been documented and archived for reference on the internet, thus rendering them globally accessible (Set Dancing News, 2016). The overall direction of flow within this field is, again, from Ireland as the hub to the various diasporic satellite locations. At a local level, there are informal bonds between *SICD* and *Harp*, which extend to other Irish social dance groups both in Sydney and elsewhere in Australia, as noted amongst other geographically translated dance genres (Falcone, 2013; Kolb, 2013).

The dance organisations which are described here are active in multiple spheres and their activities are both unwavering and unremitting (Fauser, 2013). The Ireland-based IDC operates at an international level (Brennan, 1999; Cullinane, 2003; Ní Bhriain, 2006) and is highly institutionalised, as is often the result when a genre seeks global homogeneity (Meduri, 2008). The social dance networks, though less formally constructed, have also achieved uniformity and are internationally influential. Through organisational transnationalism, whether formal or informal, dance groups in Sydney continue to experience and develop connections with dance organisations and groups in Ireland. The global networks of Irish dance genres “bring together local knowledge and distribute it on a transnational level across the organization” (Fauser, 2013, p. 49).

## Pedagogical Transnationalism

The beginnings of step dancing teaching in Sydney, as described in Chapter Four, indicate replication of Irish practices, with a dance master teaching a small group of students. For example, the *Catholic Press* (1907 January 31) contains an advertisement which states that “Mr Purtill, whose reputation as an Irish dancer is unrivalled, has decided to open classes in any suburb of Sydney in which six pupils can be obtained. Lessons will also be given at children’s homes and in classroom” (p. 28). Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dance students were listed as representing individual teachers in reports of competition results (*Catholic Press*, 1938 March 17), thus showing that the person-to-person pedagogy, as practised in Ireland (Brennan, 1999; Foley, 2013), was mirrored in Australia.

As reported by the participant cohort in this study, dancing was taught as an after school activity in several Catholic primary schools in Sydney in the 1950s and 1960s, and this is where Kirstie learned, although the teacher was “a qualified Irish dancing teacher just using the school as a venue, with no ties to the school” (Interview, March 4, 2014). Michelle (Interview, November 10, 2015) said that Irish dance lessons were taught by the Brigidine nuns at her primary school, although she later learned from a specialist step dance teacher. Eventually, during the 1960s, step dance teachers established independent schools in Sydney, holding classes in hired halls on weeknights or at weekends, a pattern which is still replicated at *Bláth*.

Within the class at *Bláth*, the current pedagogy reflects the increasingly competitive nature of the genre. Kirstie related that “there’s a lot more work on fitness and stamina than there used to be...there were no warm-ups or cool downs in those days” (Interview, March 4, 2014) while Vicki, who learned step dancing in the 1970s and 1980s, remarked that dance classes in which her children currently participate are “a little bit more disciplined” than when she danced (Interview, June 10, 2014). Certainly, Kirstie’s observation about fitness and stamina was borne out during the fieldwork visits. I observed that “with the arrival of the new group of dancers, drill commences, to reinforce correct positioning of the feet and turnout of the toes as well as postural control” (Fieldnotes, February 10, 2014). All classes at *Bláth* begin with warm-up exercises followed by drilling of basic movements which are intrinsic to the genre (see the first part of Video Sample 4.1), which is a common practice amongst competitive dance schools (F. Hall, 2008; Hassrick, 2012).

Some participants reported an increasing trend amongst Sydney dance teachers to have colleagues from Ireland visit during the European summer and run workshops for Australian students. This practice serves to both validate dance praxes away from the original source (Lau, 2007) and raises the visiting teacher from a position of regularity, where he or she is one of many dance teachers with their own schools, to the position of expert. The possession of Irishness, in this context, provides added cultural capital to the visiting teacher whilst teaching in the diaspora (Katrak, 2004). Several participants from *Bláth* have also travelled, in 2016 and 2017, to live temporarily in Ireland and attend dance classes while there. For them, the aim was to be immersed in current practice and be taught by those who are operating within the hub, Ireland (Hassrick, 2012). These dancers, due to the global homogeneity of step dance organisation and pedagogy (Cullinane, 1999; F. Hall, 2008; Kavanagh et al., 2008), did not have to adapt to vastly different methods of teaching and they were able to immediately participate in the classes.

The social dance transmission process in Ireland was also primarily oral (Hast & Scott, 2004), and both set and céilí dancing continue to be taught through oral means but with frequent reference to the written canon of dances. I observed that books<sup>50</sup> are often used at both *SICD* and *Harp*. Most notably, the published canon of approved céilí dances by the Gaelic League and IDC in Ireland (Foley, 2011; Hast & Scott, 2004) and the archive of set dances published by Murphy (1996) were employed. During the fieldwork visits to both groups, I observed that each teacher referenced prominent teachers from Ireland. In particular, the teacher of *SICD* often communicated by email with teachers in Ireland to keep abreast of the latest developments or to clarify dance instructions which are insufficiently clear (Hassrick, 2012).

Attendance at workshops in Ireland has revolutionised social dance teaching in Sydney, for it means that new trends in choreography and pedagogy are more easily accessible and validates the teachers as having learned from the source of the dance genres (Lau, 2007). In 1989, the current leader of *SICD* travelled to Ireland for the Willie Clancy Summer School in Milltown Malbay, County Clare (Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy, 2016). The teacher of *Harp* has also attended this workshop on several occasions, but not as frequently as the teacher of *SICD*, who has attended 21 times in the period from 1989 until 2017. In both *Harp* and *SICD*, workshop experiences and written dance instructions form the pedagogical base, in congruence with social dance groups in Ireland (Murphy, 1996; Foley, 2013). The privileging

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<sup>50</sup> While Cullinane (1994) states that publication of dance notes occurred in the USA and UK before the Gaelic League book was released, it is the League's book which has had the most profound influence.

of Ireland-based workshops and teachers is another form of validation seen in diasporic dance genres, since it directly connects the local teacher with the source of the dance genre (Hassrick, 2012; Lau, 2007; Wulfhorst, Rocha & Morgan, 2014).

Finally, there is another trend which is common to all of the Irish dance genres in the current study. While there is a sense in which teachers of Irish dancing genres in Sydney have all acted, historically, as agents in the construction of Irish culture (Ni Bhriain, 2010; O'Farrell, 1986; O'Hagin & Harnish, 2006), the pedagogical purpose amongst all three Irish dance groups did not include active dissemination of the beliefs and principles of Irish culture in the manner described by Issari (2011) and Ram (2005) with respect to other traditional dance forms which have been translated to other locations. I observed that teachers in the social groups announced which county is the original source of a particular dance, but step dance classes contained no historical or cultural information (Ni Bhriain, 2010).

The pedagogies of all forms of Irish dancing, then, are largely standardised, no matter the location of the class. As described earlier, step dancers are able to join classes in Ireland without difficulty as the teaching methods are almost identical, allowing for variations in teachers' personal approaches. In 2014, I made a fieldwork trip to Ireland and attended a set dance class in suburban Dublin<sup>51</sup>. I was able to join in with the dancers from the start of the class and new material was presented in the same way as it is in Sydney by the teachers of both *Harp* and *SICD*. This uniformity has emanated from the organisational homogeneity described in the previous section, and permits the culturally-based transnational flow of teachers and students (Foley, 2011; Hassrick, 2012).

All of the Irish dance groups in Sydney participate in transnational pedagogical networks which operate with Ireland as the hub and Sydney as one of the multiple satellite locations. The modern comforts of affordable travel and access to technology have been embraced, in common with other diasporic dance and music genres (Collier, 2014; Kennedy & Roudometoff, 2002; Shelemay, 2006), so that the physical distance between Ireland and Australia has less effect on pedagogies than what it once did and all teachers can more easily access the latest dances and techniques which have been developed in Ireland.

### **Material Transnationalism**

In Ireland in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the appropriation of Irish step dancing for nationalistic purposes was accompanied by the wearing of costumes, often decorated with

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<sup>51</sup> At Áras Chrónáin Cultural Centre, Clondalkin, Dublin, April 25, 2014.



embroidered images from The Book of Kells<sup>52</sup>, which purported to represent Irish history and culture (Robb, 1998). Step dance costumes of earlier times may have been far less elaborate than those of the current era, but nevertheless, from the earliest days of competitive dancing there was a one way flow, from Ireland to Australia, of fabrics, dance shoes and accompanying paraphernalia such as Tara brooches, all deemed essential for clothing the Irish dancing body in Australia (Cullinane, 2006).

Over time, this flow has accelerated<sup>53</sup>: current costs to outfit a female step dancer in new items for competition, as related by research participants, are between \$AUD3000 and \$5000, which includes dress, socks, hard and soft shoes, wig and headdress items (tiara). The dancers shown in Figure 6.1 are wearing all of these items, while hard shoes can be seen on the male dancer in Figure 6.2. Specialised Irish dance manufacturers abound, and leading Australian dancers, such as the two young women in Figure 6.1 and those in Video Sample 5.1, now choose to buy new dresses from dressmakers in Ireland. Male dancers wear embroidered vests (approximately \$AUD 700-1000) which may also be ordered from the manufacturers in Ireland, and need both kinds of shoes. The rest of their clothing is generic and available in regular clothing stores, and they do not wear wigs, so costs are much lower than for females.



*Figure 6.1.* Female dancers in competition attire (© Milton Baar, MediaImages)

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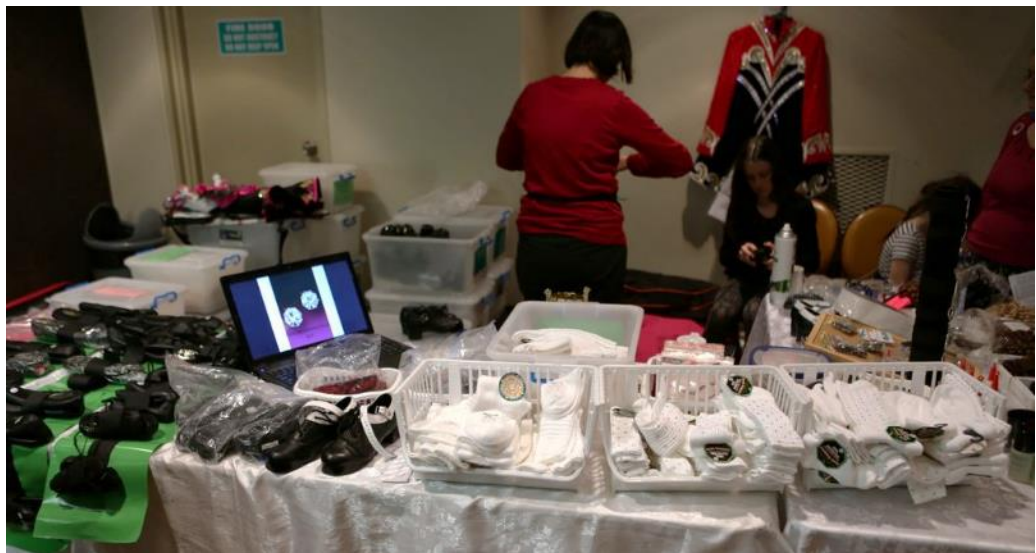
<sup>52</sup> The Book of Kells is an ancient religious manuscript which is highly decorated with Celtic knotwork, and is kept in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.

<sup>53</sup> This discussion concerns the situation for advanced dancers only, since beginner and elementary level dancers are required to compete in either street clothing or very simple costumes only, according to IDC rules (An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha, 2015).



*Figure 6.2.* Male dancer in competition attire (© Milton Baar, MediaImages)

The shoes, wigs and other items are available for purchase in Australia. There are a number of people, most of whom are also parents of competitive dancers, who have set up small businesses to trade in Irish dancing commodities (Figure 6.3). While these businesses are registered and operate within Australia, the goods they sell have been, for the most part, imported from Ireland. The producers of dresses, shoes and other items in Ireland are “cultural entrepreneurs” (Gowricharn, 2009, p. 1627) who maintain material transnationalism through the production and sale of consumable items to Irish dancers around the world.



*Figure 6.3* A stall selling Irish step dance merchandise, New South Wales Championships, Sydney, August 22, 2014.

The highly active status of the material network amongst step dancers is propelled by both the nature of the consumers and the intensity of the competitions (F. Hall, 2008; Tomell-Presto, 2003; Varade, 2015). Since most dancers are growing children, it is not uncommon for dresses and shoes to need replacement, on average, every 18 months. Besides these items, most dancers will have a variety of other items such as sock glue<sup>54</sup>, sports strapping equipment, dress covers and shoe bags. Every effort is made to make a dancer noticeable to adjudicators by whatever means is available and within IDC regulations, and unique contemporary costume design is one method of achieving this (Varade, 2015). F. Hall (2008) comments that if “two dancers are equal in performance, one in a fancy costume and the other in a simpler one, an adjudicator would be under a certain pressure to reward the fancy costume, precisely because the fancy costume has become normative” (p. 64). The exact origin of the trend for complex and attention-seeking costumes is uncertain. Horgan (2006) believes that when dancers from various geographies come together at large competitions, there is an exchange of concepts and designs which occurs as people are able to view costumes from other parts of the world, while Venable (2006) argues that “Irish-American cultural influences and ideologies shape global Irish dancing industries” (p. 23). It is likely that it would be difficult to pinpoint the precise origin of the various trends in step dance costumes, but what is certain is that dancers from *Bláth* closely adhere to recent global fashions, but purchase dresses from Ireland rather than from other diasporic locations.

Certainly, when the general economic circumstances of those who participate in competitive step dancing are taken into account, it may be seen that there is the financial capacity for spending large amounts of money in order to attain whatever competitive edge may be reached. Irish immigrants in Australia have relatively high levels of income, as noted in Chapter Four, and the same fiscal security for step dance participants who lack Irish heritage<sup>55</sup> is recorded in other studies (Hassrick, 2012; Tomell-Presto, 2003). All of the study participants from *Bláth* compete regularly and have been able to purchase the costume requirements described in this section. For the older dancers, these purchases have been made repeatedly over the period of their dance careers.

Varade (2015) states that the “rising levels of disposable income” (p. 65) have influenced the rapid turnover in dresses amongst advanced competitors. The relative affluence of participants and their families is a factor driving costumes to greater heights of elaboration in design and more expensive fabrics and decorations (Venable, 2006). The

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<sup>54</sup> This is applied around the top of the calf, to hold the sock in place and prevent slippage while dancing.

<sup>55</sup> The presence of dancers who have no Irish heritage within the step dancing community is explored further in Chapter Seven.

electronic age, in which costumes may be viewed and ordered online has led to expansion of this transnational marketplace (Venable, 2006), so Sydney step dancers have the opportunity to look as up-to-date as their Irish (and American and British) counterparts as they strive for victory at each competition (De Galláí, 2013; F. Hall, 2008; Varade, 2015).

In comparison, the social dancers are less active in material transnationalism. The participants from *Harp* and *SICD* only purchase specialised dance shoes from manufacturers in Ireland by ordering them online, or they may make an electronic acquisition of a DVD of set or *céilí* dancing, but that is the extent of their material transnational practices. The costumes for *SICD* dancers<sup>56</sup> (see Figure 6.4 and Video Sample 5.2) are produced by the leader from locally-sourced products.



*Figure 6.4* Dancers from *SICD* in performance costumes, National Folk Festival, Canberra, April 3, 2015.

Overall, Irish dancers in Sydney are active in the material field, especially when the relative numbers of adherents to step and social dance genres across Sydney are taken into account. *Bláth* accounts for just over half of the participants in this study, but the total number of step dancers in Sydney far outweighs the number of social dancers. There is only one other social dance group in Sydney but there are twenty-seven other step dance schools in Sydney not included in this research (AIDA NSW, n.d.). The exchange of goods between Ireland and Australia is concentrated within step dancing. This transnational field is well-financed and propelled by the dancers' desire for competitive supremacy and validation as modern Irish step dancers (Tomell- Presto, 2003; Varade, 2015; Venable, 2006).

## **Part Two: Croatian Dancing**

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<sup>56</sup> *Harp* dancers do not have costumes as they do not currently engage in public performances. Issues of performance are discussed in Chapter Seven.

## Organisational Transnationalism

Community organisations were commonly founded by immigrant groups, both in Sydney and other locations in Australia, soon after the first settlers from a given group had arrived in Australia (Brockhall & Liu, 2011; Chetcuti, 1986; Drodzewski, 2007; Waitt, Galea & Rawstorne, 2001). Given the complexities of migration and resettlement, it is not surprising that Croatian immigrants, along with other immigrant groups, have made the establishment of cultural links with fellow settlers from Croatia a priority, so that a stable element would be constructed within the turbulence of migration and resettlement (Lacroix, 2014; Van Gorp & Smets, 2015).

As described in Chapter Four, a high level of immigration from Croatia, which was then part of the Republic of Yugoslavia, began after the Second World War. The Croatian community in Sydney in the 1950s was part of several overarching organisations which consisted of immigrants from Europe<sup>57</sup>. The first was called the New Australians' Cultural Organisation (*The Sun*, 1949 June 14) while the other was The Australian Cultural Association of New South Wales, whose members were from 16 European cultural communities (*Meie Kodu=Our Home*, 1953 January 29). A culturally-specific organisation, The Australian Croatian Association, is mentioned in a small item in *The Sun* (1954 April 10), when 50 members of the organisation gathered in the centre of Sydney to lay a wreath commemorating those who had died fighting for Croatian independence.

Later, Croatian Clubs were built so that members of the community could socialise with others from their former homeland. The Dalmacija Sydney Croatian Club (2016) opened in the mid-1960s, “when a group of Croatian immigrants congregated together with a single passion to establish a unified community that would celebrate the beautiful qualities of their Croatian culture” (n.p.). The King Tomislav Croatian Club's (2011) website states that it was set up in 1965 and declares that “the Club is proud of its heritage and continues to uphold the Croatian culture, customs, traditions and language” (n.p.). Current research participant, Clare, related that many people, such as her parents, found it “very hard to come, which is why I think it meant so much to my parents' generation to build these Croatian clubs to keep that culture alive and it was their connection to the old country” (Interview, June 2, 2014). The clubs and organisations served as places of refuge, where shared values and traditions, so

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<sup>57</sup> Immigrants from Lebanon seem to have been considered as quasi-European as they were part of this organisation.

honoured by first generation immigrants, were privileged (Lalich, 2004; Simon, 2014; Skrbiš, 1999).

The Croatian Catholic Church has also been a focal point for community activities. While it is part of the overall structure of Catholicism, a separate network of churches where the Croatian language is used was established in Sydney (Hrvatski Katolički Centri, n.d.). Indeed, 14 Catholic parishes or centres have been established around the nation over the past 60 years (Šutalo, 2010). Most of the events at which *Vukovar*<sup>58</sup> and *Cvijet* performed during the fieldwork period were attended by either priests or nuns, and both groups were actively involved in performing at church events. For example, *Vukovar* sang at the Croatian Church Christmas Carols in a local park in both 2014 and 2015. Thus, there is a close relationship between Croatian Catholicism and practitioners of traditional folklore in Sydney.

Other transnational networks have developed from initiatives by individuals and groups within Croatia itself. Most prominently, there are three members of the Croatian parliament, the *Sabor*, who represent the diaspora (Croatian Parliament, 2017), thus demonstrating that Croatia is a nation with extraordinarily formalised political links with its emigrants. Another is the Croatian World Games, modelled on the Olympic Games, in which sporting teams from places in the Croatian diaspora travel to Croatia to compete in a variety of events (Croatian World Congress, n.d.). The Croatian Diaspora Congress, the second of which was held in mid-2016 further serves to concretise global links between Croatian emigrants (Hrvatska Matica Iseljenika, 2016).

The presence of such active channels for contact and communication between Croatia and the various diasporic locations is specifically designed to foster the development of transnational links with the former homeland. I attended a Croatian National Day event on June 27<sup>59</sup>, 2015 and, in the course of the celebrations, a pre-arranged phone call was placed to Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, who is still the President of Croatia at the time of writing. She addressed the gathering in Croatian and congratulated them for their efforts in marking the occasion, a remarkable event for a small gathering so far away from Croatia itself<sup>60</sup>. Since this event is held annually in parallel with Croatian National Day celebrations elsewhere in the world, it serves to reinforce the global “transnational imagined community” of Croatian

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<sup>58</sup> *Vukovar*'s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert, staged at a general performance venue rather than a Croatian Club, was the exception.

<sup>59</sup> The actual celebration is June 25 but the event was on the closest Saturday evening, June 27, 2015.

<sup>60</sup> In August 2017, President Grabar-Kitarović visited Sydney and presented the Charter of the Republic of Croatia, a meritorious award, to all Croatian dance groups in Sydney in recognition of their efforts in the continuation of Croatian folkloric traditions in Australia.

emigrants (Van Gorp & Smets, 2015, p. 80). The general connections between the community in Sydney and the nation of Croatia are therefore strong in the fields of religion, politics and sport. The first two of these are common fields in which transnational linkages may be constructed (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2002; Levitt, 2001, 2004; Mitchell, 2006). Sport as a transnational social space has been explored to some extent in the Irish diaspora (Darby & Hassan, 2007) but remains a field for potential future research within the Croatian emigrant population<sup>61</sup>.

There are no formalised transnational links for dance groups in the Croatian diaspora, either with Croatia or with immigrant communities in other locations such as the USA. However, as Levitt (2001) points out, parents who are accustomed to intra-community activity of one kind are more likely to seek other activities and to encourage children to be involved as well and, as described in Chapter Five, there is a strong desire amongst the participants that Croatian dancing should be perpetuated amongst subsequent generations in Sydney, a situation which matches what is recorded in the USA by Johnson (2009). Hence, from the general community organisational structure, a dance-based network has arisen, which is stronger at local and national levels than within the international arena. Organisational links between dance groups in Sydney were established in 1978, with the formation of the Association of Croatian Folkloric Groups (Budak & Lalich, 2008). The establishment of dance and music societies to which various culturally-specific groups may belong is a regular occurrence in other immigrant communities (Falcone, 2013; Kolb, 2013) and contributes to choreological and community cohesiveness.

In 2015, 2016 and 2017, I attended the Croatian Children's Folkloric Festival<sup>62</sup> in Sydney, where troupes from all over Australia gathered for an afternoon and evening of carnival rides, food and a concert with items by each group. *Vukovar* has links with similar groups in Melbourne and in Auckland, New Zealand which, while informal in that there is no organisational structure connecting the groups, are strong in intensity. During the fieldwork phase of this study, performances were held in each of these three cities, with the three groups performing on each occasion in a show of support for the other groups. The national network amongst both the children's and adults' groups mirrors the network of festivals and competitions which takes place between various localised dance groups in Croatia itself (Shay, 2016; Vitez, 2008; Čaleta & Zebec, 2017). Their interconnectedness is more

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<sup>61</sup> For example, the Croatian community in Australia has provided a large number of players who have been selected in Australia's national soccer team (Lynch, 2015; Šutalo, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> The first festival was held in 2008.

congruent with “intradiasporic transnationalism” (Lee, 2011, p. 303) since it is not generated from Croatia.

## **Pedagogical Transnationalism**

### ***Vukovar and Cvijet.***

Although there is no formalised organisational structure for traditional dancing in Croatia, ethnomusicologist Joško Čaleta related that after the war there was a “great tradition for folk schools” (Interview, July 15, 2014) in what was then Yugoslavia. Patterns of pedagogy were developed in those schools which have been reproduced in Croatia and in diasporic locations, including Sydney. Chapter Four describes the history of folkloric dancing in Sydney, beginning with the formation of *Koleda* in the late 1960s. The founders had learned their dancing in Croatia and sought to establish *Koleda* in an exact replication of troupes in Croatia, especially LADO, the national ensemble of Croatia (Crvenkovic, 2005). The creator of *Vukovar* had also learned his craft in Croatia, and had successfully auditioned for *LADO* before deciding instead to migrate to Sydney:

We were lucky that we had [the founder] who used to dance for *LADO*; we were instilled into that professionalism, originality of dance and stuff like that. (Terry, interview, March 25, 2015)

There is no formalised system for the training of teachers and choreographers in Croatia, but generally the pedagogical framework laid down by leading choreographer and dance researcher Dr. Ivan Ivančan is followed, incorporating adherence to regional stylistic nuances in dance choreographies and the absolute authority of a group’s leader in all matters of pedagogy and choreography (Katarincic, Niemčić, & Zebec, 2009).

As *Vukovar* was founded by a first generation immigrant who had danced in Croatia, there is a close temporal link between dancers in Sydney and those who learned in Croatia. Croatian-American dance ethnologist Elsie Ivancich Dunin retold the story of the first Croatian dance groups to be formed in California, and stated that initially, American teachers lacked first-hand experience, saying that they “did not have that kind of knowledge that a KUD teacher has, and they didn’t know how to develop skill in the dancers” (Interview, December 2, 2014).



Overall, substantial migration from Croatia to the USA began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Glasgow, 2012; Johnson, 2009) and so the continuity of diffusion of traditional dancing had weakened. Without this enduring transmission, the Croatian troupes in the USA turned to the recreational folk dance groups, most of whose members were Anglo-Americans (Lausevic, 2007; Shay, 2008). Dunin recalled that

in the 1950s, *kolos*<sup>63</sup> became the rage in the recreational side, and this is going into the second, even the third generation; descendants in the church group, they didn't know dances...so they invited "Americans" to teach them dances to perform, so their repertoire grew in the 1950s. (Interview, December 2, 2014)

She went on to say that

now [the Croatian dance teachers] know better, because many more have been to Croatia and have gone to the workshops and have seen the dancing, so they come back with another level of knowledge that did not exist before. (Interview, December 2, 2014)

Hence, there was a situation in which groups dominated by Anglo-Americans were providing the source material for the newly-formed Croatian folkloric groups. When compared with the data collected in the current study, the information provided during the interview with Dunin demonstrates that assumptions of homogeneity amongst different loci in a transnational network should be discarded (Brubaker, 2002), as there are situationally-specific factors such as length of settlement history which may combine to exert influence on an immigrant community (Dunn & Ip, 2008).

In spite of the short history of Croatian dance in Sydney, a number of pedagogical trends are noteworthy. The current teachers of *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* have amassed considerable experience in both children's and adults' groups. They learned their dancing and teaching skills through an apprenticeship situation, where their teaching and choreography skills were honed through the advice of their mentors. This situation is not unusual for amateur Croatian dance groups, as there are no requirements for formalised teaching qualifications for Croatian traditional dancing (Katarincic et al., 2009). However, Croatia does offer some assistance to dance teachers in Sydney and other diasporic locations. In 2016, I undertook a fieldwork trip to Zagreb, and attended rehearsals of both *LADO*, the Croatian National Ensemble, and *Ivan Goran Kovačić*<sup>64</sup> a prominent folkloric group consisting mostly of university students<sup>65</sup>. *Ivan Goran Kovačić* was the group in which the founders of *Koleda* had learned their craft whilst

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<sup>63</sup> Dances which are performed in large circles.

<sup>64</sup> The name of a prominent Croatian poet of the twentieth century.

<sup>65</sup> These visits were facilitated by Dr Joško Čaleta from the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. His kind assistance is much appreciated.

still living in Zagreb (Crvenkovic, 2005), so there is a direct transnational link between this KUD and the current dance groups in Sydney. This connection also explains why the dance ensembles in Sydney were established as troupes which perform dances from multiple, choreographically-distinct regions, because this is the nature of both *LADO* and *Ivan Goran Kovačić*. There was no need for negotiative processes to unite dancers from disparate regions into one performative unit, as has been reported in research amongst other immigrant dance groups (Shay, 2006).

During the visit to *LADO*, one of their workers told me that the group has an educational program for diasporic groups, and that a member of *LADO* could be appointed to make a visit to Sydney and hold workshops for teachers and dancers. The Croatian dance group in Auckland, New Zealand, has availed itself of this opportunity:

[The leader of the Auckland group] was actually asked to go over [to Auckland] and teach them, and he decided to emigrate<sup>66</sup>. (Terry, interview, March 25, 2015)

Sydney dancers, too, have experienced direct input from Croatian experts. The eminent Croatian choreographer and dance researcher Dr Ivan Ivančan (senior) visited Sydney in 1991 and each group sent representatives (dancers as well as teachers) so that he could assess the standard of dancing in Australia. Teresa recalled that

[Dr. Ivančan] covered all the areas and showed different steps, then he'd go to different groups and have a look—and some people got him to do choreographies. (Interview, June 16, 2015)

The current leaders of both *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* have each travelled to Croatia to participate in workshops which are organised by the Croatian Heritage Foundation, whose website shows that in August 2017, the focus was on dances from the Alpine region of Croatia, and included music, costumes and how to present folklore in stage performances<sup>67</sup> (Hrvatska Matica Iseljenika, 2017).

Opportunities for informal interactions with visiting musicians and dancers are sought whenever possible by the Sydney groups. In 2015, one of the parents at *Cvijet* knew of a *tamburica* player who had come to Australia to visit relatives, and during his stay he ran several classes for young students of the instrument. In January 2017, Dr Joško Čaleta came to Sydney with a singing group, *Dalmatica*, which had been invited to perform at the annual Sydney Festival (2016). The Committee Secretary of *Cvijet* organised a singing workshop for

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<sup>66</sup> At the time of his first visit to Auckland, this man was a member of *LADO*.

<sup>67</sup> In August 2017, the new teacher and two students from *Cvijet* were sponsored by the group to attend this seminar.

members of the two older age groups, during which Dr Čaleta was able to concentrate on Croatian language pronunciation and voice projection, in particular. Each of these examples demonstrates the “increased mobility of cultural flows” (Hassrick, 2012, p. 100) which has resulted from cheaper travel and strong transnational personal and cultural networks.

The particular pedagogical styles employed at *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* have metamorphosed since each group’s founding. Several members of *Vukovar* related that the early days of the group were characterised by a strictness which is no longer present:

We were probably a lot stricter back in the day; when [the founder] taught, you’d be too afraid to put a foot wrong. (Rosemary, interview, March 25, 2015)

People were scared of [the founder]—when you didn’t do something good, he let you know about it. (Scott, interview, March 30, 2015)

[The founder] comes from a full knowledge of folklore from *LADO* days and he was quite strict. (Molly, interview, May 13, 2015)

The man, of whom these participants were speaking, was mirroring the style commonly used in Croatia. Ethnochoreologist Tvrtko Zebec related that dance teachers in Croatia

like to be accepted as artists by the members [of their troupes] so they are not only one of them, they have to be on a higher level—so if they say “it should be like that” everybody should follow and it is very rare that some of them are cooperative in that way, especially in these folk dance ensembles. (Interview, July 15, 2014)

The teaching methods employed by the leaders of both *LADO* and *Ivan Goran Kovačić*, which I observed in 2016, were somewhat different from what is used in the Sydney dance groups. The teaching method employed by the leader of *LADO* was strict and authoritative, as befits a national professional troupe. However, the leader of *Ivan Goran Kovačić* was also stern and imposing in manner, and the deference of his dancers and musicians was evident. The current leader of *Vukovar* chooses to be relaxed in demeanour and collaborative in his teaching methodologies, yet this approach appears to be highly successful. I noted that, while it was clear that he had choreographed the dance in a particular way and he instructed the dancers in the construction of that choreography, he sometimes sought his dancers’ opinions, for example, which handhold was more comfortable for the dancers, or which pattern of motifs looked and felt the best, and he would then make spontaneous adjustments to his choreography in response to his dancers’ suggestions. An example of this conciliatory style is shown in Video Sample 4.5.

This shift in pedagogical style is likely to have resulted from the change in attitude of the second-generation immigrants, who make up the majority of dancers at *Vukovar*. Second generation immigrants have grown up in a more individualistic society and absorb the social

configurations and systems (Levitt, 2001). In Westernised societies such as Australia, democracy and personal choice are favoured, rather than autocracy (Schwarz, Zamboanga & Weisskirch, 2008; Zevallos, 2008). Thus, a collaborative teaching style is more likely to be acceptable to the group's members. This trend moves in the opposite direction to that which is reported by Wrazen (2005) and Harris Walsh (2008), both of whom note an increasingly formalised pedagogy in diasporic communities, yet it is a logical progression given the prevailing social context in Sydney, where the second generation dancers spend more time overall with the wider population (Noels, Leavitt & Clément, 2010; Zhang & Noels, 2012) than with the Croatian community.

Finally, some specific trends in the teaching methodologies also deserve attention. In particular, there is a trend emanating from the parents, for even the youngest children at *Cvijet* to be performing dance steps, whereas previously they would learn musical and dancing games before progressing to dance steps at an older age. As Camilla recounted,

it was where the older people, so like us, we would go along and have our dance along with everyone and the kids would be playing while we do our dance type of thing—for some reason when people came into Australia and started to teach and whatever, that got forgotten—it became about the kids doing what the big kids did, and that was never it, so I'm trying to bring it back. (Interview, June 11, 2014)

An additional important change, common to both *Vukovar* and *Cvijet*, is the transition from Croatian to English as the teaching language (see Video Samples 4.4 and 4.5). In both cases, classes were formerly conducted completely in Croatian, but it eventually became normative that “half the kids can't speak Croatian” (Clare, interview, June 2, 2014) so the use of English as the teaching language developed and became normative. The loss of bilingual ability is a regular occurrence amongst second-generation immigrants (Jones-Correa, 2002; Klein, 2005; Rumbaut, 2002) and even in some homeland situations, as a result of the overwhelming influence of Westernised popular culture (Collier, 2014). Within the Croatian community in the USA, Glasgow (2012) notes the gradual shift to English rather than Croatian as the second generation acculturated into the wider population. As a result, it was considered to be too time-consuming for teachers to make their remarks in both languages. During fieldwork, I observed that the Croatian words *lijevo* (left) and *desna* (right), some technical terms for steps were employed, and Croatian songs were taught, but otherwise, the Croatian language appears to be gradually slipping out of the teaching methodology.

Accompanying the loss of language is the fading of direct engagement with Croatian folklore and history as part of the dance class, a situation which is similar to that noted in other traditional dance genres when taught in diasporic locations (Issari, 2011; Ram, 2005).

Crvenkovic (2005) recalls that at *Koleda*'s leaders followed the pattern of prominent groups in Croatia by providing contextual information such as geography, history, musicology and choreology in the form of a short lecture, before beginning to teach a new dance. Clare noted that in previous years,

before the dance we all had to sit down and get a half an hour lesson—the map would come out: this is where the dance is from, give a brief history, the dress, how they dressed and other information such as “we don't have music in this dance because back in the day they were under the Turks, the Ottoman empire”. (Interview, June 2, 2014)

The dissemination of such information has now almost disappeared from dance lessons, most likely because the second generation lack the experiential memories of festivals and celebrations in the sending society (Wolf, 2002), and such information may be considered by the current generation of dancers to be of little relevance in their Australian-based lives.

### ***Kumpanjija.***

The *kumpanjija* deserves individual consideration here, since its military structure marks it as being different from *Vukovar* and *Cvijet*. Its structure is congruent with its counterpart in Blato (see Video Samples 5.3 and 5.6): the captain is chosen by the Dalmacija Sydney Croatian Club's president, who was himself a dancer in the first regular performance in 1965, and it is a role which carries great responsibility and honour amongst both the dancers and the other Club members. Only once has there been a formal pedagogical connection with the troupe in Blato. In the early 1970s a dancer from Blato came to Sydney to work with the group. Later this man was interviewed by Dunin and she recalled him saying that

teaching the *kumpanjija* in Sydney was one of the most difficult experiences in his life, because of language: young men were not fluent enough [in Croatian] for the terminology that he had to have for the dance. (Interview, December 2, 2014)

In congruence with the other Croatian groups in this study, I noted that very few Croatian instructions were used during rehearsals, again reflecting the dominance of English amongst the second generation immigrants (Rumbaut, 2002).

Overall, the Sydney troupe is less formal in its frequency, in contrast to what has been noted in other dance genres (Harris Walsh, 2008; Wrazen, 2005). In Blato, rehearsals are held several times per week over most of the year, whereas in Sydney the group only met once per week, from January until April, possibly because some dancers, including the captain, travelled for an hour in order to reach the Club premises. The disparate geographical

locations and the difficulties of navigating across the urban sprawl of Sydney thus affect the teaching practices of the *kumpanjja*.

In 2014, the first year of fieldwork, I saw that every dancer had already learned and performed the dance, but in 2015 a new young man (aged 15) was recruited. Much of his learning was by observation and repetition, a common mode of transmission for many traditions (Shelemay, 2006), but the captain spent time in a one-to-one situation each week, either refining the technique for the various steps in the dance, or explaining how to hold and manoeuvre his sword. At such times, one or two of the other young men would watch and critique the newcomer's performance, but always with kindness and encouragement. They were never derogatory in any way in their quest to train this young man's body to move in the manner required to fulfil the role of transnational representation (Lau, 2007). In the same way, new young women were quickly given informal guidelines, then were guided by their male partners during the *tanac*, with feedback being given by the other female dancers.

Transnational pedagogies within the Croatian community are, therefore, subject to influence from a variety of factors. Sydney, where the peak immigration occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, has benefitted from immigrants who had danced at a high level of proficiency in Croatia and so were able to establish groups in Sydney with teaching styles which mirrored Croatian-based pedagogies. Localised factors such as societal norms of individualisation rather than community (Schwarz, Zamboanga & Weisskirch, 2008) have led to greater informality of teaching style. Loss of Croatian language skill in the second generation (Rumbaut, 2002) has forced another change, to the use of English in dance classes. These changes, however, have served to ensure ongoing diffusion of traditional Croatian dance genres in Sydney.

### **Material Transnationalism**

Transactions for the purchase of material dance goods which take place between Croatia and Australia are enacted across the three dance groups in this study. *Vukovar* has multiple sets of costumes in its storeroom and, as they perform dances from all over Croatia, they strive to present correct costuming for the region from which each dance in their repertoire originates, in consonance with folkloric groups in Croatia itself (Katarincic et al., 2009). Many items in their collective wardrobe have either been purchased by group members while visiting Croatia, or have been ordered and shipped to Sydney. One item which must be bought in Croatia is specialised dance shoes (Figure 6.5); along with other items such as the elaborate headwear shown in Figure 6.6, they must be purchased in Croatia

because the cost of local production in Sydney is prohibitive. Hence there are manufacturers in Croatia who, to some degree, service the needs of the diasporic dancers (Gowricharn, 2009; Portes, Haller & Guarnizo, 2002).



*Figure 6.5* Croatian *opanci*, purchased in Croatia by a *Vukovar* dancer.



*Figure 6.6* Embroidered headdresses worn by *Vukovar* dancers at their 30th anniversary concert, November 1, 2014.

One of the female dancers in the group is responsible for coordinating costumes and she has scoured markets and shops in Sydney to find items which, at least from a distance when the group is on stage, provide replication which is accurate enough to satisfy audience members. A final source of costumes comes from other groups in Australia. The costume for the dance *Rukavice*, worn by the female dancer pictured in Figure 6.7, was borrowed from a dance group in Melbourne. Material networks, then, are operating amongst the adult dance groups at “intradiasporic” levels in Australia (Lee, 2011, p. 303).



*Figure 6.7* A female member of *Vukovar* at the thirtieth anniversary concert, November 1, 2014.

*Cvijet* also has multiple costumes to match the regional distinctiveness of the dance being performed. While some of their items have been purchased from Croatia, either in person or electronically, most of their costumes are produced locally by the group's costume coordinator and her assistants (Figure 6.8).



*Figure 6.8* Dancers from *Cvijet* performing at Croatian National Day celebrations, June 27, 2015.

The main reason for this is the nature of growing children, as it would be highly impractical to provide expensive items which may only be worn a few times before being outgrown. However, there is a trend, originating from parents, for the children to wear replica costumes,



instead of the “little white dresses” (Camilla, interview, June 11, 2014) which children of the previous generation used to wear for their performances. So, the costume organisers feel that they need to provide outfits which will satisfy the parents. Through the provision of outfits which reflect the original items as worn in Croatia, both *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* seek to provide an “imputed setting” (Nahachewsky, 2012, p. 28) suggestive of the original locale of the dances. The use of locally-sourced materials is a practice which is also noted amongst Croatian dance groups in the USA (Johnson, 2009), and does not detract from the cultural significance of the performance, since the costume only needs to “refer to, or symbolize the imputed setting and the imputed identity of the dancers” (Nahachewsky, 2012, p. 154).

In contrast to the other Croatian dance groups in Sydney, the *kumpanjija* dancers have only one costume, and the items possessed by the troupe consist of a mixture of items which were manufactured in Blato by those who make costumes for the troupe there, and those which have been produced here. As may be seen from Figure 6.9, it is difficult to distinguish between the Croatian-made and the Australian-made tunics worn by the young women. For the fiftieth anniversary performance in 2015, the town of Blato made a gift of new hats for the young men in Sydney as a gesture of goodwill on such an auspicious occasion. As with the other groups, the sword dancers’ costumes serve to create a setting which reminds both dancers and audience members of the original location of the dance (Nahachewsky, 2012).



Figure 6.9 *Kumpanjija* dancers at the fiftieth anniversary performance, April 25, 2015.

Finally, there is a further form of material transnationalism operating within the Croatian community, which affects dance practices but which is not related to costuming requirements. The Sydney dance groups have often played pivotal roles in fundraising events

for various needs in the Croatian homeland. On such occasions, the dance groups form part of the program of entertainment, designed to attract as many patrons as possible. In 2016, both *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* performed at an event (Figure 6.10) which targeted a need in the town of Vukovar in Eastern Croatia. The water tower was severely damaged during the Balkans conflict in the 1990s and funds are still being sought to enable the repairs to be completed<sup>68</sup>.

Financial remittances are a common means through which emigrants living in a financially secure situation may provide assistance to more needy relatives who remain in the homeland (Binaisa, 2013; Carling & Hoelscher, 2013; Levitt, 2001; Santamaria-Alvarez & Śliwa, 2016; Vertovec, 2004). Levitt (2016) suggests that the global total of financial support sent to previous homelands by emigrants exceeds \$US600 billion. Such remittances have been a specific hallmark of the Croatian diaspora, with the nation's emigrants being considered as providing a substantial contribution to the Croatian national budget (Winland, 2006).



Figure 6.10 Poster advertising fundraising event in the Croatian community<sup>69</sup>.

Dance groups, then, have been directly involved in transnational remittance-sending activities which are organised by the broader community of Croatian immigrants in Sydney.

<sup>68</sup> The dance group chose to name itself after this town, in honour of the significant battle which took place there.

<sup>69</sup> English translation of text: Croatian Catholic Centres in NSW: St Nicholas, Our Lady of the Great Croatian Testament, St Anthony, St Joseph and Our Lady have organised a fundraiser for the reconstruction of Vukovar Watertower. King Tomislav Croatian Club Saturday 27 August 2016. Ticket Price \$25. "Plavi" (a musical ensemble) are playing. The lower part of the poster is not shown as it identifies *Cvijet* and gives personal information such as names and contact details.

Carling & Hoelscher (2013) posit that economic integration into the receiving society is the most important influence on fiscal transnationalism and this is often augmented in the second and subsequent generations, who often experience increasing monetary comfort over time (Jones-Correa, 2002). Certainly, the Croatian community have, on the whole, achieved economic security (ABS, 2013), and this fundraising event demonstrates both the willingness of the community to support people in need in Croatia and the important function of the dance groups in these community-focused gatherings. Thus, material transnational practices of dance groups do not always directly relate to the dancing but to the groups' position within the community of immigrants.

### **Comparing the Communities**

This chapter is devoted to the exploration of three structural and functional transnational fields in which both Irish and Croatian traditional dance groups in Sydney participate: organisational, pedagogical and material transnationalism. The lens of transnationalism allows for a comprehension of the diverse means through which the various dance groups, and individuals within those groups, behave as actors with ties to both their former and current places of residence (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Ward & Kus, 2012). The three strands of transnationalism as discussed in this chapter also demonstrate that within a single immigrant community there exist multiple pathways of connection with the sending society, revealing heterogeneity within communities (Colic-Peisker, 2002; Scully, 2012) and even within individual dance groups. Together, these strands provide a dense yet nuanced description of “what people actually *do* on the ground” (Finnegan, 1989, p. 8, italics in original) in their dance groups in Sydney.

### **Organisational Transnationalism**

This field is often prominent in immigrant groups, whatever their origin or current location (Levitt, 2009), as transnational organisations provide an opportunity for fellowship with fellow settlers (Gerstnerova, 2014; Skrbiš, 1999) and may be considered as “tangible communities of practice” (Van Gorp & Smets, 2015, p. 73). The multiple forms of cross-border organisations “represent...the extensive institutionalization of transnational ties” (Vertovec, 2004, p. 987) between sending and receiving locations.

The initial forms of organisation links with the sending society, for both Irish and Croatian immigrants in Sydney, were not dance-related but rather political, religious or cultural, each of which served to coalesce disparate immigrants into a cohesive group. Political societies, based on existing affiliations prior to emigration, are commonly noted

amongst diasporic communities (Vertovec, 2004), religious organisations often serve to sustain cultural identity in new locations (Ng, 2013), while cultural associations are often prioritised due to their role as markers of heritage-based commonality (Fauser, 2013). Historically, the process of forming various culturally-specific organisations in Sydney served two purposes: first, it permitted each group of immigrants to maintain connections with others from the same place of origin (Leal, 2016). The clubs represented the former homeland and the accompanying values and beliefs which are practised there (Skrbiš, 1999). At the same time, inaugurating the clubs required the immigrant communities to interact with various civic and political personnel in the receiving society (Strunk, 2015). For example, they needed to negotiate with local government authorities to gain permission for building works to proceed.

The establishment of culturally-specific associations such as The Gaelic Club and the King Tomislav Croatian Club is common practice amongst multiple immigrant groups in Australia (Brockhall & Liu, 2011; Drodzewski, 2007; Waitt, Galea & Rawstorne, 2001) and is also noted in other diasporic networks across the globe (Bonnerjee, 2013; Fischer, 2017; Gerstnerova, 2016). Indeed, both the Irish and Croatian diasporic systems are remarkably strong, with considerable input from the governments of the respective sending societies to ensure that links with the former homeland are encouraged and maintained (Croatian Parliament, 2017; Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Ireland, 2015; Hrvatska Matica Iseljenika, 2016). Thus, the forging of organisational connections, as a general principle, is a familiar activity for both immigrant communities in Sydney.

The levels of dance-specific organisational transnationalism are more closely related to the nature of the genre rather than the particular cultural community from which that genre is derived. Of the six dance groups in this study, only one has adopted a highly competitive dance form within the auspices of a formal globalised framework (Cullinane, 1999; F. Hall, 2008; Wulff, 2009). Irish step dancing has a long history of structure, order and homogeneity, from the development of the Gaelic League and, later, the IDC, which successfully influences all aspects of step dance school configuration, through “multi-site organizational structures” (Hassrick, 2012, p. 98). Both the IDC and AIDA are highly organised and their combined influence affects the genre at multiple levels, and every facet of dance participation is subject to universal rules and regulations (Australian Irish Dancing Association, 2017; Hassrick, 2012; Kavanagh et al., 2008). This organisational structure facilitates the international

competition circuit, ensuring that a dancer may compete anywhere around the world<sup>70</sup>. It may also be influential in ameliorating the attrition which could otherwise have resulted in a location such as Sydney, where the settlement timeframe for Irish immigrants is over 200 years<sup>71</sup>.

Social Irish dance groups in Sydney are part of a global network, along with other groups who display a high level of similarity and this network, like that of step dancing, has Ireland as its clear point of reference. In a similar manner, Croatian dance groups privilege local and national connections (Lee, 2011) with their fellow dancers in a situation which reflects that found within Croatia itself. There is no international organisation for Irish social dance classes, Croatian folkloric groups or the *kumpanjija* troupe, but the pattern of mirroring organisational practices for dance groups in the sending society (Crvenkovic, 2005; Dunin, 2012; Foley, 2011) may be considered as another form of transnationalism. Whether highly formalised or loose and casual, transnational organisational fields exemplify the structural frameworks within which capital of all types, whether monetary, cultural or social, may flow (Cave & Koloto, 2015; Conway, Potter, St. Bernard & Rodman, 2015; Santamaria-Alvarez & Śliwa, 2016).

### **Pedagogical Transnationalism**

Traditional arts have methods of transmission which are essential for survival into the future (Schippers, 2006) and through which hierarchies may be preserved and belief systems disseminated (Foucault, 1995). Often, traditional dance and music genres have long histories of oral transmission (Grant, 2012) and all of the genres in this study began as, and primarily continue as, orally transmitted forms. There is a long history of the teaching of all forms of Irish dancing in Sydney, dating back to the early 19th century, but it is only since the middle of the twentieth century that specialised step schools have been established and affiliated with the IDC in Dublin and the current social groups established, in patterns which mirror comparable groups in Ireland (Brennan, 1999; Edwards, 2000; Foley, 2011). All forms of Irish dancing have followed pedagogical patterns which reflect teaching praxis in Ireland and elsewhere in the world (Cullinane, 1999; F.Hall, 2008; Wulff, 2009).

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<sup>70</sup> While the syllabi for competitions are globally consistent, some competitions have other regulations which mean that it may not be possible to compete anywhere in the world. For example, the Australian Championships in Irish Dancing are open only to dancers who are Australian residents.

<sup>71</sup> Irish step dance practice has also been affected by the stage shows such as *Riverdance*; this resultant increase in popularity has also served to prevent attrition in the genre. This phenomenon is discussed in Chapter Seven.

The Croatian groups *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* initially followed teaching praxis in Croatia (Crvenkovic, 2005) because they were established by first generation immigrants who had danced in Croatia before migrating. Over time, the pedagogy has become less formal when compared with the opposite trend in Irish dance genres, due to the loss of Croatian language fluency amongst the dancers and the need to adopt a more democratic approach in keeping with what dancers have become accustomed to in other aspects of their lives in Australia. The *kumpanjija* leader also has the decreased frequency of practice sessions with which to contend and this, too, has contributed to less formal teaching practices.

A notable common feature of all of the dance groups has been the gradual fading of transmission of cultural background to the individual dances being taught. This process seems to have been in evidence in the Irish dance genres for some time, since none of the field visits revealed dissemination of cultural history or knowledge, even amongst the recollections of participants who learned in the 1960s. The Croatian folkloric dancers, however, reported that this loss of transmission of ideals and values through dance classes (Issari, 2011; Ram, 2005) has occurred since the previous generation were dancing. Both communities' pedagogies have benefited from technological advances and the greater affordability of travel (Kasinitz et al., 2002), enabling more dancers to further their experience in either Ireland or Croatia. This phenomenon has been observed in other diasporic dance communities (David, 2008; Rahman, 2015; Wulfhorst, Rocha & Morgan, 2014) and serves to both strengthen the position of the sending society as the source of choreographical inspiration and enhance other transnational social spaces such as visits to family and friends or the purchase of material items whilst visiting the place of origin.

### **Material Transnationalism**

Material networks have been noted amongst other globally-dispersed dance genres (David, 2008; Wilcox, 2011; Wulfhorst, Rocha & Morgan, 2014) and they are important means through which physical connections with the sending society are maintained (Dahinden, 2010; Gowricharn, 2009). For dance groups, this usually concerns the purchase of costuming items, since costumes are strong representative symbols of tradition, culture and nationalism (Falcone, 2013; Kolb, 2013; Shay, 2006). The material field is particularly strong in the only genre in this study which involves competitions, Irish step dancing (F. Hall, 2008; Hassrick, 2012). The largely affluent population of step dancers, who are financially capable of acquiring the latest costume fashions from Ireland, drive the expansion of this transnational space (Tomell-Presto, 2003; Varade, 2015). The nature of step dancing as an individual dance form also exerts an influence on its material field. Each dancer requires a

costume which is designed specifically to their requirements (Varade, 2015), whereas the other groups' costumes are developed and purchased with a bias towards collectivity rather than individualism. Material transnationalism amongst the Irish social dancers is much less apparent, with dancing shoes being the primary item which is imported from Ireland.

All of the Croatian dance groups obtain costume items from Croatia: *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* may purchase articles, while the *kumpamjija* group has received donations of costume items from the citizens of Blato. In particular, the Croatian groups' costumes are obtained by the group for distribution to individual dancers when required. Apart from shoes, individual members of the Croatian troupes do not own their costumes outright. Every group in the study seeks, to some degree, to provide representational connections with the sending society through their material costumes (Nahachewsky, 2012). The Croatian community also exhibits transnational financial fields through the raising of money to assist those in Croatia who have pressing needs (Carling & Hoelscher, 2013; Levitt, 2001; Vertovec, 2004). Dance groups are used to attract people to these events, in the hope that these people will donate generously.

Traditional dance is described by Wilcox (2011) as “a transnational cultural practice” (p. 329), and the structural and functional transnational spaces which are discussed in this chapter reveal a number of important considerations, so contributing to discussions of diasporic dance practices within the wider discourse of immigration and resettlement. The spaces described here reveal the behaviours of immigrants (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Ward & Kus, 2012) and so extend the notions of identity construction and emotional connections (Fouron & Glick Schiller, 2002), into the sphere of the group as well as the individual. These practices also reflect the broader social, political and economic situations of the participants, serving to show the nuances of immigrant experience (Gonzales-Rábago & Blanco, 2016), both individually and collectively, as multiple conduits of connectedness are developed between Ireland or Croatia and the immigrants in Sydney (Fauser, 2013). The strands of transnationalism which are discussed in this chapter have exposed variations in life experience of immigrant dancers and dance groups which may be not only cultural in origin, but economic, linguistic, social and historical (Binaisa, 2013).





## Chapter 7

### Performance and Transnational Self-Representation

This chapter is about the performance practices of the immigrant dance groups in the current study. Through public performances, dance groups may engage with people outside of their own communities and in Australia, this means the Anglo-Australian majority. However, given the multicultural constitution of Australia's population, it also entails engagement with other immigrant communities. The notion of self-representation through dance and music is another facet of immigrant dance practice which may be interpreted through the transnational prism, as dancers seek to demonstrate a measure of ongoing affiliation with the sending society through their performances in the context of the receiving society (Bramadat, 2005; Duffy, 2005; Mackley-Crump, 2013, 2016).

Regardless of the type or location of a performance, dance engenders meaning for both the dancers and the members of the audience (Giurchescu, 1992). While some aspects of performance relating to intra-community events have been addressed in the previous two chapters, public performance is the common theme throughout this chapter. Nahachewsky (2016) describes situations in which the "ethnic salience" (p. 308) of a dance performance is increased due to the poly-cultural nature of the audience, and it is these settings, where the audience members may not possess the same cultural background as the performers, which I explore in this chapter. The dance groups included in this study, individually, may be placed along a spectrum of performance event types, ranging from very public to highly private. Amongst the cases, Irish step dancing is the most visibly prominent genre and the *kumpanjija* is the most sequestered. In terms of the two immigrant communities, the Irish dance groups perform for the general public more frequently than the Croatian groups. The reasons for this variation relate to the genre, cultural background of the performers and composition of the audience, and I address all of these facets in this chapter, with discourses of multiculturalism and performance studies being engaged to complement the transnational lens.

Irish step dancing demonstrates the effects of choreographical globalisation since, when the cultural boundaries surrounding this dance genre became permeable, the composition of the worldwide participant cohort altered. The effects on the genre were profound and, as a consequence, the nature of performances underwent alteration. Set and *céilí* groups experienced flow-on effects due to their shared Irish heritage with step dancing, but are not as prominently located in the public arena. Further along the spectrum of performance lie the Croatian folkloric groups, *Vukovar* and *Cvijet*, which perform frequently within the Croatian

community but rarely dance in situations where “ethnic salience” (Nahachewsky, 2016, p. 308) is introduced. Finally, the *kumpanjija* is designed, due to its locational specificity as discussed in Chapters Four and Five, for an audience of insiders. It has, on rare occasions, been performed outside of the Dalmacija Sydney Croatian Club. However, the Club’s leaders are not currently seeking to dance in public due to the difficulty in even enlisting enough dancers to perform at the Club on the patron saint’s day. Its ritual performance has meaning only for those who have connections with Blato, and the mnemonic cues embedded in the dance were discussed in Chapter Five. Hence, it is not included in this chapter, which concentrates on performances that traverse cultural boundaries.

I have, therefore, structured this chapter slightly differently from the two preceding chapters. While there is a similarity in that I examine Irish dancing first, followed by Croatian dancing, the emphasis in this chapter is more on individual dance genres as cases which reveal disparate aspects of the performance of traditional dancing in Sydney. I conclude with a general discussion of aspects of public events in multicultural Sydney which have been raised through the case by case situations which are analysed. To commence the chapter, I focus on the rise in popularity of Irish culture, the global changes experienced within the genre and the implications for dancing and performing in Sydney.

### **Irish Step Dancing: Dissolving Cultural Boundaries**

The Irish community in Australia, as discussed in Chapter Four, is now considered to be part of the Anglo-Australian population sector. Here, I explore the ramifications of this advantageous position, including a phenomenon which is unique to Irish dancing, namely, the dissolution of cultural specificity, since many people who lack genetic links with Ireland seek to construct connections with Ireland through participation in traditional Irish dance and music. Commencing with observations about Irish culture in general, I trace both global patterns and local practices affecting Irish dancing in Sydney.

#### **The Popularity of Irish Culture**

A lady near me had stockings on both her arms and legs, with Celtic designs and slogans; shamrocks abounded and one couple had orange (not green) sequined blazers—just to be different, perhaps. There was a multicultural mixture in the crowd; many Asian-Australians were there, all waving Irish flags, and I saw people of Indian background wearing sashes which said “Irish for a day”. That slogan summed up the spirit of the event. (Fieldnotes, 15<sup>th</sup> March<sup>72</sup> 2015)

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<sup>72</sup> In Sydney, the St Patrick’s Day parade is held on the Sunday closest to 17<sup>th</sup> March, St Patrick’s Day.

The Sydney St Patrick's Day Parade is the largest in the southern hemisphere and the fifth-largest in the world (St-Patricks-Day.com, 2016). The presence of many people who lack Irish heritage at St Patrick's Day parades is noted by Marston (2002) and by Irish ethnomusicologist Aileen Dillane, who observed that the popularity of St Patrick's Day celebrations is "about an idea about ethnic belonging" (interview, April 30, 2014). The crowd composition at the Sydney parade, as described in my fieldnotes, demonstrates the broad appeal of the event to far more people than simply those with Irish ancestry.

People who lack Irish heritage, yet who are devoted to Irish cultural practices, have been discussed before in existing scholarship. For example, Irish music sessions often attract non-Irish musicians who wish to share in the technique-sharing, experimentation and casual chatter which mark such occasions (Reiss, 2003). Rapuano (2001) describes in depth the nature and functions of sessions held both in Ireland and in two locations in the United States, recording the strong desire for association with the Irish culture, manifesting in a desire amongst the non-Irish to prove their worthiness of inclusion in the sessions and as transmitters of Irish music, and concludes by describing non-Irish musicians as "becoming Irish music" (p. 103). While Rapuano (2001) holds the view that these musicians are welcome in the sessions, others are not so complimentary. Valley (2003) describes those seeking to emulate Irish culture as "Apollos of shamrockery" (p 201) and decries the trend of wishing to be seen in public whilst playing Irish music as being "Gucci-Paddy" (p. 205).

Cultural emulation occurs in other dance and music genres, since an increasingly globalised world means that people now have "an unprecedented ability to choose a musical heritage apart from former cultural restrictions" (Bauer, 2016, p. 53). For example, Anglo-American and Anglo-Australian recreational folk dancers share a love for the rhythms and steps of dances from the Balkan region of Europe (Lausević, 2007; Mollenhauer, 2013; Shay, 2008). Some describe their own mostly English-influenced culture as "bland, colourless and stultifying" (Shay, 2008, p 193), leading them to learn the folk dances of Eastern Europe in order to satisfy their desire for affiliation with a culture which they perceive to be more desirable and interesting than their own. Shay (2008) also notes that flamenco and belly dancing are very popular amongst Anglo-Americans. In Australia, Anglo-Australian practitioners of capoeira, a Brazilian dance and martial arts practice, are devoted to a cultural practice to which the participants have no historical allegiance (Wulforth et al., 2014). In the following section, the spread of Irish step dancing, in particular, will be traced through the quiescent Irish diaspora to people beyond the boundaries of Irish ancestry.

## **Irish Step Dancing: Global Enfranchisement**

The inclusion of dancers without Irish heritage in traditional Irish dance classes is a recent phenomenon, and one which is more prominent in step dancing rather than the social dance genres. The archival sources referenced in previous chapters suggest that Irish dancing was contained, for many years, within Irish community boundaries. For example, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (1916 February 29), describes a night of Irish dancing hosted by the Hibernian Society, a uniquely Irish organisation. Similarly, Cullinane's (2006) work on step dancing in Australia describes only dancers of Irish origin as having participated until the late 20th century, when some of the interviewees in this study began taking classes. Within the participant cohort, Kirstie said of her own lessons in the 1960s

I remember one Maltese girl but that's the only one that I can remember. The rest were Irish or Irish descent. (Interview, 4 March, 2014)

Irish dancing was, then, contained within the Irish immigrant population until the latter part of the 20th century, when both members of the Irish diaspora, who had not previously been engaged with Irish dancing, and people without Irish heritage, were drawn to this aspect of their cultural heritage.

The early 1990s was the time when Ireland's economic security led to the descriptor "Celtic Tiger" (Kavanagh et al., 2008, p. 725) and one of the outward expressions of Ireland's newly found prosperity was the formulation of the Irish dancing stage show *Riverdance*. It is widely acknowledged that this stage show had profound and far-reaching effects on Irish step dancing and Irish traditional music, including the dissolution of its cultural exclusivity (Brennan, 1999; Hall, 2008; B. O'Connor, 2013; Scahill, 2009; White, 2009; Wulff, 2005; 2009) as well as boosting tourism to Ireland (Casey, 2002; Seaver, 2008). In multiple diasporic locations, the possession of Irish heritage suddenly became fashionable (Brabazon & Stock, 1999; Casey, 2002).

The ramifications of this theatrical show on step dancing may be discussed in two categories, namely, emotional and choreographical. Emotionally, the show led to a cultural awakening within the Irish diaspora and appealed to those without Irish heritage by using experiences and feeling which are universal, such as notions of community and ancestral heritage (Brabazon & Stock, 1999; Ó Cinnéide, 2002). Whilst the exact size of the Irish diaspora is unknown (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland, 2015), the former President of the Republic of Ireland, Mary Robinson, gave an estimated size of 70 million

people in her inauguration speech 27 years ago, in 1990 (President of Ireland, 2016). Irish music scholar Francis Ward noted that there were

dormant diasporic communities around the world, which really felt that they could rear their heads and be proud of [Irish dancing] and attach themselves to it. (Interview, May 1, 2014)

Ethnochoreologist Catherine Foley suggested that the era of the “Celtic Tiger” had already created an increased yearning for home amongst members of the global Irish diaspora, saying that “it was right timing; people were ready for [*Riverdance*] at this particular point” (Interview, April 29, 2014). The themes of disarticulation, desire and reminiscence, resonated with audiences worldwide (Sawyers, 2000), including people in Australia of multiple cultural backgrounds (Brabazon & Stock, 1999; Mollenhauer, 2015a).

Choreographically, the show took a traditional dance form and transformed it by a process of fusion with other genres as well as alterations to the motifs in the performance. The fusion involved the blending of elements of Eastern European rhythms into the music (White, 2009) along with the mixture of Irish step dancing with other dance genres (for example, tap dancing), whose public profiles were much higher (Hall, 2008; Wulff, 2009). Other modifications involved aspects of theatrical showmanship, such as the long line of dancers similar to those found in a Broadway musical (Wulff, 2009). The show also introduced several attractive novel features to Irish dancing, for example costumes which emphasized the shape and flow of the bodies of the dancers, a more balanced gender representation in the show, which featured approximately equal numbers of male and female dancers, and a strong masculine lead dancer wearing trousers instead of a kilt, which had been, previously, the accepted attire for male dancers in competitions (Hall, 2008).

Thus, Irish step dancing was commodified and marketed to a global audience and the result was that enrolments in that genre increased dramatically (Brennan, 1999). This effect took place in Ireland itself, as more boys enrolled in dance classes to emulate the strong male dancers in the shows (Ó Cinnéide, 2002). Breandán de Gallaí, who danced in the chorus line in the original show in 1994 before becoming lead male dancer, summed it up by saying that

it was just packaged in such a way that [people] said “I can get into it, because they’ve made it easy for me.” (Interview, April 25, 2014)

Of the 23 research participants from *Bláth*, 11 have no Irish background whatsoever. *Riverdance* was created in 1994, twenty years before the fieldwork phase of this study was undertaken, so most students at *Bláth* are too young to even remember the show’s last tour of Australia in 2003. However, several participants in this study noted that *Riverdance* was the reason for enrolment at *Bláth*.

My Mum and Dad took me to a *Riverdance* show, and as soon as I finished watching it, I wanted to copy them. (Avaly, interview, November 18, 2015)  
[My daughter] wanted to be the girl in the green dress.<sup>73</sup> (Marcia, interview, April 29, 2015)

There is also a specifically Australian media-driven influence which has increased rates of enrolment in step dance classes. In 1995, children’s entertainers *The Wiggles* released the song *Di Dicki Do Dum* (Limbaugh, 2015), which featured young Irish step dance students, so introducing the genre to young children who had not had the opportunity to see stage shows. Students at *Bláth* recalled that this song exerted influence on their decision to enrol in step dancing.

I saw it on *The Wiggles*—I was 4 years old. I said “Mum, I’ve got to do that!” (Jodie, interview, October 27, 2015)

It was me, and we were watching *The Wiggles*- (sings) “Di Dicki Do Dum Di Dum Do”. I was six at the time, and the fact that it was *The Wiggles*— if *The Wiggles* did it, I wanted to do it. (Karen, interview, March 25, 2015)

[My older sister] used to watch *The Wiggles* and she really liked it; and so with her starting, I guess I just followed. (Ainslie, interview, November 18, 2015)

Of the participants who cited either *Riverdance* or *The Wiggles*<sup>74</sup> as having motivated them to pursue step dancing as a hobby, none have any Irish heritage. Their motivation for joining a step dance class was not culturally-based, but driven by entertainment media. The remainder of the non-Irish step dancers cited reasons such as the influence of siblings and friends who were already learning step dancing, or watching a public display and wanting to learn the same genre as what they had seen. Hence, the diasporic space of Irish step dancing in Sydney, as in other locations, has metamorphosed from being exclusively Irish to a state of cultural plurality (Brennan, 1999; Wulff, 2009). However, the global control of step dancing praxis, described in Chapter Six, serves to ensure that the genre itself will continue on the path the IDC sets out (Brennan, 1999; Foley, 2001, 2013; Wulff, 2009), no matter how much the nature of the dancing population may alter.

Thus, there is both an “Irish community” in Sydney, whose members claim Irish ancestry, and an “Irish dancing community” where devotees are welcome regardless of their heritage. When people make a conscious choice to participate in a zone of cultural contact, their purpose is not to identify with the culture so much but with the activities of the group (Wulforth et al., 2014). It cannot be said that only those with Irish heritage are physically

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<sup>73</sup> Jean Butler, female lead dancer in the original cast of *Riverdance*.

<sup>74</sup> In 2016, *The Wiggles* released a new version of *Di Dicki Do Dum* (*The Wiggles*, 2016 March 17), which again features young Irish step dancers, so a new generation of children may be inspired to begin step dance classes.

capable of mastering the techniques of Irish step dancing. Cultural background does not affect a dancer's ability to "acquire the attributes of [Irish] dancing through the repetition, incorporation and performance of distinctive stylisations of the body over time" (Fensham & Kelada, 2012, p. 367), since "skill as an achievement works beyond the borders of culture" (Ramnarine, 2007a, p. 123). Thus the participation of dancers who lack Irish heritage is substantiated since, in competition, their cultural background does not count (Wulff, 2005).

So the step dancing community is a distinct entity, rightly termed by Varade (2015) as the "feispora"<sup>75</sup>(p. 58), because its boundaries now stretch further than merely the global Irish diaspora. It is full of multiple "transethnic alliances" (Hickman, 2012, p. 40) and acts as a transnational space which is characterised by participants who share the aspiration of reaching the pinnacle of the Irish dancing community through success at competitions.

Catherine Foley concluded that many people believe step dancing

wasn't something that they felt was a dance form that belonged to Ireland; they felt it could belong to anybody, and they felt they could do it. (Interview, April 29, 2014)

Step dancing certainly now belongs to "anybody" in Sydney who is able to participate in classes.

This phenomenon may be considered from multiple perspectives. Cultural emulation is certainly one descriptor which is applicable (Rapuano, 2001), as is the "affinity communities" proffered by Shelemay (2011, p. 373) in which "straightforward aesthetic and personal preferences may...intersect with other powerful diacritica such as ethnic identity" (p. 373). However, the term "aspirational transnationalism" may also be employed, since dancers are buying costumes from Ireland, attending workshops by teachers who come to Sydney from Ireland and travelling to Ireland to compete, whether they possess Irish ancestry or not. The non-Irish construct transnational social fields (Glick Schiller, 2005; Levitt, 2009) alongside of their Irish companions, and so the activities of dancers who lack Irish heritage may be considered to be transnational, but it is a transnationalism which is based on personal choice rather than biological ancestry.

### **Performing Irish Dancing in Sydney: The Benefits of Global Recognition**

An important corollary of the rise in popularity of Irish step dancing is the nature of performances of that genre in Sydney. While, again, the effects are primarily observable amongst step dancers, the other Irish dance genres are also included in this section, since they

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<sup>75</sup> Formed by combining "feis" (the Irish word for competition) and diaspora into one word.

have experienced some flow-on effects of the recent popularity of Irish culture. During the interviews, respondents were asked about the nature and frequency of dance performances in which they have participated. Some spoke of multiple performances connected with the celebration of St Patrick's Day.

Yes [my son's] done that every year, the St Patrick's Day parade. He's done other St Patrick's Day things, like at the shopping centre. (Kirstie, interview, March 4 2014)

[We have danced at] lots of things for St Patrick's Day at Irish venues. (Maeve, interview, March 29, 2014)

St Patrick's Day this year we danced for the *Today Show*<sup>76</sup>. (Karen, interview, March 25, 2014)

Multiple other loci for display were revealed during interviews with participants from both *Bláth* and *SICD*. Both groups have danced at localised venues such as pre-schools, schools and nursing homes as well as more prominent events such as multicultural festivals. Specific events listed by *SICD* dancers included the National Folk Festival (See Video sample 5.1), the Easter Show and the Maritime Museum<sup>77</sup>, while *Bláth* students have danced at the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Olympic Stadium and on the television show *Playschool*<sup>78</sup>.

During field visits to *SICD*, I observed that a book containing information about upcoming performances was left on a table at the end of the hall so that dancers can record their availability, allowing the leader to prepare a performance program. Some of the performances listed were

Illawarra Folk Festival; Australia Day Celtic Festival; Easter Show; National Folk Festival; Australian Celtic Festival Glen Innes.<sup>79</sup> (Fieldnotes, October 15, 2015)

*SICD*, then, maintains a high profile through regular performances at public events such as those listed here. In contrast, *Harp* only had one short performance (without costumes) at a fundraising event during the period of fieldwork, because the group's current members do not enjoy dancing on a public stage. However, several long-standing members related their group's previous habit of regular participation in public performances, with the National Folk Festival being the one most commonly cited.

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<sup>76</sup> The *Today Show* is a current affairs program televised on the Nine Network.

<sup>77</sup> The Royal Sydney Easter Show is an agricultural show held every year, the National Folk Festival is held in Canberra each Easter and the Maritime Museum is in central Sydney.

<sup>78</sup> *Playschool* is a children's program televised by the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

<sup>79</sup> The Illawarra is a region to the south of Sydney; Australia Day is January 26; Glen Innes is a town in northern New South Wales.



The range of performance types across the three Irish dance groups is broad, as there are venues such as nursing homes, where the audience members may simply enjoy the visual and auditory stimulation, to locations such as the Sydney Opera House, arguably the most prestigious public stage in Australia. Most performances were culturally-specific, such as for St Patrick’s Day or to represent Ireland at multicultural festivals. Based on the taxonomy provided in Table 2.1, these performances may be categorised as shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1

*Categorisation of performances by Irish dance groups in Sydney*

<b>Taxonomic Type</b>	<b>Examples from Irish Dancing in Sydney</b>
Public Ghetto (Hemetek, 2012) or Ethnic music for entertainment (Honzlova, 2012)	St Patrick’s Day Australia Day Celtic Festival Australian Celtic Festival Glen Innes
Transient Ethnic Places (Shelemay, 2012) or “Exotic” music as an example of multiculturalism (Honzlova, 2012)	Opera House Homebush Illawarra Folk Festival Easter Show National Folk Festival Multicultural Festivals Plaza Schools and Pre-schools Nursing Homes Television Shows

Irish dancers in Sydney, whatever their particular genre of choice, are involved in a variety of performances which are all, potentially, attended by a multicultural audience. Performances still contain the choreographical signifiers of Ireland (Wulff, 2005, 2009) such as costumes and steps for the benefit of the Irish immigrant community, yet simultaneously, they have successfully traversed cultural boundaries to be mounted in a multiplicity of venues. This is, most likely, due to the greater public popularity of Irish dancing as a result of the theatrical shows, beginning with *Riverdance*. The increased awareness of the genre amongst the general public means that event organisers frequently request the presence of Irish dancers in their performance programs.

Having discussed the fortunate situation of Irish dance genres within the majority population sector, I now turn to those who are outside of this part of the populace. The Croatian dance groups have not had the benefit of global public exposure and so there is a choreographically-determined boundary which must be crossed when their dances are performed for an outside audience which is not familiar with Croatian traditional dancing. In

the remaining sections of this chapter, I address some of the issues facing these groups, and discuss the problems surrounding public performances which are experienced by the Croatian dance groups in this study.

### **The Hidden Dancers: *Vukovar* and *Cvijet***

The title of this section is drawn from Finnegan's (1989) ethnography of amateur music groups in an English town, since the Croatian dance groups in this study represent some of the relatively hidden dancers across Sydney's recreational dancescape. During the period of fieldwork, both *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* performed at a variety of functions within the Croatian community, but did not dance outside of this sphere. Some of the events at which they performed were specific to Croatian activities, such as Croatian National Day in June, which is always marked with a celebratory gathering including dance performances (see Figure 6.9), while a fundraising event to aid in restoration of the water tower in the town of Vukovar, Croatia, was held in 2016 (Figure 6.10), as previously discussed in Chapter Six. *Cvijet* has an annual anniversary celebration at which the children perform, and a large party was held in 2014 for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the group. Other occasions on which performances were mounted include Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day and Christmas, but all of these events were held at Croatian clubs<sup>80</sup> and advertised only within the Croatian community.

This position of performing solely within the Croatian community, in cultural "institutions" (Shelemay, 2012, p. 211) or "invisible enclaves" (Honzlova, 2012, p. 372.), is a current one and is a situation from which some participants felt it is difficult to move.

It's very hard to actually perform outside of the Croatian community when you're not known. (Terry, interview, March 23, 2015)

Sometimes I think that the Croatian community doesn't get as much of a fair exposure as some others, like Italian and Greek—everyone knows about them, their food and all that sort of stuff. (Mitchell, interview, March 18, 2015)

I don't think there's much appreciation for [traditional Croatian dancing] outside [of the Croatian community]. (Camille, interview, June 11, 2014)

These comments suggest that the participants perceive that the broader community is unaware of either the existence or nature of Croatian traditional dancing and that without performance opportunities, that situation is unlikely to change. In the early days following the official adoption of a policy of multiculturalism in Australia, several large festivals were

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<sup>80</sup> It could be said that giving a club a name such as "Croatian Club" implies the erection of a cultural barrier by the club's members. Just as a swimming club is for swimmers, the implication is that a Croatian Club is for Croatians and a Greek Club is for Greeks. Hence, people who are not Croatian may be unlikely to venture inside unless they have a personal connection with a club member. This issue is discussed again later in this chapter.

instigated at which dance and music groups from various immigrant communities would perform, including the annual Shell Folkloric Festival which, from the 1970s until the early 1990s, was held at no less a venue than the Sydney Opera House (Kapetopoulos, 2010). One Croatian participant, during her interview, displayed her collection of concert programs. She owns a complete set from every concert, which surpasses the compilation held by the National Library of Australia, Canberra. This festival was recalled with fondness by all research participants who took part, as the following comments attest:

—with the Shell Folkloric Festival and when there was a more planned multicultural-type environment...they had all these organised things that involved the wider multicultural community. (Terry, interview, March 23, 2015)

I think [the Shell Folkloric] was great, I think it's fantastic—you were on the high stage, you were dancing at the Opera House; that was the pinnacle (Scott, interview, March 30, 2015)

[The Shell Folkloric] was fantastic; it was a great experience (Maxine, interview, September 9, 2015)

We used to work so hard to get in, and to get into the Saturday night program. I loved it; we loved it! (Teresa, interview, June 16, 2015)

The performance venue, the Sydney Opera House, could not be more prestigious, and the Shell Folkloric Festival certainly provided an opportunity for many traditional dance and music groups to perform to a culturally-diverse audience (Kapetopoulos, 2010). The extent of participation by manifold cultural groups may be discerned from the multiple photographs of the festival which are held by the National Archives of Australia (n.d.). As is evident from the participants' remarks, a lack of opportunities to perform outside of the Croatian community is seen as problematic by members of Croatian dance groups.

The cultural make-up of both *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* is homogeneous, as all members of both groups are either first or second generation Croatian immigrants. Indeed, at the initial stages of fieldwork, many participants from the various Croatian dance groups expressed surprise that any researcher would be interested in their groups, especially someone who has no Croatian heritage. This position of cultural difference between myself and the Croatian dancers was the main source of curiosity amongst the respondents. Thus these groups are, in all aspects, “invisible enclaves” (Honzlova, 2012, p. 372), where dance symbolises the shared background of the dancers and marks a strong situational boundary between group members and the general, multicultural population in Sydney.

Croatian traditional dancing contains many characteristics which are likely to appeal to general audiences, such as brightly coloured costumes and music in familiar quadruple and

triple metres such as  $\frac{4}{4}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$ . However, for anyone in the audience who lacks shared cultural heritage with the performers, a deficiency in the insider knowledge (Connerton, 1989; Kaepler, 2004), which is pre-requisite for a deep understanding of a performance event, affects the nature and depth of their appreciation of that event and so a barrier between performers and audience is created. Participants who have, at various times, brought non-Croatian friends to dance events report that those friends have expressed a measure of admiration for the performances they have witnessed, but do not indicate any sense of cultural appreciation. Instead, they stated that their friends

appreciated the work that would have gone into it. (Rosemary, interview, March 18, 2015)

are always very interested in knowing what it is, because not many people know about folklore music. (Olivia, interview, Sept 1, 2014)

said “Oh my God! Professional!” (Molly, interview, May 13, 2015)

These comments reveal that the appreciation was more focussed on the effort required to produce the performance than the content of the dance display. Roy’s (2012) study of a performance of Slovakian dancing in Melbourne showed that the Anglo-Australian audience members remarked about the “energy, movement and variety” of the dancing (p. 287), descriptors which could just as easily apply to a performance of classical ballet or modern dance.

This cultural divide seems to be precisely what the creators of *Riverdance* sought to address when creating the show. By removing many markers of Irishness and amplifying those features with broad audience appeal, such as the rhythm of the hard shoes, the performance was able to be comprehended by many more people than simply those with Irish heritage (Brennan, 1999; Hall, 2008; Wulff, 2009). A similar combination of traditional and Western dance and music is occurring with increasing frequency in performances of the Hawaiian hula, so as to promote cross-cultural engagement (Kaepler, 2010). However, amongst the Croatian immigrants in this study, a strong emotional connection between the traditional dancing and Croatia itself was identified, which I discussed in Chapter Five. In Croatia, dancing and national identity are intimately linked, especially throughout the time before independence was achieved (Shay, 2016; Zebec, 1996) and the desire of participants to perpetuate traditional dancing in Sydney, so that subsequent generations may still appreciate their cultural heritage, was also revealed in Chapter Five. Given the high level of devotion to staging dances which are faithful to dance performances in Croatia, it appears unlikely that the application of choreographical changes for the

purpose of fostering cross-cultural interest would be contemplated by any of the Croatian dance groups in this study. The dancers and parents are primarily concerned with teaching Croatian immigrants about their cultural traditions.

So, the reasons for the relatively hidden position of both *Vukovar* and *Cvijet* are multiple and complex. Aubert (2007) observes that first, “we identify ourselves with music that we like because it corresponds to our sensibility and vision of the world; we draw apart from other music when it is foreign to our affinities and fails to ‘speak’ to us” (p. 1) and also that “some genres export better than others because they correspond to the expectations of their new audiences” (p. 5). Croatian traditional dance genres are situated outside of the artistic experience of audience members who assess performances according to theatricalised standards (Grau, 2008; Shapiro, 2008) and so may always, along with other traditional dance genres, face a struggle for acceptance and appreciation. Additionally, unlike Irish step dancing, Croatian traditional dancing is not easily translatable into a genre which will have wider audience appeal. The aspects of Western theatre which were blended into *Riverdance* may not be so compatible with Croatian dancing or, indeed, with many other types of traditional dancing. However, as I discuss in the subsequent section of this chapter, this does not mean that opportunities for public performance need to be abandoned.

### **Public Performances in Sydney: Key Issues**

The various sections in this chapter have revealed a range of issues surrounding the performance of traditional dance in a diasporic location such as Sydney. The dance genres in this study are closely bound to specific social, cultural and historical contexts, since both Irish and Croatian dancing originated in nations where cultural identity had, for many years, been suppressed and where traditional dancing was one means through which people were united in the common cause of recognition and self-government (De Gallaí, 2013; Ivancan, 1988; Ni Bhriain, 2006; Vitez, 2008). The connection between dance and politics is common, and is noted amongst other European countries such as Estonia (Kapper, 2016) as well as within sub-national groups such as the Cornish people in England (Cornish, 2016). This is particularly relevant for the Croatian community as, since Croatian independence was only achieved in 1991, the participants are acutely aware of the recent history of their sending society.

The notion of a festival consisting of multiple short items is one which is common in many European countries, including both Ireland and Croatia (Fleming, 2004; Foley, 2013; International Folk Festival Zagreb, 2017; Čaleta & Zebec, 2017) and so, this concept is

familiar to the dancers in this study. Festivals may provide a space of familiarity for immigrants who have danced in or witnessed such events in their previous homeland. Certainly, as discussed in the previous section, every interviewee in the current study who participated in the Shell Folkloric Festival recalled the excitement and the sense of privilege experienced by those taking part in the festival. Participants indicated that they would be keen to perform for a broader audience if the opportunity presented itself.

I'm trying to push that we do stuff, like Sydney Festival<sup>81</sup>, stuff where we get on a real stage, not in front of just our parents and grandparents. (Mitchell, interview, March 18, 2015)

I think playing for a new audience is a good opportunity for us to go out of our own bounds and, just make people aware of different culture, I guess. (Olivia, interview, September 1, 2014)

It would be good for other people to see our culture. (Sandra, interview, March 4, 2015)

I would like a full multicultural [festival]—it would be fun to be a part of that one day. (Megan, interview, March 23, 2015)

Participants in this study indicated, overall, that the notion of performing for a multicultural audience is pleasing to them but that the opportunities for performance, especially at large, well-publicised events, are limited.

The general context of a multicultural population such as is found in Australia is considered to foster patronising attitudes, disguised as benevolent tolerance on the part of the majority population sector (Hage, 1998; Lau, 2007; Sorce Keller & Barwick, 2013; Tabar, 2005). Hage argues that in Australia there exists a “fantasy of White tolerance” characterised by “a homely feeling...generated by the presence of diversity” (p. 98), but that this represents a relationship solely based on the power which the Anglo-Australian majority exerts over everyone else. More recently, performance scholars Gilbert and Lo (2009) note that many forms of creative work may “reiterate a politics of power” (p. 2). In particular, they are concerned with the paucity of opportunities for theatrical and television performances by anyone who is not an Anglo-Australian. Similarly, Idriss (2016) observes that immigrant artists in Australia are “applauded for simply [performing] instead of being rewarded or critiqued based on the quality of their work” (p. 418). This situation is not unique to Australia as, for example, Grau (2008) notes that British dancers’ work is viewed as “universal” in its appeal while dancers from other heritage backgrounds are given a “cultural treatment” (p. 239), and Shapiro (2008), writing in the USA, states that “Western forms of dance are portrayed as the epitome of artistic expression” (p. 255). Even within the academy, the

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<sup>81</sup> A performing arts festival featuring local and international performers, held each year in January.

favouring of Western performing arts genres at Australian tertiary institutions is criticised by Scheer and Eckersall (2010).

Currently in Australia, some progress has been made in the field of multicultural arts, but much more remains to be worked out. Certainly, what must be avoided is choreo-musical marginalisation, since the assignation of traditional music to the realm of otherness is simply another form of prejudice (Haymes, 2013). Yet, the path towards equal recognition of traditional arts and Western high art is a difficult one. The recent Australian report by Mar and Ang (2015) details several worthwhile projects involving both indigenous and immigrant artists. They write that Australia needs to be

moving beyond a narrow “multicultural arts” perspective that frames distinct minority groups as set apart from a cultural “mainstream” and recognising cultural diversity as an inescapable interactive context to which artists and cultural workers respond in their working processes (p.5).

However, this chapter is more concerned with localised performances and the issue is the potential benefit of such events for both audience members and performers. The problem of enhancing audience appreciation of traditional dance is beyond the scope of this thesis. Certainly, Western-centred audiences are accustomed to performances which carry familiar theatricalities (Savigliano, 2009) and, as Roy (2012) demonstrates, audience appreciation of culturally-specific performances may focus more on the level of effort which has been devoted to preparation for the display, rather than any characteristics related to the genre being performed.

It is also impossible to draw conclusions about positive effects on the attitudes of audience members towards other cultural groups which may result from their having seen a performance of traditional dance and music. However, the possibility of even minor development of the “cognitive complexity” of which Arasaratnam (2014, p. 41) speaks, should be encouraged wherever it is feasible. A festival setting is, admittedly, unlikely to be highly productive in terms of educating audience members about difference and promoting genuine equality, as a concert of colourful entertainment, *per se*, achieves little in these areas (Sorcer Keller & Barwick, 2013). The tertiary educators interviewed by Arasaratnam (2014) believe that exposure to situations of cultural miscellany serves to encourage attitudes of inclusiveness, but they were speaking about interactive situations rather than the passive entertainment of a festival. Phillips (2016) raises the possibility of a festival which is spread across numerous performance venues, suggesting that instead of multiple performance groups being gathered in one location, the audience could choose to attend events in the places in

which the various groups usually perform, the culturally-specific clubs. This would most likely at least provide greater opportunity for conversational interaction and activities such as participatory dancing following a performance. Phillips also suggests that more formal supplementary activities such as workshops and public lectures could be likely to increase the educative value of multicultural music and dance festivals. In particular, it could encourage people to venture into clubs whose names, such as “Croatian Club”, appear to be prohibitive and this may at least begin to promote the intermingling of cultural groups at a recreational level.

The report concerning Australia’s largest festival of this kind, the National Multicultural Festival in Canberra, shows positive responses to the festival amongst its visitors, as discussed in Chapter Two (Department of Community Services, A.C.T., 2010, p. 19). Festival attendees could, admittedly, be accused of a form of strategic cosmopolitanism as they sample aspects of different cultures through music, dance and food (Grau, 2008), but the fact that the event continues, and becomes larger each year, again suggests that the participants, whether they are dancers, musicians or those who prepare and serve at the food stalls, have no issue with the idea of taking part. Indeed, the program for the 21st festival, held in February 2017, reveals a plethora of disparate immigrant communities being involved (National Multicultural Festival, 2017).

All of the dance groups in the current study seek to foreground their distinctiveness when they perform at a public event. They are seeking to present a routine which is unique, so that they may be viewed in a positive light by anyone who witnesses the performance (Strunk, 2015). Certainly, there is a degree of “packaging” involved in producing the performance, but even so, the recognition afforded to the group through their performance in a public arena legitimises a genre and allows the performers to experience valorisation rather than marginalisation (Aubert, 2007; Klein, 2005). Furthermore, provision of a prominent location for performances may serve to foster a sense of choreographical acceptance. Chacko (2013) argues that a renowned space, such as the Sydney Opera House, would enable those involved in the event to “lay claim to iconic and symbolically hegemonic space in the city” (p. 451) which is usually reserved for performances such as opera and classical ballet.

D. Taylor (2003) asserts that a performance may be considered an “ontological affirmation” (p. 3), which suggests that the provision of spaces for culturally-specific groups to dance for the general public may be a means of contributing to Giddens’ (1990) concept of “ontological security” (p. 92), in that the members of those groups and the communities represented may feel at home in Australia even while continuing their traditional practices. A



specific link between festivals and notions of belonging is noted by Chacko (2013), who argues that a “festival thus offers an important site for the examination of the co-construction of belonging and difference” (p. 451).

Belonging may involve interaction with the Anglo-Australian majority, but it should also promote networking with other immigrant communities. Repeated gatherings of musicians and dancers may foster development of feelings of collegiality, since “the production and consumption of music...draw[s] people together and symbolize[s] their sense of collectivity and place” (Kotarba, Fackler & Nowotny, 2009, p. 313). Cobb (2016) agrees, observing that “by-products of cultural performance, such as heightened emotion, liminality and *communitas*, have a profound effect on the creation of, and attachment to, place” (p. 372). Just as music and dancing at culturally-specific clubs serves to foster intra-community bonding (Lewis, 2010; 2015), so the festival space may be a means through which inter-community networks can be promoted through the shared experiences of both immigration and performance.

In considering the nature of a performance, Hill (2013) argues that “it is only those within a culture who are able to determine what resonates for them, and what best represents them” (p. 58), while Slobin (1993) observes that “over time, new perspectives cause a reordering of group priorities, a changed understanding of what is ‘authentic’, what represents ‘us’ best to outsiders” (p. 95). Performers in public festivals possess agency, since they choose to participate and make conscious decisions about the nature and content of their performances. Grau (2008) suggests that critics of multicultural performances should also consider the “ways artists have presented themselves and to what extent they have contributed to the exotic constructions” (p. 242) which are on display. Performance choices may indeed present “‘typical’ musical and other cultural traits in an idealized form” (Honzlova, 2012, p. 382) and the performers may be “magnifying, trivialising or downplaying their cultural markets” (Parzer & Kwok, 2013, p. 267) in their presentations. The difficulty here is to determine how much these choices are influenced by either real or perceived pressure from the majority population sector and how much results from active decisions by choreographers. More research which specifically targets multicultural festivals is needed, and this could also include the views of organisers, who also must take some responsibility for modes of presentation of the cultures of multiple groups (Baron, 2010), as well as performers and members of the audience.

Finally, performances by various culturally-specific groups may reflect processes of migration and the reconfiguration of identities and ways of belonging in a new environment.

Mackley-Crump (2016), writing about the participation of Pacific Islander groups in multicultural festivals in New Zealand, notes that such a performance “assists in the process of identity creation in the multicultural New Zealand context” (p. 172). Dance and music performances, then, may be viewed as being representative of a group of Australian residents who choose to valorise their cultural heritage through the performance, and who wish to recognise the freedom which Australia affords them in their desire to continue cultural traditions (Wulfhorst, 2014). Immigrant dancers are expressing their cultural origins within the context of their Australian location when they perform in public (Duffy, 2005) and they wish to be recognised as residents of Australia even while paying homage to their cultural heritage through their dancing (Winarnita, 2014).

So, performances in public spaces may have the potential to affirm the presence of immigrant groups within the fabric of Sydney’s society, and recognise that, for the groups in this study, they are performances by Australians of either Irish or Croatian heritage, and that the performance represents Irish or Croatian dancing as it has been translated from its original setting and is currently practised in Sydney. Mackley-Crump (2016) concludes that public presentations of traditional dance and music “can be performances rooted in other times, indeed, but they are routed through [the receiving society] to provide contemporary renderings of [former homeland] cultures” (p. 172). Perhaps, if culturally-specific performances were viewed as making significant contributions to the migration narratives of those participating, and subsequently, to the overall narrative of immigration to Australia, they would be assigned higher priority in the amateur performing arts landscape in Australia.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explored multiple situations in which dance groups perform outside of their culturally-determined boundaries and so, have demonstrated the complexities of performances by diasporic dance troupes within multicultural environments. Aspects of performance have been studied and analysed by scholars from multiple disciplines and through manifold theoretical prisms. Turner (1986) asserts that a performance acts as “the eye by which culture sees itself” (p. 24), so focussing on the actors themselves, while Finnegan (1989) argues that the context of the performance should be accorded equal importance along with the content. Speaking in relation to performances outside of the homeland, Rogers (2015) draws together ideas from both geography and performance studies, noting that “performance can be considered a spatial-cultural practice that grounds...transnational flows through embodied action” (p. 9). In other words, an analysis of performance provides insight into issues of subjects, spaces and places, and

“realises or relives [the] transnational migratory journeys that have taken place in the dancing body” (Fensham & Kelada, 2012, p. 396).

Diasporic dance performances serve multiple purposes for those who dance, for members of the particular immigrant community and for the wider populace. Of the many researchers who have noted the role of dance displays in consolidating group identity, Turino (2008) makes the general observation that identity is constructed and represented through performance. Others have noted the same concept within specific immigrant communities (Covington-Ward, 2013; MacLachlan, 2014; C. Silverman, 2012). Gilbert and Lo (2010) remark that studies of performance provide remarkable insight into the nature and experience of diasporic life, suggesting that diaspora communities are themselves “emplaced, embodied, interactive and performative” (p. 156).

The embodied and emplaced aspects of performance have been noted amongst all of the dance groups in this study in Chapter Five. All of them employ multiple somatic and sensory mnemonic cues in their performances, through culturally-specific musical instruments, costumes and motifs. Performances serve to evoke memories and cultivate meanings (Cobb, 2016) as well as fostering the construction and negotiation of place (Shelemay, 2012; Winarnita, 2016). Here, I have demonstrated and described the numerous ways in which these processes are deployed in both the Irish and Croatian communities, and have also explored the appropriation of cultural signifiers by people with no biological connection, in the case of Irish step dancers who lack Irish ancestry. Participants in “aspirational transnationalism” also construct links, albeit of an imagined rather than a concrete nature, with the place from which their chosen dance genre originates.

The lens of transnationalism serves as a useful tool for the deconstruction of diasporic dance performances. Such events involve dance practices which have been geographically translated and reinterpreted within new environments and under novel conditions, and various scholars suggest that this prism supports a nuanced understanding of the nexus of processes contained within these performances. Transnational spaces, along with dance spaces, are liminal (Wilcox, 2011; Winarnita, 2014) and connect the various diasporic locations to form a global “choreoscape” (Alcedo, 2014, p. 54) characterised by flows of people and their choreographies. A transnational prism, then, facilitates consideration of the manifold facets of performances by immigrant dance groups in multicultural settler society contexts, including the multiple mobilities of migration and dance (C. Silverman, 2012), embodied practices of dance (Wilcox, 2011) and shared awarenesses of past and present

lives (Barikin, Papastergiadis, Yue, McQuire, Gibson & Gu, 2014), all of which are present and operational in dance events, whether private or public.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Research Findings and Conclusion**

This study has explored the dance practices of members of the Irish and Croatian communities in Sydney, Australia, and has shown that dance is an activity through which immigrants may construct identities, nourish memories and interact with individuals, organisations and communities in Ireland, Croatia and Australia. By drawing together material from multiple disciplines and a variety of sources, it has demonstrated that studies of dance can inform and broaden understandings of migration, settlement and interactions with the broader population in the receiving society. Foley (2012) suggests that ethnochoreological research

assists in providing an awareness and understanding of varied aesthetic human movement systems (domestic and other), and also in providing a deeper cultural understanding of the people who perform and participate in them both as practitioners and as active observers (p. 149).

In congruence with Foley's assertion, the findings of this thesis have provided information about dance practices, the people who dance, the members of the audience at dance events and the historical, political and social contexts in which those events take place. This chapter, therefore, presents a summary of the research outcomes and outlines the contribution of the current study to the body of work about immigrants, traditional dance and multicultural Australia.

#### **Transnational Fields of Activity**

Transnationalism was the selected interpretative lens for the data which were collected in this study, and the primary focus was the experiences of the first and second generations of immigrants. The results of this research have demonstrated that participation in traditional dance was an important means through which various connections with participants' cultural heritage were expressed, both verbally and in the activities pursued by the dancers and dance groups. The transnational spaces within which participants were active may be divided into personal undertakings in which individuals take part, activities which occur at a coordinated level within dance genres and groups, and performative events, both private and public, through which cultural self-representation is negotiated.

## Personal Transnationalism

At a subjective level, individual participants were found to have multiple modes of connection with the place of cultural group origin. When asked to enunciate their cultural identity status, most respondents from both the Irish and Croatian communities chose to align themselves more closely with the sending society rather than with their current Australian milieu. Several of the Croatian participants spoke of the difficulties experienced by them in the past (1970s-1990s) as a result of the prejudices of members of the Anglo-Australian majority. The common activity amongst all participants was an association with a traditional dance group, and through their dancing habits, the informants' behaviours combined with their interview data to present a more complete picture of their personal identity constructions.

Emotional linkages with the sending society were formed and strengthened through participation in the dance groups. Many informants from both the Irish and Croatian communities employed terms such as “connect”, “contact” and “keep the culture” when asked about the significance of traditional dance in their lives. Within the Irish cohort, the notion of dance acting as a mode of emotional connectivity with people, places and activities in the sending society was expressed even amongst third generation immigrants. The Croatian dance participants highlighted their determination to perpetuate the practice of Croatian folkloric traditions, including dance, in Australia, so that subsequent generations will have the opportunity to participate fully in activities pertaining to their cultural heritage. Thus, for both communities, traditional dancing was identified as an important means through which memories and stories of the former homeland are elicited and perpetuated at both individual and collective levels.

Through the various dance genres practised by both communities in Sydney, embodied conceptualisations of life in the former homelands were also found to be fostering mnemonic links with those locations. A variety of sensory stimuli, which were identified as being embedded in all of the dance genres in the study, were utilised to recreate both actual memories for those who have lived in or visited the sending society and constructed notions of culturally-significant places for those who have not had such physical experiences. The three Croatian groups and the Irish step dancers all presented marked visual signification through their highly-decorated costumes. All of the dance genres in the study consist of formations, motifs and steps which engage both the eyes and the body through its kinaesthetic sense of awareness, and every genre had music which was distinctively evocative of the former homeland. Engagement of taste and smell most commonly occurred

through traditional food and drink served at culturally-specific events in which dance performances were presented.

### **Mechanical Transnational Fields**

The objective fields concerned with the structure and mechanics of the various dance groups were often operational at the level of the individual, for example when buying a costume item from the sending society, but the overall purpose of these fields was to further the development and general practices of each dance group. Whether the field was organisational, pedagogical or material, individual actions were undertaken for the overall benefit of the group rather than for intrinsically personal advantage. These fields flourished through notions of collectivity and mutual advancement, both within the respective immigrant communities and within each dance genre.

The dance groups in this study evolved through a process of organisational development within the Irish and Croatian communities. Irish immigrants were quick to establish Catholic churches and ancillary religious organisations after their arrival in Australia, as well as clubs whose focus was the propagation of Irish nationalism through both political activities and cultural pursuits such as music and dance. Following the pattern in Ireland, Irish dancing as a whole was regulated by political groups such as the Irish National Association and the Gaelic League, before step dancing became regulated by a local governing body, the Australian Irish Dancing Association. The other Irish genres continued as social dance groups, with less formalised systems of international connectivity. The Croatian community also established Catholic churches and societies, and built many social clubs around the country which became venues within which immigrants could mingle with others who had similar life experiences and a shared cultural heritage. Croatian dance groups affiliated themselves with networks characterised by informal connections at local, national and international levels.

The pedagogical pathway followed by Irish dancing in Australia has been somewhat circuitous. Individual teachers, following the pattern of the dance masters in Ireland, taught groups in localised situations, before the teaching diffused into the Catholic school system in the twentieth century, with classes being taken first by nuns then by specialised teachers who used the school premises. Eventually, genre-specific groups emerged, with step dancing now requiring qualified teachers who are formally affiliated with the Irish Dancing Commission in Ireland. Croatian dance groups were established in the 1960s in Sydney and were immediately stylised according to the pattern of groups in Croatia; this applied to the

*kumpanjija* troupe as well as the general folkloric groups. The acculturation of second-generation Croatian immigrants, including the loss of Croatian language skills and a desire for a more egalitarian approach in managing dance groups, has resulted in less formalised pedagogical styles in order to accommodate the wishes of current dancers. Across all of the dance groups in the study, there has been a greatly reduced level of dissemination of information concerning culturally-specific practices as part of the pedagogical practices. The *kumpanjija* retained the most transmission of cultural knowledge, followed by the other Croatian groups and the Irish social dance genres, while Irish step dancing has almost completely lost this function.

In all of the dance groups, the exchange of material goods took place, and as this activity most often related to items of costuming, it was Irish step dancing and the Croatian groups which participated most actively in this transnational field. Due to its highly competitive nature and the relative affluence of dancers' families, there was a vigorous trade in all items required for competition costumes in step dancing. In marked contrast, the Irish social dancers purchased very little from Ireland apart from teaching materials such as books and DVDs. All of the Croatian groups possess costume items which were made in Croatia, and often supplemented these with items which have been replicated in Australia. Due to the changing needs of growing children, *Cvijet* had more items which have been manufactured in Sydney. The Croatian community also participated in fundraising activities, sending financial assistance for various needs in Croatia.

### **Transnational Modes of Representation**

The ways in which the dance genres represented their sending societies to both their fellow immigrants and to a wider public audience, raised a variety of issues across the dance genres. Irish dance groups, especially step dance schools, have a large number of participants who lack Irish heritage, as a result of both the theatrical shows such as *Riverdance* and the appropriation of Irish step dancing by, for example, *The Wiggles*. As a result, step dancing in particular continues to enjoy a prominent place amongst amateur dance performances in Australia, and some flow-on benefits have been experienced by other Irish dance genres. In contrast, the Croatian folkloric groups lack the same level of experience in public arenas<sup>82</sup>. Some of the older Croatian informants recalled that during the early phase of multiculturalism, in the 1970s and 1980s, the annual Shell Folkloric Festival at the Sydney

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<sup>82</sup> As discussed in Chapter Seven, the *kumpanjija* is only performed for a private audience and so is not included in the current analytical remarks.



Opera House was viewed as a chance to present their cultural traditions within a prominent performance space. There are fewer opportunities in the current era, particularly of events of a similar magnitude to that festival.

The contrasting situations for public performances between the Irish and Croatian communities have exposed issues of power within the performing arts in Australia. Through their acceptance into the Anglo-Australian segment of the population and the theatrical stylisation of step dancing, Irish traditional practices have been absorbed into an arts sector which is governed by a Westernised aesthetic framework. Thus, audience members who are accustomed to classical music and dance, theatrical performances and popular culture may view every performance they witness from such a perspective (Grau, 2008; Vissicaro, 2004). These pan-cultural forms which are now so familiar to Western society seem to have replaced the specific folkloric traditions of the English people such as the Britannia Coco-Nut dance (Buckland, 2006b) and the Obby Oss (Cornish, 2016). In congruence with the rest of the Western world, the Anglo-Australian majority has moved its preference from traditional artistic practices, which may have been categorised as “exoticising discourses” (Winter & Keegan-Phipps, 2013, p.124), to Western high art with its privileging of white performers and performance styles (Gilbert & Lo, 2009; Grau, 2008).

### **Immigrants and Amateur Performing Arts in Australia**

As this study was a comparative ethnography, it has highlighted many differences between the Irish and Croatian communities, their general experiences of life in multicultural Australia, and the socio-cultural influences which have shaped their respective traditional dance genres. It has illustrated the performative advantages assigned to dance groups from the Anglo-Australian population sector. Extant research has identified a variety of marginalising situations which have been experienced by immigrant artists in Australia (Gilbert & Lo, 2009; Mar & Ang, 2015), and the current study has supported the findings of previous scholarship by identifying the limited public performance opportunities which are available to traditional dance groups. However, as Aubert (2007) suggests, the musical and choreological tastes of a population cannot be controlled, so it would seem that education of the broader populace would be the best way forward. The question of how to encourage Australians to engage in meaningful and productive encounters across cultural boundaries without reinforcing notions of ossified, homogeneous groups coexisting, is fraught with difficulty. As Dieckmann (2016) notes from her own research amongst immigrant groups in Sydney, the ideal situation would be one in which there is

an arts culture in which people engage with cultural difference through understandings of their own cultural difference, the trivialisation of both minority and majority cultures can be avoided and the multiculturalism of Australian society in its entirety can be negotiated, represented and celebrated (p. 254).

A recent publication from the Australia Council for the Arts (2017) revealed that 64% of Australians believe that the arts “impact their understanding of other people and cultures” (p. 41), thus reinforcing the need for continued financial support of arts programs, especially those which seek to engage people from outside of the Anglo-Australian population sector. Of particular relevance to the current study is the finding that of the respondents from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, 52% engaged with artistic forms from their own cultural background, thus confirming the significance of practices such as traditional dance amongst the many immigrant communities residing in Australia.

The paradox within this report, however, is that while it ostensibly supported and promoted acceptance of cultural diversity through various arts, the definition of “dance” employed in production of the research data was exclusionary. In the report’s glossary of terms, dance is defined as including “any classical dance, contemporary dance and organised social dance” (Australia Council for the Arts, 2017, p. 88). Earlier in the document, the dance genres which were included in the survey are listed as “ballet and classical dance”, “social dance, such as ballroom or street” and “contemporary dance” (p. 67). Thus, in research which was purportedly designed to capture a variety of perspectives, no traditional dance genres<sup>83</sup> were listed in the questions about dance participation. There is an apparent lack of opportunity for participants in culturally-specific dance genres to record their participation, which, in a nation with immigrants from at least 270 cultural groups (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014), is somewhat problematic.

The way forward is neither plain nor easily discernible, but this should not mean that no effort is to be made. The reworking of multiculturalism suggested by Collins (2013b) which would “recognise the fluidity and global connectedness, alliances and identities of contemporary immigrant communities in Australia” (p. 173), would be well suited to application in the arts sector. Recognition of the complex mosaic of dance and music practices (along with literature, theatre, rituals and other activities which hold great significance for the multiple communities of immigrants in Australian society) should be afforded to all, along

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<sup>83</sup> While Irish set and *céilí* dancing could be included in the “social dance” category, the definition of social dance provided in the report does not cover these genres, nor does it cover other social dance forms such as Scottish Country Dancing.

with the de-privileging of Westernised arts as the sole possessors of performative and educative value for Australia's population. A miscellany of participants in dance certainly should be encouraged, but there also needs to be a diversity of dance genres which are acknowledged and celebrated.

### **Limitations of the Research**

A primary limitation of this study is that its findings may not be directly applicable to other immigrant groups in Australia. There are many other traditional dance and music ensembles in Sydney and, while some general principles may be pertinent, it is likely that there will be specific idiosyncrasies which will render each cultural group's story unique. For example, recent research amongst Japanese immigrants in Sydney (Nagatomo, 2017) reveals considerable differences in the nature of intra-community activities when compared with the immigrant groups which are included in the current research. Another limitation is that the study looks at the Irish and Croatian communities in Sydney alone, not in any other region of Australia. While the findings may broadly apply to those communities elsewhere in Australia, there may be locational factors which determine the situation of a particular immigrant group following settlement in Australia (Dunn & Ip, 2008). Thus, the trajectories of the Irish and Croatian communities that settled in Melbourne, Brisbane or Perth may deviate from the narratives presented in the current study.

The application of this research to the same immigrant groups in settler societies other than Australia may also be restricted due to the specific nature and influence of Australian political history and current society. As discussed in Chapter Two, multiculturalism in Australia has followed a path which is quite different from countries such as the USA and Canada, and so the situations for Irish and Croatian immigrants, as well as for other immigrant communities, may be different in those locations. Thus, the study is bounded in temporal and spatial spheres and represents a snapshot of the two communities in Sydney in 2014 and 2015. This encapsulation, however, fits with the study's design as a multiple case study, with the dimensions of time and space adding to the boundaries already in place through membership of each of the six dance group cases included in the study.

### **Suggestions for further research**

This ethnography has complemented existing research amongst immigrants in multicultural Australia, including both the projects which have taken a broad approach (Arasaratnam, 2008; 2014; Brockhall & Liu, 2011; Drodzewski, 2007; Dunn & Ip, 2008; Noble, 2002, 2013; Zevallos, 2008) and those which have focused on music and dance

practices (Duarte, 2005; Garrido & Bendrups, 2013; Ram 2000a; 2000b; Roy, 2012; Senay, 2009; Sorce Keller & Barwick, 2013; Tabar, 2005). Given the number of immigrant groups which have settled in Australia (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014), the potential for further research amongst new residents is immense. The current study reveals the multifaceted and multi-layered nature of transnational activities, and it is likely that there are more fields, in which immigrants are active, which are yet to be identified and explored.

Amongst the body of scholarship concerning immigrants in Australia, comparative studies have been less common (Dieckmann, 2016; Voloder & Andits, 2015; Zevallos, 2008), yet as all of these studies along with the current project demonstrate, comparison elicits valuable data concerning specific factors which may exert differential influence on cultural groups and the variety of circumstances under which those factors may become operational. Through these revelations, this thesis has contributed to the discourses surrounding migration and multiculturalism in the Australian context. However, further research of a comparative nature is needed, whether that comparison is inter-cultural, as was the situation in the current study, or inter-locational, where the same immigrant community is investigated in multiple locations around Australia. Both research contexts are likely to yield useful information about the many variables involved in the processes of resettlement and adaptation to life in multicultural Australia.

### **Conclusion**

This study has explored the cultural significance of the various genres of traditional dance which are practised in Sydney by members of the Irish and Croatian communities, and its findings have contributed to the corpus of knowledge in several disciplines. First, the various fields of transnationalism, as identified as operational amongst the participant cohort, have demonstrated the nuanced complexities of the immigrant experience. Next, the research has validated the field of ethnochoreology, which is still a developing discipline and one which is particularly unfamiliar in an Australian context. Finally, the data have been employed to elucidate the narratives, both individual and collective, of the participants, dance groups and immigrant communities which were included in this research.

The expressions of transnational activity which emerged from the collected data have cross-disciplinary significance. Conceptualisations of identity and the emotional conduit facilitated by traditional dance, as described in this study, have exposed “the ways in which the participants are ‘doing ethnicity’ transnationally, by exploring how this takes place at different levels including the emotional level and at the level of allegiance” (Reynolds &

Zontini, 2016, p. 384) and hence have revealed how “the global intersects with the local in the experiences of individual agents” (Andits, 2015, p. 327). In particular, the continuum of cultural identities along which participants placed themselves has demonstrated the differentiated nature of belonging (Voloder & Andits, 2016) and the simultaneity of the processes of acculturation and transnationalism (Levitt, 2016; Tsuda, 2012; Wessendorf, 2013).

With particular reference to transnationalism as a theoretical construct, the study has underscored the recently-developed notions that transnational fields are not only more circular than linear (Garrido & Bendrups, 2013) but that they may also be multi-local as well as multi-national (Rogers, 2015). The term “cosmos” has been proffered by Ramnarine (2007a, p. 206), and the current study supports this conceptualisation of transnational fields, which is that transnational fields are multi-directional, connecting various diasporic locales with the former homeland and with each other, and that people at all points within each field have agency within those fields. It has drawn out examples of intra-diasporic activity and shown that participants actively contribute to the circulation of knowledge, ideas, memories and material items. Thus, while the former homeland is the source of both inspiration and activity in both the Irish and Croatian communities, people living in satellite locations are essential to the ongoing constructive and negotiative processes in all of the transnational spaces discussed in this thesis.

This study has served to demonstrate that transnationalism does not only involve those who have experienced migration. It may be a “situated practice” (Rogers, 2015, p. 8) which includes people who do not themselves need to be mobile across borders, but are those who “respond to, and rework, flows of ideas, images, finance and cultural or performance practice” (p. 8). Thus, participants in this research who rarely visit the home of their ancestors or who have never been able to visit are also considered to be engaging in transnational social spaces, along with those who travel to the sending society regularly or who have lived there for prolonged periods. The former, less mobile, group described here includes some of the second and third generation respondents in both immigrant communities as well as the dancers in step, set and *céilí* dancing who do not possess Irish heritage. There is, then, a spectrum of experience, which ranges from those who have spent the majority of their lives in the place of their birth to those whose transnational activity is “aspirational” in that they seek to emulate a cultural tradition and imagine a constructed heritage without possessing the requisite biological ancestry. Wherever a person may be situated on this scale, they can still

possess agency in the relevant transnational fields within which their chosen dance genre is operational.

The study has also confirmed the interdisciplinary relevance of research into traditional dance practices amongst immigrant groups in Australia. As discussed in Chapter Two, dance involves bodily movements, and the movements of traditional dancers embody cues of intrinsic cultural significance. The body, so essential to the practice of dance, is a salient entity across a broad range of scholarly frameworks. For example, diasporas may be comprehended as “embodiments of cultural, political and philanthropic sentimental performances” (Werbner, 2002, p. 125). Identities have been described as “embodied practices of identification and adaptation deploying particular kinds of resources with which we position ourselves in diverse social domains” (Tabar, Noble & Poynting, 2010, p. 12). As stated in the Introduction, transnationalism is an embodied activity (Dunn, 2010) since it involves movements of bodies, along with material goods, philosophies, knowledge and ideals, across national borders. All of these discourses have been exemplified in the performance of traditional dance in immigrant communities in Sydney, for “performance can be considered a spatial-cultural practice that grounds (i.e. locates) transnational flows through embodied action” (Rogers, 2015, p. 9).

The results have revealed the important role of dance in the lives of individuals, specific dance groups and two diasporic populations, and have demonstrated “the significance of dance as a mode of communication in its sociocultural context” (Filmer, 2004, p. 362). Scolieri (2008) writes that “dance studies is uniquely poised to contribute to migration studies and the foremost topics within its terrain” (p. V) and argues that dance, along with other arts practices, is useful in “exploring the experiences and conditions of global migration” (p. V). Furthermore, dance studies have an important role, particularly in multicultural societies, in achieving a broader perspective on “intercultural understandings” (Fensham & Kelada, 2012, p. 372). Indeed, “the very ubiquity, naturalness, complexity and malleability of dance and its relationship to other ways of moving and engaging in society is what makes it an ideal object of study” (Spalding, 2014, p. 225).

Finally, the research has enriched the personal and community narratives of the research participants in Sydney. Its focus has been on the ways in which people engage with dance and construct life experiences through participation in dance (Finnegan, 2003). Hence, their personal stories, and the meanings which they attribute to their dance practices (Buck, 2012; Buckland, 2006a) should not be lost amongst the theoretical paradigms, however important those discourses may be. Actions within transnational fields may be highly

emotional or, at other times, mundane, but the overarching purpose of participation within the transnational spaces explored in this study has been to maintain memories of the former homeland and to perpetuate a love for cultural heritage amongst members of subsequent generations. Dance, writes Buckland (2001) “has a particular propensity to foreground cultural memory as embodied practice” (p. 1) and it is “the elicitation and presentation of embodied cultural memories [which] fleshes out the story of a people” (Stoller, 2009, p. 47).

Migrants have, for centuries, spread across the world, and their traditional dancing has accompanied them wherever they have travelled, including Sydney. Memories, too, have become globalised, and “today, memory and the global have to be studied together, as it has become impossible to understand the trajectories of memory outside a global frame of reference” (Assman & Conrad, 2010, p. 2). In order to elicit and understand the role of those memories in the lives of Irish and Croatian immigrants in Sydney, adoption of a transnational viewpoint has been “epistemologically fruitful” (Dahinden, 2010, p. 25) and has permitted construction of a narrative “where fluidity of connections between places, real and imagined, can be viewed through a variety of lenses, all of which are constitutive of an individual’s life world” (McAuliffe, 2008, p. 77). The geographical distance between Australia and Europe remains unchanged since the first flotilla of English ships arrived in 1788, but despite the advantages of modern travel and communication, immigrants’ affective connections with that homeland are not dissimilar to those of earlier times. Bodies that have migrated to Australia continue to dance and the act of dancing still embodies, respectively, Ireland and Croatia. Through the practice of traditional dance genres, which have been translated from their original contexts, those memories are both nourished *and* give nourishment in return. Fundamentally, the study has explored and illuminated both the multi-directional and variegated nature of this transnational nutritive flow and its significance in the lives of Irish and Croatian immigrants currently living in Sydney.





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## Appendix A

### Interviewees

**Key: Age-** Adult aged 18 years or over (A) or Child (C)

**Gender:** Male (M) or Female (F)

**Generational Status:** 1, 2, 3+ (third generation or more) or 0 (for Irish dance groups only, meaning no Irish heritage)

**Dance Role:** dancer (D), musician (M), teacher (T), parent (P). The numbers of participants in each role from every dance group are provided, but to preserve anonymity, individuals are not identified by their roles.

Where joint interviews were conducted, the interviewees' names are provided together in the same row of the relevant table.

### Irish Dance Groups

**Bláth 23 participants (1 T, 14 D, 8 P)**

Pseudonym	Date of Interview	Age	Gender	Generational Status
Vivian	18/02/14	A	F	2
Jessica	26/02/14	A	F	1
Kirstie	04/03/14	A	F	3+
Sarah	11/03/14	A	F	2
Suzanne	15/03/14	A	F	0
Deirdre	18/03/14	A	F	1
Karen	25/03/14	A	F	0
Tracey		A	F	0
Maeve	29/03/14	A	F	2
Tessa	10/06/14	C	F	2
Hayley		C	F	2
Vicki	10/06/14	A	F	2
Toby	29/04/15	A	M	3+
Harriet,	29/04/15	A	F	0
Marcia		A	F	0
Charlotte		A	F	0
Simon	13/06/15	A	M	3+
Carol	26/06/15	A	F	1
Avaly	10/08/15	C	F	0
Eliza	10/08/15	C	F	0
Grace	17/08/15	C	F	0
Jodie	27/10/15	C	F	0
Ainslie	18/11/15	C	F	0

**Harp Set Dancers 10 participants (1 T, 9 D)**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Generational Status</b>
Tara	03/03/15	A	F	3+
Alison	15/06/15	A	F	3+
Theo	15/06/15	A	M	1
Andrea	23/06/15	A	F	2
Naomi	06/07/15	A	F	1
Jeremy	11/08/15	A	M	3+
Samantha	01/09/15	A	F	0
Lucy	16/09/15	A	F	3+
Roger	20/10/15	A	M	2
Dennis	02/11/15	A	M	1

**Sydney Irish Ceili Dancers 10 participants (1 T, 4 D, 5 M)**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Generational Status</b>
Lilian	28/05/15	A	F	3+
Meredith	28/05/15	A	F	1
Daphne	28/05/15	A	F	3+
Kalinda	15/10/15	C	F	2
April	15/10/15	A	F	1
Neil	15/10/15	A	M	3+
Adam	15/10/15	A	M	0
Oliver	29/10/15	A	M	1
Jacob	15/10/15	A	M	3+
Michelle	10/11/15	A	F	3+

### Croatian Dance Groups

#### Vukovar 14 participants (1 T, 12 D, 1 M)

Pseudonym	Date of Interview	Age	Gender	Generational Status
Olivia	01/09/14	A	F	2
Gary	14/09/14	A	M	1
Sandra	04/03/15	A	F	2
Mitchell	18/03/15	A	M	2
Rosemary	25/03/15	A	F	2
Terry	25/03/15	A	M	1
Scott	30/03/15	A	M	2
Molly	13/05/15	A	F	2
Teresa	16/06/15	A	F	1
Joel	17/06/15	A	M	2
Kerry	22/07/15	A	F	2
Ellen	26/08/15	A	F	2
Meryl	07/09/15	A	F	1
Irene	16/09/15	A	F	2

#### Kumpanija 14 participants (2 T, 12 D)

Pseudonym	Date of Interview	Age	Gender	Generational Status
Peter	20/06/14	A	M	1
David	27/02/15	A	M	2
Samuel	06/03/15	A	M	2
James	06/03/15	A	M	2
Matthew	13/03/15	A	M	2
Andrew	13/03/15	A	M	2
Darren	20/03/15	A	M	1
Elsa	20/03/15	A	F	2
Julia	10/04/15	A	F	2
Sharon	10/04/15	A	F	1
Marion	10/04/15	C	F	2
Ruth	10/04/15	A	F	2
Brian	17/04/15	A	M	2
Luke	17/04/15	A	M	2

**Cvijet 21 participants (1 T, 9 D, 1 M, 10 P)**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Generational Status</b>
Yvonne	20/05/14	A	F	1
Jean		A	F	1
Clare	02/06/14	A	F	2
Camilla	11/06/14	A	F	2
Charlie	04/08/14	C	M	2
Henry		C	M	2
Jack		C	M	2
Kate		C	F	2
Rebekah		C	F	2
Brooke		C	F	2
Stella	23/03/15	A	F	2
Hannah	23/03/15	C	F	2
Amelia		C	F	2
Megan		C	F	2
Greg	04/05/15	A	M	2
Bronwyn	14/09/15	A	F	2
Miriam		A	F	2
May		A	F	2
Maxine		A	F	2
Michael	12/10/15	A	M	1
Damien		A	M	1

## Dance and Music Scholars

Name and Position	Date of Interview	Location of Interview
Dr. Breandán de Gallaí Former lead dancer, <i>Riverdance</i> Independent Dance Scholar	24/04/14	Dublin, Ireland
Dr. Catherine Foley, Irish World Academy for Music and Dance, University of Limerick, Ireland	29/04/14	Limerick, Ireland
Dr. Aileen Dillane Irish World Academy for Music and Dance, University of Limerick, Ireland	30/04/14	Limerick, Ireland
Dr. Francis Ward Irish World Academy for Music and Dance, University of Limerick, Ireland	01/05/14	Limerick, Ireland
Dr. Tvrtko Zebec, Dr. Iva Niemčić & Dr. Joško Čaleta Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, Croatia	15/07/14	Korčula, Croatia
Dr. Elsie Ivancich Dunin, Professor Emerita, UCLA.	02/12/2014	Interview via Skype between Sydney and Phoenix, USA.



## **Appendix B**

### **Special Fieldwork Visits**

(Additional to regular attendance at dance classes for each group in 2014 and 2015)

#### **Special Events Attended- in Australia**

##### **Bláth Irish step dancing**

St Patrick's Day performance at an Irish themed public bar, Sydney, 17 March 2014.

Australian Irish Dancing Association (AIDA) New South Wales Debutante Ball, Bankstown Sports Club, Sydney, 10 May 2014.

New South Wales Championships, Rooty Hill RSL Club, Sydney, 22 August 2014.

St Patrick's Day Parade and dance performance, Hyde Park, Sydney, 15 March 2015.

AIDA New South Wales Graded Feis, Cranebrook High School, 16 May 2015.

New South Wales Championships, Rooty Hill RSL Club, Sydney, 23, 24 & 25 July 2015.

Penrith Valley Feis, Cranebrook High School, 12 & 13 September 2015.

New South Wales Championships, Rooty Hill RSL Club, Sydney, 6 & 7 August 2016.

##### **Irish Set and Céilí Dancing (involving Harp and SICD)**

Christmas *Céilí*, The Gaelic Club, Sydney, 6 December 2014.

Christmas *Céilí*, Lidcombe Bowling Club, Sydney, 5 December 2015.

##### **Sydney Irish Céilí Dancers**

Workshop at National Folk Festival ("Dance around Ireland"), Canberra, 3 April 2015.

Performance at National Folk Festival ("The Reel Deal"), Canberra, 3 April 2015.

##### **Vukovar**

Vukovar 30<sup>th</sup> birthday concert, Parade Theatre, Kensington, Sydney, 1 Nov 2014.

Kreni Kolo concert, Clocktower Centre, Melbourne, 24 Sept 2016 (Vukovar as guest artists).



## **Cvijet**

40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, King Tom Club, Sydney, 7 Jun 2014 (Vukovar appeared as guest artists).

Croatian National Day celebration, King Tom Club, Sydney, 27 June 2015.

Croatian Children's Folkloric Festival, Bosna Club, Sydney, 31 October 2015.

Croatian Children's Folkloric Festival, Bosna Club, Sydney, 29 October 2016.

Croatian Children's Folkloric Festival, Bosna Club Sydney, 28 October 2017.

## **Kumpanjija**

50<sup>th</sup> anniversary performance, Dalmacija Sydney Croatian Club, Sydney, 25 April 2015.

## **Special Events Attended-Overseas**

World Championships in Irish Step Dancing, Hilton Hotel Metropole, London, 18 and 20 April 2014.

Irish Set Dance Group, Áras Chrónáin Cultural Centre, Clondalkin, Dublin, 25 April 2014.

Kumpanjija performance for delegates at 28<sup>th</sup> Symposium of ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology, Blato, Croatia, 16 July 2014.

Folkloric performance excursion, led by Elsie Ivancich Dunin for delegates from ICTM Study group on Ethnochoreology, Cilipi, Croatia, 20 July 2014.

Rehearsal of *LADO*, Croatian National Folkloric Ensemble, Zagreb, Croatia, 14 June 2016.

Rehearsal of *Ivan Goran Kovacic*, Zagreb, Croatia, 14 June 2016.

# Appendix C

## Ethical Approval Documents



**Research Integrity**  
Human Research Ethics Committee

Thursday, 7 November 2013

Assoc Prof Kathryn Marsh  
Music Education Unit; Sydney Conservatorium of Music  
Email: kathryn.marsh@sydney.edu.au

Dear Assoc Prof Kathryn Marsh

I am pleased to inform you that the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved your project entitled **"Translated Traditions: A comparative study of the role of traditional dance and music practices among immigrant communities in Sydney"**.

Details of the approval are as follows:

**Project No.:** 2013/895  
**Approval Date:** 5 November 2013  
**First Annual Report Due:** 5 November 2014  
**Authorised Personnel:** Marsh Kathryn; Mollenhauer Jeanette;  
**Documents Approved:**

Date Uploaded	Type	Document Name
01/10/2013	Advertisements/Flyer	Flyer
01/10/2013	Recruitment Letter/Email	Letter of Introduction
29/10/2013	Participant Info Statement	Amended document
29/10/2013	Participant Info Statement	Amended document
29/10/2013	Participant Info Statement	Amended document
29/10/2013	Participant Info Statement	Amended document
29/10/2013	Participant Info Statement	Amended document
01/10/2013	Participant Consent Form	Consent Form Parent
01/10/2013	Participant Consent Form	Consent Form General Adult
01/10/2013	Interview Questions	Interview questions teachers
01/10/2013	Interview Questions	Interview questions other adults
01/10/2013	Interview Questions	Interview schedule arts workers
01/10/2013	Interview Questions	Interview schedule child dancers
01/10/2013	Interview Questions	Interview schedule adult dancers
01/10/2013	Interview Questions	Interview questions dance experts

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HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the approval date stated in this letter and is granted pending the following conditions being met:

**Condition/s of Approval**

- Continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans.
- Provision of an annual report on this research to the Human Research Ethics Committee from the approval date and at the completion of the study. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of ethics approval for the project.
- All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.
- All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
- Any changes to the project including changes to research personnel must be approved by the HREC before the research project can proceed.

**Chief Investigator / Supervisor's responsibilities:**

1. You must retain copies of all signed Consent Forms (if applicable) and provide these to the HREC on request.
2. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.

Please do not hesitate to contact Research Integrity (Human Ethics) should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

**Professor Glen Davis**  
Chair  
Human Research Ethics Committee

**This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), NHMRC and Universities Australia Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and the CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice.**



**Research Integrity**  
Human Research Ethics Committee

Tuesday, 8 April 2014

Assoc Prof Kathryn Marsh  
Music Education Unit; Sydney Conservatorium of Music  
Email: kathryn.marsh@sydney.edu.au

Dear Kathryn

Your request to modify the above project submitted on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2014 was considered by the Executive of the Human Research Ethics Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

The Committee had no ethical objections to the modification/s and has approved the project to proceed.

Details of the approval are as follows:

**Project No.:** 2013/895  
**Project Title:** Translated Traditions: A comparative study of the role of traditional dance and music practices among immigrant communities in Sydney

**Approved Documents:**

Date Uploaded	Type	Document Name
04/04/2014	Participant Consent Form	Dance Expert Consent Form
04/04/2014	Participant Info Statement	Participant Information Statement for Dance Experts

Please do not hesitate to contact Research Integrity (Human Ethics) should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

**Professor Glen Davis**  
Chair  
Human Research Ethics Committee

**This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), NHMRC and Universities Australia Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and the CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice.**

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**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KATHRYN MARSH**

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Sydney Conservatorium of Music

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kathryn.marsh@sydney.edu.au  
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<http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

My name is Jeanette Mollenhauer and I am undertaking a PhD at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, The University of Sydney. I am interested in studying traditional dance groups among various cultural communities in the Sydney area, and would be very interested in attending one of your group's classes. This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Sydney [Project No. 2013/895], and is supervised by Associate Professor Kathryn Marsh.

I would very much like to discuss my research with you by email, so that I can explain fully what involvement in my research project would entail for you and members of your group. This will enable you to be fully informed about the project when you are making a decision about any involvement with the group by me as a researcher.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have concerning my research project. I can also provide you with further written information about the project if you would like it.

Thank you for your time.

Kind Regards

Jeanette Mollenhauer

Home: [REDACTED]

Mobile [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]



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**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KATHRYN MARSH**  
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**Translated Traditions: A comparative study of the role of traditional dance and music practices among immigrant communities in Sydney**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT (FOR YOU TO KEEP)**

**(1) What is the study about?**

You are invited to participate in a study of traditional dance and music practices amongst three different cultural heritage groups in the Sydney area. By studying the role of these practices, including how they are taught, and any changes which have been made to them since members of each group came to Sydney, it is hoped that more will be learned about the role of dance and music in the immigration and settlement experiences of people who come to live in Australia.

**(2) Who is carrying out the study?**

The study is being conducted by Jeanette Mollenhauer, a student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and will form the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Associate Professor Kathryn Marsh.

**(3) What does the study involve?**

In order to carry out this project, the researcher will attend dance classes and performances. This will involve the researcher sometimes taking part in the dancing and sometimes videoing classes and performances (both will be done only with permission of both you and class members). As well, the researcher may seek permission to interview you, members of the dance class, parents of members of the dance class (if those class members are children), audience members at a performance, and people who are involved with organising performances. These interviews will be carried out individually and will be conducted at a time and place which is suitable and convenient for those being interviewed. Interviews will be conducted in a public place.

The interview questions will be about when and why people or their families migrated to Australia, their involvement in the dance classes both before and after coming to Australia, and what participating in traditional dances and music from their cultural heritage background means to them now that they are living in Australia. There is minimal risk involved in participating in this project.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**

The researcher will not hinder the dance classes in any way. Interviews will take between 1-2 hours for adults, and no longer than half an hour for children. The length of the interview is entirely at the discretion of the person being interviewed; you are free to allot as little or as much time to the interview process as they wish.

**(5) Can I withdraw from the study?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with the researcher or The University of Sydney.

Participation in interviews is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer every question; if there is a question you do not wish to answer, indicate this to the researcher, who will then go on to the next question. You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue; in this case, the audio and/or video recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

Interviews will be transcribed into written form, but pseudonyms will be used in this process and all identifying material will be removed so that the identity of the person being interviewed remains anonymous.

**(6) Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Pseudonyms will be used in any publications resulting from the study

**(7) Will the study benefit me?**

We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any direct benefits from the study, except to be able to contribute to the understanding of the experiences of immigration and settlement in another country.

**(8) Can I tell other people about the study?**

You are free to tell other people about your involvement in the study.

**(9) What if I require further information about the study or my involvement in it?**

When you have read this information, Jeanette Mollenhauer will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Associate Professor Kathryn Marsh.

Contact Details:

Jeanette Mollenhauer Phone 011 2 9351 3333 Email [jeanette.mollenhauer@sydney.edu.au](mailto:jeanette.mollenhauer@sydney.edu.au)  
Kathryn Marsh Phone +61 2 93511333 Email [kathryn.marsh@sydney.edu.au](mailto:kathryn.marsh@sydney.edu.au)

**(10) What if I have a complaint or any concerns?**

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or [ro\\_humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro_humanethics@sydney.edu.au) (Email).

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**Translated Traditions: A comparative study of the role of traditional dance and music practices among immigrant communities in Sydney**

**PARENTAL PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT**

**(1) What is the study about?**

You are invited to permit your child to participate in a study of traditional dance and music practices amongst three different cultural heritage groups in the Sydney area. By studying the role of these practices, including how they are taught, and any changes which have been made to them since members of each group came to Sydney, it is hoped that more will be learned about the role of dance and music in the immigration and settlement experiences of people who come to live in Australia.

Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because he/she is a member of the [name] dance group, and is learning traditional dancing.

**(2) Who is carrying out the study?**

The study is being conducted by Jeanette Mollenhauer, a student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and will form the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Associate Professor Kathryn Marsh.

**(3) What does the study involve?**

In order to carry out this project, the researcher will attend dance classes and performances in which your child is involved. The researcher will sometimes take part in the dancing and sometimes video classes and performances (both will be done only with permission of both the teacher and class members). As well, the researcher may seek permission to interview the teacher, members of the dance class, parents of members of the dance class (if those class members are children), audience members at a performance, and people who are involved with organising performances. These interviews will be carried out individually and will be conducted at a time and place which is suitable and convenient for you and your child. Interviews will be conducted in a public place.

The interview questions will be about when and why you or your child immigrated to Australia, children's involvement in the dance classes both before and after coming to Australia, and what participating in traditional dances and music means to them now that they are living in Australia. There is minimal risk involved in participating in this project.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**



The researcher will not hinder the dance classes in any way. Interviews will take between 1-2 hours for adults, and no longer than half an hour for children. You or your child can decide on the length of the interview.

**(5) Can my child withdraw from the study?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary. You are not under any obligation to consent to your child's participation.

Your decision whether or not to permit your child to participate will not prejudice you or your child's future relations with the researcher or The University of Sydney. If you decide to permit your child to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your child's participation at any time without affecting your relationship with the University of Sydney or the dance group.

Your child may stop the interview at any time if he or she does not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

**(6) Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants.

A report of the study may be published, but individual people will not be identified in such a report. Names will be changed in any publication resulting from the study.

**(7) Will the study benefit me?**

We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any direct benefits from the study, except for your child to be able to contribute to expanding knowledge about the experience of migration and settlement in a new homeland.

**(8) Can I tell other people about the study?**

You are free to tell other people about your involvement in the study.

**(9) What if I require further information about the study or my involvement in it?**

When you have read this information, Jeanette Mollenhauer will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Associate Professor Kathryn Marsh.

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*This information sheet is for you to keep*

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**Translated Traditions: A comparative study of the role of traditional dance and music practices among immigrant communities in Sydney**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT  
(CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS)**

**(1) What is the study about?**

You are invited to participate in a study about your dance group and some other dance groups in Sydney. I want to learn about the dance and music of people who come from other countries to live in Australia.

**(2) Who is carrying out the study?**

My name is Jeanette Mollenhauer, and I am a student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. I am studying for a degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Sydney. My supervisor is Associate Professor Kathryn Marsh.

**(3) What does the study involve?**

Jeanette will attend dance classes and performances. Sometimes Jeanette will take part in the dancing and sometimes she will video classes and performances (if you, your parents and the teacher give permission). The researcher may also want to talk with some people in the group (an interview).

We will talk about when and why you or your families migrated to Australia, your involvement in the dance classes both before and after coming to Australia, and what dancing means to you now that you are living in Australia. There is little risk involved in taking part in this project.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**

The researcher will not interrupt the dance classes in any way. Interviews with you will take no longer than half an hour. You can stop the interview whenever you want to.

**(5) Can I withdraw from the study?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary - you don't have to take part and - you can stop at any time without affecting your relationship with Jeanette or The University of Sydney or your dance class.

Taking part in interviews is completely up to you. Interviews will be conducted in a public place, where other people can see you at all times during the interview. You do not have to answer every question; if there is a question you do not wish to answer, tell Jeanette, who will then go on to the next question.



You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue, and Jeanette will not use any of the interview recording.

Interviews will be written out, but your name will be changed and anything that says who you are will be removed.

**(6) Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on people who take part.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual people will not be identifiable in such a report. Names will be changed in any publications resulting from the study

**(7) Will the study benefit me?**

We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any direct benefits from the study, except to be able to say what being in the dance group means to you.

**(8) Can I tell other people about the study?**

You are free to tell other people about your involvement in the study.

**(9) What if I require further information about the study or my involvement in it?**

When you have read this information, Jeanette Mollenhauer will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Associate Professor Kathryn Marsh.

Contact Details:

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Kathryn Marsh Phone +61 2 93511333 Email [kathryn.marsh@sydney.edu.au](mailto:kathryn.marsh@sydney.edu.au)

**(10) What if I have a complaint or any concerns?**

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au) (Email).

*This information sheet is for you to keep*

## Amended Form for Dance Scholars



**Music Education Unit  
Sydney Conservatorium of Music**

ABN 15 211 513 464

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KATHRYN MARSH**  
Music Education  
Sydney Conservatorium of Music  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY**

Room 2129  
Building C41  
The University of Sydney  
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Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

### **Translated Traditions: A comparative study of the role of traditional dance and music practices among immigrant communities in Sydney**

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT (FOR YOU TO KEEP)**

**(1) What is the study about?**

You are invited to participate in a study of traditional dance and music practices amongst three different cultural heritage groups in the Sydney area. By studying the role of these practices, including how they are taught, and any changes which have been made to them since members of each group came to Sydney, it is hoped that more will be learned about the role of dance and music in the immigration and settlement experiences of people who come to live in Australia.

**(2) Who is carrying out the study?**

The study is being conducted by Jeanette Mollenhauer, a student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and will form the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Associate Professor Kathryn Marsh.

**(3) What does the study involve?**

In order to carry out this project, the researcher will conduct an interview with you. The interview will be conducted at a time and place which is suitable and convenient for you. Interviews will be conducted in a public place.

The interview questions will be about dance and music practices in your country, your involvement with dance and music practices, and your knowledge of previous research into dance and music practices both in your country and within the context of immigration to Australia. There is minimal risk involved in participating in this project.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**

Interviews will take between 1-2 hours. The length of the interview is entirely at your discretion; you are free to allot as little or as much time to the interview process as you wish.

**(5) Can I withdraw from the study?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with the researcher or The University of Sydney.



Participation in interviews is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer every question; if there is a question you do not wish to answer, indicate this to the researcher, who will then go on to the next question. You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue; in this case, the audio and/or video recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

Interviews will be transcribed into written form. If you are participating in the study as a dance scholar or expert, you may be identifiable through the information you provide. In this instance, you may wish to grant consent to your name being used within the study.

**(6) Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Pseudonyms will be used in any publications resulting from the study.

**(7) Will the study benefit me?**

We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any direct benefits from the study, except to be able to contribute to the understanding of the experiences of immigration and settlement in another country.

**(8) Can I tell other people about the study?**

You are free to tell other people about your involvement in the study.

**(9) What if I require further information about the study or my involvement in it?**

When you have read this information, Jeanette Mollenhauer will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Associate Professor Kathryn Marsh.

Contact Details:

Jeanette Mollenhauer Phone [REDACTED]  
Kathryn Marsh Phone +61 2 93511333 Email [kathryn.marsh@sydney.edu.au](mailto:kathryn.marsh@sydney.edu.au)  
[Local contact person-yet to be determined]

**(10) What if I have a complaint or any concerns?**

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au) (Email).



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**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

I, .....[PRINT NAME], give consent to my participation in the research project

**Translated Traditions: A comparative study of the role of traditional dance and music practices among immigrant communities in Sydney**

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.
3. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.
4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential. I understand that any research data gathered from the results of the study may be published however no information about me will be used in any way that is identifiable.
5. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney now or in the future.

6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the audio and/or video recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

I understand that I can stop my participation in the focus group at any time if I do not wish to continue; however as it is a group discussion it will not be possible to exclude individual data to that point.

I consent to the observation of my participation in dance classes and other cultural activities involving dance and music.

7. I consent to:

- |                      |     |                          |    |                          |
|----------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| • Audio-recording    | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Video-recording    | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Receiving Feedback | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered YES to the "Receiving Feedback" question, please provide your details i.e. mailing address, email address.

**Feedback Option**

**Address:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:**

\_\_\_\_\_

.....  
**Signature**

.....  
**Please PRINT name**

.....



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

Music Education Unit

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ABN 15 211 513 464

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### PARENTAL (OR CAREGIVER) CONSENT FORM

I,.....[PRINT NAME], agree to permit  
.....[PRINT CHILD'S NAME], who is aged ..... years,  
to participate in the research project

#### **Translated Traditions: A comparative study of the role of traditional dance and music practices among immigrant communities in Sydney**

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my child's involvement in the project with the researcher/s.
3. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent to my child's participation.
4. I understand that my child's involvement is strictly confidential. I understand that any research data gathered from the results of the study may be published however no information about my child nor I will be used in any way that is identifiable.
5. I understand that I can withdraw my child from the study at any time, without affecting my or my child's relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney now or in the future.



6. I understand that my child can stop the interview at any time if my child or I do not wish to continue, the audio and/or video recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

I understand that my child can withdraw from participation in the focus group at any time if my child or I do not wish to continue; however as it is a group discussion it will not be possible to exclude individual data to that point.

I consent to the observation of my child's participation in dance classes and other cultural activities involving dance and music.

7. I consent to:

- |                      |     |                          |    |                          |
|----------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| • Audio-recording    | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Video-recording    | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Receiving Feedback | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered YES to the "Receiving Feedback" question, please provide your details i.e. mailing address, email address.

**Feedback Option**

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
Signature

.....  
Signature of Child

.....  
Please PRINT name

.....  
Please PRINT name

.....  
Date

.....  
Date



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### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM DANCE SCHOLARS

I, .....[PRINT NAME], give consent to my participation in the research project

**Translated Traditions: A comparative study of the role of traditional dance and music practices among immigrant communities in Sydney**

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.
3. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.
4. I understand that I may be identifiable through the research data collected, since I am responding in a role of authority.
5. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney now or in the future.
6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the audio and/or video recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

I understand that I can stop my participation in the focus group at any time if I do not wish to continue; however as it is a group discussion it will not be possible to exclude individual data to that point.

I consent to the observation of my participation in dance classes and other cultural activities involving dance and music.

7. I consent to:

- |                               |     |                          |    |                          |
|-------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| • Audio-recording             | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Video-recording             | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Use of my name in the study | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Receiving Feedback          | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered YES to the "Receiving Feedback" question, please provide your details i.e. mailing address, email address.

**Feedback Option**

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
Signature

.....  
Please PRINT name

.....  
Date

## **APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES**

### **Interview Schedule - adult dancers, musicians, parents**

#### **1. Involvement with the dance group in Sydney.**

- How soon after coming to Australia did you join the dance group?
- Why did you decide to join the group?
- How often do you attend?

#### **2. Feelings about being in the dance group.**

- How do you feel when you are dancing with the group?
- What does the dancing mean to you?
- What do you think the dancing means to your family?
- What do your friends (from outside of your cultural heritage group) think of your dancing?

#### **3. The group's performances.**

- How often does the group perform?
- Where do you perform?
- What kind of costumes do you wear for a performance?
- Do you have live or recorded music?
- How do you feel when you are performing the dances?
- How do people from your cultural heritage group react to a performance?
- Why do you think they react that way?
- How do people outside of your cultural heritage group react to a performance?
- Why do you think they react that way?
- Would you like to perform more often if you had the opportunity?
- At what kinds of places would you like to perform?

#### **4. The dances.**

- Are they for men, women or both together?
- Are they danced with particular musical instruments playing the music?
- Are they danced at particular occasions (eg a wedding or festival)?
- Can you tell me anything else about those occasions (for example, what food is eaten, where the occasion takes place, what clothes are worn, what time of day the occasion takes place)?
- Who teaches the dances (that is, is it taught by only men or only women, or can anyone teach it?)

#### **5. [If relevant] Involvement did you have with dancing in [country of birth].**

- How long did you dance there?
- Can you tell me what is the same/different about dancing in [country of birth] and in Australia?

#### **6. Can you tell me when and why your family came to Australia?**

**7. (First generation immigrants only) The experience of coming to a new country.**

- What made you decide to leave [country of birth]?
- Can you describe your feelings about leaving?
- Can you describe your feelings during the trip to Australia?
- What was it like settling in to a new country?

**8. (Subsequent generations only) What parents have told their children about coming to Australia.**

- What made them decide to leave [country of birth]?
- Can you describe their feelings about leaving?
- Can you describe their feelings during the trip to Australia?
- What was it like settling in to a new country?

**9. Description of own cultural heritage identity.**

- Do you feel that you belong more to [country of origin] or to Australia?
- Has that feeling changed over time, and, if so, how has it changed?
- Are there situations in your life now where these feelings may change?
- What are those situations and how do your feelings change in those situations?
- Why do you think your feelings change?
- Has your involvement with the group changed the way that you feel about your cultural identity?
- Why do you think involvement with the group has changed the way you feel about your cultural identity?

## Interview Schedule- child dancers

### **1. Involvement with the dance group in Sydney.**

- How long have you been in the dance group?
- Why did you decide to join the group?
- How often do you attend?

### **2. Feelings about being in the dance group.**

- How do you feel when you are dancing with the group?
- What does the dancing mean to you?
- What do you think the dancing means to your family?
- What do your friends (from outside of your cultural group) think of your dancing?

### **3. The group's performances.**

- How often does the group perform?
- Where do you perform?
- What kind of costumes do you wear for a performance?
- Do you have live or recorded music?
- How do you feel when you are performing the dances?
- How do people from your cultural heritage group react to a performance?
- Why do you think they react that way?
- How do people outside of your cultural group react to a performance?
- Why do you think they react that way?
- Would you like to perform more often if you had the opportunity?
- Where would you like to perform?

### **4. The dances.**

- Are they for men, women or both together?
- Are they danced with particular musical instruments playing the music?
- Are they danced at particular occasions (eg a wedding or festival)?
- Can you tell me anything else about those occasions (for example, what food is eaten, where the occasion takes place, what clothes are worn, what time of day the occasion takes place)?

### **5. [If relevant] Involvement did you have with dancing in [country of birth].**

- How long did you dance there?
- Can you tell me what is the same/different about dancing in [country of birth] and in Australia?

### **6. Can you tell me when and why your family came to Australia?**

**7. (First generation immigrants only) The experience of coming to a new country.**

- What made you decide to leave [country of birth]?
- Can you describe your feelings about leaving?
- Can you describe your feelings during the trip to Australia?
- What was it like settling in to a new country?

**8. (Subsequent generations only) What parents have told their children about coming to Australia.**

- What made your parents decide to leave [country of birth]?
- Can you describe their feelings about leaving?
- Can you describe their feelings during the trip to Australia?
- What was it like settling in to a new country?

**9. Description of own cultural identity.**

- Do you feel that you belong more to [country of origin] or to Australia?
- Has that feeling changed over time, and, if so, how has it changed?
- Are there situations in your life now where these feelings may change?
- What are those situations and how do your feelings change in those situations?
- Why do you think your feelings change?
- Does being in the dance group change your feelings about which country (country of heritage or Australia) you belong to?
- Why do you think the dance group changes your feelings?

## Interview Schedule- Dance Teachers

### **1. Involvement with the dance group in Sydney.**

- [If an immigrant themselves]How soon after coming to Australia did you become involved with the dance group?
- Why did you decide to become involved with the group?
- How often do you run the group?

### **2. Teaching dance.**

- How long have you been teaching dance?
- From whom did you learn dance?
- How do you feel when you are teaching the group?
- What does the dancing mean to you?
- What do you think the dancing means to your family?
- What do your friends (from outside of your cultural heritage group) think of your dancing?

### **3. The group's performances.**

- How often does the group perform?
- Where do you perform?
- What kind of costumes do you wear for a performance?
- Do you have live or recorded music?
- How do you feel when the group is performing the dances?
- How do people from your cultural group react to a performance?
- Why do you think they react that way?
- How do people outside of you cultural group react to a performance?
- Why do you think they react that way?
- Would you like to perform more often if you had the opportunity?
- At what kinds of places would you like to perform?

### **4. The dances.**

- Are they for men, women or both together?
- Are they danced with particular musical instruments playing the music?
- Are they danced at particular occasions (eg a wedding or festival)?
- Can you tell me anything else about those occasions (for example, what food is eaten, where the occasion takes place, what clothes are worn, what time of day the occasion takes place)?
- Who teaches the dance (that is, is it taught by only men or only women, or can anyone teach it?)
- Have you changed the dances in any way, making them different from what would be danced in the original setting?
- Have any of the changes that have been made in Australia caused problems in the [cultural group] community?

### **5. [If relevant] Involvement did you have with dancing in country of birth.**

- How long did you dance there?



**6. (First generation immigrants only) The experience of coming to a new country.**

- What made you decide to leave [country of birth]?
- Can you describe your feelings about leaving?
- Can you describe your feelings during the trip to Australia?
- What was it like settling in to a new country?

**7. (Subsequent generations only) What parents have told their children about coming to Australia.**

- What made your parents decide to leave [country of birth]?
- Can you describe their feelings about leaving?
- Can you describe their feelings during the trip to Australia?
- What was it like settling in to a new country?

**8. Description of own cultural identity.**

- Do you feel that you belong more to [country of origin] or to Australia?
- Has that feeling changed over time, and, if so, how has it changed?
- Are there situations in your life now where these feelings may change?
- What are those situations and how do your feelings change in those situations?
- Why do you think your feelings change?
- Does being in the dance group change your feelings about which country (country of heritage or Australia) you belong to?
- Why do you think the dance group changes your feelings?

## Interview Schedule- Dance Experts

### **1. Involvement with dance.**

- How long have you been involved with dance?
- What is the nature of your involvement (dancer/teacher/academic etc)
- What does being involved with dancing mean to you?

### **2. Dance performances [scholars may speak of traditional dance practices generally rather than a specific performance group].**

- How often does the group perform?
- Where do you perform?
- What kind of costumes do you wear for a performance?
- Do you have live or recorded music?
- How do you feel when you are performing the dances?
- How does the audience react to a performance?
- Why do you think they react that way?
- How do visitors and tourists react to a performance?
- Why do you think they react that way?

### **3. The dances.**

- Are they danced by men, women or both together?
- Are they danced with particular musical instruments playing the music?
- Are they danced at particular occasions (eg a wedding or festival)?
- Can you tell me anything else about those occasions (for example, what food is eaten, where the occasion takes place, what clothes are worn, what time of day the occasion takes place)?
- Who teaches the dances (that is, is it taught by only men or only women, or can anyone teach it?)

### **4. Innovative practices.**

- Can you tell me about any changes which have been made to the style and form of the dances in this country?
- Why were those changes made?
- Have those changes caused any controversy within or outside of the dance community? Can you explain why?

### **5. [Scholars] Previous research into traditional dance.**

- Can you tell me about research into this dance form, conducted by either yourself or other researchers, in this country?
- Can you tell me about research into this dance form, conducted by either yourself or other researchers, in a diasporic context?