

**Diversity and Ethnic
Communal Places: Qualitative
Research and Measurements of the
Outcome of Fragmented Immigrant
Collective Actions**

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- **First Conference “Understanding diversity: Mapping and measuring”**, 26-27 January 2006, FEEM, Milano, Italy. Contact person: Valeria Papponetti, valeria.papponetti@feem.it
- **Second Conference “Qualitative diversity research: Looking ahead”**, 19-20 September 2006, K.U.Leuven, Leuven, Belgium. Contact person: Maddy Janssens, maddy.janssens@econ.kuleuven.ac.be, and Patrizia Zanoni, patrizia.zanoni@kuleuven.ac.be
- **Third Conference “Diversity in cities: Visible and invisible walls”**, 11-12 September 2007, UCL, London, UK. Contact person: Valeria Papponetti, valeria.papponetti@feem.it
- **Fourth Conference “Diversity in cities: New models of governance”**, 16-17 September 2008, IPRS, Rome, Italy. Contact person: Raffaele Bracalenti, iprs.it@iprs.it
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Diversity and Ethnic Communal Places: Qualitative Research and Measurements of the Outcome of Fragmented Immigrant Collective Actions

Summary

Diversity is also generated and sustained by immigrant grass roots institutional development. The development of more than 450 ethnic spiritual and secular communal places in Sydney since 1950 identifies its culturally specific urban space. The development of these key signifiers of diversity establishes grounds for qualitative research and measurements over the organisational life-cycle, besides the quantitative measurements and mapping. Qualitative research and measurements of diverse stages of organisational life, including its many invisible effects, establishes a holistic comprehension of this social phenomenon and of the creation and sustainability of diversity. The established diversity is representative of the bonding social capital and of the generated bridging social capital. The established sense of belonging, developed and maintained through collective engagement, fosters phenomenological research. Indicators on sustainability in the context of generational, social and cultural changes, and of communication effects extending beyond the initial functional intent and of the ethnic and spatial boundaries reflect established diversity.

Keywords: Communal Places, Diversity, Measurement, Sense of Place, Sustainability

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Introduction

Diverse immigrant groups through grass-roots collective actions impact and create material representations of cultural diversity in many social environments. Ethnic institutional development (Breton 1964) contributes to the quality of life of new settlers and embeds cultural diversity in the cultural and spatial urban landscape. Fragmented immigrant collective experiences produce various tangible and visible outcomes; appropriated places of worship, leisure, schools and nursing homes enhance the quality of life during settlement and signify newly generated social and cultural diversity. Among other institutional developments, more than 450 immigrant collectives have appropriated their own spiritual or secular communal place in Sydney since 1950. The outcome of this development identifies culturally specific Sydney urban space on a global scale.

Ethnic collectives impact on urban morphology identifying cultural changes that followed large-scale demographic and cultural changes. The process of appropriation of these key signifiers of diversity and the utility provided to immigrants, and to other consumers, establishes grounds for qualitative research and diverse measurements of diversity experienced over the organisational life-cycle, besides the quantitative measurements and mapping of this human endeavour (Lalich 2006). Collective memories embedded in these places differ, just as their temporal duration and impact differs too. Some transmute from being ethnic communal to public places, while others would most likely remain as historical toponyms in the urban landscape¹.

Multidimensional diversity

Diversity originating out of human movements, permanent and temporary migration, is a major social phenomenon. Research into all stages of the organisational life of diverse ethnic institutions fosters a holistic comprehension of the creation, continuity and sustainability also of cultural diversity that emerged out of mass migration. The outcome of this process represented by a multitude of diverse and often invisible effects, enables in-depth insights into the process of inception, as well as the everyday life and sustainability of a culturally diverse society.

Institutional development often involved collective grass-roots development of particular communal places perceived as necessary for everyday communal use by a particular

group of people. These symbolically defined places appropriated to satisfy settlers' collectively perceived urgent needs are qualified by the state of exigency, transferred culture and access to resources. Although some would outlast their developers, their temporality depends on the level of satisfaction derived by the developers and their families (Baurreiss 1982), and on organisational financial capacity too. The attempt is made in this paper to pursue this important aspect of diversity, represented by communal places that are appropriated by immigrant-settlers at the time of settlement in, what is for most, a new social and cultural environment.

The grass-roots human involvement in diverse stage of organisational life is the focus of qualitative research. It is recognised in all stages of organisational life, from inception to various forms of participation in everyday activities and in engendered communication flow to the established sense of belonging and considerations of temporality. The analysis of immigrant experiences helps in the understanding of the creation and everyday appearances of diversity.

The established communal places are major signifiers of cultural diversity in many parts of the Sydney metropolitan area. They appear as individual units or in more or less scattered clusters. As culturally specific complex nodes on the social and urban landscape they are major elements of communication flows (Castells 1991) extending beyond the individual aspirations, collective aims and limits, and the spatial boundaries. This contribution aims to indicate the major patterns of the observed aspects of diversity with experiences generated by 393 diverse ethnic organizations that have appropriated their own place, property or home, in Sydney over the second half of the last century.

A brief introduction to the key features of cultural changes that occurred in Australia and in Sydney since 1948 provides a contextual comprehension of the generated diversity under the impact of major demographic changes experienced over this period. Use of language at home (and in public), changes in religious structures and leisure patterns are among the major recognisable consequences of the arrival of over three million settlers of non-English speaking background since 1948 in Australia. Brief information on the outcome of the development of places of worship, social and sporting clubs, childcare, schools and aged care places by settlers from non-English speaking countries precedes discussion on some key qualitative aspects of diversity identified through visible ethnic communal places in Sydney.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN SYDNEY

The establishment of communal organizations and their appropriation of communal places is the outcome of fragmented collective acts by many immigrants in the environment, changing under the weight of post-war immigration to Australia and urbanization. This immigration is characterised by the heterogeneity of its structure and the predominantly urban settlement induced by the needs of housing, construction and industrialisation that demanded both labour and markets; but also because of defence considerations (Collins 1984, 4; Logan, et al 1981, 41-2). The expanded immigration programme and the breakdown of diverse immigration barriers to non-Caucasian immigration increased the share of immigrants from non-English speaking countries from 1.8 per cent in 1947 to 13.5 per cent of its 19 million inhabitants in 2001 (Price 1980; ABS 2001).

New settlers went mostly to major coastal cities; Sydney still remains a favourite destination. The share of non-English speakers in Sydney increased from 2.2 per cent out of a million and a half inhabitants in 1947 to 23.4 per cent out of four million in 2001 (Spearritt 1978; ABS 2001). It is estimated that people of non-English speaking background, first and second generation, together comprise over 54 per cent of the Sydney population (Burnley, et al 1997, 33). These dynamic demographic changes reflected changes in immigration patterns and large scale arrival of people from non-English speaking countries diversified a predominantly Anglo-Celtic social structure.

Immigration-induced change in the religious structure in selected Census years presented in Table 1 is probably the key indicator of cultural diversity in Australian society, where all major world religions are now embedded. Although European Orthodox, Middle-Eastern Christians, Muslim and Buddhist believers started to arrive already in the 19th century, due to the drastic entry restrictions they were barely recorded statistically in 1947. Now, followers of these and other religious denominations make up over 19 per cent of the total Sydney population. The large-scale arrival of continental Europeans and later of Asian and Latin American settlers greatly increased the number of Roman Catholic believers who now make up around 29 per cent of the total Sydney population, making it by far the largest religious denomination. These cultural changes increased pressures on already existing religious and educational systems developed

earlier by predominantly Irish Catholic settlers, although some newly established immigrant Roman Catholic communities developed their own infrastructure as well.

Table 1. Religion in Australia: Changes in Denominational Affiliation, 1947-2001 (%)

Religion / denomination	Australia 1948	Australia 1971	Australia 2001	Sydney 2001
Anglican	39.0	31.0	20.7	19.8
Roman Catholic	20.9	27.0	26.3	28.8
Presbyterian & Reformed	9.8	8.1	3.3	2.9
Methodist	11.5	8.6	6.7 ¹	3.9 ¹
Lutheran	0.9	1.5	1.4	0.5
Judaism	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.8
Sub-total	82.5	78.7	58.8	56.7
European Orthodox		2.7	2.9	4.2
Oriental Christian			0.4	1.5
Other Christian	2.4	2.2	6.2	5.5
Islam		0.2	1.5	3.4
Buddhism			1.9	3.4
Hinduism & Sikh			0.4	1.4
Other Non-Christian			0.4	0.3
Other	3.8	5.4	1.2	1.7
No religion	0.3	6.7	15.3	11.7
Not stated	10.8	6.1	10.3	9.0
Inhabitants	7,579,358	12,755,286	18,972,350 ²	3,997,322 ²

Note: 1. Uniting Church. 2. Includes visitors (1.1% and 1.2% respectively).

Sources: Mol, H. (1985). *The faith of Australians*, Sydney; George Allen & Unwin; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002 Year Book, No 84, Cat. No 1301.0, Canberra; ABS (2001) *Clib 2001 Census Statistics*, Canberra; Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW (1998). *The People of New South Wales*. Sydney.

Besides the religious diversity the post-war intensification of cultural diversity is also well identified by data on language use at home. In Sydney, 1,094, 414 or around 27.5 per cent of all inhabitants in 2001 of over 5 years of age make daily use of one non-English languages at home (CRC 2003). This creates fertile ground for culture transfer and maintenance alongside the institutional development, including day schools and childcare centres by diverse communities.

The large numbers of immigrants of diverse cultural background meant an additional and differentiated demand for goods and services that could not be satisfied by the limitations of the entrenched local culture and a non-responsive welfare state (Jakubowicz 1989, 275; Martin 1981, 1978; Lewins 1978; Cox 1975, 182). These settlers, permanent immigrants, brought new forms of culture, social life and recreation as well, but Australia was not prepared for the effects of its own ambitious immigration program. Moreover, assimilation was the official policy until the late 1960s. The arrival

of a large number of people of different ethnic and social background generated many issues, but policy makers for years showed no interest in solving diverse settlement issues, like housing, unemployment, recognition of classifications and skills, and diverse other social and welfare problems (Cutts 1992; CIE 1992, xv; Jupp 1991,106; 1966, 180; Cox 1987, 90). Sydney, as a major settlement place was not well endowed with public places and welfare services, including childcare places, to which access was further limited due to cultural and linguistic differences (Brennan 1998, 144; Thompson 1994, 205; Spearritt 1978, 36,241, Sandercock 1977). Despite the policy changes since the 1970s and three decades of application of multicultural policies at diverse levels of society, many non-English speaking migrants still do not feel welcome (SMH 2005;Jupp 2002; Dunn 2001; Betts 1999, 316; Hage 1998, 16).

From “wogball’ to Germany 2006

The first major change in the Sydney cultural structure occurred during the 1950-1960 period when 50,000 European refugees arrived (Burnley 2001, 129; Kunz 1988, 43-5). They found work, security and new chance for life, but little else (Horne 1964; Logan et al 1981). In a time of plenty of work, but of urban gloom, the after-work options were for many the “the pub and the races” (Patrikareas 2000). Mussels were used only for fish bait, not today; while Frank Lowy started his world wide shopping mall empire with the urgent purchase of a second espresso machine to satisfy his numerous Italian customers in the western suburb of Blacktown (SMH 2003, Margo 2000). Similar to earlier experience in the USA from 1870 to 1920 when industrialisation, urbanization, a structured division between work and leisure time impacted the growth of associations (Gamm and Putnam 2001, 207-210), immigrants soon established their own organizations and developed their own communal spiritual and secular places.

European immigrants resurrected football, the “global game”, on the continent where British culture was firmly embedded, except for football. Immigrant-organised football clubs (local-born players joined too) made up a majority in the Sydney Championships with a rare club that had a local name² (Korban1994). To many European immigrants football was the major leisure and recreation activity, a mode of communication, a display of organizational skills and inter-community contacts (Moseley, et al 1997; Caldwell 1987). However, football was sadly spurned by mainstream society, it belonged to *wogs, poofters and sheilas* according to the apt observation by Johnny Warren, long-

time captain of the national team³. In 2006, the national team participating in the World Cup is supported by seven million TV viewers (The Daily Telegraph 2006).

Bocce and wine enjoyed in the backyards of the semi-rural Sydney suburbs brought trouble to many Southern European immigrants (Powell 1994), but soon new Croatian and Italian clubs established *bocce* pitches besides football grounds. On the other hand German, Hungarian and Slovenian clubs created clubs with bowling alleys. Several decades later, immigrants from Asia introduced Lion dance, dragon-boat racing, martial arts and the celebrations of the lunar New Year.

ACTION FOR HOME⁴

Through their intentional collective acts immigrants create and embed diversity in a place of settlement as they make a decision to create conditions for a normal life that are not supplied through the channels of a mainstream society. They make cultural diversity visible and embedded in social and spatial morphology. The pertinent issues in this process range from the contemplation of the urgency to find means to satisfy collectively-perceived needs to decisions on the nature and the extent of the collective acts. Such collective decisions qualitatively influence the lives of many immigrants-settlers; with the aim of establishing communal *home* immigrants create roots in a new environment.

Across the urban landscape communal places symbolically identify embedded new cultures. These specific nodes differ and produce a new culturally different image of a city representing a new quality in society. The embedded qualitative differentiation makes these products of grass-roots efforts at the time of contingency qualitatively unique descriptors of cultural and urban development and key signifiers of a new and continuously emerging diversity.

Ethnic communal places or homes are a rich source of information on the emergence and experience of diversity. The comprehension of the origins of this significant form of human engagement can be brought forward by the enhanced awareness of the motives that generated this engagement and subsequent development and through the identification of direct human involvement at different stages of institutional life. Immigrants needed a home, not just an abode or place of residence, in the place of their

settlement. To appropriate a communal home they pull together their resources in a joint act, in action for a home. The metaphor of a (communal) *home* being rich with qualitative descriptors supports comprehension of the emerging diversity. Considerations on *the action for home* covers a trajectory from motives generating the desire to establish a communal home to consumption, the evaluations of achieved expectations and sustainability of the outcome of a particular collective effort. A brief theoretical introduction to key aspects of collective action introduces discussion on qualitative aspects of diversity signified by the appropriated ethnic communal places.

LETS BUILD IT TOGETHER⁵

Through collective action concerned immigrants-members of a certain ethnic group or of its segment advance common or collective interests, solve perceived problems and enhance quality of social existence. Ethnic collectives produce collective goods capable of satisfying a particular need perceived as urgent, but that cannot be satisfied otherwise or provided efficiently through the channels of the host environment (Hechter 1987; Hechter, et al 1982, 415; Hannerz 1974, 60; Olson 1965,5). Collective goods are intentional products of the action by actors who decide to accomplish aims collectively rather than individually (Buchanan and Tullock 1965, 13) and have the property of *quasi* public goods (Buchanan 1987, 18-21; Stiglitz 2000, 14). Groups of immigrants appropriate suitable and accessible buildings or blocks of land with the intent to establish and develop necessary places of worship, social clubs, sports grounds, schools, childcare and aged care places. Ethnic collectives supply but also consume appropriated collective goods, communal places, which have a certain intrinsic significance for that particular group of people. Similar to public goods, collective goods are characterised by the property of non-depletability in consumption.

Communal places are the product of a private commitment exercised collectively towards a joint goal. People create a good to meet common interests because without their joint effort they would most likely have no adequate place to enjoy spiritual life, socialize, transfer culture to the young or care for the elderly. It is remarked by Coleman (1990, 300) that social relationships develop among individual actors who attempt to make the best use of available resources over which they have control. This settlement experience confirms an observation by Polanyi (1957, 46) that individual economic interests are not only in the focus of their interest as many immigrants pursue non-

economic aims as well, including the maintenance of social ties and the enhancement of collective wellbeing. This is reflected in the action of many immigrants who pool their resources in prescriptive collective action to achieve material and social outcomes that could not be reached individually. With their own engagement people enhance the quality of their existence in the new environment.

Ethnic collective action is a local response to diverse settlement social and cultural constraints, deprivation and the inadequate supply of mainstream social infrastructure. During migration social capital (Bourdieu 1993, Coleman 1990, Putnam 2000, 1993) is enhanced among people of the same cultural background and common settlement experience, and is a key ethnic resource mobilized in the process of appropriation of a collective good. It has been found that marginalisation and alienation aids in defining the course of collective action and mobilization of resources (Hechter et al 1982, 421). The enhanced sense of solidarity among immigrants of the same ethnic and cultural background undergoing similar settlement experience and perceiving the same, or similar, social issues stimulates the desire towards finding joint solutions. Moreover, by finding solutions for perceived social needs many immigrants settle and put down collective roots in a new environment creating material expressions of diversity.

A group of people enters into collective arrangements and makes decisions about joint investment, resources, location, construction, management, control, maintenance and service delivery. Ethnic communal places have tangible and measurable material and economic values as a capitalised asset, but also embody important intangible symbolic and social values. The collective defines goals to be achieved with the intent of “achieving position in relation to the environment” (Luhmann 1995, 198). Besides measurable inputs and outcomes, there are also diverse, and much less quantifiable, social outcomes. Immigrants directly impact on the quality of their existence, but at the same time inform about their success, achievement and permanence of settlement too. The *visible* communal places developed by immigrants or “others” through voluntary grass-roots collective acts differ from the other public places not only by the mode of supply and consumption, but also by the introduced symbols, their significance and the established sense of attachment (Relph 1976, 37). The benefits of this development are socially beneficial as places are developed where participants can feel at home, have

continuous social intercourse, worship collectively, transfer and maintain culture, relax, or take care of the elderly.

The development of ethnic communal places is not a uniform experience as collectives make a decision to commit their time, energy and money to appropriate necessary collective goods instead of using substitutes, such as their own homes, or renting and sharing available facilities for such purposes. The visible results of many collective actions undertaken by fragmented ethnic groups provide diverse information on the self-enhanced quality of existence in the new environment. While informing about the significance of grass-roots collective action undertaken on a local level that very often transcends both ethnic and spatial (suburban) limits, the developed indicators provide qualitative insights into the established forms of cultural diversity also.

Voluntary engagement

Immigrants want to lead a normal life in a new environment and are motivated to engage to help themselves to continue to satisfy spiritual and other cultural needs. They did not arrive just as a labour force (Collins 1991; Grassby 1984) but as people with own cultural and social needs. The immediate quality of life of many migrants suffers in comparison to the place of origin and many have to undertake steps to redress the disadvantages of the newly found situation and create conditions to meet and enhance the personal, family and even collective quality of life. In this process places of settlement change, and Sydney, from a colonial outpost, within several decades became a multicultural global city (Freestone 2000; Burnley 2000) defined by the grass-roots efforts of its new inhabitants.

Diversity as a product of human activity is generated, maintained and defined by human response to circumstances. The large scale, although fragmented, human engagement is indicative of the significance and temporality of established diversity. Cultural diversity is deeply rooted in human engagement and commitment at the grass-roots level. However, the voluntary nature of development makes it difficult to research and represent human participation at all stages of the process. Irrespective of significance very few organizations keep records of people engaged voluntarily in all stages of organizational life. Still, the currently recorded volunteers are indicative of the human determination to improve the quality of their life and their subsequent impact on diversity.

Data in Table 2 indicate numbers of two categories of highly committed (Lyons and Hocking 2000) volunteers in this sample of ethnic organizations. Besides volunteers who assist and participate in different organizational activities, there are also volunteers who participate in the management of these important symbols of cultural diversity. However, in many instances it is claimed that “there are volunteers available according to the organisational need”, “people help on request” and similar, indicating the existence of a much larger number of volunteers.

Table 2. Management patterns of Ethnic Community Capital, by type and gender, Sydney, 1950-2000, Estimate (%)

Participation	Gender	Religions (n206)	Leisure (n94)	Education (n44)	Welfare (n47)	Total (n391)
Management ²	Male	82.1	77.0	71.1	68.5	78.7
	Female	17.9	23.0	28.9	31.5	21.3
	Total (n)	2,235	1,150	190	445	4,110
Volunteers	Male	37.6	49.0	30.3	33.1	39.3
	Female	62.4	51.0	69.7	66.9	60.7
	Total (n)	8,967	2,286	350	1,528	13,671
Total (n)	All	11,202	3,436	540	1,973	17,151
Total (%)	All	65.3	20.1	3.1	11.5	100.0

Notes: 1. Boards and committee members, volunteers only.

Around 15,000 persons are registered as volunteers in two categories closely connected with transfer of culture, namely places of worship and social clubs. Voluntary participation in the other two categories has limited opportunities as they depend very much on employed staff to provide services. Together, the past development of these significant symbolically defined places supported through the active daily involvement of these highly committed volunteers provides opportunities to around 180,000 persons to have access to services necessary to satisfy their needs and enhance the quality of life in new environment.

The annual value of this voluntary engagement is estimated to be around fifty million Australian dollars⁶ assuming they volunteer around three hours per week or little above the estimate for average participation in voluntary activities. However, it is not taken into account that most voluntary work is realised during after work hours and weekends. If

historically extrapolated over the fifty years period this data indicate that over a hundred million of work hours valued at over a billion Euros of voluntary work was involved in ethnic communal places, in signifiers of diversity (Lalich 2004). Moreover, this estimate ought to be corrected for much larger participation during development stages. Such intensive voluntary human involvement provides a special significance to these places, as they generate feelings of belonging. The magnitude of this direct personal involvement underlines comprehension of the sense of attachment to these places having direct impact on the wellbeing of many settlers, that is, Sydney inhabitants.

Material contributions

Immigrants invested more than 552 million Australian dollars⁷ of their own money towards this development, or around sixty per cent of the total investment (Lalich 2004). The current financial value of the appropriated property is estimated to be over a billion Euros. Although a further twenty eight per cent of financial resources were raised through banks, it was repaid either through financial contributions or purposeful commercial expenditure and payment for services. The rest of the finances mostly came from public sources and went mainly towards the development of schools and aged care places. The foreign sources represent just over two per cent of the total, indicating how this development was a genuine local grass-roots response to the settlement constraints and difficulties. Moreover, immigrant-developers donated large quantities of construction material and furniture, besides many artefacts, icons, stained glass windows, books. Such donations add to the symbolic significance of the appropriated ethnic communal places. They are more than a place of transferred and reterritorialized culture as they are places of significance, attachment and belonging to many donors and other members of community.

SIGNIFIERS OF DIVERSITY

Results of these fragmented ethnic collective actions are reflected in the creation of new culturally diversified social space (Lefebvre 1991, 164) imbued with various forms of spiritual life, leisure and recreation activities, transfer and maintenance of culture, childcare and care of the elderly. The dynamics of the appropriation of communal space by 393 organizations from over 60 culturally ethnic groups in response to settlement constraints within the existing social context over this fifty years long period is presented in Table 3. The material outcome of this development enables at least 180,000 persons

to have a welcoming place that meets their major interests at any given moment. The indicated development, divided in five ten-year periods, reflects changes in immigration and demographic patterns; attempts to transfer and maintain culture, language and heritage; considerations of communal wellbeing; and public support.

Table 3. Appropriated Ethnic Communal Places, Sydney, by type and periods of development, 1950-2000 (Estimated persons; developed units)

Type/ period	1950-1960 %	1961-1970 %	1971-1980 %	1981-1990 %	1991-2000 %	All units by type (n)	Capacity-persons ⁶ (100 %)
Religious ¹	11.9	21.1	18.7	24.3	24.0	208	120,029
Clubs ²	17.9	26.7	15.8	30.0	9.6	94	49,151
Education ³	0.4	0.6	22.3	48.5	28.2	44	10,792
Aged care ⁴	17.5	23.4	10.0	27.6	21.5	47	2,270
Units/period ⁵	12.2	14.5	17.0	29.8	26.5	393	...

Note: 1. Includes places in halls, Sunday school classrooms. 2. Includes sports clubs, but not spectators at sporting events. 3. Includes places in childcare and in tertiary institutions (hostel). 4. Beds in aged care; does not include places in general welfare organizations. 5. Including eleven general welfare places. 6. Indicates capacity places, not the actual users, attendants, volunteers.

Source: Lalich, W.F. 2004, *Ethnic Community Capital*, Unpublished Ph D Thesis, UTS, Sydney.

For this purpose over four hundred and seventy thousand square metres were developed with different dynamics. More than half of all respondent units, 56 per cent, were developed since 1980, indicating the persistence of felt needs, accumulation of capital, and arrival of immigrants from new sources. The development of schools, childcare centres and aged care was facilitated during the last two decades by government support. In this period around 77 per cent of all school and childcare capacities together with 49 per cent of all aged care were developed. The need for aged care was large at the beginning of the post-war settlement as some groups of displaced persons had to approach this problem in a very short time.

The intensity of the development of places of worship was maintained over the half-century period although their development intensified and diversified during the last two decades mostly due to the new immigrants. Over 48 per cent of all religious capacities were developed since 1980 responding to demand for places of worship by newly arrived Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Oriental Christians believers. Some earlier-arrived European Christians built new and larger churches reflecting the increased prosperity and replacing the older unsatisfactory places of worship and community halls. On the other hand the development of social and sports clubs decreased rapidly in the last

decade. This reflects ageing of the post-war European immigrants who developed clubs to meet their own social and recreational needs, generational changes, changes in the structure of immigrants, but also in the society, in particular in the patterns of recreation, sports and hospitality industry.

The development dynamics was also influenced by exogenous factors, by changes in the socio-economic environment and increased public awareness about immigrants' welfare. The post-war development is divided into two ideologically different periods, in which the initial period until the 1970s corresponds broadly to the assimilation pressures and sporadic public support for migrant initiatives. In the second period, delineated with the year 1980, the development of ethnic day and community schools, childcare, welfare and aged care received public support as public awareness of unsatisfactory conditions facing immigrants surfaced (Henderson, Harcourt, et al 1970). The development in the first period punctured the protective assimilation shield and these places are very much representative of the nascent diversity that now penetrates and signifies many segments of society⁸.

Governments directly influenced the development patterns and in particular ethnic schools, childcare and aged care, starting from the Whitlam Labour government (1972-1974) that introduced various policy measures, and from 1974-75 migrant welfare and educational organizations received material help (Jakubowicz, et al 1984, 38-9). Later, the Galbally Commission (1978), established by the subsequent conservative Coalition Government of Malcolm Fraser, qualified in 1978 the existing social constraints encountered by new settlers as unsatisfactory, recommending major policy changes, and moreover recognizing ethnic organizations as major service providers to migrants.

The dynamics of this development mostly reflects changes and processes within the ethnic communities that define goals and identify community capability or access to human, material, financial and organizational resources. The arrival of large numbers of immigrants of the same origin and cultural background created necessary human and material thresholds. However, as immigration is structured not only by ethnicity, age and gender, but also by regional, cultural, class and ideological differences it impacts on the perception of priorities, patterns and dynamics of development. Decisions on the development priorities and the orientation of collective acts reflected in the outcomes are

foremost the result of settlement encounters and experiences, desire for maintenance of transferred cultures, the ageing process and access to resources. Inevitably, the development emphasis changed from the satisfaction of the immediate social and cultural needs of the first generation of initially mostly male immigrants and the urgently needed places of worship to the long-term maintenance of transferred cultures, religions and languages, to the organised care for weaker members of the community across generational changes.

As a result of this heterogeneous pattern of development embedded symbols of cultural diversity define the social and (sub)urban landscape. Social and sporting clubs with different sports grounds reflecting not only differences in culture and leisure patterns of new settlers but also social deprivation and lack of opportunities enriched a city not well endowed with public space (SMH 2006; Sandercock 1977). Similarly, until recently rare, over two hundred various European Orthodox and non-European Christian churches, Buddhist and Hindu temples, mosques and synagogues are major cultural landmarks on Sydney urban landscape. Similar effects are also established by various European (Mediterranean), Jewish and Muslim day schools and aged care places.

FABRICS OF LIFE⁹

These developments, the existence and experience of these important signifiers of diversity generate grounds for conceptualisation of various indicators and measurements of diversity. Attempts at measurements can be made at different stages of the organizational life cycle, from production to the consumption stage, although many social costs and benefits are not readily assessed in monetary terms and are difficult to estimate (Baumol and Blinder 1985, 543). This makes it difficult to fully recognize, comprehend and measure the extent of the impact of ethnic collective action on quality of life and social texture through creation and continuity of diversity.

Data on appropriated places and constructed space identify besides the dynamics of collective action and tangible outcomes as well as the established social significance of these visible signifiers of diversity. Various measurements identifying human engagement, current activities, phenomenological relations, linkages and participation of the second generation provide important insights into the social effects of this development. Moreover, they inform about the organizational maturity and future

potential. Diverse measurements of consumption patterns and communication effects are profound descriptors of the generated diversity also.

Ethnic communal places as visible landmarks replete with symbolic meaning and collective memory are representative of current cultural and social diversity. These places reflect the days of hardship during the settlement and the human endeavour aimed at improving the quality of life. The established diversity is not only representative of the bonding social capital (Putnam 2000) experienced during the development process, but also its product. The available data make it possible to develop additional important insights identified by the generated bridging social capital (Putnam 2000) that impacts on the quality of established relations and communications with the rest of society. The interpretations of achieved and maintained diversity can be made at diverse hierarchical, functional and spatial levels reflecting its cultural, social and spatial impact.

These places enable social networks (Fernandez-Kelly 1995) and create *fabrics of life* for many settlers, their families, and to many neighbours. The assessment on this qualitative outcome of this development is represented in information on the perceived satisfaction with the jointly developed opportunity to meet the collectively perceived needs. Furthermore, diverse activities engendered due to existence of this utilitarian development create a complex web of attachments emphasising the meaning of this supportive *fabric of life* to many immigrants. These integral segments of ethnic institutional completeness are the foundation of their lives in an environment defined by earlier established mainstream cultural and social system.

Communal home

The established relations towards appropriated communal places generated and maintained through collective engagement fosters phenomenological research into the established sense of place based on the multiplicity of expressed feelings. Information generated in places of worship and clubs reflects not only on the created sense of place and satisfaction with the developed place but also on the significance of created diversity. The available indicators underline the motives and the need felt for these specific signifiers of diversity, enable comprehension of the historical process and of organizational life, and the perceived impact of this development on socio-spatial structures. These places were established because people needed them as an essential

connection to the place of settlement. By creating their own roots, immigrants at same time built roots of diversity.

Respondents in both leisure and religious places emphatically indicate the significance of a developed sense of belonging and feeling of home. These places are *centres of life* to many persons. Data in Table 4 express the richness and depth of associations developed towards these places built through collective effort. To many these places represent a *communal home* in the new environment and the place they identify with, contributing to the argument on the special property of communal places built from below but expanding in significance beyond the original utilitarian intent of their builders.

Table 4. Significance of Selected Communal Places, Sydney, 2000 (%)

Relational signifier	Significance		Functional signifier	Significance	
	Leisure (n181) ¹	Worship (n286) ²		Leisure (n161) ¹	Worship (n355) ²
Home of the community	14.3	13.1	Meeting people	15.8	12.3
Centre of life	9.6	7.3	Transfer of cultural roots	7.3	8.7
Create a way of life	6.4	5.3	Provision of help	5.3	8.6
Achievement	6.1	5.3	Share heritage	4.4	7.8
Feeling of sameness	5.3	3.7	Multiculturalism	2.9	5.8
Place advantages	4.7	2.5	Enable other activities	2.4	2.1
Identification with	3.2	1.9	Escape isolation	2.1	1.9
Other	3.2	4.4	Other	7.0	9.3
Sub total	52.8	43.5	Sub-total	47.2	56.5

Notes: 1. 342 signifiers=100. 2. 641signifiers=100.

Source: Lalich, W.F. 2004, *Ethnic Community Capital*, Unpublished Ph D Thesis, UTS, Sydney.

The multitude of diverse signifiers is indicative of the significance of developed phenomenological relations and attributes expressed towards communal places created by immigrant grass-roots collective acts. Although the distribution of attributes could have been arranged differently, responses qualitatively identify the importance of these places to a community beyond their functional significance. Places of worship are appropriated for diverse purposes and they facilitate realisation of many different activities making them the focus of everyday activity of at least five per cent of Sydney inhabitants and their functional significance is identified by registered responses. Such a broad range of intensively different signifiers firmly embeds many of these places, not only as important urban nodes but also as key identifiers of embedded cultural and social diversity. The additional representation and even measurement of this social

phenomenon is made possible involving different facets of life permeating these key elements of social and urban infrastructure.

Centre of life

The consumption stage of the life span of these community homes is best identified with the diversity of activities in which community members participate. Besides being meeting places and fulfilling other essential functions, various activities are organized at or from these places as people create their own way of life in these places embedding diversity of life patterns in a given environment. The ability to undertake or participate in diverse activities brings people to these places and fosters a sense of dependence and attachment to appropriated places. By activity is meant any event that occurs at or is organized at or from a particular place. People participate in activities that are either the product of a particular function orientation of the appropriated place or in activities that are being generated because of the existence of these places. Furthermore, activities differ according to cultural, language and social differentiation, and according to time of arrival and place, or suburb, of settlement also.

Information in Table 5 displays a rich content of activities generated by this important social process indicating the vitality and role of these places in social space. The outcome, generic activities that directly relate to the established key function together with generated new activities is compared with the results presented in seminal work by Warner whose findings are adapted to relate to the research findings. Although the source and categorization of findings by Warner differs, data did not originate from ethnic organizations, nevertheless a comparison made possible indicates certain similarities in distribution patterns and underlines the capability of established places to generate diverse activities constructing social space, new linkage and communication effects.

Table 5. The Incidence of Activities at Ethnic Communal Places, Sydney, 2000 (%)

Generic activities	Places of Worship (n 206)	Places of Leisure (n 94)	Education (n 33)	Aged care and welfare (n 47)	Adapted From W. L. Warner ⁵
Communal	20.3	20.5	23.9	21.1	20.8
Functional/Religious	12.3	8.1 ¹	10.8 ³	14.6 ⁴	8.8
Social	14.4	17.6	10.2	10.1	16.7
Sub-total (%)	47.0	46.2	44.9	45.8	46.3
Generated activities					
Commercial	4.0	6.2	4.6	8.6	13.6
Culture	7.4	8.4	7.2	8.0	
Education	12.2	6.2	6.6 ²	9.2	3.9
Entertainment	8.4	18.1	8.5	13.1	28.5
Recreation/sports	6.0	2.1 ²	10.2	5.6	8.4
Welfare	8.3	6.1	12.1	7.3 ²	
Youth	6.7	6.7	5.9	2.4	
Sub-total (%)	53.0	53.8	55.1	54.2	54.4
All activities (=100)	3011	1770	305	465	5800

Notes: 1. Sports and recreation. 2. Religious. 3. Education. 4. Welfare. 5. Adapted from W. Lloyd Warner (1963: 136), *Yankee City*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Source: Lalich, W.F. 2004, *Ethnic Community Capital*, Unpublished Ph D Thesis, UTS, Sydney.

The social importance of these places is indicated by the ability of over 180,000 persons to worship, socialise, participate in sport, attend day school or childcare, or have a place in a nursing home at any given moment. The annual income of around 130 million Euro supports the life of these important places, employment, maintenance and the pursuit of over 5,500 indicated activities. Many of the developed places have expanded their initial function beyond the original intent, and even the functionally more utilitarian and publicly supported schools and aged care institutions generate a significant number of additional activities, and nine activities per unit are frequent. Moreover, the frequency of activities in the range from 15 to 19 per places of worship unit and social clubs respectively is indicative of the holistic importance and social impact of these places. The established functions, generic and generated activities contribute to the creation of a multilayered rich communication field.

Communication effects

The existence of ethnic communal places generates not only new images in the landscape, sense of place and activities, but also diverse contacts, linkages and

communication. These significant symbolic nodes in the urban and social landscape are source of communications of diverse modes, intensity and directions that often extends beyond the collective and spatial boundaries. The most immediate communication link is with their own community, second generation and place of origin, but also to the immediate neighbourhood and the other segments of community. Various linkages across space, including transnational, are being established and maintained that otherwise would have had difficulty in being materialized. However, in many instances, some of the encounters either at public or personal level are far from being satisfactory ones, as well as there being either no, or inadequate, inter-community communication. On the other hand, through ethnic succession or co-optation (Lefebvre 1991:369) of earlier developed churches and clubs, ethnic collectives preserved their public function for posterity. Diversity is being continuously created and maintained through grass-roots involvement of people in social space and expressed through diverse linkages and modes of communication.

The diversity of linkage effects is illustrated with the patterns of communication established by two culturally different ethnic communities in Sydney, Chinese and Croatian. The assessed data indicate diversity in established communication patterns among diverse types of organizations (Lalich 2005). Chinese Buddhist organizations and regional clubs have much more intensive links with the co-ethnic community and the place of origin than the other organizations. However, the place of origin is not necessarily one of the regions of mainland China. Unlike the regional clubs, The Mandarin Club, the largest Chinese communal leisure institution is in many ways akin to “mainstream” social clubs with its diverse source of members, although it has strong links to the overseas Chinese community too. On the other hand, the development and management of aged care organizations very much depends on public financing and consequently a significant part of linkages are directed towards the host society. The aged care organizations form a major part of the local Chinese social security system and are an integral part of the Australian aged care and welfare system as well. A more contemporaneous organizational form, community centers, have diverse activities that emphasize links to the rest of the immediate social environment besides their own community. A similar pattern of behaviour is evident among local Chinese Christian churches that encounter strong competition from local mainstream churches too. Both those two latter forms of organizations are also much more open to youth, and it is

expected that they would deal more successfully with generational and societal changes, social and physical mobility.

The life of local Christian churches involves the active involvement of youth in many activities, creating the possibility of additional links to society, beyond the transfer of language and culture, and missionary work. In comparison, acculturation weighs heavily upon the three Croatian Catholic communities because of unsatisfactory participation of the second generation in community life. Moreover, there is persistence of intensive linkages with a place and country of origin identified in twelve communal places appropriated by Croatian settlers. All clubs are still tightly connected with the place of origin, irrespective of the intensity of patterns of participation by their football and bocce offshoots in local sporting life, including at national levels. As it is usual practice in Australia active players are of different backgrounds; one of the clubs, due to lack of their own players established a joint team with the neighbouring Maltese immigrants who did not have their own premises, *Hajduk-Wanderers*. Significantly similar to many other ethnic clubs, only one Croatian club identified a major presence of youth in club activities. On the other hand, the management board of the only aged care place established by the Croatian community consists of locally educated professionals from the second generation (Lalich 2006), similar to experience in many other ethnic aged care institutions.

Sustainability

Differences in motivations, collective response and behavioural patterns influence the creation and the continuity of diversity. The appropriated communal place will exist as long as the people who established them have an interest in their existence. Due to ageing, generational and cultural changes, and enhanced competition some would terminate and have limited long-term influence on the perseverance of cultural diversity. Maintenance of these beacons of diversity is dependent on many factors, including the intensity of the transfer of culture that goes beyond the limits of “symbolic ethnicity” (Gans 1996). Foremost, their longevity is dependent upon transfer of power to the second generation and the extent of their participation and satisfaction with the past development. Diverse institutional forms have established communication of different intensity with the second generation and have different expectations of the future. Participation of youth in maintenance of transferred culture through appropriated

communal places is among the key influences on the future of immigration-created diversity. The information on the role of the second generation in the life of communal places adds significantly to the understanding of the future trends. Religious organizations are in general, to a much higher degree content with the role of the youth and second generation in the organisational structure in comparison to clubs. Only 39 per cent of clubs are satisfied with the role of youth in comparison to 70 per cent of religious units, clearly indicating that many clubs may remain only as toponyms and remembered through the strength of local narrative. This would refer to a smaller number of places of worship, and probably schools that are mostly established by religious organizations, which would continue to signify embedded diversity.

Cultural diversity in the dynamic urban environment is dependent on diverse exogeneous factors too, on various forms of exchange and pressures from the immediate neighbourhood and surrounding cultural environment. The depth and intensity of bridging, besides the bonding social capital, would impact on the longevity of these places as the continuous existence of a particular place generates not only new social capital but also opportunities for new roles and activities, as it is “appropriable for other purposes” (Coleman 1990, 312). Pressures arising out of acculturation, secularisation and the continuous urban redevelopment process (Zukin 1995:128) on one side could be detrimental, while the expanding transnational space and channels of communication would on the other side compensate changing migration patterns and impact not only on longevity of these places, but also on diversity too.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The intensive appropriation of ethnic communal places contributes to the creation of diversity in many urban environments. The appropriation of ethnic communal places is not only a material outcome of reterritorialized (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 68) cultures at the time of contingency but also an outcome imbued with diverse and deep symbolic connotations. Collective actions undertaken by diverse and fragmented ethnic communities produce visible material outcomes, communal places, imbued with many visible and invisible characteristics. The existence of these places of worship, clubs, schools and childcare as symbolic representatives of cultural diversity creates grounds for not only the comprehension of newly generated diversity but also for various forms of qualitative research and measurements.

These places acquire the role of community home and of essential *fabric of life* to many settlers. Moreover, these places produce diverse communication effects that expand beyond the ethnic and spatial boundaries. The life span of these places differs and depends on many endogenous and exogenous factors. Of particular importance is intergenerational change; however, diverse organizational forms experience different intensity of youth participation.

Diversity is symbolically defined by this form of cultural and social development at the time of settlement. These signifiers of cultural diversity allow for various measurements identifying development, consumption, maintenance, sustainability and diversity having significant impact even beyond the immediate collective and spatial boundaries. The outcome of this grass-roots collective action, being specific for each environment, offers many possibilities for the qualitative understanding of diversity and diverse measurement reflecting effects of human movement and experience of transplanted cultures.

Endnote

- 1 Gordijew, I. cited in Poole, M.E. et al (1985, 149).
- 2 List of football clubs in Sydney First Division competition in 1967: *Apia; Croatia; Hakoah; Melita Eagles; Pan Hellenic; Polonia; Prague; St George-Budapest* and *Yugal* were organized by ethnic communities, but not the Manly, named after a coastal suburbs (Korban 1994).
- 3 “*Sheilas, wogs and poofters: An incomplete biography of Johnny Warren and soccer in Australia*”, is the title of a book using derogatory terms for women, South Europeans and homosexuals. Also: *Wogball, the beautiful game of Aussie heroes*, Nick Giannopoulos, The Sydney Morning Herald, 25. 05. 2006, p 5.
- 4 Title of the community action in a pamphlet published by the Slovenian club “Triglav”.
- 5 An article in the Assyrian publication *Kinarah* (1994,4) in reference to the start of development of the Assyrian club “Nineveh”
- 6 Calculated on the basis of twenty dollars per hour. Ironmonger (2000, 68-9) applies ABS data, indicates value of voluntary hour as A \$ 17.10, plus 12,7% additional material cost, or in total A\$19, 27 in 1997. Also, according to ABS data, average Australian adult volunteered nearly three hours weekly in 1997, but only seventy minutes in organizations (Ironmonger 2000, 61). Highly committed volunteers are people who volunteer at least six hours per week Lyons and Hocking 2000, 44).
- 7 Converted to year 2000 Australian dollar value.
- 8 Identified among many other manifestations through heavy presence of ethnic restaurants, Italian culinary words infiltrating into English, 95,000 spectators at the football match Australia-Greece (SMH 25.05.06).
- 9 Ellis Island Museum: qualification of ethnic organizations and their premises.

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