



Re-Thinking the 'Migrant Community'

A Study of Latin American Migrants and Refugees in Adelaide

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DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Signed

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ABSTRACT

What does it mean to be a Latin American in Adelaide? In what sense can we speak about Latin American migrants and refugees in Adelaide as members of an 'ethnic/migrant community?' These are the two fundamental questions that this ethnographic study attempts to answer and challenge in relation to the official multiculturalism discourse and popular representations of 'migrants' in Australia.

This thesis is based on 18-months of fieldwork conducted from 1997 to 1999 in various organisations, social clubs and radio programs that were constructed by participants and 'outsiders' as an expression of a local migrant community. The subjects of this dissertation are migrants and refugees from Latin America currently living in Adelaide.

This ethnographic study of the 'Latin American community' challenges the official view and representations of these migrants as 'people of culture' and as members of a homogenised 'ethnic community'. The study looks at the different ways in which various social groups and individual migrants construct their localities and their particular identifications. Such processes are explained in relation to multicultural imageries and the ongoing relations with their homelands and the *Latino* diaspora.

Each chapter explores particular sites of communal performances and expressions that are central to the interpretation and experience of the local 'community'. The analysis of such sites questions the official definitions of Latin Americans as members of a singular 'ethnic/migrant community' and looks at the ways in which such definitions are interpreted, negotiated and lived by these migrants. The notion of a 'Latin American community' and its cultural representations is not about maintaining 'culture'. Rather it is about 'culture' and 'identity' being constructed as part of a migratory feeling of 'being out of place'. What are often interpreted as nostalgic attempts by migrants to 'stay the same' need to be understood as part of the ongoing relations with the places of origin, reactions to multicultural images and policies, and the migratory desires for a 'place' and feeling of 'home' in the new context.

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I take full responsibility for any mistakes and misrepresentations that may form part of the text. What I wrote is based on my own personal understandings (and misunderstandings) of the different individuals and social groups that I met during this research, I make no claim to speak for, or on behalf of Latin Americans in Adelaide.

I thank the State Library for the access I was given to the exhibition *Expressions of Latin America*, clearly what I wrote about the exhibition is based on my personal interpretations and observations and does not represent in any form the State Library of South Australia.

There are many other individuals who I need to thank for being there and helping me to go through this long and difficult process. My supervisors Dr. David Murray and Dr. Charmaine McEachern who spent long hours discussing and reading my endless rewrites. In particular I need to thank Dr. David Murray for his hard work and enormous help during the last phases of the writing that made it possible for me to reach this final stage. I also thank Dr. Avraham Cordova from Tel Aviv University, a scholar and a friend who, as the wonderful teacher that he is, encouraged me to take this strange and challenging route in my life.

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May you never be forgotten.

There have never been so many people who end up elsewhere than they began, whether by choice or by necessity (Rushdie, 1987:63).



Figure 1: 'Joyas Del Ceren' Salvadoran folkloric dance group performing at Festival Latino 2000.



CHAPTER 1

LATIN AMERICANS IN ADELAIDE — LOCATING THE *LATINOSCAPES*

Latin American communities in South Australia foster, maintain and promote the many aspects of the rich traditions of their cultures.

... Latin American traditions of music, poetry, dancing, theatre, and political debate are also vigorously maintained in South Australia. The Latin American community has a number of talented performers who participate in local festivals and ensure that their heritage will continue to be fostered and enjoyed.

... Latin American organisations in South Australia provide an important focus for cultural life. They conduct cultural activities such as tapestry and weaving workshops, traditional cooking sessions, general social gatherings and contribute to Multicultural Days with Latin American food, music, exhibits of textiles and other crafts. These organisations present adults, who may not speak English fluently, with an opportunity to socialise and give children and adolescents the chance to practise Spanish and learn more about their cultures (Migration Museum, 1992).

What does it mean to be a Latin American in Adelaide? In what sense can we speak about Latin American migrants and refugees in Adelaide as members of an 'ethnic / migrant community?' These are the two fundamental questions that this ethnographic study attempts to answer and challenge in relation to official multicultural discourse and popular representations of 'migrants' in Australia.

This introductory chapter presents the various contexts, sites and locations that I studied during my fieldwork amongst Latin American migrants and refugees in Adelaide. It locates the subjects of my fieldwork and simultaneously contests the view of the 'migrant community' as a simple ethnographic location. Instead I view the different locations that I studied as *Latinoscapes* a terminology adapted from Appadurai that relates to the various localities that are constructed in relation to the experience and interpretation of the migratory movement. The term *Latinoscapes* refers to multiple translocal and transglobal cultural interactions and social relations that help to frame and construct a particular 'Latino / Latin American' locality in Adelaide.

This chapter's epigraph is taken from information provided by the Adelaide Migration Museum. It is part of a computerised database service that enables visitors to the

museum to search for information regarding a specific 'ethnic community' or migrant group in South Australia. The above description depicts the 'Latin American' migrants as cultural subjects who, despite their migratory movement, manage to 'foster, maintain and promote' their rich cultural traditions. As such, I argue, the text is part of a 'taken for granted' way of talking and representing 'ethnicity' and 'culture' in the context of Australian multiculturalism.

References to 'cultural traditions', formal 'social organisations', 'traditional cooking', music and crafts are typical of the ways by which 'ethnic culture' is thought about, represented and frequently celebrated within state multicultural discourse and praxis. The cultural *difference* that the 'migrants' possess becomes visible via organised 'celebrations of diversity', which enrich the 'host culture' and supposedly contribute to greater social tolerance. Yet, pigeonholing diverse groups of migrants into a simplified notion of the 'migrant community' and their representation as carriers of 'culture' mean that the 'migrants', and mainly those who are categorised as NESB,¹ are always regarded as the ethnic 'others'.

The terms 'migrant' and 'ethnic' are indistinguishable in the Australian context. Those categorised as 'ethnics', are often non Anglo-Celtic migrants who are automatically assumed to be part of a distinctive local 'community'.² Such an assumed collective 'difference' of the 'migrants' or the 'ethnics', which is stressed as the basis of their inclusion within the multicultural nation, is also what creates the basis for their exclusion and discrimination, mainly by those who see themselves as 'real' Australians.

A. Walwicz's poem 'Wogs' captures beautifully the feelings and emotions that the presence of the 'ethnics' evoke in those who see themselves, not only as naturally

¹ The acronym 'NESB' is an abbreviation for 'Non-English Speaking Background'. It is often used in official discourse as a basis for various governmental and non-governmental policies.

² There are various historical reasons for the conflation of 'ethnicity' and 'migrants' in Australia; for an important sociological work in this regard see Martin (1978). Interestingly there is a recent demand made by various officials to drop the notion of 'ethnic' altogether because it is 'divisive and obsolete' and to adopt instead the term 'multicultural' which seems to be more inclusive as it does not 'specify sections of the community' (*The Age*, March 31, 2001).

belonging to Australia but also as those to whom the national space belongs, a space which is now being 'invaded' by strangers.

You can't miss them they're everywhere they shout they're noisy they're dirty they put vegetables in their front gardens they eat garlic they shouldn't have come here in the first place they're strangers i want to be with my own kind with my brothers with people like i am there's too many of them here already you don't know how to talk to them they're not clean they annoy me funny names luigi they got their own ways they don't do as you do they're aliens they look wrong they use us they take us they take us for what they can get from us then they go away they're greedy they take our space they not us not our kind they after what they can get they stick together i don't know what they say they don't fit in they dress wrong flashy they don't know our ways they breed and breed they take what little we got what is ours what belongs to us they take ours and ours they're not us ... (Cited in Gunew, 1990:108).

State multiculturalism often regards such racial hostility as a 'natural' response to migration, a result of normal 'misunderstandings' that need to be explained and avoided. Yet, it is also the 'positive' representations of the ethnics / migrants as carriers of 'cultural enrichment', their depiction as new additions of flavours and aromas to the already exciting and cosmopolitan multicultural mix (Hage, 1997:136), that makes the 'migrants' and their 'communities' be seen as an enclave of cultural difference. In other words the 'bad racist' and the 'good multiculturalist' are often two sides of the same coin.

Popular representations and the actual 'cultural' consumption of, for example, exotic 'ethnic foods' and 'traditional dance' in the settings of multicultural festivals are often offered as proof of the Australian multicultural success story. Celebrations of cultural diversity, amongst various other sorts of representations, are not only considered pedagogical instruments for promoting social harmony, tolerance and defeating racism but are also presented as evidence of the 'maintenance of culture' and the existence of the 'ethnic community'.³

³ Hage locates the pedagogical facet of multiculturalism in the writings of Al Grassby. Al Grassby who is seen by many as the father of Australian multiculturalism writes in *The Tyranny of Prejudice*, that his aim as a Minister was 'to turn the classroom of the nation into crucibles of tolerance' (Cited in Hage, 1998a:83).

The importance of public representations of 'culture', as I will elaborate later in the chapter, is partly in the way in which the 'visualisation of difference' helps the dominant Anglo-Celtic Australian to 'imagine' the multicultural 'nation'. Australia is presented, by the 'good White nationalists', as a harmonious national collective consisting of many separated parts in which each part is supposedly a 'community' with its own unique and often exotic 'culture' (Hage, 1998a:78). The main metaphor of the nation, as evoked by the dominant discourse in Australia, is that of the (multi)cultural 'mosaic', which enables the mutual existence of *different* cultures that together form a unified, harmonic and cohesive national identity.

However, as a result of this mosaic imagery the distinctive 'cultural communities' are never in themselves considered multicultural. In order to be part of the 'multicultural nation', in order to be considered a 'community' at all, such collectives need to express (or in state multicultural discourse 'maintain') their own separate linguistic, religious, but definitely not national, forms of 'culture' and 'identity'. Under this same logic, it is never the single 'ethnic community' but rather the collection of such 'different cultures', the 'collection of otherness' (Hage, 1998a:157), that provides the cultural space that the 'migrants' and their 'communities' occupy and turn into a 'multi' cultural sphere. This is also why, despite the official rhetoric which claims that 'we are all multicultural', everyday popular uses of the term 'multicultural', when it is attached to cultural events, specific foods and even to institutions like schools, often simply mean of non-Anglo background or of 'ethnic' origin.

The information about the 'Latin Americans' from the computerised database of the Migration Museum is sensitive enough to avoid, at least most of the time, the simplistic categorisation of Latin American migrants and refugees as a single 'community'. It talks instead about 'Latin American communities', acknowledging the cultural, national and even the linguistic diversity within this particular 'cultural' group. Yet, the text assumes that such communities, within the general category of 'Latin American' are clear and non-problematic social entities. The assumption is that migrants and refugees from Latin America, like other 'ethnic groups', are forming a local 'community' (or 'communities') which enables them to 'maintain' and perform their rich cultural life and to 'contribute to multicultural days'.

Critics of state multiculturalism often argue that the notions of 'community' and 'culture' within that discourse are reifications, based on the view of culture and identity as fixed entities that are somehow clearly defined. The impacts of and reasons for such reifications are explored further in the next chapter, yet one implication of the definition and representation of the 'migrants' and 'ethnics' as 'communities,' is the way in which it renders the 'community' to be a homogenous collection of individuals. Such individuals, while 'not like us', are nevertheless part of some collectivity by which they share similarities to each other. Seen in this light it is the state which enables and indeed demands that the migrants be a 'community' in the first place; the 'community' exists within a multicultural discourse that constructs it as part of the 'nation' (Stratton and Ang, 1998:155). The 'community' becomes a neat statistical category that helps define and categorise migrants and has a direct influence, not only at the level of representations and performances, but also by determining the level of governmental funding and services that are provided to the 'community'. As a statistical category, the definition of the 'community' is often based on other statistical categories such as 'place of birth', 'country of origin' and even a common language, all of which are purposefully regarded as 'natural' markers of the boundaries of the collective.

Yet, when analysing definitions such as 'community' and 'ethnicity', we need to go further than pointing to state power to define and reproduce these categorisations. Statistical profiles of people from Latin American countries in Adelaide, while undoubtedly important, tell us very little about the particular ways, boundaries and different experiences of the so-called 'Latin American community'. Common cultural dimensions such as nationality, language and religion may create powerful ties and act as distinguishing characteristics of 'ethnic' groupings, yet, as statistical categories they may at times conceal the various contradictions, self-definitions, distinctions and boundaries that are part of the social struggle to define a 'community'.

In his book *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu (1990), explains that the statements and definitions which sociologists often make about the social world tend to ignore the 'practical' logic of the very same social definitions that they are using. Terms such as 'ethnicity', 'culture' and 'community', like many other sociological concepts, mean

different things within particular social fields. Bourdieu's work and his general *theory of practice* stress the importance of such distinctions. 'In so doing, Bourdieu argues, such sociologists assume that all knowledge about the social world has a sociological purpose. They forget that knowledge for most people who produce it has a practical purpose' (Hage, 1998a:31).

At the same time, anthropologists who are researching particular social phenomena or particular 'others' need to be aware of the practical purpose of their own social fields and language. For these reasons Bourdieu criticises the notion of 'participant observation' and suggests instead to speak about 'participant objectification', terminology that, like any reflexive social analysis, looks not only at the subject of analysis but also at the 'analysing subject'.

For what needs to be objectivated is not the anthropologist performing the anthropological analysis of an unfamiliar world, but the social world that has made both the anthropologist and the conscious or unconscious anthropology that he engages in his anthropological practice — not only his social origins, his position and trajectory in the social space, his social and religious positions and beliefs, but also, and more importantly, his particular position within the world of anthropologists (Bourdieu, 2000:1).

Framing my research as a study of a 'migrant community' or an 'ethnic group' is part of a recognised anthropological field where such 'others' are a legitimate subject of study. A term such as 'ethnic community' has, therefore, a particular sociological history but it also needs to be understood from within the various other fields and the social agents who produce and use such categories. 'Ethnicity', for example, may or may not be the way various groups of people choose to define themselves. Some migrants and refugees may be defined by the state or even choose to define themselves as 'ethnics' or as a 'community', yet we still need to find out the specific ways and social contexts in which such terminologies operate. We need to analyse the particular sense such terminologies make for their various users.

Furthermore, the multicultural conceptualisation of 'a united and harmonious Australia' often works to 'obscure[s] the constant struggle within and between those classified as ethnic groups' (Bottomley, 1992:59). The theoretical challenge is to explore the complex processes of constructing collective identities over the struggles

to monopolise legitimate symbolic, as well as economic, capital (Bottomley, 1992:13). In Bourdieu's terminology, we need to observe those who have 'the power to make groups' in order to study the 'politics of culture'. As Bottomley (1992) shows, regarding Greek-Australians, such a theoretical approach is very important for understanding the dynamics of 'ethnicity' and the complex process of identity formation. Definitions of 'customs' and 'traditions' are strategies in the struggle for symbolic and material resources. 'In this process, particular forms of religious practice, kinship — even language, music and dance — can become boundary markers' (Bottomley, 1992:89).

In researching a particular 'migrant community' it is important, therefore, not to assume *a priori* such a category, and instead to look at the different ways and particular social agents that 'make' the 'community' a recognisable social category. It is from such a theoretical context that the concept of 'cultural brokers'⁴ can be useful for analysing the strategies of social agents, including the state, who actively construct and represent the 'community' in terms of an 'ethnicity' and 'culture'. Within the multicultural discourse and imagery the cultural brokers are often those who struggle to become recognised as 'representatives' of a particular 'community'; they work in various 'ethnic' organisations and are often organising cultural performances, producing textual and visual representations of their 'culture' and establishing various communal sites. Such individuals and the different communal sites and representations of the 'community' that they are producing are one of the main focuses of my research. In this thesis I will be analysing in depth sites such as the communal *fiestas*, community radio and a community cultural exhibition. Other such sites that I visited during fieldwork but will only briefly mention in the thesis are the community newspaper, various voluntary or governmental support groups, multicultural festivals, sports events, religious institutions and many other less formal sites and locations of social gatherings.

Many of the activities occurring in these sites could be conceptualised in terms of translation. The cultural brokers work as translators between the 'Australian' (state)

⁴ Eric Wolf introduced the idea of 'brokers' or 'brokering institutions' to anthropology in 1956. Wolf needed a concept that would help him understand the web of group relations and the ways in which local communities in Mexico were linked to the national level (Fox, 1991:2).

and their 'ethnic' categorisation. Such a translation is almost always operating in two directions: understanding and interpreting the 'Australian' (multi)culture, whilst at the same time constructing and representing 'our culture' to 'our community' and to the outsiders. The cultural brokers are the 'people who have the power to make groups', a theoretical view which is close to Barth's conceptualisation regarding the 'field of entrepreneurship' which 'create[s] collectivities and mobilised groups for diverse purposes by diverse means' (1994:21). The study of these cultural brokers, and the ways in which 'cultural identity' is planned and cultivated is important because it is mainly in their activities that multicultural policies and images are advanced, reproduced and possibly challenged.

Clearly, there are many differences in the ways in which academics, the state and different individuals, groups or 'cultural brokers' use terms such as 'ethnicity', 'culture' and 'community'. Yet, as I will elaborate later, the main terminology used by Latin Americans and their cultural brokers in Adelaide is that of the 'community'. My interest in the notion of the 'community' is not to look for the ultimate definition of the term, to point to its simplification and reification within the official discourse, nor even to present a historical study of such a conceptualisation in Australia. Rather, in accordance with Bourdieu, my theoretical aim is to present the practical purpose of the 'community' for the people who invoke it and struggle within a social structure that they express, reproduce and continuously transform.

The experience of the 'community', as Anthony Cohen (1985) suggests, is something that a group of people has in common with each other, but it is also what distinguishes them in a significant way from other groups (Cohen, 1987:12). The boundary of a 'community' and 'identity' is constituted through the meanings people bestow upon it (Cohen, 1987:12). In this sense the 'community' is very much about symbolic boundaries. The emphasis on the experience of the community is highly relevant for understanding the feelings and ways of belonging to a particular 'ethnic / migrant community'. This is so mainly because the 'consciousness' of 'community' and its symbolic boundaries are often very different from the simplistic ways by which the 'community' is (re)presented within official discourse.

Accordingly then, if the term 'Latin American community' is not solely a rhetorical figment of the state multicultural imagery, we should look at and research the various kinds of symbolic boundaries that are created and maintained in the construction of such a 'community' from a variety of perspectives. The theoretical challenge is to discover how and to what extent multicultural policies, ideologies and representations are part of such symbolic boundaries; to try and find out, as Verdery (1994:47) suggests, 'How are "identities" socially constructed, and how are people who "have" "identities" made?' And how, I would add, such people 'make' and 'talk about' their own identities.

Critics have often condemned the ideological aspects of multicultural policies as merely constituting the new state ideology. Such critics have pointed to the power relations that are embodied in official multiculturalism's re-presentation of the 'other' (Hage, 1998a; Stratton, 1998). However, the study of multiculturalism cannot be reduced solely to its dominant images or government policies. Grounding the effects of such policies and images in specific case studies is important for unfolding, not only the meaning of multiculturalism from the migrant's point of view, but also the ways in which state policies and constructions may influence the processes of 'community' and identity formation.

In his classic introduction to *Ethnic groups and boundaries*, Fredrik Barth indicated that: 'the critical focus for investigation becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group rather than the cultural stuff that it encloses' (1969:15). What makes an 'ethnic group', therefore, are the characteristics of self-ascription and ascription by others. Such a conceptualisation has enabled researchers to observe the ways in which the 'community' and 'ethnicity' are being constructed without the need to assume a homogenised culture (Verdery, 1994:41). Barth (1994:14) himself has argued that seeing 'ethnicity' as the 'organisation of difference' is based upon a postmodern notion of culture as constant flux. In this sense, Barth (1994:21) suggests, we should look at 'ethnicity' (and the complex process by which self-ascription and ascription by others constructs boundaries of 'ethnic communities') through three levels of analysis — the micro, median and macro. The micro level focuses on the formation of identities at the personal level: 'the management of selves in the complex context of

relationships, demands, values and ideas' (Barth, 1994:21). The median level looks at leadership: the 'field of entrepreneurship, leadership and rhetoric' in which the collectivities are created and mobilised (Barth, 1994:21). And the macro level refers to state policies: 'the legal creation of bureaucracies allocating rights and impediments according to formal criteria, but also arbitrary uses of force and compulsion ...' and to the global or international discourse and organisations which influence the state level and the median level (Barth, 1994:21).

The importance of Barth's model lies in its attempt to work out the phenomenon of 'ethnicity' from individual experiences to global contexts (Barth, 1994:30). The most localised 'communities' and 'identities' may often emerge in relation to transnational movements and complex social interaction. This is particularly true in the case of migratory movements where dislocations and relocations are parts of the 'habit of living between worlds' (Chabers, 1994:6) which evoke the 'elsewhere' in complex ways. Baldassar (1997), who studied the practice of the 'return visit' by Italian migrants (their children and grandchildren) from Perth back to their village in Italy, shows how such 'going away' makes practical sense for these Italian migrants. In the context of multiculturalism, these various generations of migrants are using the 'return trips' to construct their 'identity' as Italo-Australian (Baldassar, 1997:85). Baldassar's study demonstrates that 'ethnicity' is 'continuously being reinvented in response to changing realities within the group, in the host society and the home country' (1997:89).

Such studies allude to the importance of a detailed ethnographic account of the complexity of transitional interactions within and in relation to a particular 'locality'. 'Ethnicity' and the 'identities' that help to form such (trans)localities are in themselves products of constructions, narration and 'imagined communities' that provide a unique sense of belonging. These sorts of situational approaches to 'ethnicity' have challenged the 'dominant western-nation state ideology according to which all identities are fixed and unique' (Verdery, 1994:39). The need is now to apply such a critique to the multicultural narrative. It is necessary to explain not only the practices by which 'ethnicity', 'culture' or 'communities' are being artificially constructed from above, but also to try and answer why and how, under the images

and policies of multiculturalism, such processes are carried out in terms of 'culture' and 'identity' by those who are categorised in particular ways by the 'multicultural' discourse. We need to shift our analytical gaze from the critique of official ideology to the study of the 'community' as a social field in which various social agents actively participate and struggle in a dynamic social world that involves 'locality' and the 'elsewhere' in complex ways. As Verdery (1994:43) suggests, we have to find out, 'What is the relation between ethnicity and the forces that seek to reify and homogenise culture — to make it "shared"? What is it that has made culture [as in the "politics of culture"] something important enough to disagree about?'

For these reasons there has been a call by various researchers to distinguish between the policy of multiculturalism (state or official multiculturalism) and the way multiculturalism is experienced in everyday life in Australia. Hage (1998a:133), for example, makes a distinction between the 'official-White multiculturalism' and the 'multicultural Real'.

The fantasy of the White manager is grounded in a social reality where non-White Australians are clearly under-represented in the political, social and economic managerial class. It is this reality which gives credibility to the White Australian that positions himself or herself in the role of the valorising mixing manager. At the same time there are clearly tendencies in Australian society for non-White Australians to assert themselves as equally empowered Australian national wills within the field. This is the reality that cannot be incorporated by White multiculturalism, the multicultural Real (Hage, 1998a:133).

Stratton (1998:15) makes a similar distinction and talks about 'everyday multiculturalism' as 'syncretic and rhizomatic multiculturalism' which is essentially different from the conservative politics of official multiculturalism.

For anthropologists, there is a bitter irony in such distinctions, which is partly a result of the way in which official multiculturalism uses the classical anthropological definition of 'culture'. 'Culture' within the official discourse is always reified, always located within a homogeneous 'migrant community'. Yet, within anthropology, as in other disciplines, it is mainly mass immigration and the life experiences of other displaced peoples that is often 'used' to challenge and deconstruct this very same classic anthropological conceptualisation of 'culture'. Anthropology's position

towards these issues is somehow different to other western intellectual disciplines and critical theory that deals with notions of movement, delocalisation and displacement. In contrast to other 'intellectual peregrinations' (Chambers, 1994:3), anthropology has to deal directly with its main theoretical conceptualisation of 'culture' and the anthropological praxis of studying 'culture'. Within current anthropology there is, therefore, a theoretical attempt to break away from any reified definition of 'culture', including the view of culture as localised in a single place (Appadurai, 1991; Baldassar, 1997; Bammer, 1994; Chambers, 1994; Clifford, 1997; Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996; Massey, 1994; Olwig & Hastrup, 1997). Notions such as 'diaspora', 'ethnoscapes', 'cultural sites' and 'travelling cultures' amongst others, are examples of attempts to capture and theorise the massive movements of people around the globe (Clifford, 1997:17).

What is the significance of the phrase 'our culture' for a 'community' that contains multiple identities and cultures? What kinds of social practices are involved in the incorporation of such complexity into the frame of a 'community'? And to what degree are such local definitions of a 'community' the result of transcultural and global identity processes? While these are the kind of questions social scientists ask in their attempts to decipher complex and elusive phenomenon such as 'ethnicity,' 'identity' and migration, these are also questions asked by the 'migrants' themselves, especially when they are faced by the hardships of migration and their sense of otherness.

The 'Latin American community' is the main conceptual framework that is used by various local 'Latin American' organisations, different social groups and individuals who are influenced by official multiculturalism. Yet, in order to understand the particular notion of the 'community', the feelings and forms of 'identities' which the sense of having a 'community' promotes, we need to study the various practices, symbolic meanings, images, representations and the social conflicts that the process of 'becoming' a 'community' entails. We need to examine not only the historical contexts and various ways by which 'migrants' are being defined within state multiculturalism, but also to explore the ways by which the 'community' operates as a

‘cultural space’ that enables migrants to perform and live their particular ‘inbetweenness’ condition (Probyn, 1996).

My work takes a theoretical perspective that refuses to accept any notion of ontologically belonging to the world or any group within it (Probyn, 1996:22): ‘Belonging is an achievement at several levels of abstraction’ (Bell, 1999:3). In other words, the category ‘ethnic / migrant community’, apart from its ideological facets, is a complex social reality that is situated at the meeting place between the official categorisation and the migratory experience.

Is there a ‘Spanish Speaking community’ in Adelaide?

According to the *Settlement Data Bulletin* from November 1997, there are 3148 ‘Spanish speaking’ people in South Australia. In this general category there are 691 persons who were born in Chile, 868 in El Salvador, 1135 persons from *Other North and South American*⁵ countries and 758 people who were born in Spain. Over the last few years the number of new arrivals from Latin American countries has been relatively small. Between 1987-1997 there were 1169 persons in total who arrived in South Australia from South America, Central America and the Caribbean.

These figures indicate that South Australia, for various reasons, is probably not the preferred destination of migrants from Latin America. Yet it is more likely that such low figures are a result of the selection methods used by immigration policies. Official state discourse separates the policy of multiculturalism, which is seen as internal to the Australian nation, from the complex and often obscure selection methods of current immigration policies. As the current political situation in most Latin American countries is that of transition to democracy it is much harder to gain refugee status from this region. The difficult economic situation in many Latin American countries means that for many Latin Americans it is also almost impossible to receive business visas or to immigrate to Australia under the category of skilled migrants. Furthermore, the current Australian Coalition government restricts family reunion visas or places

⁵ This category does not include people from Canada or the United States who come under separate categories.

financial demands and conditions on such visas that most migrants cannot meet. Such policies, in contrast to multiculturalism, target those 'others' who are located outside of the national space. This bureaucratic division of labour is based on the Australian State desire to control and shape the 'multicultural' make-up of the nation and has, as such, a direct effect upon the social structure and social realities of many of the so called 'ethnic communities'.⁶

As a result of such selection mechanisms, the Chileans and the Salvadorans are currently the two most noticeable groups amongst the Latin American migrants and refugees in Adelaide. These two groups are central to the generic categorisation of the 'Latin American community' due to the larger numbers of Chileans and Salvadorans and their better level of organisation in comparison to other Latin American migrants or refugees. Most Chileans and Salvadorans arrived in Adelaide as a result of particular political circumstances in their countries of origin. For example a large number of Chileans in Adelaide are miners from the north of Chile who fled Chile after a national miners strike which resulted in them being blacklisted and without any possibility of finding work in Chile under the totalitarian rule of the military junta. This is another important factor that contributes to the formation of these two main collectivities in Adelaide. There are, however, small numbers of migrants and refugees from other countries in Latin America such as Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Uruguay, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and Cuba amongst others. In contrast to most of the Chilean and the Salvadoran migrants and refugees, other Latin Americans have a variety of personal reasons and life circumstances that led them to settle in Adelaide.

Generally speaking there have been two major migration 'waves' of Latin Americans to Australia (Amézquita et al, 1995:168). The first wave was in the 1970s when people from Chile, Argentina and Uruguay arrived due to political and economical hardships in their countries. The second wave was during the 1980s when mainly

⁶ Australia is 'lucky' in comparison with other countries, because of its geographical characteristics it can control such movements with greater ease. Despite official multiculturalism Australia is very restrictive and exercises harsh treatment for 'boat people' or 'illegal' asylum seekers who are detained for long periods in remote detention centres. Hage (1998a:107) explains this practice of 'ethnic caging' as resulting from the desire to control the national space and argues that analytically speaking a similar desire to control otherness is to be found within official multiculturalism.

people from El Salvador and other Central American countries arrived as a result of the civil war and political unrest. The majority of Chileans in Adelaide arrived in the 1970s and the 1980s after the military coup of General Augusto Pinochet in September 1973. Some Chilean families arrived in Adelaide even earlier, fearing the rise of communism, after Salvador Allende was elected as the Chilean president in 1970.⁷ Yet the majority of the Chileans in Adelaide are people who were persecuted by the military regime. Such persecutions varied between those who were placed on the regime's black list and for this reason had to leave Chile and others who were arrested without trial and brutally tortured for their political activities in various leftist groups that opposed the dictatorship. Similarly, most of the Salvadorans in Adelaide who arrived in the late 80s were fleeing the harsh economic conditions and the 12-year brutal civil war in El Salvador (1980-1992) in which an estimated 75,000 people were killed and several thousands more 'disappeared'.⁸

Despite these different time frames it is important to note that the Salvadorans and the Chileans, like other Latin American migrants who I met during fieldwork, shared similar sociological characteristics. The active members of various social organisations and clubs were migrants or refugees usually in their 40s and 50s who because of their age and lack of English were often unable to find permanent work. As such they could dedicate long hours and efforts as volunteers to one or even several communal organisations. The majority had families and small children and they often supported other relatives and family members who they had helped migrate to Australia (usually their parents). The few Latin Americans born in Australia were often too young or simply did not participate in the different organisations and social activities apart from the soccer clubs.

⁷ Historically the first group of Chileans arrived in South Australia during the mid-nineteenth century as muleteers and worked to transfer the copper ore from the Burra mines to Port Wakefield. Most of these people went back to Chile and there are no records of what happened with those who stayed in South Australia. Interestingly, this historical fact is often mentioned in order to provide historical depth to the 'community' and the presence of Latin Americans in South Australia. See for example, the Adelaide Migration Museum's pamphlet about the 'Latin Americans of South Australia'; and in an interesting newspaper article, '*Hispanohablando en Australia del Sur*', in *Noticias Y Deportes* (27 of May 1999), the writer proudly emphasises this historical fact, in arguing for the existence of Latin Americans in South Australia prior to the Spanish migrants and even prior to the existence of the Australian Parliament and its restrictive 'White Australia' policy.

⁸ The Salvadorans living in Adelaide are a small fragment of the estimated 1,000,000 Salvadorans who fled El Salvador during the civil war to other countries such as Mexico, Honduras, Panama, the United States and Canada.

Like other Latin Americans in Australia, most of these migrants arrived in Adelaide under the 'Refugee' and the 'Humanitarian' programs. Yet, it would be wrong to assume that *all* of these migrants would define themselves and experience their lives in Australia as exiles or refugees. Amongst the Latin Americans themselves, apart from any official state definition, only those who claimed to be 'genuine' political refugees evoked the term 'refugee' in their various organisations and social activities. It was common to hear some Chileans criticising other Chileans as not being 'real' refugees. Such accusations obviously do not 'prove' that some migrants cynically used the refugee status in order to enter Australia. What it shows, however, is that there is a certain social value attached to the term 'refugee' and that for some Chileans, but certainly not for all, the category 'refugee' plays an important role in their own self-definition as 'political' and exiles. Such a distinction illustrates one of the differences through which 'migrants' often perceived themselves in comparison to the ways that they are defined by others and in particular the ways in which they are defined by the state.

Another important distinction in this context is found in the common multicultural category of the 'language community'. Official multicultural discourse refers to these diverse groups of migrants as forming part of a larger 'Spanish speaking community' a term which includes 'Latin Americans' and 'non-Latin American' migrants. Such a 'reference' is not merely a matter of rhetoric as it is also what determines governmental funding and as such controls and defines the representations, which the migrants are 'encouraged' to promote. Obviously the Spanish language is one of the factors that bring these people together, Brazilians who speak Portuguese (who in any case consisted of a very small number of people) were not, for example, considered to be part of the local 'Latin American community'. At the same time the Spanish language is also what separates the 'Latin Americans' into their particular nationalities. A favourite practice amongst the 'Latin Americans' was to imitate different accents or tell jokes in which words that are similar or sound similar have totally different meanings in their different countries. It is for these reasons that in daily conversations and amongst various organisations, as well as in many other public events, the reference was often made, not to a 'Spanish speaking' but rather to a 'Latin American community' or simply *Latinos*. Some organisations still maintain

the official term of the 'Spanish speaking', as for example the 'Federation of Spanish Speaking Communities' or the 'Spanish Speaking Community Catholic Church'. However, even such organisations usually had no Spanish participants and were understood by the participants to be in fact 'Latin American'.

This latter category, as I will elaborate later in this chapter, is also highly problematic. It includes various groups and individuals who define themselves according to particular national, political and even religious affiliations, which often collided with the generic pan-national *Latino* / Latin American image. Yet, it is the term *Latinos*, more than any other terminology or collective definition, that operates as a cultural marker for various groups within the official category of the 'Spanish speaking'. In a way this categorisation works to distinguish the *Latinos* from the 'Spaniards'. One of my informants explained it in these words: 'The Spaniards are Spaniards and the *Latinos* are *Latinos* — we may speak the same language but we are from totally different cultures'. Some *Latinos* also criticised the Spaniards in regard to the historical context of the colonisation of Latin America. Mainly, however, there was a boundary between the general notion of the *Latinos* and that of the Spaniards. The Spaniards in Adelaide have their own separate social club and produce their own local radio program in Spanish. Langer, (1998:168) who studied Salvadoran refugees in Melbourne, has a similar argument.

Contrary to expectations implicit in the idea of Spanish as a 'community' language, speaking Spanish is no guarantee of shared 'habitus' in Bourdieu's sense of the term — the highly nuanced taken-for-granted understandings and practices that mark the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' in terms of how we speak, eat, dress, shop and so on. Like English, Spanish is not a language of a single country or 'ethnic group' but of a former empire, and relations between Spanish speakers are structured accordingly. 'Speaking Spanish' may provide the conditions for mutual recognition and respect within the bounds of the 'community language', but it can equally make people aware of class and national difference, and being patronised is no more acceptable for its happening in your 'mother tongue'.

In more than one sense the category 'Spanish speaking' is understood to be a homogenised official category; as a Latin American community worker once told me, '*los Australianos nos ponen a todos en la misma bolsa*' — 'the Australians put us all in the same basket'. In contrast to this 'official' homogenisation the category 'Latin Americans' or *Latinos* is understood to contain cultural and national diversity that suit

the social make-up of the 'community'. The Spaniards, while having some relations with the *Latinos*, for example by including Latin American performers in their annual multicultural 'Spanish Festival', generally saw themselves and were understood by the *Latinos* to be part of a separate 'ethnic community'.

Most of the Latin American migrants and refugees in Adelaide live in the northern suburbs of the city. The main attraction of these suburbs is in their relatively cheap housing rates. These areas are also where many of the houses, which are owned and run by various state public housing programs and the South Australian Housing Trust, are available. The northern suburbs of the city are considered relatively 'poor' and 'multicultural' and are marked by higher levels of unemployment and poverty. Yet, these suburbs do not resemble 'slums' or run-down over-populated urban areas in other Australian cities or the United States. Undoubtedly, like other residents of these suburbs, Latin Americans migrants and refugees living in these areas occupy low socio-economic positions and many are dependent on social welfare. Despite their relative poverty, however, most of these migrants and refugees, including those who regarded themselves as middle class in their countries of origin, often experienced their current living standards in Australia as reflecting upward mobility. I often heard statements by migrants and refugees who, despite their 'poverty' by Australian standards, claimed that Australia has no real poverty. Such statements need to be understood in relation to the meaning of 'poverty' across Latin America where social welfare does not exist and large sections of the population live in horrendous conditions. In addition, despite large cuts in governmental funding, there are still various governmental and non-governmental organisations that offer social welfare to people in need. Many Latin Americans, for example, live in houses that belong to one of the nine 'Spanish-speaking Co-operatives'. These Co-operatives are part of the State government community-housing program that provides housing options for low income and special needs groups.⁹

⁹ In total there are 119 community housing organisations (Housing Co-operatives and Housing community Associations) in South Australia which are supported by the SA Community Housing Authority (SACHA), a statutory body established in 1992 to administer the South Australian Co-operative and Community Housing Act 1991. SACHA is responsible for the regulation, administration, development and financing of all the State community-housing programs. For more information see: (<http://www.immigration.sa.gov.au/factSheets/housing.htm>).

Despite their demographic clustering it is important to stress that the term 'Latin American community' does not stand for a particular geographical area. The small numbers and the social diversity of Latin American migrants in Adelaide, as well as the urban forum of a single one-square mile centre (the city) and widely spread suburbs, mean that Adelaide does not have a *barrio* or a *Latino* neighbourhood.¹⁰ Instead, the expression 'Latin American community' or simply *La comunidad*, in its local context, is marked by fluid forms of connectedness and social networks that have no one geographical location and for that matter no single homogeneous characteristic.¹¹

Mapping the Ethnographic Sites

Various organisations and a variety of cultural, social and religious activities represent what is officially categorised as the 'Spanish speaking community' in South Australia. Some of these organisations aim to meet the needs of the different cultural and social variations within this general categorisation. For example, there are several voluntary social organisations such as *The Chilean Club* and *Casa Chile* for the Chileans, *The Spanish club* for the Spaniards, *The Salvadoran community*, and two soccer clubs, *Club Salvadoreño* and *Club Deportivo Aguila*, for the El Salvadorans. There are also several government-supported organisations that target the particular social needs of Spanish speaking migrants. Two such organisations are *Grupo mayores de 50 de Salisbury*, a support group for the older Spanish and Latin American migrants, and *El Centro de Salud para la Mujer* that deals with health issues and provides services for Spanish-speaking women. Other important social organisations are *Club Latinoamericano*, which operates as a monthly social gathering, the *Spanish speaking Catholic Church*,¹² and *The Federation of Spanish Speaking Communities in South Australia*.

¹⁰ The Co-operatives are not confined to a single area. Typically a Co-operative would have several houses in various locations, mainly in the northern and southern suburbs of Adelaide.

¹¹ Mandy Thomas describes a similar reality for Vietnamese living in Australia (1999:14).

¹² There are also at least eight different evangelical Churches that have congregations of Latin American migrants.

Due to the dispersed nature of social relationships and multiple sites that are part of life in an urban environment, and due to the social and cultural diversity within the general category of the 'Latin American', I had to make certain choices in regard to the sites, organisations and individuals that I chose to study. Such decisions were made primarily on theoretical and methodological grounds.¹³ From the above-listed organisations my research focused mainly on the *Federation* and the various organisations that, during fieldwork, were represented by this umbrella organisation. The main reason I chose this particular organisation was because it was the only organisation that was formally operating at the meeting point of official state categories (of the 'ethnic community') and various other social groups and organisations that emerged locally in response to the migratory movement. It is important to note that although the term 'community' is part of the self-representation of many of these organisations, each such organisation has a particular history, different goals and different types and frequency of activities.

Despite the many changes and recent debates within anthropology in regard to the idea and practice of fieldwork there is still an assumption that fieldwork is located within a particular 'space' in which the anthropologists are expected to 'be' and spend time with the people who occupy that 'space'. One of my initial methodological problems was therefore to try and examine not only what it means for various individuals to be part of the 'community', but also to look for the various sites which were deemed significant for the notion of the 'community'. There are, of course, individual migrants who do not see themselves as being a part of any such 'community'. During my fieldwork I did meet some individuals who chose to distance themselves from the 'community', but there are obviously some who live totally outside of it. Yet it is almost impossible to locate and meet such people. My fieldwork was therefore an attempt to understand the ways in which various communal 'sites' were mapped and imagined by the migrants that I met.

¹³ Obviously, like in any other type of social relationship there are many other factors that influence the type of relationship that anthropologists have with the people they study. These may include the researcher's gender, age, cultural background etc. including, of course, the initial and continual illusive categorisation of very complex and different types of relationships and forms of involvements as an academic 'research' and 'fieldwork.'

It is for these reasons that my fieldwork was multi-sited. I moved amongst various locations and group affiliations, which were connected in one way or another to local / global '*Latino* / Latin American' social worlds or what I called the *Latinoscapes*. These *Latinoscapes* should be seen here as something which is less rigid and locally defined than the term 'community' is often thought to be. Such social worlds go beyond the immediate locality. They are not clearly marked, and as such are more fluid, situational and in constant flux. In the context of migration these social worlds operate as 'alternative realities' that are lived and maintained through the attribution of symbolic meanings and the transformation of the new 'locality' that migrants 'reterritorialised'. Different symbolic resources, such as music, food, dance and the use of Spanish in various situations and communal gatherings help to create a particular *Latino* effect that always invokes some place elsewhere as much as it is experienced locally.

Thus, my work as an ethnographer was not confined to a certain location or a particular geographical area within the city. The social locations and the practices carried out by those who occupied these sites were usually constructed at certain times and in particular contexts. Different physical spaces were defined as 'Latin American', 'Chilean' or 'Salvadoran' when they were used and occupied by these migrants while at other times such spaces had a different context and different uses altogether. Each of the various local 'Latin American' soccer teams, for example, has its own soccer ground, located usually at a school. During the game, the space was transformed into a 'community' event by the use of music, food, and forms of talking and living the event. A larger set of practices and the particular ways of participating in the situation defined such events. The same logic can also be applied to the local community radio stations that, like the *fiestas*, or the soccer matches, become important 'Latin American' communal sites during the weekly broadcast in Spanish.¹⁴

The Chilean Club and the Spanish Club are the only two social organisations that have their own permanent locations and operate as a 'community home' and a place of

¹⁴ A similar argument could be applied also in the context of the Australia national programs in Spanish on SBS radio. However, these programs, which in accordance with SBS policy defined their audiences as a 'language community' are produced in Sydney and Melbourne and as such have a different effect from the local programs that see themselves and are seen by the local *Latinos* as 'our' programs.

gathering during the weekends. However, these two organisations are not included in this research. The Spanish Club was not considered by participants to be part of the 'Latin American community' and the Chilean Club chose, for various reasons, to marginalise itself from the inclusive category of the 'community' during fieldwork. The Clubs had no representative at the *Federation* and tended to avoid the struggles among other organisations in regard to governmental grants or in organising representations of the 'community'. While the Chilean Club did support solidarity events that were organised in cases of natural disasters in Latin America, it was hostile to the political activities organised by other Chilean groups and the political refugees and mainly operated as a meeting place for a group of Chileans from the north of Chile.

For these reasons I cannot claim to have studied every aspect of the life of the people with whom I worked. What my fieldwork attempted to achieve was to get as close as I could to the ways the participants themselves experienced and understood their own involvement in the 'community'. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, for most participants the 'community' was often experienced in a similarly fragmented manner. In that sense one could 'choose' and be part of the 'community' or stay away from it, to participate or to cease to participate, to be involved or to stay away.¹⁵ 'The less contact I have with other *Latinos* the better I am', as I was once told by one of my informants after his failed attempt to join a group of other *Latinos* who were organising a social event.

During fieldwork I became one of the 'active' participants in the 'community'. I was always available and participated in the organisation of various social activities. I came to be known as the person who 'knows many people in the community'. At the same time, as in any complex form of social interaction, doing fieldwork meant that I had different types of engagements with the different individuals that I met.

Writing an ethnography that takes the term 'community' as one of its main problematics means that this work should not be read as 'the' true representation of

¹⁵ Obviously group identity is never merely voluntary, especially in the context of racism and discrimination which are part of the daily life of many migrants and minority groups in Australia.

the 'Latin American community' in Adelaide. Rather it is about what Clifford (1986:7) named 'partial truths' that are based on deep involvement with a few of the active, and some of the less active, members in a social world that the participants themselves construct as a 'community'.

The 'community' is therefore a complex network of people, organisations, and social activities at different locations and various sites that have no real stability or permanency to them. In a sense the 'community' is experienced in relation to various sporadic social activities and organisations that emerge in relation to particular needs or in response to events in Latin America. These organisations or social groups would often disintegrate due to internal conflicts or cease to operate and vanish when there was no longer a need. For example the *Federation of the Spanish Speaking Communities in South Australia* where I had visited in my initial mapping of the Latin American organisations and activities in Adelaide, had completely new faces when I officially began my fieldwork just a few month later.

There were always, however, new initiatives and individuals who developed a form of 'community activism' and who were constantly organising and participating in what was regarded as 'community events' and 'community organisations'. I named such people 'cultural brokers' and it was with them that I spent most of my time. Organising a community event like a *fiesta*, or establishing and maintaining 'community' sites like the radio programs or a social club, meant that these activists saw and defined their roles as 'community leaders' or 'organisers'. Their activities aimed to bring people together and produce performances of 'identity' for the 'community' and for the gaze of the outsiders. These 'cultural brokers' operated under the cultural logic of 'maintaining our culture', whilst also functioning as 'cultural translators' of the necessary adaptation of their sense of 'identity' and that of the 'community', to life in Australia. Such constructions are often, but not necessarily, part of an ongoing dialogue with official multiculturalism and the 'homelands' that these migrants had left behind.

These 'community activists' were usually migrants who, in some cases due to their inability to find permanent employment, dedicated most of their time to the

construction of the 'community'. Yet it is important to remember that even these few persons, who were seen at times as the personification of the 'Latin American community', were usually operating from a particular section or a distinctive social group within the general category of the 'Latin Americans'. These lines of difference, as I will elaborate in the next chapters, were mainly based on 'nationality', but also on political and even regional affiliations.

One of the main sites where the notion of the 'Latin American community' is constructed is *The Federation of the Spanish Speaking Communities in South Australia*.¹⁶ The *Federation*, which is located in an office building in the city centre, is an umbrella ethnic organisation that was originally established eight years ago (1992) by Spaniards and Latin American migrants. There are different versions of the reasons that led to the establishment of the *Federation* and the way in which it was established. One such version is that the *Federation* was established as part of a political struggle against another 'Latin American' organisation. This early organisation was established by professional Chilean migrants and as such its members were seen by many Chileans and other Latin Americans as elitists and non-representative of the 'community'. The need to resist this first organisation (which, during fieldwork, no longer existed) and to get access to government grants led to the establishment of the *Federation*. Yet, it is clear that the main idea behind the *Federation* was the multicultural notion of the 'Spanish speaking' migrants as members of an 'ethnic / language community'. In its first Bulletin, the *Federation* presented itself as a solution to the necessities and the 'problems of the community' in recent years.

Ya en el pasado existían organizaciones hispano hablante con objetivos culturales, sociales, deportivos, solidarios, religiosos, etc. que se tropezaron con distintas limitaciones, entre ellos podemos mencionar los económicos e infraestructurales, los cuales convergieron en un solo interés común, la creación de la Federación (Boletín Número 1, 1994).

Up till now there were Spanish speaking organisations with cultural, social, sporting, solidarity, religious etc. objectives, which ran into several limitations, among them we can mention finance and infrastructure. These organisations have now converged in a single common interest, the creation of the *Federation* (my translation, from Bulletin Number 1, 1994).

¹⁶ For the remainder of the thesis I will refer to this organisation as the *Federation*.

The goal was to create an umbrella organisation that would represent the 'common interest' of the 'community', which was defined and constructed by the *Federation* as a language community. One of the reasons to come together and join forces was undoubtedly the desire to improve the ability to apply for government grants instead of competing against each other. As such, the *Federation* has become the sole organisation that is still regarded by government agencies as representative of the 'Spanish speaking' communities in South Australia.

The promotion of the 'community' is still one of the main official goals of the organisation. And yet, almost eight years after its establishment; there is still no clear definition of the 'community', its needs and means for achieving such a goal. This is why 'community development' is often translated as the desire to create socio-cultural and mainly 'Latin American' activities and representations. On a daily basis, however, the *Federation* operates as a provider of social support and referral services for Latin American and even some Spanish migrants. The various individuals who manage and run the *Federation* are by definition members and representatives of other organisations. Apart from the paid social worker and a project officer who are also Latin American, the organisation is run by volunteers and is totally dependent on government (Federal and State) grants for its existence.

As an ethnographic site the *Federation* was extremely important, as it was where the definition of the 'community' by the state and the desires and attempts for self-definition as a 'community' met. For various official institutions such as *Centrelink* or the *Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA)*, the *Federation* is regarded as living proof of the 'existence' of a 'Spanish speaking community' in Adelaide.¹⁷ However, like many umbrella organisations, the *Federation* is marked by constant struggles amongst various individuals, groups and organisations who try to influence and control the definition of the 'community'. To a certain degree the *Federation* is an 'independent ethnic organisation'; it is run by migrants from the local 'community' and the participants are those who decide whom to include and not to include as part of the 'community'. Yet what makes the

¹⁷ The name of the *Federation* adopts the term 'Spanish speaking' but as I mentioned before Spaniards were not part of the organisation at all, and the underlying assumption of the participants was that the *Federation* is a Latin American organisation.

Federation a place of various struggles is the way it became the only viable way for achieving governmental funds. The *Federation* adopts the official use of the term 'community' but, in part due to such a definition, it is a site of constant power struggles amongst various groups and individuals who do not necessarily see themselves as a single homogenised 'community'. Small flags from many of the countries of Latin America were placed in the reception area of the main office in order to symbolise that the federation was neither a 'Chilean' nor a 'Salvadoran' organisation.

Apart from the official goals and the political struggles within and outside the *Federation*, in its everyday activities the organisation's office operates as a meeting place, where people come to spend time and be with other *Latinos*. It is a gathering place where members from different nationalities meet for particular activities, such as free English lessons, to get advice and converse with each other. As part of establishing my ethnographic presence I became one of the volunteers in the organisation and participated in different groups and social activities that were organised by the *Federation* and the various organisations that it represented.

Another important ethnographic site, which I analyse in chapter four, is the 'Latin American' 'ethnic' radio-programs. During my fieldwork, there were three different local 'ethnic' programs, which, despite their rivalry, different style and content, were all operating under the same cultural logic. The three programs were *The Latin American Hour*, *Latin American Voices (Voces de Nuestra Tierra)* and *The Salvadoran Radio Program*. During fieldwork I worked as a volunteer on two of these programs: *Latin American Voices* which was closed down after it had operated for two years and the *Salvadoran Radio Program*. These local radio programs, each broadcasting for one hour a week, aimed to provide Latin American migrants in Adelaide with a means of communication and connection to what the participants saw as their 'culture' and their homelands. By playing 'their' music and broadcasting local community announcements and news items from Latin America, the programs were thought to function as virtual meeting places for a geographically and culturally diverse group of people. The ways the programs operated their content (that the volunteers regarded as 'important') and the various social struggles within the

programs themselves, were all part of the attempt to create a sense of belonging and to construct a local 'community'. In this sense, these radio programs, like the *Federation* and other organised social activities, provided an important cultural space that gave the volunteers and the audiences alike, an opportunity to take part in a weekly cultural performance of a local 'Latin American' identity.

In a similar fashion to the *Federation*, the radio programs were 'using' the cultural space provided by the policy of multiculturalism. They were operating within the 'ethnic' niche allocated to them by the policy 'allowing' them to maintain aspects of their 'culture' and to be regarded as members of an 'ethnic community'. Yet the practices themselves were not confined to such simplistic definitions. The various radio programs exposed tensions that existed between the participants' sense of identity and 'culture' (or rather their particular claim to, or experiences of, different Latin American, national and political identities) and the multicultural model of a homogenised 'ethnic community' from which the programs were operating.

As ethnographic sites, the two programs provided an opportunity to observe the use of media by Latin American migrants in constructing and performing their own sense of 'locality' and 'community' in relation to their homelands. Such practices work not only to problematise any simple assumption about a unified and homogenous 'ethnic / migrant community', but also provide an example of the ways media can operate in generating diasporic identities. It is interesting to note that the 'ethnic' media 'consumed' by the migrants is not limited to the local radio or even the 'state' ethnic media. There are at least three private services which rent out videos of television programs and Latin American *Telenovelas* (mainly from Chile but also private copies of programs from Univisión a giant television corporation co-owned by U.S. investors Televisa of Mexico and Venvisión of Venezuela which is watched in eighteen Latin American countries, Canada and the U.S.). Furthermore, a few months after my fieldwork finished (end of 1999), a private cable TV company arrived offering residents in Adelaide access to 24 hours of *Canal-7* in Chile. The Internet is also used and is central for the reading and downloading of the daily newspapers that were often read on the local radio programs.

Numerous other social activities, such as weekly sports events and *fiestas* (parties), discussed in chapter three, were also of ethnographic significance. *Fiestas* played a major role in providing a sense of 'community' and were essential for generating and fortifying social networks. The *fiestas*, which were normally seen as family activities, were central in creating the communal gatherings of an alternative social environment. As such, more than the radio programs or the various Latin American organisations, the *fiestas* were the most significant social events that symbolically demonstrated the 'community' to itself. As sites of multiple cultural performances the *fiestas* were the main public forms of the embodiments of 'culture' whereby participants saw the consumption of 'typical' food and the performance of 'Latin' music and dance as expressions of a *Latino* 'identity'. Theoretically speaking, the *fiestas* should not be seen as the *result* of a prior 'Latin American' cultural identity, but rather as one of the main sites whereby such an identity, while being performed and exhibited, is being constructed (Fortier, 1999:43). During fieldwork there were also few nightclubs in Adelaide that held weekly 'Latin nights' where local Latin American musicians often performed. Such events were distinguished from the communal *fiestas*, and while attended by many *Latinos*, were usually promoted for non-*Latinos* as an opportunity to experience Latin American rhythm and 'culture'.

Another set of ethnographic sites consisted of organised cultural representations of the 'Latin Americans' for the gaze of 'outsiders'. Such events took place at multicultural festivals in which the 'Latin American community' or various 'Latin American' dance groups or individual performers represented aspects of their 'culture'. Similar representations of culture were conducted at multicultural days in schools and 'Latin American cultural nights' or 'Latin American' festivals that were organised by various organisations. Some of these cultural nights celebrated or commemorated the work of a famous writer or a Latin American artist, other events were constructed as representations of the 'Latin American community' or 'Latin American culture'. Like the communal *fiestas*, these events took place in various settings and depicted alternative cultural representations of particular 'social groups' within the generic category of the 'Latin American'. After the arrest of General Augusto Pinochet in London, for example, a cultural night was organised by a Chilean political group that included an exhibition and a screening of a film about the military coup in Chile. In

chapter five I deal with one such 'cultural exhibition' that was held at the State Library. The exhibition *Expression of Latin America* is analysed as an example of a (multicultural) setting in which such representations of 'culture' and the 'community' take place.

Other types of social gatherings, which are in a way similar to the *fiestas*, are the weekly soccer matches and the religious activities. During fieldwork there were two Salvadoran soccer clubs, a Chilean soccer club, one mixed 'Latin American' soccer team and an *Italo-Argentino* soccer club. All of these teams are part of the amateur soccer league and play more or less every Sunday. As these events were central to the sense of the community, I joined one of the Salvadoran teams and attended most of the matches and training sessions. Not all the players in the teams are from the particular nationalities the teams identify with, or even from Latin America. Nevertheless the teams, apart from 'World United' the official mixed one, were considered to contain a particular national identity i.e. 'Salvadoran' and 'Chilean'.

The soccer matches, much like the *fiestas*, were always accompanied by food stalls and Latin American music. The weekly matches operated as a meeting place for family members and friends. Symbolically, the teams and the weekly events themselves functioned within a cultural framework that brought together the local 'community', the homeland and complex notions of cultural and gender identities. The local teams were often named after famous soccer teams in the homeland such as *Aguila*, or after a particular national identity such as El Salvador, this created a direct link to 'elsewhere'. In this sense the entire sports event, like the *fiestas*, could be considered as a performance of particular identities and sites for exchanging social information and gossip in the construction of local social networks. I chose, however, not to write specifically about the soccer teams because I believe that these social groups and the weekly matches were in a way similar to the cultural logic of the *fiestas*, which I deal with in the third chapter. Furthermore, I felt that I could not study in depth the complex relationship between the players and amongst the various soccer teams within the scope of my fieldwork.¹⁸

¹⁸ These various sports clubs were not represented at the *Federation* and were each in a way a complex 'field' in its own right. In contrast to the Radio programs or the *Federation* these clubs focused on playing soccer and normally had no claim to represent the 'community'.

Religious gatherings are clearly other examples of such important sites that involved the construction of a 'community' and various performances of identity. However, in contrast to the various social clubs and soccer matches that are in a way 'similar' to each other, the religious activities demonstrated a diversity that was beyond my ability as a single researcher to investigate. In contrast to any stereotypical image of Latin Americans as devout Catholics, the present situation in Adelaide, and probably in Latin America, reveals a complex field of rival religious institutions. While most of the Latin Americans would define themselves as Catholic, only a very small number attended the weekly Church services. Furthermore, some migrants preferred to attend their local 'Australian' Church and as such did not participate in the 'Spanish speaking' services. I met, for example, a migrant who, despite being highly involved in various 'community' organisations, told me that her 'community' is the local Church which she attends rather than the 'Latin American community'. Other religious organisations such as Pentecostal, Evangelist Churches, Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons conducted services in Spanish and had their own small religious groupings of Latin Americans. Each of these organisations had relatively small numbers of Latin American attendants, but together they probably had as many members as the 'Spanish speaking' Catholic Church.

While I do recognise the importance of religious practices and beliefs to some of the issues that I deal with in my own work, I feel that such sites should be studied separately from the other institutions and social events of which I was a part. Religious practices and 'religious communities' pose an interesting and under-researched aspect of multiculturalism. This may be due to the fact that 'religion' often crosses 'ethnic' and 'racial' lines and cannot, therefore, be easily framed in the mosaic image of the nation. Yet, even in my own research setting, it seems that these various religious institutions were operating in a different social field from the one that I was studying. For example, there was no representation of any religious organisations at the *Federation*, and at least some of these organisations (especially the Evangelists) were deliberately marginalised and ignored by non-members of these Churches. For example, the organising committee of *Festival Latino 2000*, who aimed to represent the local 'community' and its 'culture', decided not to let any religious group (and in particular Evangelist Christians who wanted to promote their Churches during the

event) to have a stall or be part of the Festival. Such a decision was taken mainly because 'religion' like 'politics' was seen as divisive to the 'Latin American community'. In contrast, the Catholic Church that had a claim to speak as the 'community' (in organising annual solidarity *fiestas* or in depicting itself as a 'Spanish speaking' Church) also avoided any type of involvement with the non-religious aspects of the 'community' life. The Church was not represented at the *Federation* and was regarded by other Latin Americans as a 'community' in its own right. Such a position helped the Church to present itself as a common denominator or as an organisation which is above the multiple social divisions amongst the *Latinos*. While effective to a degree, such a position marginalised the role of the Church in the daily life of the 'community' and marked the people who attended the Church regularly, like the members of the other organised religious activities, as consisting of separate 'communities'.

An Informant Question: 'Is your study only about us the Salvadorans or is it about all the Latinos?'

Early in my fieldwork I realised that not only was there no one clear geographical location or place that can be described as the 'community', but that the term *la comunidad* was used by, and meant different things for different groups and individuals. Furthermore, while some people did attempt to formally organise themselves into a 'community' and to construct various forms of collective 'Latin American' spaces based upon their shared language, historical, cultural, national and even political aspects, such a process was never a simple one.

State multiculturalism, as I explain in the next chapter, totally ignores or renders such a complexity 'unimportant' in targeting and framing these diverse groups of migrants and refugees as 'language' based or 'ethnic communities'. For insiders, however, the notion of a 'Latin American community' is a highly contested category. It signifies various conflicts and multiple divisions rather than a clearly defined collectivity. As a general framework, the 'Latin American community' included various groups and individuals, often at variance with each other over particular understandings of political, religious, social and national identities. Thus, the numerous social activities and the various 'ethnic' and social organisations, as well as many other cultural

performances and self-representations amongst the *Latinos*, are part of a complex social milieu of fragmented and often competing social forces that shape the construction and negotiation of the 'community'.

The term 'Latin American' is by definition a generic term. It stands for people who come from 25 different countries, which are linguistically, racially, economically and culturally diverse. Historically, the notion of a separate 'Latin American identity' emerged during the period of state formation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when separate national identities were developed in South and Central America. Such an identity emerged mainly as part of a cultural and political struggle against the United States and was presented by the 'Latin American' intelligentsia as an identity that opposed the materialism of North America. During the 1960s the idea of the 'Third World' gave the category 'Latin America' a new definition. It was no longer based on similar 'Latin' characteristics, but rather an 'identity' that was understood to be part of a 'formerly colonised world attempting to throw off the cultural effects of conquest and enslavement' (Franco, 1997:268). The military governments in Central and South America which came to power during the late 1960s and early 1970s and the vicious underside of national identity made so obvious by those regimes made the idea of the separate nation-state no longer the preferable form of collective identity. It is in this context that the category 'Latin American' is currently seen by many as an alternative to narrow national identities. The relatively recent redemocratisation process in South America, the ending of civil war in Central America and the Zapatista challenge to the institutional party in Mexico, mark new ways of thinking about (trans)national identity within 'Latin' America.

The very notion of collective identity becomes more arduous given that anti-foundational thinking makes both identity and identification precarious so that the notion of homogenised Other to be reclaimed or excluded can no longer be entertained (Franco, 1997:270).

There is no doubt that these fundamental political and ideological developments in 'Latin America' have some influence on the large 'Latin American' diaspora across the world. However, the current notion of a global '*Latino* culture' is influenced mainly by what is happening in the United States. In fact many popular cultural products such as *Salsa* music and dance, which are consumed globally as 'Latin

American', originate and are produced in the United States. Within the U.S. there is a distinction between terms such as *Latinos*, *Latin Americans*, *Hispanics* and more particular terms such as *Nuyoricans* (Puerto Ricans born in New York), *Neoricans* (for Puerto Ricans who live in other regions of the U.S.A.) or *Chicanos* (Mexicans and their descendants who live in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas). To a certain degree, the U.S. *Latino* is a political term that categorises these particular groups as 'people of colour' and as such stands mainly for a local 'minority' culture. In contrast, the term 'Latin Americans', within the U.S. context, is used in reference to people who live in or migrated from Latin America and as such have, apart from their sense of being 'Latin American', a particular sense of national identity.¹⁹ The third term, 'Hispanic', which at times operates as another pan-ethnic term similar to *Latino*, has within the U.S. racial context another meaning, where it stands for the 'European' Spanish roots of people who consider themselves, in contrast to the *Latinos*, to be 'Whites'.²⁰

Mato (1998:598) has examined the multiple cultural contexts in the U.S. that produce the image of the *Latino* as an 'all-encompassing transnational identity'. In particular there are numerous new cultural materials and images that act as the foundation of what Mato defines as 'US Latina/o "Latin" — American identity'.²¹ Such images, he argues, are part of an attempt to create an 'imagined transnational community' which promotes a new 'extended racial and transnational identity' (Mato, 1998:600). The

¹⁹ In order to transcend such distinctions there are constantly new definitions that attempt to be more inclusive, such as *Americanos* or *Latin/o American* to mention only a few. See for example Taylor and Villegas (eds), (1994).

²⁰ Villegas (1994) brings this account in his attempt to make sense of the complexities of such categorisations within the U.S. context:

Some years ago I founded the Irvine Chicano Literary Contest. At that time (1974), I invited several scholars working on topics related to 'Hispanics' in the United States to discuss the name of the contest. They all were professors at the University of California, Irvine. After extensive discussion the conclusion was that 'Chicano' was the only term available at the time to describe the contest's potential audiences and, from their point of view, the only politically correct means of labeling the contest. At the time, according to those I consulted, 'Latino' was considered a derogatory term.

Later on as, Villegas describes, despite the many negative associations of the term 'Latino' in American culture, it is this category that turns into the official definition of the 'multiplicity of cultures within the traditional totalising umbrella of "Hispanics"', when several Universities establish 'Chicano / Latino studies program'.

²¹ All such definitions are highly politicised within the U.S. This is, for example, how Mato explains the way he is using such terminologies: 'I use the word 'America' to name the whole continental mass, the word United States or its abbreviated expression 'the US', to name this particular country, and the abbreviated adjective 'US' to identify individuals, institutions or phenomena based on or taking place in this country' (1998:607).

new image of the *Latino* as *raza unida* — ‘united race’, ‘... highlights assumed similarities while obscuring presumed differences that at times may become more or less significant’ (Mato, 1998:602).²² As such, the U.S. category of the *Latino* is different from the notion of ‘Latin American’ identity as it was historically developed within ‘Latin’ America.

Note that this latter transnational [Latino] identity, which is the focus of our present discussion, is mainly advanced by a wide range of non-governmental subjects and should not be confused with the ‘pan-national’ case promoted by ‘Latin’ American governments, although both have their common roots in the nineteenth-century *Latinoamericanismo*, and overlapping and mutual influences among them must also be recognised (Mato 1998:611).

Many of the ‘Latin American’ migrants and refugees in Australia could have easily found themselves living in the U.S.²³ and becoming part of such complex racial categorisations. Yet, different racial and historical distinctions within Australia mean that many of the U.S. meanings and categories do not translate directly to the Australian context.

Local ‘Latin American’ migrants and refugees often use the term *Latinos* as self-references to what they define as *la comunidad en general* — ‘the community in general’ or as a reference to their collective but diverse ‘cultural identity’. The category *Latino* is clearly evident in many of the cultural products and images that originate in the U.S. and are consumed locally as part of ‘identity markers’ of ‘Latin’ ‘culture’. Claudia, a Latin American teenager from Adelaide took the 11-hour bus ride to Melbourne, along with many other local Latin Americans, to see the concert of *Proyecto Uno (P1)* a U.S. based popular Latin band. This is how she described to me her experiences of the concert and the performances of the popular song *Latinos*.

Everyone was really surprised at the end when P1 said thanks and blah blah blah and walked off the stage without singing Latinos and the crowd just went crazy and we were all screaming LATINOS and banging on the chair and jumping up and down until the floor of the theatre caved in and they came back out and sang the song and we all shook our bodies, raised the roof and burned the floor.

²² Mato (1998) begins his paper with a quotation of the lyrics of the song ‘Plástico’ by Rubén Blades, which talks about the *Latinos* as a *raza unida* – ‘united race’.

²³ It is common for many Latin Americans and in particular El Salvadoran migrants and refugees in Australia to have family members living in the U.S. and Canada as well as in many other countries.

Yet, in its local context the term *Latino* loses many of its 'racial' and 'political' contexts of the U.S. and is often used as synonymous with the notion of 'Latin Americans', which is largely seen as the preferable generic 'ethnic' and 'cultural' category of the 'community'.

Interestingly some migrants, mainly political refugees from Chile, did adopt the category 'Latin American' as a cultural and political footing for an anti-colonial framework. As 'Latin Americans' they often made a direct link between 'our struggles' against the United States and global capitalism 'back home', and the particular social and political struggles that they identified with in the Australian context.²⁴ These struggles included resistance to global neo-liberalism, racism, and support for the reconciliation process and the political struggle for Native-Title land rights in Australia. Many of the local Latin American public activities, which were organised by individuals and organisations who adopted such a political perspective, often included Aboriginal performers and were usually opened with a symbolic acknowledgment that Adelaide is on *Kaurna* land.²⁵

These affiliations are interesting because apart from challenging any homogenous view of the 'migrant community', they also challenge the way official multiculturalism distinguishes between issues regarding 'migrants' and those regarding indigenous rights in Australia.²⁶ Langer (1998:173) found an equivalent affiliation with indigeness amongst Salvadoran refugees in Melbourne, which she explains as part of the 'globalisation' strategies of human-rights agencies, religious and environmental organisations, who 'call out' the Salvadorans as 'indigenous' and 'ethnic' subjects. Such a construction is one of many other possibilities that 'call out' a particular 'specificity' of the Salvadorans who can then be mobilised within

²⁴ There are 'political' organisations such as CISLAC ('Committees In Solidarity with Latin America and the Caribbean'), an Australian volunteer organisation that was established in 1979 in support of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua, which are concerned and committed to the political struggle within Latin America. However, CISLAC had no claim to represent the 'community' and as such was not part of the local 'Latin American' groupings and associations.

²⁵ *Kaurna* is the name of the Aboriginal people who, prior to the arrival of White settlers, lived on the Adelaide plains.

²⁶ See for example a paper by Peter Read in regards to migrants as 'the third side of the triangle' (1997:87). Read points to the way that the 'migrants' were left out of the debate about Native Title and indigenous issues in Australia. Important as it is, Read's initial study does not problematise enough the diversity amongst and within various migrant groups in relation to such complex issues.

different sites by various (global) organisations, who Langer describes as 'identity brokers'.²⁷

... interventions on behalf of oppressed and dispossessed minorities are generative as much as defensive, articulating and maintaining cultural boundaries that might otherwise be submerged, and constructing networks of 'solidarity' that might otherwise be submerged, and constructing between groups with no prior history of common cause (Langer, 1998:173).

Yet, despite the presence of such affiliations, during my fieldwork the generic term 'Latin American community' was somehow separated from any particular 'political' definition. The 'political' and 'indigenous' specificity of the 'Latin Americans' was seen as one of the many other possible groupings that at times were included but at other times were excluded from the general category of the 'community'. Particular groups and individuals who claimed and struggled to represent the 'community' often regarded such 'political' specificities to be something that ought to be separated from the larger and non-political, 'ethnic / cultural' category of the 'Latin American community'. The Spanish adjective *'los politicos'* was used mainly amongst Chilean immigrants as a derogatory term when describing those Chileans and other Latin Americans who were identified as people from the political left.

For most participants the term 'Latin American community' implied that there are various individuals, social groups and different organisations who perceive themselves to be different from each other whilst still regarding themselves to be part of a larger collective. The term *La comunidad Latina* or simply *Latinos* was often used when referring to a collective identity that is different from the particular national identity of the speaker. In other words, the definition 'Latin American' was never an 'individualised' self-definition but was rather seen as a definition that emerged from the collection of various distinctive national identities. This is how Monica, a young Uruguayan woman in Adelaide, explained it to me:

Do I see myself as Uruguayan or Latin? That is a pretty good question but I consider myself to be 100% Uruguayan and because Uruguay is in South America that makes me Latina. The difference in the terms is when I say I'm Uruguayan its saying that I'm from Uruguay the country but when I say I'm

²⁷ It is interesting to note that in contrast to Langer's (1998) findings in Melbourne, in Adelaide it was mainly Chilean political refugees and not Salvadorans who participated in events that depicted them as 'indigenous'. Many of the Salvadorans in Adelaide do not see themselves as 'political' and as such avoided any political construction of themselves including their assumed 'indigeneity'.

Latina that is more like saying I am from South America and South and Central America united as one is what we call Latinos. And to tell you the truth there aren't many people who actually know where Uruguay is and if they do know it's because of the soccer which is a shame 'cos it's about more than that.

We can see how the adoption of the term 'Latin American' or *Latina* is related to the 'new' place where people don't know where you are from. These collective definitions need to be contextualised as the category 'Latin American' cannot stand for clear 'taken for granted' cultural attributes, furthermore, due to immigration and the diasporic condition, being 'Latin American' gains new meanings for these migrants. Such collective categorisations need to be understood in light of the particular conditions, social distinctions and different life circumstances, as well as in relation to ongoing contacts with the homelands, which these migrants inhabit.

Reflecting on his personal experience as a migrant, Daniel Mato writes about the way *salsa* music in the U.S. and across Latin America, emerges from, but also helps to generate feelings of connections to an 'identity' which, despite its cultural diversity, attests to a '*Latino* unity'.

I once heard that for us the so-called Latin Americans, 'Latin' America became a reality because of the multiple exiles and economic migrations in the 1970s that came together in Mexico and Venezuela 'Latin' Americans from diverse latitudes. I have personally experienced this phenomenon. Reflection on it was pervasive among groups of exiled or simply migrated 'Latin' Americans in Venezuela, where I have lived since I left Argentina, where I grew up. I have more recently become acquainted with the argument of some Latina/o intellectuals that *salsa* is an expression of the 'Latinos' amalgamating experience in the United States — closely associated to their common experience of racism — and their permanent relations with their countries of origin (Padilla, 1989). The making of such a 'Latino' identity in the United States has not been a process free of differences and conflicts. It has sometimes been contested and at other times helped by the making of more particularistic identities and social movements, most notably those of Chicanos and Puerto Ricans (Mato, 1998:613).

In this sense, *being* 'Latin American' in Australia, although different from the *Latino* identity in the United States, is constructed in new and different ways from any previous sense of a 'Latin American' identity. This does not mean that the historical sedimentation of these terms, as well as their present evolution in 'Latin America' and in other parts of the world, are not relevant to the 'local' context. On the contrary, it is

obvious that the various notions of 'Latin American identity', as well as more particular national identities, which are part of a local / global '*Latino* pan-national identity', are highly relevant for the 'present' life of these migrants. The term 'Latin American' may obviously mean different things within different contexts. For example when a cultural exhibition was presented at the State Library, it was called 'Expressions of Latin America' and was offered as an opportunity for Latin American artists to express 'their pride in creating a new place for their culture and works in multicultural South Australia'. Such 'official' uses of the category 'Latin American' is obviously quite different from the 'everyday' uses of the term.²⁸ The construction of communal 'Latin American' spaces, while being locally debated, is part of a complex process of cultural negotiations that form the particular histories, and the political processes in 'Latin America', the U.S. and the ideological, historical and political contexts in Australia.

It is due to such social dynamics that it is possible to argue that the notions and experiences of 'Latin American' 'culture' and 'identity' will be different for various *Latino* groups across the world, but also amongst various cities in Australia. There is no doubt that there are some similarities between the way 'Latin Americans' see themselves in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, mainly as they are all exposed to similar state ideologies and policies. Yet it is also clear that the actual experiences and understanding of the 'community' may be very different. There are numerous structural factors (such as the numbers, places of origins of the various groups of migrants and their different life conditions in each of these cities) and many other 'subjective' interpretations and particular social relationships that influence the level of organisation and the sense or 'feeling' of 'community'.

To a certain degree, the local notion of a 'Latin American community' is political as it promotes a sense of an 'ethnic community'. As with other minority groups, 'The claim of belonging to a community is often a moment of empowerment, and marks a desire to be heard. It is part of the "struggle to come into representation", and reflects concern to identify the experience of marginalisation as something shared with others'

²⁸ Chapter five explores many other aspects and assumptions about the 'Latin Americans' that were evident in this particular exhibition.

(Hall, 1988:27-31, cited in Thomas 1999:15). However, such a 'local' political aspect, including (as mentioned above) the interpretation of the term 'Latin American' as an opposition to capitalism and U.S. domination, is only one aspect of the internal struggle to construct the local 'community'.

In Adelaide the struggle over the 'political' aspect of 'Latino / Latin America', even when not articulated in these words, was conducted between those who considered themselves and were marked by others as 'political' (mainly Chilean political refugees²⁹) and those (mainly Salvadorans and others) for whom the term 'Latin American community' operated as an inclusive ethnic / cultural category devoid of political underpinnings. For those who promoted the 'inclusive' ethnic image, the 'community' aimed at representing various groups and different national identities. Langer (1998:165) found similar tensions amongst Salvadoran refugees in Melbourne. Such tensions, Langer explains, result from the difference between 'ethnicity' and 'history'. Being 'political' is indicative of the desire to remain part of the history of the place of origin, while the 'fiction' of ethnicity (as it is constructed by official multiculturalism) is about rejecting such a 'history' and adopting a popular definition of being an 'ethnic' in Australia that is defined as the new 'home'.

Many representations of the 'community' and its 'culture' were intended for the gaze of those commonly regarded as *los Australianos* (i.e. the Anglo Celtic Australians). Yet, any claims or attempts by individuals and different groups to *speak as* the 'Latin American community' were always challenged and contested. Within different organisations and communal events, such as the *fiestas* and multicultural festivals, such representations were either openly or covertly disputed and participants often expressed the feeling that '*our community* is highly divided'.

At the same time it seems that in its local context, the general category *Latino* is also used for the definition of particular national identities. Nationality was always the first social distinction and the most notable one at any level of social interaction amongst individuals and social organisations. Due to different accents in Spanish and the

²⁹ This category is also misleading as there were also divisions amongst the Chilean political refugees themselves, mainly according to the different political parties that they identified with in Chile.

particular use of the language, as well as other perceived differences, for most Latin Americans it is not hard to recognise almost immediately if the speaker is a Salvadoran, Chilean or from another country in Latin America.³⁰ As such, in the local context, the generic collectivity actually facilitates the presentation of the separate national identities that it incorporates. The different 'nationalities' within the generic 'Latin American' category are depicted as homogenous entities that do not contain differences. Verbal references to *La comunidad en general* — the community in general — were normally made in contrast to the separate national 'communities' (mainly *La comunidad Chilena*, and *La comunidad Savadoreña*), which were presented by participants as separate and clearly defined entities.

Doing Fieldwork Amongst the 'Latinos'

I am attending a meeting at the Federation. I am one of the volunteers in a group of Latin American migrants (mainly Chileans but also some Salvadorans) who want to produce a short informative film in Spanish about the Equal Opportunity Act. This is our third meeting and we are discussing some of the ideas that should be in the film. There is a new face at the meeting today. His name is Roberto.³¹ He is a photographer and he arrived in Adelaide a few months ago. He heard on the local Latin American radio program about the film and came to offer his help. This is, as he tells us, his first contact 'con la comunidad' ('with the community').

'De que nacionalidades son? Roberto asks. 'We are from everywhere, 'de todo' Camila answers: 'Chileans, El Salvadorans, Puertoricans, Peruvians, Venezuelans and even one person from Cuba. 'Where are you from?' She asks. 'I am from Ecuador' Roberto replies. 'But you don't speak like an Ecuadorean. You do not have an Ecuadorean accent' Camila says. 'Well, in Ecuador we all have different accents, people from the coast speak differently from those in Quito. But maybe it is also because I left Ecuador a very long time ago, over 25 years ago. I lived in Venezuela, the United States, Switzerland, and for the last 10 years in Sydney.' 'So what made you come here to Adelaide?' someone asks, jokingly. 'Sydney is not what it used to be, it is too cosmopolitan, and there is too much crime around, especially from Asian gangs. There are just too many of them.' Adriana tries to 'defend' the Asians, 'I don't know what it is like in Sydney but here the Asians are doing really well, they are always the best students in the schools and many of them go to Uni'. Roberto hears the remark but continues: 'When we first moved to Sydney we could leave the window open and nothing would happen, today it is different. Four Asians attacked a friend of mine after he refused to buy drugs from them; it is getting really bad there. Believe me you are lucky here

³⁰ Language obviously marks many other social distinctions and complex relations of power as Bourdieu's work clearly indicates. Langer (1998), as mentioned above, points to such distinctions when criticising the generic categorisation of the 'language community' that ignores the power relations and discrimination, which are operating through language.

³¹ All names used in the thesis are pseudonyms in order to protect the privacy of the people that I met during fieldwork.

in Adelaide, it is also much cheaper to live here. My house that cost me here \$150,000 would cost in Sydney \$350,000. Public transport is also much cheaper here'.

Maybe because of the Asians that were mentioned, the conversation moves to a direct discussion of multiculturalism. Roberto speaks about China. For him China is an example of a multicultural society which, as he tells us, can never work. 'There is a serious problem in China with all the different ethnic groups they've got there, they all want autonomy from the government. For example there is Jewish autonomy in north China and the Muslims want autonomy as well but the Jews have, of course, more power and money than the Muslims', Roberto says and laughs. As a newcomer Roberto doesn't know that I am an Israeli and not Latin American. There is a sudden silence in the room and they all look at me. I am not really offended, after all this is not the first time that I have heard the infamous connection that is made between Jews and money, I am however a little bit surprised especially in the way it was constructed this time in relation to Jewish autonomy in China. 'Are you Jewish?' Roberto asks rapidly. 'Yes' I reply, 'I am from Israel and I am Jewish.' 'A Jew that can speak Spanish?' he asks a little surprised. He obviously cannot understand what I am doing amongst the Latinos. 'Yes' I say, 'and I am not the only one, you know, there are many Jews who can speak Spanish'. 'So are you a Sefaradita?' Roberto continues. He is referring to the old Sefardi (Spanish) Jews who were expelled from Spain 500 hundreds years ago. 'Yes I am a Sefardi but that is not why I can speak Spanish. I was born in Israel and learned to speak Spanish when I travelled in South America. I can also assure you that not all the Jews are rich and powerful, and that there are many different kinds of Jewish people in Israel and around the world — we are not all the same, you know.' 'Yes, but tell me is it true that the religious people control your government in Israel?' 'Well, it is not that simple. There is a coalition government and different parties have the balance of power, it is all part of the political game'. Roberto uses my reply to shift the conversation to another subject. 'Yes it is all politics. You know what will happen if they arrest all the criminals in Latin America? There will be no one left to govern.' Everyone laughs.

This extract from my field diaries raises some important issues in relation to the practice of fieldwork and my own position within the particular field that I studied. Being 'from another place' meant that I shared with the people I met some sense of 'otherness' from the dominant Anglo-Celtic Australian culture. I, like my subjects, could relate to a similar experience of being 'out of place' and far away from home. At the same time this short ethnographic description, as incidental as it is, reveals something important about my position within the field as an outsider to the people that I studied.

I never saw Roberto again, and had no further opportunity to try and make sense of the way he came to see his own 'identity' and his participation within the 'community'. Yet, his reaction to me being Jewish and an Israeli was somewhat

typical. I was always seen as an outsider, not only as a person from another 'culture', but also as someone from a group that always evoked the image of the rich Jew. My presence, at least for those who met me for the first time, was always surprising. It always evoked, amongst other reactions, theological discussions about Judaism, Christianity and Israel. And because images of Israel are frequently in the news I often found myself talking about the political and historical situations of modern and biblical Israel.

As the description above illustrates, my *otherness* was understood mainly in terms of my own historical and cultural-religious context. Being an outsider meant that in one way or another I had no 'natural' reason to be part of their social field. This aspect was conveyed to me often through jokes when people referred to me as a spy of the community, and in stressing my Israeli background, as a *Mossad* (Israeli secret services) agent. Roberto, like many other migrants who I met, was surprised to find me (an anthropologist, but also an Israeli and a Jew) in a place that you would normally expect to meet people like 'yourself'. At the same time my position as an 'other' amongst 'others', meant that my relationships and participation with the 'community' were often understood as part of the Australian multicultural experience; part of the everyday life in Australia, where people from different cultures meet on a daily basis. For this reason I was often referred to, as *el israelita*, an Israeli or a Jewish person, and not as *el antropologo*.³²

My lack of knowledge of the particular social conditions of migrants' lives in South Australia and being a recent arrival myself had both positive and negative aspects. My unfamiliarity with the Australian context and my limited experiences of the countries of origin in Latin America had undoubtedly limited my ability to notice and understand many of the nuances and social particularities in the life of the people that I studied. Nevertheless, my otherness gave me a possibility to 'see' and question many of the events and social interactions that I was taking part in and that I have often experienced as new and strange. As a young person I had travelled extensively across various countries in South America. In regard to some of these migrants (mainly

³² At times I was also teasingly regarded as 'el turko' (The Turkish) which is used across Latin America as a derogatory term for Arabs and other Middle Eastern looking people.

Chileans) I felt, therefore, that I had some experience of their countries of origin. Yet, I have never been to Central America and as such learnt about El Salvador mainly from the migrants and refugees that I met during fieldwork. In regard to other complex life experiences of some Latin American migrants and refugees, most notably torture and the 'culture of terror' that were impossible for me to 'understand', I always tried to listen, acknowledging to those who shared with me such stories, my inability to 'make sense' of their horrendous experiences (Taussing, 1992:135). At the same time, as a person who comes from a totally different place, I myself was a source of interest and was seen as an 'exotic' other. The anthropological gaze was often directed towards me when people were trying to learn 'where I come from' and 'how different life in Australia is from life in Israel'.³³ This particular duality enabled me to 'be part' of the social world I shared with the subjects of my study, whilst simultaneously reflecting upon it.

The main methodology I employed when studying *Latinoscapes* was based on participant observation. This means that I obtained most of my data from the long hours that I spent in various locations and amongst different individuals and groups who during fieldwork, were part of these fluid social networks. 'The important thing about the anthropologist's findings is their complex specificness, their circumstantiality' (Geertz, 1973:23). Participant observation, while limited in a sense, is a powerful methodology in grounding abstractions such as 'community', 'cultural identity', 'ethnicity' and other such contested sociological terminologies, to specific situations. Furthermore, the anthropological study of the life experiences of different groups of migrants can also problematise the general category of the 'migrant' or the 'ethnic' which is assumed to encompass all people who are officially regarded as 'migrants' by the state.

Fieldwork experience is also about the complex relationships that exist between researchers and their subjects. In a sense I was a migrant amongst migrants. Yet, my distinctiveness from the subjects of my study was not only due to our different socio-linguistic and cultural backgrounds but also to the way we ended up in Australia. Such

³³ I was interviewed about my work in *Noticias y Deportes* a Spanish newspaper which has a section about the 'Spanish Speaking-Latin American community' in Adelaide, under the title 'Eres Latino?' which is a play of words on my name and the Spanish verb *Eres*. *Eres Latino*, means 'You are Latin'.

a distinction is very important. Many of the people whom I met during fieldwork came to Australia as refugees due to political persecutions or economic hardships in Latin America. The particular history and circumstances of arrival in Australia is important for understanding the micro level experiences of displacement in the new homeland. 'Being from another place', however, meant that my fieldwork, which was conducted in what is generally defined as the 'west', cannot be easily categorised as part of the anthropologists' tendency to conduct work within their own societies. Doing fieldwork in Adelaide was not for me what is often called 'anthropology at home'.

La falta de confianza (a lack of confidence) and *envidia* (jealousy) were common complaints made by Latin Americans when describing their social relationships and the 'community'. Those who promoted the view of the *Latinos* as members of a unified 'community' regarded these issues, as the two main problems which prevented them from working together. Under these circumstances and from an ethical and moral perspective, I found it most useful to be very clear about my own interest in participating in the 'community'. My position as an outsider enabled me to move between various groups and social networks that were often hostile to each other. On the other hand, in some cases people chose to talk to me knowing that I also spoke to, and was involved with their rival groups. My involvement and participation in various social groups and the mutual trust and the personal relationships which I established with the participants in these various social networks proved to be highly informative.

The anthropological practice of writing about 'communities', 'societies' or 'nations' is usually based on methodological involvement with individuals. Clearly the 'individual' is also a culturally problematic concept that can not be assumed to exist as a given or in separation from the larger cultural settings which produced it. Anthony Cohen problematises this aspect in relation to his own practice as an anthropologist, realising that he was always engaged with 'individuals' while he 'wrote' about 'communities' and 'cultures'.

I was nevertheless dealing ethnographically with individuals, whose engagement with each other was problematic and fraught with misunderstanding, and who were reserved about their own generalisations

into 'societies' or 'communities' or 'cultures' in ways which anthropologists seemed insensitive (1994:X).

This is another good reason for not using the term 'community' in a non-problematic manner in describing the locations of my fieldwork. However, most of the individuals I met as an ethnographer shared with me some form of 'coming together' in what was constructed as part of the 'Latin American community'. The various forms of my participation and the rapport established with different individuals within different types of social events generated a special way of interacting which provided me in a limited way *some* sense of the experiences and 'knowledge' of an 'insider'.

The Structure of the Thesis

The next chapter will provide a general theoretical mapping of the issues that my fieldwork aimed to explore. It contextualises the category of the 'Latin American community' as a relevant and interesting 'case study' in the context of the theoretical questions that I focus on. The term 'community' is explained in relation to official multicultural discourse in Australia that is very different from the fragmented social field and constant social struggles regarding the 'community' boundaries and various possible definitions. The chapter moves away from the particular framework of the local Latin American social worlds in order to explore and problematise the different historical and theoretical language that constructs the category of the 'migrant / ethnic community'. Such official categorisations shape and frame the various organisations and self-definitions that these particular groups of migrants are part of.

The following chapters present and explore in greater detail the different social fields of *Latinos* living in Adelaide. Each chapter explores various sites in relation to the idea of the 'community' and the official policy of multiculturalism. These various ethnographic sites are viewed in relation to a particular theme that the chapter problematises.

The third chapter looks at the local *fiestas* as particular forms of communal gatherings and cultural performances. It explains the *fiestas* as one of the main sites that produce the experience of the local 'community' in relation to the migratory multiplicity of

places. The *fiestas* are sites that produce a sense of a 'community' but also demonstrate the struggle over various definitions and 'identities' that produce boundaries and express the claim by various groups and individuals to represent the 'community.' Due to the lack of a neighbourhood or single geographical location of the 'community' the *fiestas* are cultural performances that need to be understood in relation to the migratory 'construction of locality'. Such performances provide the 'Latin Americans', and their various other self-definitions (national, political, religious) with the experience of 'locality' and multiplicity of places that challenge the 'reification of culture' that are so typical in official multiculturalism performances of 'ethnicity'.

Chapter four looks at two different Latin American community-radio programs as sites that are operating from within the logic of official multiculturalism. Yet, the 'cultural space' that is 'given' to the programs also provides an opportunity to struggle over the right to represent the 'community'. To a large degree the two radio programs studied are different answers given to the migratory experience. While both programs are presented as 'ethnic' programs, their style of presentation and cultural content, as well as their diasporic goals challenge any such simplistic categorisation.

The fifth chapter explores the representation of 'culture' and the 'community' for the gaze of the 'Australian' outsiders. This chapter deals with a Latin American cultural exhibition at the State Library of South Australia and analyses the different readings the exhibition evoked from different visitors. I look at the need for the 'Latin American' to gain visibility as a 'cultural community' within official multiculturalism, which exoticises 'Latin Americans' as a source of cultural enrichment. The exhibition space and the remarks in the Visitors' Book present the various ways by which such representations are debated amongst Latin Americans and by those who regard these sorts of representations as a way of accumulating political power and symbolic capital within the 'community'. What makes the representation of the 'community' so important is the centrality that is given to the 'visibility of otherness' within official multiculturalism.

The sixth and final chapter presents the social positions of three different Chilean 'individuals'. These individuals, despite their sociological similarities, have nevertheless very different interpretations and experiences of the 'community'. All three have different relationships with what they regard as the 'community'. Yet, all three, despite their very different strategies, social positions and understandings of the 'community' share with each other a notion of the 'community' that they try to change, challenge or avoid altogether. The presentation of these social agencies problematises the idea of the 'community' as the 'natural' starting point in the attempts to understand migrants' lives in Australia, while it shows the centrality of the 'community' in relation but also in separation to the official policy of multiculturalism.

I conclude by returning to the key themes of the thesis in order to suggest further areas of research in regard to the notion of the migrant community and official multiculturalism. Greater sensitivity to the analytical and practical aspects of the migrant community is needed for understanding the migratory experience and the complexity of migrants' lives in Australia.

CHAPTER 2

STATE MULTICULTURALISM — A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

Before dealing with the particular life experiences and social worlds of the people I studied, I want to critically analyse the official multicultural discourse in Australia. Such contextualisation is essential because the 'expressions' of the 'community' that I observed and the 'ease' with which I could define myself as a researcher of an 'ethnic community', mean that this study has a direct relation to official multiculturalism. The policy provides the discursive space, social institutions and social definitions that those who are categorised as 'ethnics' or 'migrants' encounter and reinterpret while 'making' sense of their identities and lives in Australia.

My aim in this chapter is to frame the theoretical, intellectual and historical contexts from which questions about 'migration', 'community', 'culture' and 'ethnicity' in Australia emerge. These prominent terms are often used in official policies, multiple academic studies and by formal institutions and various migrant groups, in thinking, writing and developing policies regarding migrants in Australia. In a way as an official state policy, multiculturalism produces images and 'knowledge' that target and have an effect on 'all Australians'; however, because of the way it has developed and its latent assumption about 'identity' and 'culture', multiculturalism has a direct effect on the life experience of 'migrants'.

My discussion of official multiculturalism does not deal with specific policies and particular areas such as education or media that are affected by multicultural policies. Rather it is a critical reading of the multicultural rhetoric and images that highlights the gaps and tensions between the reified representations of the 'migrants' and their cultural 'communities', and the complex diverse experiences of Latin American migrants and their sense of 'community' and 'locality' in Adelaide. I will not, therefore, present in detail the specific socio-political history of multiculturalism in Australia, nor will I portray the numerous definitions or multiple debates which the term has generated in Australia and elsewhere since its introduction. Instead, I shall explore state multiculturalism as a dominant discourse that provides the language and

general background for any discussion regarding issues of immigration, identity and culture in Australia.

This chapter provides, therefore, an analysis of Australian multicultural discourses and practices. It deals with the ways in which official multiculturalism has been criticised for formulating a new state ideology that reifies 'cultures' and 'ethnicity', and it problematises such a reification by pointing to new theoretical developments within anthropology in regards to the migratory movement and diasporic experience.

The Construction of a Multicultural Nation

Multiculturalism has given us the chance to build a remarkable nation, with a distinctive and meaningful blend of cultures, assured in its relations with its neighbours and confident in the sense of its own history and identity (Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs [ACPEA], 1982).

A strongly expressed view in some of the public submissions from respondents who claim 'Anglo' or 'old Australia' heritage is that multiculturalism is a negative and divisive feature of Australian society, creating disdain for people of Anglo-Celtic origins and denigrating Australian culture by promoting other cultures as more worthy. They argue that this contributes to a general sense of unease and causes unacceptable levels of separateness in society. While acknowledging that the assimilationist policies of the past asked too much of migrants, these respondents criticised multiculturalism for asking too much of Australian-born people and not enough of migrants. The Council respects the people expressing these concerns but believes their views reflect an incorrect perception of multiculturalism, pointing to an important communication strategy priority (National Multicultural Advisory Council, 1999:15).

State multiculturalism has become, since its introduction in the 1970s, the main discourse in relation to 'migrants' and other minorities in Australia. The term multiculturalism was first used in Canada in the sixties with regard to minority groups whose origins were neither British nor French Canadian. With its introduction to Australia in the seventies, the term was applied mainly to migrants of Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB).¹ In 1972, Al Grassby, the Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam government, was the first to use the concept of multiculturalism as a

¹ It is important to note that although the meaning of multiculturalism has shifted over the years, and the concept today is not confined solely to immigrants, the convention employed by policy makers has always been that multiculturalism is a policy directed especially toward NESB immigrants.

basis for a new policy that defines the 'nation' in relation to the presence of 'ethnics' in Australia. Grassby defined multiculturalism, as Jupp (1997:134) explains:

... as enshrining the 'family of the nation'. He advocated the idea of 'permanent ethnic pluralism' by which he meant that 'each ethnic group desiring it, is permitted to create its own communal life and preserve its own cultural heritage indefinitely, while taking part in the general life of the nation'.

This first attempt to define multiculturalism carried within it many of the contradictions, issues and critiques that multiculturalism as a concept and as an official policy has generated throughout the years. What exactly is the 'cultural heritage' that needs to be preserved? Upon what notion of 'cultures' are such definitions based? To what degree and by what means should Australian governments encourage the indefinite maintenance of such a cultural heritage? Who or what defines the boundaries of a particular 'ethnic group'? And what exactly is the 'general life of the nation' when everyone stays permanently different?

The term 'Multicultural Australia' is by now, as Kapferer writes, a 'well-worn phrase beloved of politicians' (1996:11). However, the official shift to multiculturalism in the seventies is usually presented as a remarkable change for a society which was openly racist² and had maintained, since 1901, a selective immigration policy, in order to 'create a nation for a continent' (Jupp, 1996:2). The infamous 'Immigration Restriction Act' (enforced from 1901), which came to be known as the 'White Australia Policy', is one of the best examples of selective immigration policies. Restriction on non-European immigrants continued until 1973 whilst preference for British migrants finally ended only in 1983 (Jupp, 1996). Multiculturalism, we are often told, emerged out of a better understanding of the new cultural diversity of Australia. Unlike the previous post-war immigration policies (assimilation and later

² Racist policies were applied not only to immigrants but also likewise to the Aboriginal peoples who were supposed to assimilate into the dominant culture. Forced assimilation was applied to 'mixed descent' Aborigines under the assumption that their 'colour' would be 'bred out' (Jupp, 1996). For an interesting historical account of Australia's racial anxieties during World War II, see Saunders (1994). Interestingly, Aborigines were never truly included in state multiculturalism partly because of their own resistance to be defined as another 'ethnic group' within the multicultural nation. Instead, Aborigines tended to experience and politically advance their views of Australia as a bicultural nation and not as a multi-cultural one (Vasta, 1996:51). Australian governments and academics have normally tended to treat 'White-Aboriginal' relations and 'Anglo-Ethnics' relations as two separate spheres of life (Hage, 1998a:24).

integration), multiculturalism openly rejected the idea of assimilating the new migrants to becoming 'like Australians'.³ As Al Grassby wrote in 1973, in his famous manifesto, *A Multicultural Society for the Future*:

The increasing diversity of Australian society has ... rendered untenable any prospects there might have been twenty years ago of fully assimilating newcomers to the Australian way of life, to use a phrase common at the time (Quoted in Castles, et al. 1988:59).

This was the beginning of what later developed into a fully fledged 'ism' which played a major role in the 'national obsessions' of 'Inventing Australia' (Castles et al. 1988; White, 1981). Australia was imagined as 'one nation' composed of many cultures in which multicultural policies and symbols were to provide the general framework for peaceful coexistence.⁴ The aim was to educate the nation in the light of the new multicultural national identity. Special multicultural education programs, legal apparatus, various government institutions and different forms of 'ethnic' media were constructed in order to advance the new policy.⁵

Official multiculturalism, Kapferer argues, became the new state 'mythology, which structures and manipulates the relations between state and people' (Kapferer, 1996:3). The study of the ways in which the new mythology was advanced focuses mainly on the ruling groups, the myth-makers and the ways in which they constructed textual and other representations of multiculturalism as the new narrative of 'commonality'.

It is in their power, and in their interest to maintain a single dominant narrative, smoothing out differences and divergences, incorporating oppositions, and where they cannot, repressing or obliterating the narratives and perspectives of others. It is such a narrative that is pursued within an official policy of 'multiculturalism' — just, compassionate, equitable — by

³ The logic of the post-war immigration program was to repel the 'yellow peril' and as such the preference was for British immigrants. When these could not be obtained in large numbers the call was for other 'assimilable types' such as Italian or Eastern-European who could rapidly become indistinguishable from other Australians (Castles, et al. 1988:9).

⁴ The debate in regards to this aspect was usually presented around these lines: Is multiculturalism 'good' for the nation, in uniting us all, or is it 'bad' as it creates further divisions? John Howard, the current Australian Prime Minister, who is known for his opposition to the notion of multiculturalism, argued, in what came to be known as the 'One Australia' debate during 1988, that the policy contributed to the loss of social cohesion.

⁵ In this aspect the new policy carried on the same pedagogical logic of the previous ones. For example, in 1947 the aim of the Commonwealth authorities was to 'convince the Australian community' that migrants of non-British origin could be as easily assimilated as the British. The goal was to 'condition' the Australian people to accept the new migrants whole-heartedly into the 'Australian community' (Martin, 1978:28).

the Australian State in its search for social harmony and consensus, or at least for the appearance, the simulacrum (which may be all that is necessary), of such harmonious relations within the nation state (Kapferer, 1996:253).⁶

In this light, ethnic press, ethnic radio and ethnic TV were understood to be state means for promoting the powerful multicultural narrative of the nation. Considering the scope of such a national project 'it is hardly surprising then, that once multiculturalism became official policy in Australia, the Federal government should have looked to the electronic media as one of the key forces for implementation of multicultural policy' (Foster & Stockley, 1984:122). The government became the main initiator in the development of ethnic / multicultural electronic media. 'Maintenance of language and culture, settlement assistance and promotion of tolerance, mutual understanding and an appreciation of Australia's multicultural society', were according to the Galbally Report (1978), the main areas multicultural television should aim for (Foster & Stockley, 1984:120).⁷

Critics of official multiculturalism have often criticised the policy as 'ideological', a label that depicts the policy as a deceptive manipulation whose real aim is the cooptation of the new migrants (Foster & Stokley, 1984; Jakubowicz, 1984; Seitz, 1993). The portrayal of migrants as people who are 'allowed' to maintain their original 'culture' and have a separate 'ethnic identity' within the framework of the

⁶ Kapferer provides the example of the new Australian national anthem instituted in 1984. The previous *God Save the Queen* was substituted with *Advance Australia Fair*, with somewhat altered lyrics:

The old second verse, with reference to 'gallant Cook' who 'raised old England's flag, the standard of the brave' on our shores — 'With all our hearts we love her still, Britannia rules the Wave' — has been relegated to abashed oblivion, to be replaced by a multiculturalist vision, stressing open-handed sharing, not colonialist conquest (Kapferer, 1996:15).

This new multiculturalist verse is:

For those who've come across the sea,
We've boundless plains to share.
With courage let us all combine:
Advance Australia Fair.

Another example is the bicentennial celebration and its ideological project that was constructed in order to 'celebrate what it means to be Australian'. The event was planned 'to encourage all Australians to understand and preserve their heritage, recognise the multicultural nature of modern Australia, and look to the future with confidence' (from the Bicentennial Authority quoted in Castles, et al. 1988:5).

⁷ The complex history of the evolution of Australian ethnic media and the public debates such a development created are beyond the scope of this research. However, it is important to note that most critics, by focusing on the ways in which the state 'used' the ethnic media and other ideological state apparatuses to construct multiculturalism, often ignored the ways media were used by the migrants themselves. See for example Foster & Stockley (1984). The work of Dona Kolar-Panov (1997) and the book *Floating Lives: The Media and the Asian Diaspora*, S. Cunningham and J. Sinclair (eds.) (2000), are exceptions to this general evasion.

'unified' nation, is often seen as oppressive and manipulative as were the previous government policies in regards to 'migrants'. Marie de Lepervanche, for example, regards the discursive shift from 'race' to 'ethnicity' as 'a series of ideological transformations in the recreation of hegemony'; ethnicity in this context 'masks conflicting class interests and the nature of class relations' (1980:25). A similar argument is raised by Foster & Stokley, who '... suggest that "ethnicity" and "multiculturalism" were linked together as social constructs and that ethnic groups were encouraged to seek their identity through "ethnicity" rather than "class" consciousness' (1984:8).

Official multiculturalism, in its encouragement of the retention of languages other than English and its support for the continuation of 'ethnic foods', festivals, art exhibitions and so forth, is regarded by such critics as a practice of management and control. According to these views, the official policy, operates in a similar way to the old indirect rule of British colonialism. 'The government has become "generous" and consents to the maintenance and development of cultural / ethnic differences — within certain carefully defined limits' (Seitz, 1993:39).

As a form of social control multiculturalism is perhaps more insidious than assimilation because it officially promotes public tolerance of private lifestyle issues without addressing, other than in rhetoric, and mostly totally ignoring, the unequal power, structural positions and relations between the ESB and the NESB communities in Australian society (Seitz, 1993:41).

State multiculturalism, therefore, is regarded as an ideology that was conducted to mask class interests and as an attempt, as part of the process of nation building, to construct a single dominant national identity (Castles, et al. 1988; Hage, 1993). The emphasis of such criticisms is placed on the ways in which the new multicultural ideology, which works to co-opt and control the migrants, reproduces Anglo-Celtic hegemony.⁸

⁸ The term Anglo-Celtic hegemony is in itself highly problematic. Ghassan Hage argues that in order to avoid such a fabricated homogenous category it is preferable to think and explain national dominance through Bourdieu's notion of the 'field of power'. In this sense the categories 'Anglo' or the 'White' are 'cultural possessions which allow their holders to stake certain claims of governmental belonging relative to the weight of the capital in his or her possession' (Hage, 1998a:56). Such a perspective allows a historical account of the ways such symbolic capital are constantly transformed in relation to the internal struggles within the field.

In contrast to such criticism, Jupp argues that the construction of multiculturalism as a cohesive national identity was and still is essential for Australia. Accordingly, 'Somewhat like other forms of national political ideology, multiculturalism offers a rudimentary social and political vision of an ideal Australian society, as well as a range of politics for its attainment' (Jupp, 1997:132). Yet governments, Jupp argues, have to try to develop collective loyalty from their multicultural populations in order to survive, even if 'multiculturalism and a uniform conception of national identity are incompatible' (Jupp, 1997:143).⁹ This rather functional explanation embraces the idea that achieving social harmony is the true goal of multicultural policies and assumes that without such harmony the social system will not endure. Interestingly, in accord with those who see multiculturalism merely as a powerful state ideology, Jupp's argument, while defending multicultural policies, focuses only on the top-down political aspects of the policy.

What the debate about multiculturalism rarely addresses is the 'taken for granted' view of the policy as something that is designed from above; a governmental policy separated from the 'migrants' or the 'ethnics' that it is targeting. Hage (1998a) shows that there is an essential problem in the way the policy and the political process that lead to the emergence of multiculturalism, including much of the debate around it, assume the policy as something which can be designed and 'improved' at the top.

... we need to deconstruct a dominant White fairy tale that state multiculturalism (multiculturalism as state policy and official ideology) was a nice gift from White European Australians to the migrants institutionally referred to as 'NESB migrants'. This fairy tale is commonly used to infuse a sense of security among White Australians, for it views Australian settlement policies as a series of wilful choices made by increasingly enlightened, but totally in control, White Australian governments deciding to move away from the 'evil' and racist White Australian policy to the 'good' and non-racist multicultural policy (Hage, 1998a:235).

⁹ Within official multiculturalism the demand for 'national loyalty' is presented as follows:

1) Multicultural policies are based upon the premise that all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, to its interests and future first and foremost; 2) multicultural policies require all Australians to accept the basic structures and principles of Australian society — the Constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language, and equality of the sexes; and 3) multicultural policies impose obligations as well as conferring rights: the right to express one's own culture and beliefs involves a reciprocal responsibility to accept the right of others to express their views and values. (DIMA, 1997; *Multicultural Australia: The Way Forward*.)

Obviously, the perception of multiculturalism as the new official national identity is opposed by the likes of Pauline Hanson¹⁰ and other nationalists, who regard multiculturalism as a threat to the national identity, where such an identity is seen and understood to be based upon a unified and homogenous Anglo-Celtic ethnicity. One example is Pauline Hanson's infamous statement that: 'We are in danger of being swamped by Asians who have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate' (Macdonald, 1996). The logic behind these forms of cultural racism is that 'one nation' always equates with 'one culture' one 'race' and one 'ethnicity' (Gillespie, 1995:10).¹¹

Yet, it is wrong to assume that the existence of anti-multiculturalism attitudes and politics as promoted by the Hansonites 'proves' the policy's anti-racist rhetoric. Despite the multicultural rhetoric, racism is still part of the daily life of many 'ethnic' groups in Australia:

The anti-racism of official policies and public rhetoric is often only skin-deep: it masks the continuing reality of differentiation and discrimination based on biological and cultural markers which are linked to a discourse of race and ethnicity. There is no single racism in Australia, no simple black - white divide (Vasta & Castles, 1996:5).

This is why, as Vasta and Castles (1996) argue, in contrast to the term multiculturalism, the term multi-racist better describes Australian society today. Hage (1998a:20) asks an interesting question which is important in this context: 'I wondered why, while so many academics, including myself, see multiculturalism as merely a different way of reinforcing White power, some people experience it as if it actually does lead to undermining such a power'. The answer to this question is found, according to Hage, in the way the multicultural Real poses a threat to the 'White Nation' fantasy which is still part of the way many white Australians view the nation.

¹⁰ Pauline Hanson is the leader of the racist nationalist political party 'One Nation.' See G. Gray & C. Winter (eds), (1997) *Resurgence of racism in Australia*, for a collection of papers that analyse the effect and policies of 'One Nation' and racism in Australia.

¹¹ See for example the following quotation from a book that presents multiculturalism as a betrayal of the Australian nation: 'There is only place for one nationalism in Australia — Australian nationalism, which encourages all residents to integrate as Australians, regardless of their ethnic background' (Campbell & Uhlmann, 1995: 2).

For these reasons, rather than seeing state multiculturalism only in terms of manipulation and hegemonic class ideology, it is also important to explore the politics of difference and the idea of 'culture' that multicultural policies are based upon. I would argue that the debate surrounding the policy of multiculturalism is in a sense part of the debate revolving around the notion of culture itself. The difficulty of defining multiculturalism and of constructing a multicultural national identity is partly derived from the ways in which the 'multicultural condition' that is part of life in Australia and elsewhere problematises any previous notions of identity and culture (Lechte & Bottomley, 1993:22).

Multiculturalism is both a feeble acknowledgment of the fact that cultures have lost their moorings in definite places and an attempt to subsume this plurality of cultures within the framework of a national identity (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992:6).

We need, therefore, to explain the 'logic of difference' and the representation of 'cultural diversity' within the multicultural imaginary. These aspects, I will argue, have a direct effect not only on the ways migrants in Australia are being defined by the state but also on the way they often come to define themselves.

Multiculturalism: The Logic of Difference

Multiculturalism is not about institutionalisation of difference, rather it is an approach which seeks to reinforce social harmony by encouraging all Australians to recognise the reality of cultural diversity in our society ... (Office of Multicultural Affairs [OMA], quoted in Kapferer, 1996:259).

The fear, continuously evoked as one of the main justifications for multicultural policies, is that 'ethnic diversity' would lead to fragmentation or 'cultural ghettoism' and may incite 'ethnic conflicts' and racial hatred (Anderson, 1993).¹² The response to such fears was to reconstruct the 'ethnic' as part of the collective.

One way forward could be to continue the present stress on distinctive ethnic cultures, languages and histories — but in the context, not only of maintaining separate ethnic groups and organisations, but understanding and

¹² The educational film 'One Australia' opens with footage of ethnic violence in order to argue in favour of the values of multiculturalism as the only way to achieve a cohesive national society and prevent such violence and racism. Interestingly racist and nationalist ideologies that oppose multiculturalism frequently make use of the same fears.

appreciating the multi-ethnic background standing behind the steadily growing ethnic mix and the feeling of being an 'Australian' (OMA, 1989:8).

In this sense multiculturalism includes all the variations of ethnic identities, as well as 'ethnic intermixture', which is part of the general condition of living in a multicultural society (OMA, 1989:8).

'Ethnicity' like the term 'migrant' has a particular history in the Australian context. In her extensive work on migrants in Australia Jean Martin studies in detail the socio-political history of such terms. In the 1950s and the 1960s 'migrants' were seen as a supplement to the established Australian life and therefore had to be assimilated and as soon as possible. By the 1970s 'migrants' had come to be seen as a social problem with which the government had to deal. Since 1975 a new understanding has emerged with a shift to the notion of the 'ethnic communities'. This last shift is important, according to Martin, as it illustrates the view of migrants as minority pressure groups, which is a legitimate part of the general social structure as a whole (Martin, 1978:55).

Yet, 'ethnicity' or the notion of 'ethnic identity' continues to signify separation, it is something that frames but also challenges the dominant image of multiculturalism. The *Fitzgerald Report* of 1988 revealed that many Australians still think that multiculturalism is something for 'ethnic groups' (i.e. non Anglo-Celtic immigrants). According to the report, the challenge for policy makers and politicians was to change such attitudes and emphasise the fact that multiculturalism is *for all Australians*.¹³ In order to avoid such tensions a distinction was made between 'soft' multiculturalism which has 'nothing to do with ethnicity, either in origin or in justification',¹⁴ and 'harder' multiculturalism which was seen as a direct route to separatism. Such a distinction implied that '... some difference is good for the nation, but that too much difference is not' (Chock 1995:317).

¹³ Interestingly the term 'ethnic' is derived from the Greek *ethnikos* which was 'originally applied to heathens, cultural strangers, "others" and "outsiders"' (Gillespie, 1995:9).

¹⁴ This was stated by Professor Lauchlan Chipman (1980), as part of the debate which took place in the early 1980s, about the dangers for Australia in the creation of ethnic TV, which was feared would damage the cohesiveness of the nation (Bostock, 1984:106).

Within this ideological framework the phrase 'cultural diversity' became a substitute for the notion of 'ethnicity'. 'Ethnics' were no longer pressured to assimilate into the nation by diminishing their otherness and instead of seeing their 'ethnicity' as a problem, the emphasis shifted to their 'culture', which, according to ideals of liberalism, ought to be tolerated. This discursive shift from 'race' towards 'ethnicity' and then 'culture' was part of the multicultural rhetorical attempt to combat the cultural and political context, whereby being 'ethnic' meant being different from the 'real' Australian. 'Most of all, multiculturalism requires us to recognise that we each can be "a real Australian", without necessarily being a "typical Australian"' (ACPEA 1982, cited in Stratton and Ang 1998:154).¹⁵

The effectiveness of such discursive shifts is limited because it does not openly challenge practices of inclusion and exclusion and fails to problematise the various forms of belonging to the 'national' community. In other words, 'culture' and 'cultural differentiation', when used in that sense, can easily be transformed into a basis for racist discrimination as evident in what is now called the 'new racism' or 'culturalism' (Barker, 1981).

Indeed, in the Anglo-Celtic version of it, while multiculturalism requires a number of cultures, Anglo-Celtic culture is not merely one among those cultures, it is precisely the culture which provides the collection with this 'peaceful co-existence'. That is, multiculturalism as a phenomenon is one of many cultures, but the essence of the whole phenomenon, the spirit that moves it and gives it coherence, is primarily Anglo-Celtic (Hage, 1993:134).

Furthermore, the problem lies not only in the ways in which official multicultural images have constructed the 'ethnicity' of the 'Other', but also in the ways that such imagery has used the notion of culture. The reference to the 'cultural diversity' of Australia is usually presented, in the official discourse of multiculturalism, as the *nature* of current Australian society. Such an assumption justifies the policy as necessary and views 'cultural' difference as something that is 'obvious' or commonsensical. In this sense multiculturalism is almost always both a description and a prescription.

¹⁵ From the Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, *Multiculturalism for All Australians: Our Developing Nationhood*, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, May 1982, p.17.

In a descriptive sense multiculturalism is simply a term, which describes the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Australia. We are, and will remain, a multicultural society. As a public policy multiculturalism encompasses government measures designed to respond to that diversity ... it is a policy for managing the consequences of cultural diversity in the interests of the individual and society as a whole (OMA, 1989, p. vii, cited in Fincher, Campbell & Webber, 1993:105).

Such assumptions about 'cultural diversity' are based, as Kahn (1991) suggests, on the classic anthropological notion of 'culture', particularly as Boas and other American anthropologists developed it in the nineteen twenties.¹⁶ 'Culture', in this historical context, was a new concept that replaced the old explanation of human variation, which had been based upon the physiological notion of 'Race'. In this sense Culture 'referred to a universal human attribute' (Kahn, 1991:49) whilst explaining the existence of differences between humans.¹⁷ However, the new conceptualisation did not solve the problem of discrimination and racism. The application of the term 'culture' to a group of people who are deemed to be different in some essential sense from other groups may produce the same hatred for the 'other', based this time not on his / her race, but rather on his / her culture.¹⁸

The reference to 'cultural diversity' within official multiculturalism has reified the notion of culture. Accordingly, multiculturalism had been depicted as a taxonomy of 'cultures' by which the migrants are conceived as:

Members of homogeneous ethnic and cultural communities, who carry their culture in their baggage and then struggle to maintain and preserve it. In so far as they succeed, immigrants add new cultures to the existing culture(s), thereby extending and consolidating a multicultural society in Australia (Fincher, Campbell & Webber, 1993:105).

¹⁶ Galbally in his *Review of Post-Arrival Programmes and Services to Migrants* (Galbally Report, 1978) is actually quoting Taylor's classical definition of culture as a basis for his policies.

It is desirable to define our concept of culture. We believe it is a way of life, that 'complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of Society' [Taylor (1891), *Primitive Culture*, London] (Quoted in Castles et al. 1988:69).

¹⁷ The difference was made between 'Culture' with a capital 'C', which was understood to be the abstract universal property, and 'cultures' that point to specific cases (Lambek & Boddy, 1997:8).

¹⁸ For an extensive debate on the relations between 'culture' and 'race', and the way in which the notion of culture was used as a basis for differentiation and control within multiculturalism, see *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 'Special issue: (Multi)Culturalism and the Baggage of 'Race', (1995) Vol.1 No. 4, 301-323.

An interesting example of such a taxonomy may be found in the 'Encyclopedia of the Australian People' edited by Jupp (1988). The Encyclopedia is a monumental project, which attempts to map the different cultural groups of the 'Nation, its people and their origins'. Alphabetically organised, each 'ethnic' group receives a short description of its history, some statistical data, and a photograph that represents its 'culture'. Chock (1995), who studied a similar project of the 'Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups', argues that such representations are based upon an attempt to replace 'race' with 'culture' (ie 'ethnic group'). This is a practice which Chock defines 'culturalism', the 'ideological frame in which the Encyclopedia constructed "ethnic groups" as a model of the nation, by making each group culturally different in minor but regular ways from all other groups' (1995:302).¹⁹

Another clear example of such reification is found in the 'sea of faces', one of the most popular images of multiculturalism, in which each face is an icon of a specific culture that is clearly defined and constitutes one fragment of the cultural mosaic of separate similar pieces (Lechte & Bottomley, 1993:33). This is why languages, food and other 'exotic' visual differences are often used in representation of the 'ethnic culture'. These sensual forms of differences provide easy signifiers of 'otherness' and are brought as a testimony to the diversity of the national collective. It is in this sense that 'culture,' as it is used by official multiculturalism, is never in itself 'multi' because multiplicity and diversity are understood to arise only from the aggregation of different 'cultures' (Segal & Handler, 1995:392).

Hage (1993) points to the power relations that exist in such multicultural representations of otherness.²⁰ He regards multicultural fairs and festivals as being part of the 'Anglo-Celtic imagined multicultural collection' (Hage, 1993:135). The

¹⁹ The term 'culturalism' according to Stratton (1998:13) typifies the new racism, which Hanson promotes. The assumption is that some cultures are considered incompatible with what is claimed to be Australia's national culture. 'In this thinking, culture is not reduced to race, race works as a signifier of it and, as a consequence, as Hanson insists, small numbers of racially different people can be allowed into the country provided that they actively acculturate to Australian culture' (Stratton, 1998:14).

²⁰ See also this argument by the *Democratic Socialist Party of Australia*, which regards multiculturalism to be a new kind of racism:

Multiculturalists' fetish of ethnic differences has led them to artificially lump together all migrant and racial groups into static cultural categories, regardless of class or other divisions within these groups. Multiculturalism then elevates these categories into fixed differences. So, Asians are always and inherently authoritarian and obedient to authority, and Aborigines are always and inherently spiritual, the modern 'noble savages' (Kim, 1996:18).

collection of otherness was a colonial practice of representing the 'exotic natives' alongside the 'exotic animals' (in zoos or world fairs), in order to exhibit the collector's power over that of the colonised. Accordingly, 'exhibitionary multiculturalism is the post-colonial version of the colonial fair' (Hage 1993:133). 'The fact that multiculturalist policy "allows" non-Anglo-Celtic ethnic groups to "maintain their culture", in no sense makes it less of a fantasy of total control' (Ibid, p.135).²¹

Multiculturalism versus the Multicultural Condition

Most of the academic criticism of multiculturalism in Australia attests to the difficulties enlisted in the policy's attempts to construct, manage or manipulate groups and individuals in a new political and historical setting where people do not share the same 'cultural' background. However, some of multiculturalism's critics call for a distinction between the official policy of multiculturalism and the experience itself, or to paraphrase Lyotard, the 'multicultural condition'.

These critics argue that the policy of multiculturalism is a dubious attempt to construct an identity in a world in which identity and 'culture' become fragmented and fluid. As such, an analogy is created between the multicultural and the postmodern.²² The multicultural condition is presented as a 'liberating vision,' one that, like postmodernism, aims to recover voices and images that challenge dominant narratives and official discourses (Lechte & Bottomley, 1993:22). Living the multicultural condition ascribes to a sense of postmodern identity that is 'both here and there and neither here nor there at one and the same time' (Bammer, 1994:xii). In Lasch's (1985:38) words, it is a world in which 'identities can be adopted and discarded like changes of custom'. Consequently, the 'postmodern condition' is itself always multicultural in the sense that culture becomes a multicoloured free-floating mosaic in constant flux.

²¹ Hage compares this practice to the modern language of zoology in which '... greater liberty for the animals and special exhibits or situations are created to demonstrate the animal's normal way of life' (1993:135).

²² For a detailed account of such an analogy see: Gordon L. Clark, Dean Forbes and Rodrick Francis (eds) 1993 *Multiculturalism, Difference and Postmodernism*.

This is why Leche and Bottomley (1993:22) claim that, an 'Australian multicultural experience can raise new ways of thinking and experiencing the world'. Such views oppose and challenge official multiculturalism's objectification of others / cultures as homogeneous identities and advance instead a more fluid, playful notion of identity.

The problem with official multiculturalism is that it tends precisely to freeze the fluidity of identity by the very fact that it is concerned with the synthesising of unruly and unpredictable cultural identities and difference into harmonious unity-in-diversity. So the metaphor of the mosaic, of unity-in-diversity, is based on another kind of disavowal, on a suppression of the potential *incommensurability* of juxtaposed cultural differences. Here we confront the limits of state multiculturalism (Stratton and Ang, 1998:157).

With this line of argument, the images and policies of multiculturalism are not necessarily multicultural because such images assume and promote an essentialist notion of culture (i.e. 'the sea of faces') which have nothing to do with the multicultural condition (Lechte & Bottomley, 1993:33).

While there is no doubt that official multiculturalism has reified and homogenised cultures and ethnicities, there is an obvious difficulty with an alternative postmodern 'celebration of fragmentation' in which 'identity is an infinite interplay of possibilities and flavours of the month' (Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996:1-2). Such images have been opposed by minorities, exiles, diasporas or other marginal groups which often suffer from difference and discrimination, and which have '... protested this *vive la différence* ability of the privileged "to exoticize themselves selectively"' (Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996:3).²³

I find this last point extremely important. While many of the critics of multiculturalism reveal the power relations or the ideological aspects that such policies are based upon, they ignore, at times, the migrants themselves.²⁴ The study of

²³ Cresswell (1997) shows how the postmodern writing of such a celebration of culture and identity has led to the romanticisation of the 'traveller', 'migrant' and the 'nomad' which became in a sense the new postmodern primitive.

²⁴ Within the context of Australian multiculturalism Hage (1997), for example, points to important distinctions in relation to the ways 'ethnic food' is consumed in Australia. While in the multicultural reality of migrant lives, ethnic food is part of the migrant home-building process; it plays a different role within what Hage defines as cosmo-multiculturalism. Cosmo-multiculturalism is about the ability to appreciate and consume the authenticity of such ethnic food as commodities, which are available in the market place. In that sense cosmo-multiculturalism is multiculturalism without migrants (Hage, 1997:134).

multiculturalism can not be reduced to its official definitions and popular images. The 'migrants' who are central to the discourse may actually 'use' multicultural ideologies, images and even its reification. Such reinterpretation can be used by migrant groups to fight racism and discrimination or in order to re-construct their sense and interpretation of the 'community' whilst resisting state policies when these ignore their needs or project an image which some migrants may find offensive (Vasta & Castles, 1996:58).

Anderson (1993), who studied the creations of Chinatowns in various cities throughout Australia, illustrates the complex meeting point between multicultural images, practices and resistance to such ideologies. The building of Chinatowns was part of the 'landscape imprint of multicultural policy', and is seen by Anderson as a practice in which European groups in Australia '... held the power to define and fashion Chinatowns in ways that reveal more about themselves than the "ethnic attributes" of the East' (1993:71). Chinatowns were constructed throughout Australia as part of the mosaic imagery in celebrating difference and were transformed into popular sites of consumption. However, it is the reified notion of ethnicity, within the national multicultural imaginary, that worked to signify 'otherness', characterised stereotypically as different from the Anglo-Celtic 'mainstream'.

Thus rather than being defined in terms of, for example class, gender, age and so on, people of Chinese origin are categorised in terms of putative 'Chineseness'. This is defined as if in reality there exists some homogeneous system of values and practices that is imbibed by all people of Chinese origin, regardless of generation, in China, Canada, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Australia (Anderson, 1993:77-6).

An interesting and important element of Anderson's analysis is that of the Chinese migrants' opposition to orientalism and the re-invention of their 'Chineseness'. In Melbourne, an organisation of citizens of Chinese origin was formed in order to fight the plan to turn Little Bourke Street into Chinatown, claiming that '... we don't want to bring back the image of an opium-smoking, mahjong-playing people which the whole concept of Chinatown encourages' (Anderson, 1993:87).

Anderson's study indicates the importance of grounding the rhetoric and policies of multiculturalism in specific case studies. Here, lies the real power of a detailed

ethnographic study of a particular group of migrants.²⁵ Such studies may illustrate the ways official multiculturalism affects the life of migrants in Australia as a social field which is analytically different from issues (important as these are) such as the level of funding or particular policies.

Multiculturalism — A Desire for the ‘Other’

The notion of the ‘ethnic / migrant community’ and the festive or commercialised expressions of its ‘authentic’ culture are central to the ideological space of multiculturalism. The migrants become part of a landscape of otherness that invites the localised ‘public’, categorically defined as non-migrant, to explore, discover and experience the ‘flavours’ of far away places in the convenience of their ‘backyard’. Why indeed travel when the exotic flavours of the world are just around the corner?

The more ‘exotic’ the other seems in its colourful costumes, exciting music, elaborate dancing and the aroma and tastes of its foods, the more attractive it becomes for the consumption of the ‘non-exotic’ locals. More than any non-visible markers of difference or cultural and visible similarities between the migrant and the non-migrant, it is the ‘visibility of otherness’ that has become one of the most attractive forms of representing the migrant’s ‘culture’ in the Australian context.

Part of the reason why such representations are so popular is because they allow official multiculturalism to promote itself as a positive form of ‘cultural enrichment’. The colourful visibility and the ‘noise’ of the multicultural festival are often presented as symbols of national maturity, healthy cosmopolitanism and an illustration of social harmony within the multicultural nation. In a tautological sense, the celebratory expressions of *different* ‘cultures’ provide the proof that ‘we are multicultural’, which then, as a manifestation of ‘our diversity’, can be promoted as *enjoyable* ‘cultural enrichment.’ This is why ‘cultural diversity’ is always celebrated and seen as *valuable* (Hage, 1998a:117). Such expressions, which tend to present themselves as being

²⁵ Obviously, it is no less important to study multiculturalism in the context of non-migrants in Australia. Hage’s ‘*White Nation*’ is an example of an important study that looks at the ways the nation and multiculturalism are perceived by those who see themselves as the ‘real’ Australians or people who feel that they are ‘unquestionably in *their* own country’ (Hage, 1998a:16).

inclusive, often demonstrate cultural hegemony. The other culture is rendered visible while the national 'mainstream' becomes culturally invisible. This allows for a limited expression of otherness. Such representations enable the hegemonic culture to 'speak' from the power position of the nation which is depicted as inclusive and multicultural (Stratton and Ang, 1998:158).

It is in this context that 'cultural enrichment' is often evoked as an 'anti-racist' argument that 'proves' that the migrants contribute positively to Australia. To set up a multicultural festival demonstrating that it is the migrants that make 'us' a 'vibrant multicultural nation' is to argue against 'racist' views that depict 'only' the negative aspects of migration (disease, criminality, ethnic violence, loss of 'our' cultural identity, social disintegration etc.). Such an opposition, however, is often made from similar assumptions about the 'us' that is enriched or alternatively threatened by the migrants.

The way the voice of the 'ethnic other' is made passive not only by those who want to eradicate it, but also by those who are happy to welcome it under some conditions they feel entitled to set, is one of the main features of these ritualistic 'immigration debates' that White Australians enjoy having so much (Hage, 1998a:17).

The notion of 'cultural enrichment' itself is often based on a binary opposition between the culture that is being enriched and the one that is doing the enriching.

For the White Australian articulating it, the discourse of enrichment still positions him or her in the centre of the Australian cultural map. Far from putting 'migrant cultures', even in their 'soft' sense (i.e. through food, dance, etc.), on an equal footing with the dominant culture, the theme conjures the images of a multicultural fair where the various stalls of neatly positioned migrant cultures are exhibited and where the real Australians, bearers of the White nation and positioned in the central role of the touring subjects, walk around and enrich themselves (Hage, 1998a:118).

Notwithstanding the multicultural rhetoric of tolerance and the encouragement of migrants to 'retain' and express their original cultural identity, it is important to realise that such difference is often a product of the social construction of the migrants as 'people of culture'. The assumed 'otherness' of the migrants is what makes them culturally visible while their 'visibility' works to reinforce the invisibility of the dominant culture. In a sense, '... the more power one has, the less culture one enjoys,

and the more culture one has, the less power one wields' (Rosaldo, 1989:202). Cultural expressions of the migrants' otherness are based upon a set of power relations that creates zones of 'cultural visibility' that exist in contrast to zones of 'cultural invisibility' (Rosaldo, 1989:198). It is always 'they' who have culture and 'we' who do not.²⁶

Furthermore, as Langer (1998) illustrates, the Australian multicultural way of categorising the migrants, or the 'ethnics', as 'communities' assumes a nostalgic pre-modern aspect of the 'communal' itself.

There is at once a utopian nostalgia in this notion of a traditional world whose embodied representatives can be preserved as 'ethnics' in the multicultural museum, and a wilful ignorance about the economic and technological changes that have fundamentally altered the conditions of identity-formations throughout the globe (Langer, 1998:170).

Migrants are always expected to have not only a 'community', but also a 'traditional' costume, a national dance and a *typical* food that they can proudly display (and often are encouraged to do so) on special occasions such as the multicultural festival, or by dressing-up for the school multicultural day. Even when such costumes and 'traditions' are no longer part of the daily life or the official representation of the nation, in the country of origin. This fetishised 'cultural difference' ignores the markers of global postmodernity (Langer, 1998:170) and as such marks the 'ethnics' in Australia as less 'modern' (or more 'cultural' in Rosaldo's terminology) than the non-ethnic Australians (Langer, 1998:170).

Yet, what makes such representations of 'culture' (and their depiction as mere manipulations) much more complicated is the way in which the migrants themselves often use 'culture' and its various representations. Having a *different* 'culture' and the different relation to the previously taken for granted past, present and future, emerge out of the feeling of otherness in the new place. It is a product of a migratory anxiety,

²⁶ Rosaldo (1989) talks about such practices in relation to anthropology and the way by which the closer the anthropological subjects were to 'us' the 'less' culture they assumed to have. It is in such a context that official multiculturalism adopts anthropological jargon including classic definitions of the term culture itself.

where the 'maintenance' and the transmission of 'culture' becomes a 'consciously undertaken project on the part of the individual' (Ram, 2000:262).

Migration into a radically different culture introduces a sharp disturbance into such a relationship to the past, present and future. Without the social environment that was taken for granted up until now, the past is revealed to be something less autonomous and secure than the embodied acquisition of the previous experience. Migration reveals such a version of the past to be entirely dependent on invisible social supports that are now no longer available. With migration, that which was able to function as an implicit set of skills as orientations becomes for the first time, that which has to be thought, represented. It now (and only now) becomes something that is thought as 'one's culture. Insofar as the cultural patterns are no longer available as a straightforward acquisition, then there is an impulse to 'keep the culture alive' (Ram, 2000:262).

It is often that exact migratory desire for 'culture' that seems to challenge the homogenised view of the 'nation'. Clearly, the visibility of otherness is rendered a problem in assimilation policies, where, as Rosaldo (1989) argues, the official goal is to turn the culturally visible 'them' into an imaginary culturally transparent 'us'. Yet, even in this context, as Hage explains, the 'desire' to make everyone *like 'us'*, is not really about making the other disappear, rather it is 'more to stress the difference between "us" and "those who are *trying to be* like us"' (Hage, 1998b:288). 'Assimilationist mimicry is always less than what it is trying to mimic, and its subject is seen as forever wanting' (Hage, 1998b:228).

In problematising 'cultural visibility' Rosaldo (1989) exposes the power relations in which 'visibility of otherness' and 'invisibility' of the normative are socially constructed. What Rosaldo (1989), identified as zones of cultural visibility and invisibility within anthropology and the 'nation' are the outcomes of particular fields of power in which to have or not to have a 'culture' become an important form of symbolic capital. The importance of such a perspective is in the way by which it encourages us to see the ways in which such 'visibility' and 'invisibility' are part of complex power relations, cultural and historical circumstance. Interestingly, it is often the non-visible 'other' who is seen as more threatening. A clear example is that of the anti-semites who try to expose the 'Jew', as the ultimate dangerous 'other' exactly because he/she looks just like 'us'.²⁷

²⁷ Zizek (1999) explains such a desire as the Lacanian notion of the *objet petit a*, a search for 'the object

Within the Australian context and its cultural tradition of individual liberalism it is not the 'community' or simply the 'other', but often the '*visible other*' that is most likely to suffer from racism and discrimination. The Orthodox Jew, the Black, the Indigenous, the Muslim woman wearing the *hijab* and the 'Asians' are some of those who in the Australian context carry with them a 'mark of difference' (Joan Scott, cited in Gunew, 1993:54). Such visibility is evident, as Frantz Fanon writes, in the cry 'Look, a Negro!' (1990:109). A visibility that overdetermines the 'other' from without. 'I am a slave not of the "idea" that others have of me but of my appearance' (Fanon, 1990:112). The tendency of such visible others is often to 'disappear' to search for some liberating invisibility. 'I slip into corners, I remain silent, I strive for anonymity, for invisibility. Look, I will accept the lot, as long as no one notices me' (Fanon, 1990:112).

Clearly, visibility and invisibility are not products of an 'objective' observation or a mere numerical aspect. It is not the rarity of such 'others' or their 'real' objective difference that makes them visible, rather, as Žižek (1999:65) explains, such visibility is a product of a symbolic space that is structured in ways that enable us *to see* them as the 'others'. And as Bhabha explains, using Etienne Balibar's arguments:

... the identificatory language of discrimination works in reverse: 'the racial / cultural identity of the "true nationals" remains invisible but is inferred from ... the quasi-hallucinatory visibility of the "false nationals" — Jews, "wops", immigrants, *indios*, *natives* blacks'. Thus constructed, prejudicial knowledge is forever uncertain and in danger, for as Balibar concludes, 'that the "false" are *too* visible will never guarantee that the "true" are visible *enough*' (Bhabha, 1998:31).

In Australia, the symbolic space of the 'dominant culture' is constructed around a fantasy of Australia as a White nation (Hage, 1998a). The 'ethnics' are those who see themselves and are seen by others as non-Anglos and often as non-Whites or even as 'blacks', 'a terminology that has less to do with notions of race than with perceived opposition to a dominant group' (Gunew, 1993:59).²⁸

that makes the difference where one cannot establish any positive difference' (1999:100).

²⁸ Gunew, (1993:59) explain that Italians in Australia used to be called 'blacks' and that many other 'ethnics' like Arabs and even Greek-Australians are still considered and seen by themselves and others as 'blacks'. From my own experience the *Latinos* never defined themselves as 'blacks' (unless when they were actually 'black' or Afro-Latinos) but they also did not normally see themselves as 'Whites'. The 'Whites', within the Australian context, was a term synonymous to 'Anglos' that was simply regarded under the generalised category '*Australianos*'.

The visibility and invisibility axis is never an exclusive one. It is not about being seen or ignored by the others. There is always a need to explore the power fields and the situational aspects of such cultural visibility / invisibility. Who is visible and who is doing the watching? How is the visibility constructed? How much and what kind of visibility or invisibility is allowed? In what contexts may migrants seek and 'exploit' such visibility and in what ways can they resist it or produce an alternative 'visibility'?

While multicultural festivals can be used by the state in order to exercise its symbolic power over the 'collection', such representations, from the migrants' point of view, can actually contribute to the creation of an alternative imagining of the 'host society' and a sense of belonging in the new place. 'Ethnic' cultural performances can act as a basis for an alternative representation that challenges or even strategically 'plays along' the official categorisations of multiculturalism while it gives migrants the opportunity to reclaim what they define as their 'culture'. Gillian Bottomley, for example, shows how Greek-Australians use dance, which could be seen as one of the ways in which the dominant culture exoticises them, 'as a positive measure of their difference from the dominant Anglomorph population' (1992:84).²⁹ Yet, such a political potential is limited especially when such events and performances (of 'culture') are operating from within the symbolic power of the state.

The problem, therefore, is to explore the ways that the notion of cultural identity is related to multicultural policies and imagery, whilst avoiding the reification and homogenisation of 'culture'. The real challenge is to conceptualise the multiple flux of identities (collective or personal) whilst being suspicious of any simple representation of homogenised 'culture'. At the same time we need to avoid the discourse of liberal individualism which rejects any claim for a group 'identity' and sees the 'individual' as the author of its own 'choices' and cultural identity (Bourdieu, 1990:61). Instead we need to contextualise and look at the different social fields and particular reasons

²⁹ The term 'strategic essentialism' is another way politics of identity can work for some minorities in order to gain political power and protect their sense of otherness. Within Australia see for example the way Aboriginal self racialisation was used in a tactical way in protecting their special place as the indigenous people of Australia and in resistance to them becoming another ethnic group amongst many others (Stratton, 1998:32).

for claims and attempts to 'maintain' or represent 'our culture' especially when migrants themselves evoke it (Barth, 1994:30; Bourdieu, 1990).

'Community', Performances and Migratory Forms of Belonging

One of the first issues that I had to address during my fieldwork was to try and define the socio-cultural fields in which terms such as the 'Latin American community' or 'communities' seem to operate and 'exist'. I was concerned mainly with the ways by which these particular groups of people create meanings and construct spaces in which they can have a sense of living in their own 'culture' and 'community'.

Accordingly, I wanted to observe the ways by which these migrants worked to create forms of belonging in their new social and cultural context. The term 'belonging' stands here not only in relation to the 'local' setting of the 'ethnic community', as in *being* one of a group of culturally similar persons (or even by *being* part of the larger Australian context) but also in the sense of the *longing* to be some place elsewhere. As much as the migratory movement is a trajectory of dislocation it is also about multiple forms of gatherings in the 'new' place, a 'place' that is often experienced as 'different' and 'strange' from the place of origin. The 'desire for belonging' (Probyn, 1996:19) is embodied in the migratory experience.

Homi Bhabha beautifully captures this aspect of the migratory movement in his description of the 'time of gathering':

I have lived the moment of the scattering of the people that in other times and other places in the nation of others, becomes a time of gathering. Gatherings of exiles and émigrés and refugees; gathering on the edge of 'foreign' cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafés of city centers; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another's languages; gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of underdevelopment, of other worlds lived retroactively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present (Bhabha, 1994:139).

Official multiculturalism, in its cultural classification and by its reification of 'otherness', often assumes migrants to be part of a homogeneous 'community' with a clear sense of 'ethnic' identity and 'culture.' Yet, such a conceptualisation is far from

the ways by which movement and the migratory experiences make 'migrants' question their own sense of 'identity' and 'belonging'.

Identity, or the process of engagement of the self in the social world, is an issue for migrants partly because representations of migrants often contain the assumption that identity is somehow homogenous, coherent and stable. Migration, however, highlights the relational, contextual and fluid nature of identity (Thomas, 1998:xii).

Extensive movements of people, ideas and cultural products and the multiple ways by which the familiar 'locality' is fractured and transformed by global movements and 'travelling cultures' doesn't mean, however, that 'identity' is no longer relevant or that such terminology should be avoided altogether. In taking into account the temporal and the fluid and even fragmented nature of identities, we need to proceed by asking how, and in what ways do identities continue to be produced, performed, embodied and lived effectively (Bell, 1999:2).

The migratory experience obliges the migrants, as well as their 'host societies', to re-think their sense of identity and belonging. In particular for the migrants, the sense of being 'out of place' makes it necessary to 'create a place', to construct particular 'zones of difference' (Probyn, 1996:23), in order to 'make sense' of the new social and cultural environments that they encounter. The migratory ways of belonging are part of what Edward Said defines as the 'discontinuous state of being' (cited in Chambers, 1994:2), a social position which is 'always tainted with deep insecurities about the possibility of truly fitting in, of even getting in' (Probyn, 1996:40). For this reason belonging is an 'in-between' state: 'thus, while belonging may make one think of arriving, it also marks the often fearsome interstices of being and going, of longing, of not arriving' (Probyn, 1996:40).

In addition to the 'desire of belonging', migrants, like other displaced persons, need to 're-member' their previous social life in different ways in order to (re)construct their own social definition of 'identity' and 'community' in the 'new place' (Myerhoff, 1982:111). Myerhoff uses the term 're-membering' in relation to a special type of performed recollections amongst elderly Jewish immigrants in the United States. These particular powerful and lived recollections of the past enabled the elderly to

retell and reconstruct their life history. Re-membering one's 'identity' and 'difference' is not always played at the collective level, yet as Myerhoff shows, an important aspect of such recollections rests in the way that they take the form of cultural performances.

Cultural performances are reflective in the sense of showing ourselves to ourselves. They are also capable of being reflexive, arousing consciousness of ourselves as we see ourselves. As heroes in our own dramas, we are made self-aware, conscious of our consciousness (Myerhoff, 1982:105).

Performing 'identity' and recollections of the past are extremely important in the context of migration. The collective performances of 'our culture' are not merely a 'reification' or 'folklorisation' of 'ethnicity' and 'culture' or even pure nostalgia, because such public 'performances of culture' are what make the migrants visible and may provide them with a sense of 'community'. As Myerhoff argues in quoting Mircea Eliade, cultural performance and the visibility of a particular group and 'cultural identity' is important not only because it is a 'vehicle of being seen', but mainly because 'we become what we display' (Myerhoff, 1982:106). Furthermore, part of the 'home building' process in adjusting to life in a new country is about developing a group identity and searching for 'communities'. The multiple gatherings of migrants in the 'new place' are based, to a large degree, on the desire to meet people who you can recognise as your 'own' and who can recognise you as such. To have a 'community', in that sense, means to create '... a space where one knows that at least some people can morally be relied on for help' (Hage, 1997:103).

The category 'ethnic community', like other such 'alternative' social worlds is assumed to exist 'naturally' for minority groups and migrants, who are regarded by the dominant culture as part of the undifferentiated 'Others'. Such categorisations create the effect that Gilroy calls, 'ethnic absolutism' (cited in Fortier 1999:43), whereby 'cultural practices are reified and naturalised as "typical expressions" of an ethnic identity; they are seen as resulting from that identity, rather than performing that identity' (Fortier, 1999:43). This is why it is important to emphasise that belonging to a 'migrant / ethnic community' is never 'natural' and that 'ethnicity' and even the 'original' national group identity or 'culture' can never be taken as the starting point of the discussion. 'Culture' and 'identity' cannot explain or help assume

the existence of a 'community' and there is always a need to avoid the view of the 'community' and its 'culture' as a closed or stable system.

To understand the dynamics of the social worlds which these migrants create, their sense of difference and the way they construct their new 'locality', we need to study the various 'cultural identities' that are performed and constructed as part of a local / global *Latino* social world. In the Australian context, the notion of 'culture' is central to these constructions because it is mainly this terminology, alongside the idea of the 'community', that is central to official multiculturalism. In order to gain visibility (as a 'community') the 'Latin Americans' need to become 'cultural performers' — they are made to produce an image of themselves as people of 'culture' which may then give them better possibilities to compete for limited governmental resources.

In order to understand how such 'cultural' identities are formed, performed and challenged we need to analyse the structures, policies and the particular social contexts in which such cultural negotiations and ethnic differentiations take place (Bottomley, 1998:37). Furthermore, expressions of 'Latin American' cultural identity are not things that these migrants simply brought with them into Australia, rather they are being produced locally in relation to, but also in separation from, the official discourse.

In an interesting discussion of the 'Helen Demidenko' affair, Sneja Gunew argues that it is the 'idealisation of ethnicity' and the lack of knowledge of ethnic differences in Australia that offer the conditions in which official multiculturalism operates as a system of control and surveillance in a Foucauldian sense.³⁰ 'Ethnicity' is always produced in accordance with the dominant discourse. Like gender, which is in Butler's view a product of performativity 'in which identity is the effect of performance, and not vice versa' (Bell, 1999:3), so is 'ethnicity' within the setting of official multiculturalism and various other cultural institutions that promote it. Like a drag

³⁰ Helen Darville is an Anglo Australian writer who wrote a controversial but prize-winning anti-Semitic novel in which she as a writer 'adopted' a Ukrainian ethnic identity. As such her work was considered and judged, as a genuine 'ethnic' voice.

show performer who helps reveal the 'performativity' of gender, so is the case of a writer who performs 'ethnicity' in order to give her novel a sense of authenticity.

Ethnicity here, exists only in representation — or performance. This is the scandal of transvestism — that transvestism tells the truth about ethnicity. Helen Darville merely wished to perform the idealised 'ethnic' (Gunew, 1996:166).

A similar argument is made by Stratton and Ang (1998) who argue that the emphasis on 'ethnicity' within official multiculturalism is part of the settler-society attempt to create a distinctive national culture, which hides its Anglo-Celtic hegemony. The performances of 'ethnicity' serve an important function in the maintenance and reproduction of Anglo-Celtic cultural hegemony, '...official multiculturalism suppresses the continued hegemony of Anglo-Celtic Australian culture by making it invisible' (Stratton and Ang, 1998:158).

Yet, 'ethnicity' and performances of 'otherness' are not entirely the work of the dominant culture. Some migrants, even when not openly discriminated against, may feel and experience their own life as if they are 'out of place', far from their familiar social environment and cultural space.³¹ The construction of a social environment in which you can talk in your own language, consume your own 'ethnic' food, listen to your music and have a sense of 'community' are some of the ways in which migrants try to make themselves feel at home in Australia (Hage, 1997:101). These practices and feelings should not always be perceived negatively, as in the sense of lost and nostalgic longings for some place elsewhere, since, as Hage argues, such 'nostalgic feelings are affective building blocks' which 'are used by migrants to engage in home-building in the here and now' (Hage, 1997:104). It is such practices that provide migrants with a sense of difference and pride, which is almost essential for any group and personal identity (Bottomley, 1992:132).³²

³¹ For this reason space plays an important role in the construction of identity after migration. See, for example, the important work of Mandy Thomas (1999) in regard to the ways in which Vietnamese-Australians create and imagine their place in Australia.

³² Max Weber's classic analysis of status groups is relevant here. To be a status group the group needs to distinguish itself from other groups and have the claim of their difference accepted by other members of the society. In the particular context of ethnic groups, Weber talks about 'ethnic honour', which can be sustained by shared language, memory and religious beliefs (cited in Bottomley, 1998:32).

Furthermore, the attempt to 'imagine a community' and the construction of a group's belonging, especially in relation to migration, also involves the formation of particular subjects (Fortier, 1999:42). The production and the representation of a collective identity is never merely textual or visual but involves the construction of differentiated subjects who embody and perform their 'culture'.³³ Yet, because of the migratory movement and the experience of 'being out of place', such daily performances of the 'original' culture (including the 'staged' ones) are never merely, even when 'marketed' as such, the expression of the 'authentic culture' which the migrants brought with them to Australia.³⁴

The theoretical challenge in analysing group identity and the complex relationships migrants have with their homelands is to explore the particular contexts and ways by which, within the multicultural imaginary, abstract notions such as 'community', 'culture' and 'identity' are experienced and lived. The need is to observe the ways in which social categories, such as 'country of origin', 'language' and even 'ethnicity', apart from their statistical quality, are debated, experienced and performed in the new 'localities' that migrants construct.

In a theoretical attempt to conceptualise the global migratory and diasporic construction of 'place' and the production of new types of localities within the nation-state, Appadurai talks about a process of 'reterritorialization' (Bell, 1999:33). Migrants in this sense are not only deterritorialized but also reterritorialized in more than one place. They remain involved in the life and political contexts of their homelands while constructing their new locality.

Diaspora — Place, Culture, Identity

State multiculturalism's practices and images are incorporated into the Latin American migrants' definitions of themselves and their 'community' in more than one

³³ Fortier (1999:55), points to the way 'continuity' is often transferred to future generations of migrants who are placed under pressure to express it and continue to live their parents' 'past' and duality of places.

³⁴ The claim of authenticity emerged mainly when aspects of the 'ethnic culture' were marketed outside of the 'community'. For example, a recent local dance school was advertised as a school in which (in contrast maybe to other such venues) the teachers are 'Authentic South American Latin Teachers'.

sense. Yet we need to remember that immigration is a complex process which involves other issues and experiences that may or may not be related directly to the dominant discourse of state multiculturalism. These understandings are essential for avoiding a simplistic or partial explanation of migration. It is important to face the theoretical and practical challenges which the movement of large populations present, not only for the 'nation' and its 'identity', but also for the migrants themselves as well as for anthropologists and others who are living and studying such complex social realities (Olwig & Hastrup, 1997).

In a world of diaspora, transnational cultural flows, and mass movements of populations, old-fashioned attempts to map the globe as a set of culture regions or homelands are bewildered by a dazzling array of postcolonial simulacra, doublings and redoublings, as India and Pakistan apparently reappear in postcolonial simulation in London, pre-revolution Teheran rises from the ashes in Los Angeles, and a thousand similar cultural dreams are played out in urban and rural settings all across the globe. In this culture-play of diaspora, familiar lines between 'here' and 'there', centre and periphery, colony and metropole become blurred (Gupta & Ferguson 1992:10).

As Rushdie (1987:6) reminds us 'There have never been so many people who end up elsewhere than they began, whether by choice or by necessity'. New anthropological conceptualisations of 'culture' are part of the attempt to understand a world of 'travelling cultures', a world whereby the famous photograph of Malinowski's tent 'among Trobriand dwellings' (Clifford, 1997:20) as the primary image of fieldwork, is no longer appropriate.³⁵

The effects of massive movements of people and 'cultures' on the notion and the experience of the 'locality' are particularly important in the context of anthropology. Migratory movements challenge the previous anthropological assumption of a simple link between culture, people and specific places (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992:6).

Anthropology's own self conception depended on a notion that 'they' were supposed to be 'there' and 'we' were supposed to be 'here' — except of course, when 'we' showed up 'there' as ethnographers, tourists, missionaries, or development experts (Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996:1–2).³⁶

³⁵ This is the case for example in the work of Ghosh (1994:50) who realised that 'every man', in the Egyptian village he had studied, 'was a traveller'.

³⁶ Tsing (1993:123) raises a similar point:

In defining itself as a science that can travel anywhere, anthropology has classically constituted its objects — 'cultures' — as essentially immobile or as possessing a mobility that is cyclical and repetitive. The contrast between travelling science and its fixed objects is

In this context, space was seen as a kind of 'natural grid on which cultural difference, historical memory, and societal organisation are inscribed' (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992:6).

The world today can no longer be presented in such an elegant way. Globalisation transformed any simple division into 'us' and 'them', 'the west and the rest', with the result that the west itself can no longer imagine itself, to itself, as homogenous and monocultural.³⁷ 'The "savage" is no longer out "there" but has invaded the "home" here and has fissured it in the process' (Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996:2).³⁸ The global context, by which 'difference is encountered in the adjoining neighbourhood; the familiar turns up at the end of the earth' (Clifford, 1988:14), presents methodological and theoretical problematics regarding the practice of anthropology in the late twentieth century and beyond (Clifford, 1997:20). Rapid mobility of people, commodities and technologies has led many contemporary scholars to study the 'cultural heterogeneity and the trans-communal links through which "communities" are forged' (Tsing, 1993:9). A new style of ethnography is needed in the study of the *ethnoscape*, the '...landscape of persons who make up the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and persons ...' (Appadurai, 1991:190). In this sense, Appadurai writes:

The landscapes of group identity — the ethnoscares — around the world are no longer familiar anthropological objects, in so far as groups are no longer tightly territorialised, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogenous (1991:196).

The term 'diaspora' is important in this context as it attempts to capture the complex processes of such hybrid cultural play:

displayed in the expected practices of fieldwork: the anthropologist travels; the culture is found in a set place.

³⁷ David Theo Goldberg argues that the assumption of homogeneity is an artifice which ignores the historical records in which migration is 'somehow part of our natural condition' (1994:21). In this sense the notion of multiculturalism opens our eyes to the fact that 'culture' was never localised and that, 'People move and have moved since human inception' (1994:21).

³⁸ Within anthropology, 'The fieldwork injunction to go elsewhere construes "home" as a site of origin, of sameness' (Clifford, 1997:85). Lavie and Swedenburg ask, 'What would Margaret Mead have made of Samoan gangs in Los Angeles, or of the L.A. Samoan gangster rap group the Boo-Yah Tribe, named after the Samoan term "boo-yah!," for a shotgun blast in a drive-by shooting?' (1996:1-2).

Diaspora is one attempt to name this hodgepodge of everyday 'out of country, ... even out of language' experience and its textual representations. Challenging our perceived notion of place, disrupting those normative spatial temporal units of analysis like nation and culture, it accounts for one type of displacement (Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996:14).

Diasporas carry within them the ambivalence embodied in the cultural experience of dwelling / travelling. The diasporic experience is one that revolves around the dialectic of home and away, it represents the experiences of displacement but also enables the construction of home away from home. As such, as Clifford (1997:9) suggests, diasporas should be 'seen as potential subversions of nationality — ways of sustaining connections with more than one place while practicing non absolutist forms of citizenship'.³⁹ The notion of diaspora then, within the larger context of post-colonialism and globalisation, is a good starting point for understanding the experiences of migrants in 'multicultural' societies.

Instead of looking only at the ways in which migrants relate to their 'host' society (i.e. assimilation, adaptation and cultural loss or cultural maintenance), the concept of diaspora places the stress on the ongoing relations migrants have with their 'homeland'. Yet, the power of such an emphasis is in the way it challenges the categorical separation between here and there, home and away, and instead looks at the multiple interactions and social relations that mark the multiplicity of places.⁴⁰ Diaspora is about ambivalence and as such affords the possibility of staying and being different. In this sense, rather than a notion of culture that is fixed and rigid within some 'ethnic' category, the diaspora points to the contingent and contextual aspects of identity.

³⁹ It is true that diasporic populations can be nationalistic, and Clifford acknowledges this. However the practice of 'homecomings' is almost always a negation of the diaspora, as was the historic case of the establishment of the state of Israel (Clifford, 1997:251). In this sense the diaspora represents for intellectuals like Daniel Boyarin, a model *for* and a possibility to go beyond nationalism and the nation state. Accepting hybrid identities and the rejection of an exclusive ethnic national space, means accepting the diasporic condition in which there will be no meaning for displacement in regards to people who are not where they belong, because people will belong where they are. From this perspective, the state of Israel is actually 'the subversion of Jewish culture and not its culmination'; Jewish nationalism is regarded as 'negation of the diaspora' in a deeper sense from which Zionism is seen as a way of 'capturing Judaism in a state' (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993:722, 724; cited in Clifford, 1997:270).

⁴⁰ The 'homeland' in itself is often being constructed as part of the diasporic experience as a source of resistance against oppressive national hegemony (Clifford, 1997:225).

At the same time the diasporic experience is always about the negotiation of identity within a particular socio-historic setting.

Thus, the term 'diaspora' is a signifier not simply of transnationality and movement but of political struggles to define the local, as a distinctive community, in the historical context of displacement. The simultaneous strategies of community maintenance and interaction combine the discourse and skills of what Vijay Mishra has termed 'diaspora of exclusivism' and 'diasporas of the border' (1994) (Clifford, 1997:252).

While this last statement fails to problematise enough the idea of the 'community' it nevertheless alludes to the notion of the 'locality' which is extremely important for the experience and notions of the diaspora. The historical and social contexts of the 'new place' and the relations to the homeland are part of a larger process by which the 'ethnic identity' and the 'community' (that at times are assumed to be given or 'natural') are constantly created and transformed.

In order to understand the complex process of 'identity formations' and 'community formations' that are part of the condition of 'living in a new country' (Carter, 1992), we need to explore the complex relations that migrants maintain with their families, local communities and the nation-states from which migration took place. Return trips, particularistic media, financial support and other kinds of collective and private practices (for example the use of video and other electronic media) are some of the ways in which such relations are constructed and maintained (Cunningham & Sinclair, 2000; Kolar-Panov, 1997).

Official multiculturalism demands that migrants demonstrate loyalty to their new national identity. However, migrants may try to keep an alternative national identity (as well as other 'types' of identities) as part of their 'diasporic condition'.⁴¹ While these identities are not necessarily in conflict with each other, such an ambivalence is enough to problematise any simple view of multiculturalism as a unified national identity. In this sense it is not enough to explore only the ways in which diasporic relations influence the experience and the various interpretations of the local

⁴¹ Benedict Anderson calls this phenomenon the 'ethnicization of existing nationalities' that are practising a 'long-distance nationalism' (Quoted in Verdery, 1994:55). See also the work of Skrbis (1999).

'community'. It is also necessary to see if, and in what ways, such ambivalence challenges the official definition of multiculturalism and the conceptualisation of the 'ethnic community'. The concept of diaspora is important in this regard since it offers, as Brah (1996:180) explains:

... a critique of discourses of fixed origin, while taking accounts of a homing desire which is not the same thing as desire for a 'homeland'. This destination is important, not least because not all diasporas sustain an ideology of 'return'.

There is a need to see if official multiculturalism can provide room for the existence of 'diasporic communities' that it attempts to contain and redefine as 'ethnicities' within the framework of the multicultural nation. Furthermore, the simplistic idea of a unified and harmonious multicultural nation that ignores the power relations between the dominant Anglo-Celtic majority and the 'ethnics', as well as the resurgence of racism that attacks the inclusive rhetoric of the policy, may result in disillusionment with multiculturalism. This, in turn, may lead to the emergence of the 'diasporic' as a form of resistance to the 'inclusive' national rhetoric of multiculturalism. In particular circumstances such 'diasporic communities' may result in the establishment of alternative identifications and the emergence of 'neighbourhoods' that operate as alternative cultural spaces to the nation-state (Appadurai, 1995).

Other practices that challenge the official policy are at the level of the 'individual' migrant. We should look at the ways by which individuals challenge their general categorisation as an 'ethnic collective' by presenting and 'maintaining' a sense of 'difference' and distance from the 'community' and by producing alternative 'identities' in their everyday life.

In exploring these questions we should not accept the view that multiculturalism forms a powerful state ideology in which migrants are reduced to mere pawns. Nor should we take up the idea that multiculturalism, as the antithesis of racism, automatically gives more room for manipulating identities and encouraging the *self-definition* of 'ethnicity' (Verdery, 1994:37). We also have to bear in mind that whilst official multiculturalism's 'politics of identity' may encourage the construction of

'ethnic communities', it can actually be oppressive to individuals who might want to discard their supposedly 'home culture' and oppose such an 'ethnic' characterisation.

The danger is that multicultural policies will tend to '... make identities more rather than less imperative, as identity categories become mandatory elements of people's existence within the state' (Verdery, 1994:39). Some individuals may reject altogether their permanent multicultural categorisation as 'migrants', who belong to an 'ethnic community' and have a distinct 'culture'. These individuals may oppose also any ambivalent diasporic view of themselves by making Australia their new home.⁴² Thus, rejection of 'ethnicity' and an opposition to the category of the 'migrant' are possibilities that have to be addressed in specific case studies and in particular situations.⁴³

Why then, in such a global context, is it important to speak about a local 'ethnic / migrant community?' Is such a 'localised' terminology of any value when, despite its official state definition, it is clear that the 'local' 'community' is not situated in one particular space nor clearly defined? Yet it is the 'community' more than any other social category that my research focuses on. This is not only because the 'ethnic / migrant community' is the main *practical* category used by the state to define and control such collectives, but also because the term *la comunidad* — the community — was constantly evoked as the main source of struggle and 'collectivity' by the *Latinos* themselves.

The anthropological gaze enables us to problematise many of the assumptions in regard to the 'community' and to explore the way migrants use but also resist such

⁴² A survey conducted by the Office for Multicultural Affairs in 1988 shows 'that only 7.4 per cent of the survey thought of themselves as belonging to an ethnic group other than Australian or British, while 84 per cent responded to the survey by disclaiming membership of any ethnic group, and claim instead to be simply Australian' (O'Regan & Kolar-Panov, 1994:129).

⁴³ In this context the question, 'where are you from?' especially for the sons and daughters of migrants can be seen as an insult, an implication that you do not really belong.

All my life in Australia I have been asked the question: Where are you from? When reflecting on how hatred has operated in my own life and sense of self, I can't escape the memories of racist hostility I've experienced here and the discomfort this question always caused me. 'I'm from Sydney', I'd answer. 'But where are you really from. Where are your parents from' and so it goes, as any one who doesn't look 'Anglo-Australian' would only know too well (Goldman 1997:155).

multicultural categorisations. Furthermore, in exploring the complexity of the 'performance of identity', we can move beyond the ethnocentric assumption that such 'identities' are necessarily bound to the official ideology and the 'ethnic' niche in Australia, and instead look at the global context of the *Latino* diaspora.

The local *fiestas*, as I will discuss next, are about the production of 'localities', networks and identities that cannot be easily contained under the official multicultural rhetoric of the 'maintenance of culture' or as cultural expressions of a homogenised 'ethnic community'. Instead of 'maintaining' 'culture' and the 'community' these social events should be read as constitutive. These events operate as sites of gatherings and performances that illustrate the migratory movement and the complexity of the diasporic condition.

CHAPTER 3

HERE / THERE — PERFORMANCES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A LATINO LOCALITY AT THE COMMUNAL FIESTAS

En Chile Nacido

*Despues de tantos años
Despues de tantas vivencias
todas ajenas a mi chilena experiencia;
me doy cuenta y percibo
que estos años
rápidamente se han ido.*

*Nacido en esa exigua
Penetrante y larga faja de tierra
soy parte de ella
ceñida, al epicentro del mundo
desde Antártida roída y desdeñada
te llevo Patria mía
en el pensamiento y la mirada.*

*Admirando en la distancia
tus montañas y apacibles lagos
de aguas magnificadas
por colores indescritibles
a la palabra humana.*

*Y el dieciocho de Septiembre se celebra
con cuecas; vino y empanadas
toda la alegría de una ramada.*

*Recordando cuando me viniera
pues allá, quedó todo lo que fuera
más amado y querido;
aunque muchos años transcurridos
con el tiempo nada olvido
porque en la retina tengo
hasta lo último que en Chile
esté sucediendo.*

*Ayer como hoy sintiendo
que por la vida voy
de Chile contando
las cosas que vivo,
pendiente y escuchando.*

*Y al despedirme digo
aquí o donde muera
vivirá el recuerdo de mi tierra
donde yo naciera ...*

Born in Chile

After so many years,
After this long life
Different and strange
from my Chilean experience
I realise and acknowledge
that these years have gone so fast.

Born in that scanty,
Penetrating and long strip of soil
I'm part of that land,
girdle to the centre of the world
from the desecrated Antarctic
Chile, you are under my skin
In my thoughts, in my eyes.

Now in the distance admiring
your mountains, and lakes
magnificent waters
colours indescribable
no words can do you justice.

And the 18th of September,
Independence Day is celebrated
with wine, food dance and joy.

Remembering what I had left,
there stays, everything
precious and loved in my life,
with time and half my years gone
nothing have I forgotten
in my senses I hold even
the smallest thing in Chile.

Feeling as yesterday and today
Throughout life I'm thinking
about Chile speaking of those things
I care about.

In my farewell I say
I love Australia,
but my roots, deep inside
here and wherever I die
memories will live on
of the land where I was born.

‘Born in Chile’ was written by Sergio Mouat, a Chilean poet who, like other Chilean migrants and refugees in Australia, left Chile in the aftermath of the military coup of 1973.¹ I chose this poem to open this chapter because it articulates eloquently the existential experience of the migrant’s movement between different cultural and geographical landscapes. As I explained in the previous chapter, the ‘new’ localities that migrants construct are often a result of complex social realities, power structures and ongoing relations with the homeland that shape the migratory desire for belonging. Such localities are often where the ‘duality of place’, the particular migratory sense of displacement and cultural change are lived and constructed.

‘Born in Chile’ is a manifestation of the migratory relationships with different (often experienced as exclusive) sets of places. The poet looks back on his life trajectory and his memories of the old place in relation to his present life in a different place. Yet, this sort of reflection is not merely an act of nostalgia or mourning for the lost ‘nation’ and its landscape.² In adopting what I call the ‘here / there framework’, the poem is clearly written from an experience of Australia as a place that is distant, strange and foreign to the homeland. ‘*El fin del mundo*’ — ‘the end of the world’, is a term used by many Latin American migrants when recounting their first encounter with Australia. Yet the ambiguity of such a position becomes evident when the binary of here / there can no longer be easily obtained. As the poet reflects about the ‘Chile’ that was left behind, he states, almost in surprise but in a self-reassuring way, ‘nothing have I forgotten / in my senses I hold even / the smallest thing in Chile’. ‘Chile’, despite the movement, ‘stays’; it is inscribed in the body, *en la retina tengo*, ‘Chile, you are under my skin / In my thoughts, in my eyes’, and as such becomes part of the present life in the new place.

From a distance, however, Chile — its people and geographical landscape — is no longer within the reach of ‘direct experience’ or ‘accessible immediacy’ (Schutz,

¹ The original poem was written and published in a bilingual edition of the book ‘*From the Andes to the Brindabellas*’. The English translation of this particular poem is somewhat clumsy, yet this is the way that it appeared in the original text.

² For many Chilean exiles the ‘lost nation’ is often not merely the place that was left behind but also the dream to build a new ‘just Chile’ that was crushed by the brutal regime of General Augusto Pinochet. See Timerman, (1987) for an interesting account of the political drama of the military coup and life during the years of dictatorship in Chile.

1964:111). Instead the homeland, the place of the deep 'roots',³ needs to be evoked, imagined and performed (as the reference to the celebration of Independence Day indicates) in order to 'coexist' in the new place.⁴ 'Born in Chile' is as much about the particular time and location it is written from as it is about the memory of the place of origin. The mental act of remembering, but also the act of writing and publishing such bilingual poems, within the context of movement and delocalisation, are social techniques used for the 'construction of locality' (Appadurai, 1995). For many migrants such processes are born from, but also work towards constructing a 'duality of place'. The memory of 'there' plays an important role in the construction of a particular 'here'. The new place, and to a certain degree the old one, are experienced in the light of the here / there ambiguity, which is in itself a social construct achieved through various practices and symbolic expressions within the new locality.⁵

This chapter begins by exploring some aspects of the here / there complexity and the ways in which such a framework marks the life experience of Latin American migrants and refugees in Adelaide. I point to the ideological construction of official multiculturalism that assumes Australia as a *different* and distinctive national space. I then move to explore the ways in which the here / there framework constructs the communal *fiestas* in Adelaide as cultural performances of 'identity' and the 'community' that they are embodied in, but also how it works to construct the migratory experience as a multiplicity of places. I compare these communal *fiestas* to new emerging commercial *fiestas* that promote Latin dance and music as 'cultural' exotica.

³ The image of 'roots' is typical to the image of the nation and national identity. (Malkki, 1992). This image does not appear in the Spanish version of the poem which talks instead of '*el recuerdo de mi tierra*' the memory of the land.

⁴ It is possible to argue that the poet is actually talking about his memories of the celebration of Independence Day back in Chile. However, such celebrations are also conducted in Australia and may suggest, therefore, a different reading. The 'local' celebration of Independence Day generates, like the poem itself, memories of 'Chile', the place that was left behind.

⁵ It is interesting to note that the lines 'In my farewell I say / I love Australia but my roots ...' do not appear in the Spanish version of the poem. In the Spanish version there is no reference to 'I love Australia' and instead 'Australia' is only regarded as '*aquí*' (here). The Australian '*aquí*' is like any other foreign place, '*aquí o donde muera*' (here or wherever I die), which is very different from the feelings for '*mi tierra donde yo naciera*' (my land or my country where I was born). The reason for the addition of the line 'I love Australia' could be the desire to 'explain' to the 'Australian' reader that the love for the 'original' homeland is not excluding the love for Australia. It is almost as if the poet attempts to answer the imaginative accusation that as a migrant (who was born somewhere else) he does not really belong *here*. 'If you suffer so much, if Chile is so wonderful, why are you here, why don't you go back?'

The *fiestas* are an integral part of the communal 'Latin American' social life in Adelaide. In more than one sense the celebration of a *fiesta* is always a celebration of the 'community', and for the 'community'. It is a form of social gathering, whose success depends on the collective efforts and complex social networks, which these events also help to maintain and reproduce. There is at least one *fiesta* celebrated every month although at other times there may be two or even three *fiestas* celebrated. The preparation of a *fiesta* includes the collection of donations, food preparation and the promotion of the event in different community media and at other social events. *Fiestas* are normally celebrated on Friday or Saturday nights at different 'community halls' around Adelaide,⁶ and are often organised and promoted by one or several 'community' organisations as a fund raising activity. A 'typical' *fiesta* may bring together around three to four hundred participants.

The event itself, even when this is conducted in relation to a particular disaster 'back home', is always a celebratory event. It involves particular sounds, tastes, smells, dances and other performances and social behaviours that are seen and regarded as an expression of Latin American cultures. A night of the *fiesta* will almost always include various types of staged performances, mainly of 'traditional' folkloric dance and that of 'Latin' dance music. Performances, in their broad sense, are not limited to the staged presentation of musical and folkloric dances mainly because as a social gathering, the *fiestas* incorporate audience participation with the consumption of 'typical' foods, and dancing to the sounds of one or several local 'Latin' bands. Seen as communal events, the *fiestas* are attended by family members of all age groups including very young children.

Whilst *fiestas* may contain various representations of particular countries of origin (through the presentations of particular foods, music and dance forms as well as other national 'identity' markers) these events also promote and celebrate a sense of a global *Latino* diaspora. As a result of such multiple identifications the *fiestas* cannot

⁶ At the time of writing, there is no 'Latin American' or 'Spanish' community hall in Adelaide. As such the *fiestas* were often celebrated in various 'ethnic' community halls or at different community centres around Adelaide. What determined the selection of a particular place were its size, availability and price as well as many other factors, like the acoustics and cooking facilities.

simply be read as the migrants' maintenance of their 'original' culture or alternatively as multicultural reductions of the 'real identity' to dance, music and (exotic) food.

A short description from the fieldnotes of one of the *fiestas* that I attended, reveals the richness of such events as an ethnographic site.

I arrive at the community hall in a suburb close to the city centre where the Salvadoran Independence Day Fiesta takes place. Although it is not very close to where most of the Salvadorans live this same hall has been used before for other communal fiestas. It is around seven o' clock and the place is still quite empty. Outside the entrance I stop and say hello to the women who stand in front of a large barbecue plate where they are frying the pupusas, the Salvadoran national food and the most requested serve in the Salvadoran fiestas. 'Hola que tal? They ask me, 'Muy bien, gracias' I reply. 'Como esta la familia? y donde esta tu esposa? The questions are familiar and I reply in Spanish just as I always do. 'My family is fine, but my wife was too tired to come, it is difficult to get out so late with the little one, so I am here by myself'.

I enter the main hall, which is a basketball court that has been transformed for the night into a Salvadoran space. Along the walls, ribbons and blue and white balloons have been placed and on one of the basketball rings, where the stage area is, there are two large flags, one is the flag of El Salvador and the other is the orange flag of the soccer team that organised the event. This particular fiesta is celebrated in order to collect money for the new Salvadoran soccer club, 'Club Deportivo Aguila' and was organised by members of the soccer club. Surprisingly, despite the fact that it is officially a party for Independence Day, there are not very many national symbols or themes displayed. Apart from the flag there are no other symbolic representations of the republic. There are no representations of traditional costumes, maps or photographs of El Salvador, they don't even play the 'Himno Nacional' or perform any other national rituals, like reading the 'Oracion a La Bandera Salvadorena' — 'The Prayer for the Salvadoran Flag' which is traditionally learnt by heart and is recited endlessly by school children during the 'semana civica' in El Salvador. The 'oracion' had been recited a week earlier on the local Salvadoran radio program which had celebrated Independence Day. Nor are there, as in other Salvadoran fiestas, any acknowledgments of the different 'departamentales', (regional and municipal zones) which symbolically mark the different parts of the republic.

The place is still quite empty but cumbia and merengue rhythms are already playing very loudly. Nobody is dancing yet, the serious dancing will begin only later, after the eating and drinking, and when the hall is full. The loud music will continue throughout the night. The local Latin band 'La Brazza' starts to play, this is their first segment. During the intervals the D.J 'Sonido Magico' steps in to play his music. People are entering and beginning to sit down at the tables that are placed around the walls, leaving the centre of the hall empty for dancing. Some of the tables are already reserved for particular families. Children are running around exploring other rooms

of the community centre. Each table, so it seems, is occupied by a particular family with parents, children and even grandchildren all sitting together.

Seeing me standing alone Paula, a Salvadoran community worker and one of the organisers of the event, invites me to sit next to her with her friends and family. As I often come by myself to such events I am always happy to be adopted in such a way. Paula shows me the program of the night. She points to a little girl who is dressed in a colourful traditional dress, 'you see this girl she will compete for the title of 'Miss Independencia junior, we will then have a competition for Miss Independencia 98'. This last competition is about fundraising and the person who manages to sell the most tickets, at ten cents each, will be the winner. There are two young women walking around and asking people to buy their 'tickets' and support them in the competition. I ask Paula, who is judging the competition and what is the criterion for the little girls. She explains that it is mainly the one who is the most 'simpatica' 'it is about the way they dress and present themselves' she explains. A local radio presenter is the MC for the night and she will announce the competitions and present the different competitors. Later, at around midnight, after the dancing and when some of the little children are already sleeping in their prams and people are ready to leave, the MC will conduct a raffle of the entry tickets and raffle tickets that have been sold during the evening.

Throughout the night I dance with Claudia, a young Salvadoran mother of three little boys who has recently separated from her husband after finding out that he has been having an affair with another woman. As we dance she jokes that as I have been dancing with her all night people are probably already talking about us, and think that we are a couple. While we are dancing she suddenly looks at a certain woman who is dancing just a few meters from us. 'You see that woman.' she asks. 'The first time that my husband left me was for her. He went to live with her'. I feel that she lays all the blame on the other woman so I tell her that her husband is probably not such an innocent victim. But according to Claudia, this other girl, who is also married, is well-known as a man-chaser. 'She stole my husband' she says. I try to ask for more details but the loud music makes it very hard to speak.

Before going home at around 1:00 am I speak to Mario, we stand next to the improvised kitchen area where the drinks and food are sold. Mario has drunk continuously throughout the night and is obviously quite drunk. He approaches me and asks in Spanish, 'So what do you think about us and about our culture?' I don't really know exactly how to answer such a direct question, so I reply, 'It is very interesting, I like the music and dance but I am a bit sad to see all the tensions amongst the different groups of Latinos'. Mario stops me, 'You don't understand, we have fights but we are united, we are sharing the same spirituality. We are all together, all the Latinos.' As I am thinking about a response he adds, 'If you need any help I can help you, I can read and comment on what you write. You know I was also doing a PhD. back in El Salvador, but I never finished it'. Rafael joins our conversation. He is also a little drunk. 'Tell me again what my name means in Hebrew?' he asks, and I reply that it means 'God will cure you'. Mario apologises and leaves as his wife calls him to come and help carry the sleeping children to the car. Rafael stays and talks to me about Daniel Dorfman and the play 'The Death and

The Maiden. We had talked about this play previously after one of the Radio programs and now he brings it up again. Because he is drunk and very emotional about the play it is hard for me to understand exactly what he wants to say; he claims that many people did not like the play and the way Dorfman, who did not suffer from torture himself, wrote about it. He also says that he remembers that, in the play, there is a powerful moment when the heroine, who had been tortured, tells her husband how painful it had been for her to find out that while she was being tortured he was with another woman. I said that I couldn't remember that particular detail of the play. 'The idea of the play' Rafael says, 'is that you can not help someone who has suffered so much, there is no way to compensate for such suffering'. He gets really excited when our conversation switches suddenly to the situation in Israel and when I mention that part of the problem is that each side sees the other as non-human. Rafael responds, 'You see this is exactly the point: You shall love thy neighbour'. 'Can you hate your brother?' he asks me rhetorically, 'If people realise that their enemies are their brothers they will not be able to kill them'.

It is the social complexity of such events that made me experience and read the *fiestas* as cultural events in which various performative and symbolic practices, multiple conversations and complex social knowledge, work to produce not one but several contested local 'Latin American' and distinctive national groupings. By adopting the multicultural notion of a 'cultural community', the *fiestas* are often presented by organisers and participants as a public expression of a local 'Latin American community'. However, in their various symbolic forms, as well as in their complex politics of production, these social gatherings demonstrate rival claims and incompatible views of the 'community'.

Before further describing the particular setting of the *fiestas* and how they operate and are organised, it is important to look at the complexity of the migratory relation to place and movement between places. Such a contextualisation is essential for understanding the articulation of the migrant locality through the notion of 'community' and organised migratory gatherings in the new place. This theoretical framework is further explored in the next chapter in relation to 'ethnic media' and the construction of the 'community' through symbolic representations of 'culture' and the 'elsewhere' that are part of migrants lived experiences and the ideological definitions of the 'migrant community' in the new place.

The Migrant In-Between Condition

Movement, the fluid sense of identity and the physical dislocation from one's native land are amongst the most common experiences of our century (Bammer, 1994). The lives of migrants, the displaced and the nomadic are often seen as the embodiments of the 'unhomely' postmodern condition (Bhabha, 1994:9). The migrant, the traveller and the nomad have become the new 'postmodern primitives' (Cresswell, 1997). Yet, apart from being a useful metaphor for the fluid nature of cultures and identities in a deterritorialised, diasporic and transnational world (Appadurai, 1995:213), migration transforms and reveals the cultural aspects of 'place', 'locality' and 'identity'. As Gupta and Ferguson argue, migratory experiences disturb the 'unproblematic link between identity and place' (1992:7).

The global movement of people and 'cultures' is a phenomenon that recounts larger historical and transnational processes but its effects are often felt and debated at the level of a particular locality. The localities affected by migration are obviously not only those of the host countries but often also of the countries the migrants come from. Anderson, for example, notes that the Philippine economy is heavily dependent on remittances sent by Filipino workers and migrants in the Gulf, Italy, Saudi Arabia, England, California, Hong Kong, Japan and Spain (1994:327). It is for these reasons that the notion of a deterritorialised world, as Yaeger argues, does not mean that the 'local is lost' (1996:16). In fact it is through migration and movement that we come to understand the importance of theorising the 'locality'. When we can no longer simply assume cultures to be localised in definite places, we are able to notice 'the hybrid nature of all localities and the arduous cultural work required to maintain local customs' (Yaeger, 1996:16). 'Place' (and for that matter 'space') is 'a fragmentary field of action, a jurisdiction scattered and deranged, which appears to be negotiable or continuous but is actually peppered with chasms of economic and cultural disjunctions' (Yaeger, 1996:4). Any 'locality' is an inherently fragile social achievement, which is in constant need of social maintenance (Appadurai, 1995:205).

The notion of 'locality' is spatial but it is also, as Appadurai explains, a relational and contextual social construct. In light of these aspects of the 'locality', Appadurai

analytically distinguishes between the spatial aspect of what he defines as 'neighbourhoods' — 'the actually existing social forms in which locality, as a dimension or value, is variably realised' (1995:204) — and the relational and contextual aspect of 'locality' as 'a complex phenomenological quality, constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity and the relativity of contexts' (1995:204).

Migrants, almost in a teleological sense, are seen as people who do not 'belong' in their new social context. In his well known essay, 'The Stranger', Schutz points to the ways by which the relationship of the *locals* to their social reality is essentially different from the ways by which *strangers* relate to the particular dominant 'cultural pattern of group life' that they encounter as outsiders. Phenomenologically speaking, for the 'locals' the 'locality' is part of a 'natural' and normally unnoticed social world. Such a social reality, in Schutz's words, consists (as long as there is no evident 'crisis') of the 'trustworthy recipes' and the 'thinking-as-usual' (1964:96). The stranger, however, is by definition someone who does not share the same 'thinking-as-usual' and 'of-course' assumptions that locals have. For Schutz, the 'stranger' is an important 'ideal type', an analytical example of social *difference* that helps to illustrate the phenomenological notion of the 'social construction of reality'. The 'stranger' reveals the social processes of producing 'thinking-as-usual' that lead by definition to the creation of a particular 'reality' which 'outsiders' do not share.

Yet, the relation between a particular 'locality' in a physical spatial sense and the ways by which such 'locality' generates a particular group of people who share a similar 'thinking-as-usual' is not clear. Appadurai (1995) tackles this issue when he shifts his theoretical emphasis from the 'construction of reality' to that of the 'construction of locality.' 'Locality' is produced and maintained while it creates its particular *local subjects*, 'actors who properly belong to a situated community of kin, neighbours, friends and enemies' (Appadurai, 1995:205). A particular 'locality' always produces some kind of boundaries, it creates not only its particular *local subjects*, but also the material and spatial aspects of their locality. In other words, the 'locality' produces 'the very neighbourhoods which contextualised these subjectivities' (Appadurai, 1995:205).

For Appadurai, the question of 'locality' is important in relation to the future of the nation-state and the way it faces the transnational destabilisation of its particular production of locality. Postmodern perspectives reveal that, in a delocalised world of rapid communication, multiple movements of people, commodities and ideas, 'locality' itself can no longer be considered and even experienced as persistent and constant as previously thought.

The 'forever settled' residents wake up to find the place (places in the land, places in society and place in life), to which they 'belong', no longer existing or no longer accommodating (Bauman, 1996:29).

It is a world in which the way to survive is to have no particular identity, a world in which 'identities can be adopted and discarded like a change of costume' (Lasch, 1985:38; cited in Bauman, 1996:23).

And so the snag is no longer how to discover, invent, construct, assemble (even buy) identity, but how to prevent it from sticking. Well-constructed and durable identity turns from an asset into liability. The hub of postmodern life strategy is not identity building, but avoidance of fixation (Bauman, 1996:24).

Such an image relates to the cultural effects that the rapid movements of people, cultural products and a global market economy have on the political and theoretical attempt to localise 'cultures' and 'identities.' Bauman criticises such postmodern life strategies as leading to the devaluation of social morality and to the fragmentation of any kind of human relations. The 'other' is seen 'primarily as the object of aesthetic, not moral, evaluation; as a matter of taste, not responsibility' (1996:33). Postmodern relationships encourage the individual to avoid any form of long lasting attachments with other people (Bauman, 1996). It is clear that such life strategies will tend to ignore any attempt to develop a group identity or a sense of a 'community' that tries to maintain a particular sense of 'identity'. For this reason, as I mentioned before, a postmodern celebration of fluidity has often been opposed not only by academics, but also by minorities, exiles and diasporic populations, as well as other marginal groups who suffer from real difference and discrimination (Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996:3). Furthermore, as Appadurai argues, it is exactly due to such a global context of 'travelling cultures', that the production of the locality becomes problematic within the framework of the nation-state. The main problem for the nation-state is found in

the way by which its local 'neighbourhoods' are now, in one way or another, part of some *ethnoscape* (Appadurai, 1995:208).

One such example is Nicholas De Genova's work about 'Mexican Chicago' a concept and a social reality that points to the ways by which '... something about Chicago itself has become elusive, even irretrievable, for the U.S. nation-state' (1998:2). 'Mexican Chicago' is a term that refuses to accept the 'epistemological stability of the U.S. nation-state as a presupposition' and 'insists upon admission of Chicago to its proper place within Latin America' (De Genova, 1998:2). From this perspective, state multiculturalism in Australia, as in other 'multicultural states' like Canada and to a certain degree in the U.S. can be seen as an attempt to come to terms with the complexity of such localities and the diversity of 'cultures'.

At the same time, it is important to remember that despite the obvious effects of globalisation on the experience and understanding of locality, and in spite of the multicultural rhetoric and policies, Schutz's insights with regard to the 'stranger' are still valid. Clearly, a global economy means that not every movement of people can be considered as migration. Alongside migrants, refugees and asylum seekers there is a new class of professionals who 'live' for a few years in a 'different' place before they move on to another one. Most of the Latin Americans I met during fieldwork saw themselves, and were defined by the state, as migrants or as refugees, and while some were contemplating a return back 'home' most saw their stay in Australia in permanent terms. It is still, therefore, mainly the 'displaced' who experience their life as being 'out of place', living in a 'new place' and to a large degree living the complexity of movement between places.

What contributes to the migratory *in-between* experience is not solely the subjective experience of life in a 'new' place. Rather such feelings and positions are often a result of the definitions of locality (and its local subjects) that depict the 'migrant' as a 'stranger' as the one who is not really from *here*. The ways through which 'locality' produces its local subjects and boundaries in relation to other 'localities', are always linked to larger notions of power and belonging. The sense of *belonging* to a 'locality' is almost always based on various forms of exclusion. Hage (1998a:45), for example,

explores the different ways and dual modality of such a belonging to the national home in the Australian context. On the one hand 'I belong to the nation' and on the other 'the nation belongs to me'. It is the second form, what Hage defines as *governmental belonging*, which is mostly evident in social practices of discrimination and racism against 'migrants' and other 'ethnics' in Australia (Hage, 1998a:45).

This is why the here / there binary is often very restrictive and may operate as a double-edged sword. As a relational binary such a categorisation may enable a particular migrant or diasporic group (or for that matter other minorities) to construct and 'maintain' a distance from the dominant 'others'. Yet, it is often exactly such a binary that is used as a reason for attacking the 'migrants' as 'strangers', who do not really 'fit in' or 'belong', in their new place. Displacement and movement (and for that matter the notion of the here / there binary in itself) need to be understood in relation to the cultural processes that work to define 'localised' cultures and identities.⁷

It is somehow paradoxical that the sense of belonging to an 'original' place becomes extremely important for feeling at 'home' in the new place. Benedict Anderson reminds us that 'Exile is the nursery of nationality' (John Dallberg-Acton, cited in Anderson, 1994:315). The historical emergence of nationalism is found in a particular 'nationalising moment' that is directly linked to the state of exile when one is far from home but wants to come back from exile to the 'imagined home'. Reflecting on the complex relation between displacement and 'home,' Anton Shammas the Palestinian novelist, notes that '...we don't ever leave home — we simply drag it behind us wherever we go, walls, roof, and all' (1996:467). 'Home', even in the context of exile and dispossession, 'is probably the one single thing we don't leave home without' (Shammas, 1996:467). Such a 'home' in the context of 'the national order of things'

⁷ A similar relational binary is often invoked by other social groups that define themselves as an 'alternative' identity or as a 'community'. Such social groups, as part of their 'politics of identity' may adopt a particular us / them binary. Clearly, such groups often emerge out of discrimination and the definition of them as 'others' who 'are not really like us'. The same binary, therefore, is used for attacking and discriminating against those who are *different* and 'refuse' to be like us. In the context of migration and the idea of a distinctive national space, the two *different* places, the here / there, often exist only through their opposition to each other. Yet, it is always important to explore the particular contexts in which such fictional opposition is produced. It is clear, in a way, that there are always many 'heres' as there are always many 'theres' that such binaries tend to avoid or ignore.

(Malkki, 1992:32), is often located within a particular 'imagined community' or a particular nation-state even when, as in the case of Palestine, the 'imagined home' no longer exists (Shammas, 1996).

The places that the migrants left and the ones into which they move always possess a history, a particular set of social distinctions, practices and images that define any particular 'locality'. The migrants' 'production of locality' involves, therefore, some form of negotiation with the 'place' that was left, as much as with the past and present definitions of 'locality' in the 'new place'. It is from such an experience that migrants are often engaged in various forms of 'home-building' that aim to achieve a familial and homely space in the new place. This is a practice, as Hage explains, that is different from the physical building of a home, because the migratory 'home-building' is mainly an affective construct that involves 'the building of the feeling of being "at home"' (1997:102). It is in this sense that migrants, due to their experience of being 'out of place', may find themselves in constant need of refining their sense of 'locality' and producing a feeling of being at home in the new place (Thomas, 1999:xvi).⁸

The diasporic desire of some migrants to hold on to one's 'original' identity and the contemplation of returning 'home' are constantly promoted in order to construct a particular cultural position. The migratory journey and the social life in a 'new place' often involve the active memory of the 'old place.' Thus, 'remember where you came from!' operates as a personal and collective obligation in resistance to its racist parallel 'go back home to where you came from'.⁹ In order to understand the 'locality', and the sense of place and belonging to such a locality, we need, therefore, to explore the ways by which the 'elsewhere' is reconstructed, re-membered and re-

⁸ Mandy Thomas shows how the particular understanding of 'home' for Vietnamese-Australians and the way the interiors of their homes are shaped is often an expression of memory. 'The home is strategically chosen as the idiom through which many deal with the loss of both their homeland and the physical and emotional worlds that land encompassed' (Thomas, 1999:46).

⁹ For exiled and dispossessed people the yearning for the 'return' is a powerful image. It is often the symbolic construction of the return that becomes extremely important. 'Next year in Jerusalem', as Jews recited throughout their 2000 years of 'exile' away from their 'home'. Also interesting in this context, is the difficult recognition of many elderly migrants that they will probably die in the foreign land without ever returning 'home' or the way in which some 'return' to be buried in their 'land' of origin. (Such a place, as Jewish history reveals, may not always be the place that they were born in but also a place of 'origin' in a theological or a spiritual sense.)

lived individually and collectively via various practices, performances and representations. Equally, we need to explore how the new 'home' or place (and even the 'community') is assessed and valued, as 'elsewhere', which is always contrasted in relation to an imaginary 'here'.

Interestingly within the official multicultural discourse and imagery the 'migrant community' (or the 'ethnic community') is often depicted as a 'place'. The 'community' and its 'culture' is imagined as a location or a site (usually in the form of social clubs, places of religious worship and other non-profit organisations) in which migrants (from a particular community) come together to 'retain' and express their *different* cultural identity. The 'ethnic / migrant community' is by now a recognisable site for 'exploration' by various professionals such as social and community workers, including, of course, social scientists and even film makers who 'study' or represent such *different* local 'communities'. In conducting fieldwork amongst a particular 'community' my aim was not to reinforce the simplistic image of a 'localised' and clearly defined 'ethnic / migrant community'. Rather, fieldwork experiences enabled me to look closely at the different ways by which movement, the experience of dislocation, and life in the new place (including state-policies and official definitions) work to construct a particular type of 'locality'. Such a 'locality' is split both in spatial and phenomenological terms along the migratory movement between what is often experienced as two different 'places'.

This duality of place, and the attempt to construct a 'community' and zones of familiarity in the 'new' place, are embodied in the setting of the local communal *fiestas*. The *fiestas* are the most significant form of migratory gathering of the Latin Americans in Adelaide, and is also one of the sites where the 'community' and its 'culture' are represented and 'lived' in a way that is grounded within particular social relations and embodied experiences. The *fiestas* are also about the duality of place and need to be understood from within the relational aspect of the diasporic 'locality'. The gathering itself and the embodiments of *Latino* dance and movement always invoked some place 'elsewhere'. To listen and dance to the music of *Orquesta del Barrio* in Adelaide is an experience that evokes a 'culture' and places that are not from *here*.

Yet, this music is transformative of the 'locality' because it is located *here* in what is experienced as a different place.¹⁰

The Communal Fiestas — Ethnographic Setting

A *fiesta* is a celebration, a performance of what is perceived, within the Australian context, as an expression of a *different* cultural identity that is symbolically located in some place 'elsewhere'. Clearly, it would be wrong to narrow the cultural and political complexity of the *Latino* social world in Adelaide to the focal point of the *fiesta* alone. Yet it is the lack of a clear geographical place, a neighbourhood or a distinctive spatial location of the 'community' that makes these social gatherings extremely important. It is important to note however that there are some differences in the ways that the Salvadoran migrants and the Chilean migrants in Adelaide (the two large national groups of *Latinos*) experience a spatial sense of a 'neighbourhood'. In contrast to the Chileans most Salvadorans are located in the northern suburbs of the city and as such a sense of a Salvadoran neighbourhood begins to emerge. This concentration is symbolically expressed amongst Salvadorans with the 'renaming' of the suburb of Paralowie, *Soyapango*, after a notorious municipal area of the city of San Salvador. And yet despite such important differences, the small numbers of *Latinos*, their diversity and relative marginalisation as a 'migrant community', make the *fiestas* a significant communal event.

The notion of the *fiesta* is a generic term that carries within it residues of meaning, as well as a particular set of behaviours and performances in particular settings. 'Our calendar is crowded with *fiestas*', writes Octavio Paz in relation to the Mexican 'Day of the Dead' (1961:47). The Spanish noun *fiesta* can be applied to a large range of activities, from private parties to large religious, national and historical celebrations. The 'art of the *fiesta*' as Paz explains, is an essential part of the cultural life in

¹⁰ *Orquesta del Barrio* is a Melbourne based *Salsa* band. The performance of this particular band in Adelaide was at a commercial *fiesta* and not a communal *fiesta*. Later in the chapter I explain the differences between these two settings. In their self-presentation (and performance) the band evoke a *Latino* elsewhere. 'Direct from Melbourne sizzling New York style salsa sensations' as the performance in Adelaide was promoted.

Mexico. The *fiesta* is the only place where the Mexican can 'discharge his soul' and 'escape from himself' (1961:49).

This is the night when friends who have not exchanged more than prescribed courtesies for months get drunk together, trade confidences, weep over the same troubles, discover that they are brothers, and sometimes to prove it, kill each other (Paz, 1961:49).

For Paz, the *fiesta* is an open expression of '*a people*', a public gathering of a 'living community in which the individual is at once dissolved and redeemed' (1961:48).

Each particular *fiesta* across Latin America, be it national, religious or at the level of a local village or town, has its own unique socio-historical, political and cultural significance. According to Appadurai's view, as I presented it above, a national *fiesta*, as suggested by Paz, would be seen not as an expression of a 'society' but a 'technology of localisation' in which a nation-state produces its 'people' (Appadurai, 1995:214). For this reason and when we take into account the importance of *fiestas* for the social and cultural life across Latin America, it is not surprising that this term marks important public gatherings and public celebrations for Latin American migrants in their new 'locality'.

The local *fiestas*, however, even when these are celebrated in relation to some 'traditional' *fiesta* back home or when they represent a particular 'original' identity, need to be understood from within their new social context and cultural significance. In celebrating a national holiday from 'there', the participants are marking a particular date as a special occasion. The coming together, the folkloric stage performances of 'our culture', the consumption of *typical* food and the performance of 'Latin' music and dancing, all help to articulate the belonging to a particular 'place of origin' and to a local 'migrant community'. To celebrate *el dieciocho de Septiembre – con cuecas; vino y empanadas* (the 18th of September with *cuecas*, wine and *empanadas*)¹¹ in Adelaide, is not only to exercise continuity with the place of origin nor is it merely a representation of the 'nostalgic' past, rather it is also a way for participants to mark their cultural difference in the wider social environment *here*. This is not to say that

¹¹ The 18th of September is the Chilean Independence Day. This is an abbreviation of the lines about Independence Day in the poem presented above. *Cueca* is the Chilean national dance and *Empanadas* are Chilean pies that are regarded as a national food.

such 'cultural exclusivity' is enforced or even directly desired; rather, a *fiesta*, in its new connotation is a celebration seen by outsiders and the participants themselves as an expression and performance of a 'community' which consists of a *different* social identity. In a way, in its new context it is the *relational* aspects of the event, 'us' and the 'other/s', that becomes important rather than any 'original' cultural substance. It is these relational aspects of ethnicity that lead Comaroff & Comaroff to find parallels between 'ethnicity' and 'totemism': 'both are, ultimately, modes of social classification and consciousness, markers of identity and collective relations' (1992:53).



Figure 2: Chileans performing the *cueca* at Festival Latino 2000.

At another level, it would be wrong to read the celebration of a *fiesta* as merely an expression of 'identity'. The *fiestas* are much more than that. They are places of gathering where people, often from different nationalities, meet, talk, exchange gossip, personal stories and watch each other dance and interact. The *fiestas*, almost independently from the particular event that is celebrated, are sites of multiple social interactions and social consequences that, like in any other social contexts, do not all relate to the formal objectives of the event and its various representations. Only a small part of the conversations and interaction that I normally had with other participants during a *fiesta* involved a direct reference to the event itself. Rather, such conversations (and other non-verbal gestures) contained many other issues and social information that the sharing of the physical space of the *fiesta* helped to produce.

Such conversations within the setting of a *fiesta* provided me with important social knowledge about the people that I met and my own position as an outsider within that setting. The importance of the gatherings was often in the way such interactions enabled the participants to talk to each other about multiple issues and subjects. When I asked Mercedes, who only rarely participated in the *fiestas*, how a particular *fiesta* that she had attended had been, she talked to me generally about some of the people that she had met and the event itself. Yet, for her, this particular *fiesta* was mainly about a sad and difficult conversation that she had had with another woman whom she had not seen for a long time. Their conversation was about their personal difficulties and experiences in dealing with divorce and separation. They talked about the emotional and physical abuse they both had suffered within their marriages. It was a conversation, as Mercedes told me, which had enabled her to rethink her own position and life as a single mother.

There are multiple reasons for attending or avoiding a *fiesta*, and multiple ways by which different people experience or are part of a particular *fiesta*. During fieldwork I met the organisers of such events, the volunteers who worked at the *fiestas* and also participants or accidental visitors who only came once a year to a particular *fiesta* and were not in any other way involved in the ‘community’. The *fiestas* are undoubtedly celebratory events, but as a meeting place they are much more than just a site where people eat ‘traditional’ foods and watch symbolic representations of dance and music.

Ways of Re-membering — Organising Fiestas

The establishment of communal organisations or other social activities that ‘represent’ the ‘community’ are always promoted in relation to the migratory movement and the necessary adaptation to the new place. *Estamos ahora en Australia* — ‘we are now in Australia’ is a phrase that is often evoked when criticising, explaining or arguing for necessary adjustments (of ‘our mentality’ or ‘the way we do things’) to the different social ‘realities’ of the new place. The first time that I heard this expression was when a young Salvadoran woman tried to explain to me the difficulties experienced by the Latin American youth, their behaviour in Australia, and their problematic relationship with their parents under such terms. She was arguing that the feeling that ‘we are now



in Australia' was often 'used' by teenagers as an excuse for drinking and sexual liberty that back in El Salvador was unthinkable and in particular for young women. Interestingly, she described the feeling of being in Australia as a personal transformation of the way in which she saw not only her 'identity' but also her body. When explaining the differences between El Salvador and Australia this young woman, who arrived in Australia as a teenager, described a complex set of changes in her look and appearance (different clothes, make up, dieting) that she took on in relation to life in the new place. *Estamos ahora en Australia* in a more positive sense is what helps to define the *fiestas* (alongside the notion of cultural 'maintenance' in celebrating a *fiesta para mantener nuestra idioma, costumbres y tradiciones* — 'for maintaining our language, customs and traditions') as a means of creating a 'new' and unified local 'Latin American community'.

In his studies of the social context of 'US Latinas/os' lives, Daniel Mato identifies, several kinds of artists, poets, singers, writers, musicians, visual artists, and video and television, cinema and theatre creators, 'who increasingly and diversely appeal to our consciousness and subconsciousness with different representations of that more or less imagined [Latino] transnational community' (1998:600). Such cultural products are producing a particular 'mental image' of the proposed imagined 'transnational US Latina/o- "Latin" American identity' (Mato, 1998:601). The magnitude and lives of *Latinos* in the U.S. is clearly very different from the life of Latin American migrants and refugees in Australia. Yet, Mato's argument is very interesting because in a global context the 'cultural brokers' and cultural products, that he describes, have a direct influence on the 'local' sense of a *Latino* cultural identity. The notion of the 'Latin American community' is undoubtedly influenced by the emergence of the category *Latino* in the U.S. context, yet locally it takes different forms where it emerges mainly in relation to the idea of the 'migrant community' within the Australian multiculturalist context.

In the process of organising and producing local Latin American *fiestas* the organisers occupy particular social positions in the production of the experience and the notion of the '*Latino* / Latin American community' and its cultural identity. While such cultural brokers can be socially identified as the 'people who have the power to make groups'

(Bottomley, 1992:54), there is a need to emphasise that the local self-titled category *Latinos* (or *la comunidad*) is never about a single group or simple aggregation of distinct national identities. Rather, the term *Latinos*, in its local connotation and as a marker of the 'community', as previously explained, is always used in reference to various social groups and individuals who are at present actively participating in the general social field of the 'community'.

The celebration of a *fiesta* is also seen as a means of collecting funds rather than as a 'cultural' expression for its own sake. In times of large governmental cuts in funding for 'ethnic communities', the *fiestas*, through the sale of entry-tickets, food and drinks, become an innovative means for the financial maintenance of various community organisations and social clubs. The desire to make a larger profit while celebrating a particular 'identity' was often a source of interesting debates amongst the organisers of a *fiesta*. When the Salvadoran radio program was in the process of organising its annual *fiesta*, one of the organisers suggested not selling *pupusas* (which are often sold in the *fiestas*, as part of the *comidas típicas* — 'typical food' of El Salvador) during the forthcoming *fiesta* of the radio program. Taking into account the hard work involved in the making of the *pupusas* (which are always freshly prepared during the night) and the low price (one dollar each) for which they are sold, it would be more profitable, he argued, to sell hot-dogs instead. However, other participants in the meeting argued that the people who come to the *fiesta* expect to eat *pupusas*. The proposal for a larger profit was rejected because without the *pupusas*, the *fiesta* could not be considered a Salvadoran *fiesta*. In a way the eating of the *Pupusas* is central to the sense of being Salvadoran in the new place. I once heard a Salvadoran woman explain how it is only here in Australia that she had to learn how to make the *pupusas*. To a large extent the consumption of the *pupusas* was often attached to some form of a communal gathering. In particular every Sunday after the soccer matches Salvadorans gathered at one of several *pupusiadas*, normally located in the garage space of a Salvadoran family that prepared and sold the *pupusas*.

The organisation of an average *fiesta* demands a relatively small amount of money, as most of the large expenses, such as the payment of the hall and the bands are often

paid for after the event. This made the *fiestas* the preferred way of collecting funds.¹² The amount of money collected at *fiestas* varied widely, at times hardly covering the costs of production, while at other times, successful *fiestas* may have a profit of up to \$7,000. The profit of a particular *fiesta* is highly influenced by its approximation to other *fiestas*. For this reason it is very important for organisers to secure a particular date and try to avoid the celebration of *fiestas* at the same time or even one week after another. Yet as the distribution of available dates was never jointly organised the celebration of *fiestas* was always a potential source of conflict and mutual accusation when they were too close or coincided with each other.

The uses and reasons for collecting funds in the *fiestas* are as varied as the different organisations and goals that these funds are allocated to. *Fiestas* are organised for the financial maintenance of the various local soccer teams, the radio programs and even on special occasions for providing financial help to local families and individuals in need. An interesting example is a *fiesta* that was initially organised for collecting funds for the victims of Hurricane Mitch in Central America and was transformed into a '*fiesta* for the deceased', or '*fiesta* for the Salvadoran families'. This transformation occurred after two Salvadorans had died in Adelaide, both in tragic circumstances, a week prior to the *fiesta*. The money collected at the event was then given to the families.

At other times a *fiesta* could be organised to demonstrate solidarity with the people of Latin America, or to collect funds in support of a particular political cause or in support of a political party 'back home'. The 'political' *fiestas* are rather rare and were organised mainly by Chilean left activists, or by organisations such as the 'Australia-Cuba Friendship Society' that does not necessarily frame itself as a Latin American community organisation. In contrast solidarity *fiestas* are often conducted in response to specific natural disasters in Latin America. For example, during my fieldwork, *fiestas* were organised in response to the devastation left in Central America by Hurricane Mitch and a devastating earthquake in Colombia.

¹² Other ways to collect funds were soccer matches, in which players paid a symbolic amount and food was sold for spectators; or *pupusadas* (mainly for Salvadorans) where the gathering was organised around the consumption of *pupusas*. Yet, the funds collected at such events were relatively small in comparison to the *fiestas*. At times such smaller events were organised in order to collect funds for organising a *fiesta*.

An interesting case was a *fiesta* that was organised by some El Salvadorans in order to send money and aid to families who live in a large rubbish tip close to the capital city of San Salvador. The *fiesta* was organised after a Salvadoran migrant read the story about these families on the Internet edition of '*El Diario de Hoy*' a major daily El Salvadoran newspaper. After the *fiesta* was celebrated and the money was sent, it gave rise to the emergence of a new local solidarity organisation ('*Luz y Esperanza*' — 'Light and Hope').

Despite the social and political divisions amongst the *Latinos*, these solidarity events, (maybe due to their outward orientation) are often promoted as 'representing' *the entire community*. This is often in contrast to other *fiestas* which, even when marking a national holiday such as Independence Day, are usually considered to 'belong' to a specific group or a particular social club. It is always important for the organisers, usually members of one or several social organisations, to emphasise that the money that was collected at a *fiesta* went for the support of a community organisation or, as in the case with solidarity *fiestas*, for a particular aid organisation.

Each *fiesta* is a unique cultural event that often has its own political and local historical context. All the *fiestas*, however, except for the 'emergency' solidarity ones, are promoted and celebrated as annual events; as such, more than any other forms of gathering, *fiestas* help to create a sense of a local 'tradition' and provide some form of social stability within the new locality. The definition of the *fiestas* as 'community' events means that *fiestas* can never be organised merely for the purpose of 'making money'. In a sense, a *fiesta* is always understood to promote a collective goal. These aspects are emphasised in the way organisers often ask members of the 'community' for donations of food and drinks and tend to present the economic success of a *fiesta* as a result of a collective effort. At the same time, organisers are often susceptible to accusations of using a *fiesta* for just 'making money' or for promoting their own individual interests. For this reason the financial aspects of the event are closely monitored and the role of the treasurer is usually the least desired role in the organising committee. The profit that is made during a *fiesta* is always publicly demonstrated by placing a photocopy of the check on the *Federation's* notice board,

publishing the financial balance in the local Latin American newspaper and reporting its details on different Latin American radio programs.

The *fiestas*, like many other public cultural displays, provide opportunities to make explicit what is regarded by the participants themselves as significant moments of their life and cultural identity. *Fiestas* deliberately work to localise and produce a sense of a 'Latino / Latin American community', but as such these events are also the sites of multiple social struggles and conflicts amongst various groups and individuals who see themselves as part of the 'community'. In other words, for a particular club or social group to have their own annual *fiesta* means to be part of a particular 'collective' or 'community', not only because of the important financial support that the *fiesta* provides, but also due to its representative and demonstrative aspects. By bringing people together and demonstrating that your specific organisation has public support you gain a particular position within the general social field of the 'community'. For the participants and other competing organisations a successful *fiesta* demonstrates the social strength and social support that a particular organisation has. This is why some participants and organisers saw the *fiestas* not only as an expression of a local 'Latin American community', but rather as a demonstration of the social divisions and rivalry within the general notion of the 'community'. The social and financial importance of the *fiestas* in supporting particular organisations and various soccer and social clubs, means that the different *fiestas* mark the social divisions amongst the various players within the field of the 'community.'¹³ It is in this context that the *fiestas* become one of the main sites that enable particular national, political and religious groups (and for that matter the 'Latin American community') to come together and express their own version of their 'culture' to themselves and to outsiders.

¹³ These social divisions were mainly along national and political lines. Yet, at the same time and in many cases, the *fiestas* were also illustrating that such boundaries were not very rigid. For example, when two *fiestas* happened to be celebrated on the same day, apart from the 'social drama' amongst the organisers before the events, on the actual night many participants tried to attend both.

Fiestas — ‘Community’ and Outsiders

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the *fiestas* are often promoted as an opportunity for ‘outsiders’, normally defined as ‘Australians’, to come and enjoy an authentic cultural experience; an opportunity to taste, dance and enjoy a different ‘culture’. In a sense, however, as ‘community events’ the *fiestas* are seen and experienced by the participants as events that stand in contrast to the local ‘multicultural’ festivals. Occasions such as ‘Festival Latino’, the ‘Spanish Festival’ and ‘Refugee Week’, to mention only a few, are seen as events in which the performances of ‘our culture’ are directed towards ‘outsiders’, commonly in the symbolic forms of ‘traditional’ food, dance and costumes. Yet, a *fiesta*, even when it involves similar sorts of performances is mainly seen as a *Latino* event.

Such a distinction was evident, for example, when a group of Latin American migrants worked together with a local council to organise ‘Festival Latino 2000’, that they defined as the first *Latino* festival in Adelaide. The council representative rejected a promotion poster proposal, a colourful map of Latin America that one of the Latin American members of the organising committee proposed. Instead she proposed an image of a young Afro-Brazilian woman dancing at the carnival in Rio de Janeiro. A photo, as she told us, a friend took when he was travelling in Brazil. This image was seen by some of the members of the committee to be non-representative. ‘We have no Brazilians here and she doesn’t even look like a *Latina*’ as one of them complained, yet they eventually accepted this poster on the grounds that the festival is not for ‘us’ but rather a way of showing the ‘Australians’ our culture. ‘It is like a Mexican restaurant’ as one of the committee members explained:

If you open a Chilean restaurant no one will come, but if you open a Mexican one, even if the food you sell is not really Mexican, people will come — this is what they know. This poster is the same, when Australians think about a Latin American festival they have the image of the carnival in Rio, so this is what we need to use in order to make them come to our festival.

In contrast to such a ‘strategic exoticisation’, it was common to hear stories about ‘outsiders’ who came to a *fiesta* and could not, for example, figure out how to eat the *pupusas*, or could not dance like the *Latinos* do. Whilst the multicultural festival was

understood (and deliberately promoted) as an event that attracts ‘outsiders’ and exposes them to an ‘exotic’ and different cultural setting, at the communal *fiesta* the presence of such ‘outsiders’ was immediately noticed. Outsiders at the *fiestas* are not only ‘Australians’ but also other Latin Americans, such as recent arrivals or even those from a different local social group. The notability of such ‘outsiders’ reveals the notion of ‘us’ that a *fiesta* creates in relation to those who are regarded as members of a particular social group. Furthermore, it is because of such familiarity that avoiding a specific *fiesta*, by individuals or groups, was normally noticed by other participants and was often interpreted as an expression of a social division within the ‘community’.

It is important to note that I do not propose that the *Latinos* in Adelaide are part of a separate social ‘world’ or that they are sealed off from the rest of Australia. Yet, there is something about the experience of coming from a different place, of speaking a different language, and of the style of interactions, and in particular in the ways such aspects are produced within the specific settings in which the *Latinos* come together, that generate a feeling of otherness and separation. This bubble-like effect is very much a product of the experience of being a ‘stranger’ in a place that in many ways is very different from the places that these migrant and refugees came from. The *fiestas*, like some of the other communal ‘sites’ that I study in my fieldwork, may create an image of the Latin Americans as a people who are living by culture alone. Obviously such an image distorts and even simplifies a very complex social reality in which multiple ‘individualised’ experiences and cultural issues of being ‘Latin American’ are lived within the banality of their everyday lives. These aspects are undoubtedly important and yet such an image is intrinsic to the experiences that I studied. It is the logic of such collective gatherings, sites and events that shape the expression of the ‘community’ and its understanding, and it is these aspects that I chose to look at and explored throughout my fieldwork.

The Fiestas — Space and Performance

Normally, the *fiestas* take place on the weekend at one of the various halls and ‘community centres’ around Adelaide. The ‘hall’, often the basketball court, as in the

description above, of a community centre, is decorated with various national symbols such as flags and other 'Latin American' artefacts. Tables are organised along the two sides of the hall to accommodate families. The front of the hall is the stage area, marked as such by the large loudspeakers, microphones and musical instruments. The foods and drinks are sold in designated areas and the centre of the hall is left open as a dance floor. The 'cultural program' of the evening usually includes various performances, mainly folkloric dance and live music played by one or several local 'Latin' bands. Regardless of the particular occasion being celebrated or the different social groups organising a particular *fiesta*, most *fiestas* share a similar formal structure (opening; staged performances; Latin dance and a raffle) and demonstrate similar types of performances and social behaviour.

Dance and music are central to the situation of the *fiesta* and as in other social gatherings are used to promote 'identities' and produce a social definition of particular situations and events. These performances are of two main types: the first is the performance of various 'national' music and dance styles on stage, and the second is the pan-national *Música Latina*, that always involved audience participation and is almost never 'folklorised' as the 'traditional' national dance styles are. 'Latin' music, in contrast to a national folkloric dance and music style (such as the Chilean *cueca*, which is often performed at the *fiestas*) cannot be easily identified with a particular place or a single national identity.¹⁴ In fact many of the most popular 'Latin' songs and artists, such as songs by *Proyecto Uno* and *Gloria Estefan* to mention only two, are produced in the United States. It is therefore the performances of 'Latin' music and various dance forms, mainly *salsa*, *merengue*, and *cumbia* that is most useful in generating a sense of a *Latino* 'imagined community'.¹⁵

From its emergence in the 1960s, *salsa* music, a modern version of the Cuban *son*, conceived of itself as promoting an international pan-*Latino* ethnic consciousness. It is a product of a unique 'sociomusical moment' and an expression of *el alma del barrio*

¹⁴ It is interesting to note that stage performances of *salsa* and *merengue* have recently become part of the representation of the 'Latin American' culture and 'community' within the setting of multicultural festivals.

¹⁵ Latin music was also played publicly on various local community radio programs, however, as I explain in the next chapter, within the radio programs different kinds of music were attached to more specific sets of national and political identities.

— ‘the soul of the barrio’, that emerged in relation to ‘a new sense of pride in being *Latino*’ (Manuel, 1994:22). *Salsa*, more than any other ‘Latin’ musical style developed as a musical expression of the *Latinos*’ common experiences of racism and discrimination in the United States and the complex continual relations with their countries of origin (Mato, 1998:613).

Although salsa may not be stylistically original, it is highly significant as a socio-cultural phenomenon. For millions of Latinos salsa is not only the most popular dance music, but also a link between tradition and modernity, between the impoverished homeland and the dominant grassroots culture and the corporate media. Salsa is a musical lingua franca shared by separate Latino nations and communities, and a form where the conflicts and contradictions involved in such encounters are mediated (Manuel, 1988:47).



Figure 3: Brazza Band, a local Latin band performing at the Adelaide Fringe Festival 2000.

The lyrics of many popular *salsa* and Dominican *merengue* dances and songs that have become as global and popular as *salsa*, are often about the dance itself and the physicality of movement. Furthermore because *salsa* emerged in a particular social context many songs contain in their lyrics a powerful social commentary that at times, mainly in the U.S., generated criticism and various debates. For example, Manuel tells us about Miami Cubans who banned from their airwaves songs by the popular *salsa* performer Rubén Blades that criticise U.S. hostility to Castro’s Cuba (1994:24). It is in this context that *salsa*, *merengue*, *cumbia* and other popular ‘Latin’ dance music cause the local *fiestas* to be seen and experienced by participants as a *Latino* event.

The music and dance, more than the 'typical food' or other national symbols, generate a sense of a pan-national *Latino* identity that works, in a way, against any attempt to construct a separate 'national' space in performing 'traditional' and national music and dance forms.

Yet it is often the representations of different and distinctive 'nationalities' that help to define the collective as 'Latin American'. The pan-national image of the *Latino* is always about collectivity and separation, cultural unification as *Latinos* whilst retaining distinct national identities. In fact even with 'Latin' music that can no longer be identified with a single nationality or place it is common in some songs to name particular nationalities. During performances of 'Latin' bands a common practice was to call out some of the different national identities which together form the *Latinos*.¹⁶

Despite the centrality of popular Latin music in the *fiestas* and in the local community radio programs, I also met several Latin American migrants who regarded *salsa* and other popular music, as lower forms of musical expressions in comparison to the more politically committed, folklore and traditional songs. Artists such as Violeta Parra, Silvio Rodriguez and Mercedes Sosa, despite their particular nationalities, were seen to be promoting in their music a more authentic pan-national Latin American identity than that of the popular and commercial *salsa* songs. The different musical forms and the 'political' content of their songs made these three artists, amongst others, to be seen as representatives of the 'real' Latin American soul and identity.

¹⁶ One such example is the lyrics of the song *Latinos* by the U.S. based Latin band *Proyecto Uno*. This song was very popular and was often played in *fiestas* (mostly from the CD). The naming of the different nationalities of the '*Latinos*' generates the feeling and images of a united *Latino* identity. Yet this pan-national image is achieved by naming the different national identities of the *Latinos*:

... españa, puerto rico, venezuela,
santo domingo, honduras, guatemala,
mexico y nicaragua, chile, ecuador,
panama, el salvador(mi paiz),peru y
cuba, uruguay, paraguay ,colombia,
costa rica, argentina, bolivia,

I am feeling you all

mi gente estan caliente (my people are hot)
latinos hasta la muerte. (Latinos till death) (My translation.)

Another important form of audience participation in the *fiestas* is through the consumption of 'typical food'. In contrast to the pan-national and transnational aspects of the music, the food, like the performances of different national-folkloric dances, is always attached to a particular national identity. Only the 'collection' of such different 'national' foods (For example, *empanadas chilenas* and Salvadoran *pupusas* and *tamales*) within the setting of the *fiestas*, work as a symbol of 'Latin America' in general. A particular *fiesta* is defined as 'Latin American', 'Salvadoran', 'Colombian', 'Chilean' etc. according to the event it celebrates or commemorates, but also according to the particular national symbols it evokes via performances of folkloric dance, the consumption of national foods and the performance of popular 'Latin' dance music.

The 'local' structural and cultural similarities of the *fiestas*, their uniqueness and distinction from each other, as well as their difference from other types of public 'performances of ethnicity', make these events much more than mere re-enactments of an 'original' culture. The *fiestas* are the main sites of intensive and public cultural performances, yet it is wrong to see these events as mere expressions of an original 'identity' or 'culture' that were simply brought into Australia from some place elsewhere. It is important to emphasise that like other complex cultural performances the *fiestas* are not primarily 'nostalgic' but also constructive. The *fiestas* are not simply a connection to nostalgic 'cultural experiences' but rather they work to produce a particular 'local', albeit fractured, *Latino* space and the *local subjects* that occupy such a space. They work to produce cultural meanings, express feelings and 'identities', even if such meanings and experiences are often ambiguous and contested. It is an anthropological truism that 'participants in a performance do not necessarily share a common experience or meaning; what they share is only their common participation' (Bruner, 1986:11).

Furthermore, as a form of social gathering, these events provide an opportunity for exchanging extensive social information and gossip; 'the *fiestas* are like the community noticeboard' as one of my informants explains, but as such they are also an opportunity to create and reinforce existing social networks. The participation of very young children makes the *fiestas* an important place of socialisation — some

fiestas, for example, involve the participation of children in various stage presentations and performances such as folkloric dance.

It is in the context of migration and the ways by which the *fiestas* work to present a sense of a local 'community' that these events are also about a duality and complexity of places and belonging. Seen in this light, the *fiestas* play an important role in the symbolic process of producing a new 'structure of feeling' that supports the creation of what I previously defined as the local *Latinoscape*.

The Fiestas and the Here / There Ambiguity

As an outsider I was often told that the local *fiestas* are very different from similar events back home. In a sense *fiestas*, in the particular forms and character that they have in Adelaide, never existed prior to migration. The *fiestas* 'back home' were different cultural events. 'Back home', as I was once told by one of the participants, 'the *fiestas* were always happier - '*más feliz, más alegre*'- and women never danced alone or with another woman as often happens here'. A Salvadoran man made this remark as an illustration of the negative effects the Australian way of life has on traditional Latin values and gender roles. Migration to Australia, he argued, makes the women (and children) stronger and the men weaker and dependent.¹⁷ Dancing *back home* was also less of an organised ('community') event and more part of the daily life and personal experience. It is the ways by which such differences are experienced in every day life and the ways migrants consciously attempt to 'maintain' a *different* cultural identity, that make 'identity' and 'culture' an effect of these local performances and not the reasons for it.

My own personal experience of participating in the *fiestas* was often that of the transformation of place. In stepping into the physical space of a *fiesta*, I felt at times as if I had entered an 'imagined' space, a local miniature version of some place

¹⁷ In an interesting paper presented at the Adelaide University anthropology departmental seminar, Ghassan Hage explained that such views often result not from Australia being less patriarchal but rather from the way the patriarchal powers in Australia belong to the state. As such, he argued, the expression of such feelings and opinions by migrants is an outcome of struggle between different patriarchal orders.

elsewhere. In the case, for example, of the Salvadoran Independence Day *fiesta*, that I described above what contributed to such an experience was the smell and taste of the *pupusas*, the sound and performances of *salsa* and *merengue* rhythms, the many children who were running around, some dressed in traditional costumes, and the way people were dancing and interacting with each other. All these activities seemed to be the means by which these migrants, teleologically understood to be people out of place (and as members of a migrant or ethnic community) were producing a particular social event in which they were expressing their sense of belonging to an 'imagined' national community. Based on my own experience and position as an outsider and my anthropological desire to locate myself within a particular (cultural) site, I formulated my interpretation of this 'Independence Day *fiesta*' as a social event that produced a particular locality. Furthermore it did so whilst symbolically attaching itself to some place 'elsewhere' and simultaneously detaching itself from the 'outside' Anglo world. I saw the celebration of such a national holiday, in the context of life in Australia, as an expression of attachment to a particular centre, a national identity or a collectivity that is linked to a distinctive geographical place which is enshrined in the collective memory.

This interpretation, as I later realised, while not totally false, was to a certain degree a product of my own naive anthropological position and was based on a problematic assumption that such a (ethnic) social reality is somehow different and distinct from the dominant (Anglo-Celtic) 'Australian' understanding of locality. In other words I experienced the *fiesta* as 'elsewhere' because I assumed a dichotomy or a simple duality of places (Australia / El Salvador). Yet, such social events are at the heart of the 'Australian' experience, whereby different groups of migrants construct their version of 'locality' in what can be categorised as a particular Australian way of being 'ethnic'. These events are not only about representation or the imitation of 'elsewhere' because, despite what is seen as a binary or a simple duality of places, they are located within complex social networks and associations within that 'locality' and the 'elsewhere'. Such events, therefore, cannot be reduced to a mere set of representations, rather, they have to be explained and understood in relation to the particular (and often complex) social worlds and social realities in the new place.

While some of the *fiestas* were celebrated on important or significant (mainly national) dates, their original meaning and symbolic forms were often totally transformed. For example the annual *fiesta* of the *El Salvador Soccer Club* was celebrated locally as *Las fiestas agostinas*. The name and the date are a direct reference to one of the most important religious-national events in El Salvador. *Las fiestas agostinas* are celebrated on the sixth of August as a religious celebration of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ *El Divino Salvador del Mundo*, who is not only considered to be the guardian saint of the capital city but is also the namesake of the Republic of El Salvador. When celebrated in Adelaide, as the *fiesta* of the local soccer club, most of the religious significance and even national meanings of the ‘original’ *fiesta* are left out but the date and the name are used as a reference to the ‘Salvadoran-ness’ of the participants, the soccer club and the organisers of the event.

The El Salvadoran Independence Day *fiesta* that I described above was the first time that Independence Day had been celebrated in Adelaide. The reason why this particular national holiday was suddenly celebrated, almost ten years after migration from El Salvador and settling in Adelaide, was a by-product of a social division within the *El Salvadoran Soccer Club*. A division within the club led to the emergence of a new soccer team — *Club Deportivo Aguila*. It was the new club that decided to celebrate this particular *fiesta*. Furthermore, such a celebration was seen, at least by some Salvadorans as related not to a ‘genuine’ expression of national feelings amongst Salvadorans, but rather as an imitation of the *local* ‘Chilean Independence Day *fiesta*’.¹⁸

The Salvadoran celebration of Independence Day was criticised not only for not being ‘authentic’, but also as something that was in contrast to the Salvadoran ‘identity’. Alberto, one of the prominent figures amongst the Salvadorans, explains:

This fiesta represents nothing. It is just the people from Aguila who thought it would be a good way to make some money. We had never before celebrated Independence Day because even in El Salvador it is mainly promoted by the

¹⁸ This particular *fiesta* is also organised by a local soccer team, which is part of the *Chilean Club*. Interestingly a similar division had occurred a few years earlier amongst the Chileans themselves when a group of the ‘political’ Chileans left the club and established their own political organisation and a new soccer team.

government and often ignored by the majority of the people. You should know that we Salvadorans are not as patriotic as the Chileans are.

This statement, which was no doubt made from a particular social position within the 'community' and in obvious opposition to the new soccer club, reveals nevertheless that it is wrong to read the *fiestas* as acts of nostalgia. These events are not based upon nor are they totally derived from a memory of an 'authentic' or 'original' identity. Independence Day was a good occasion to focus on because the rival Salvadoran soccer team had already adopted *las fiestas Agostinas* for its own annual *fiesta*. This is also why such a celebration cannot be read simply as a form of 'long distance nationalism'. As much as it was evoking and using the 'elsewhere' and the 'homeland' in producing the sense of a Salvadoran event, this particular *fiesta* was also very much connected to a complex set of social relations and divisions within the particular contemporary social field of the 'community' and its locality.

Migrants only rarely perceive 'identity' and even their 'homeland' in an essentialist or simplistic manner. On the contrary, most migrants realise very quickly that they cannot 'stay the same'; their everyday life and their personal experiences of dislocation obligate them to reflect upon difference and change. Some migrants may consciously and even subconsciously resist such change, refuse to learn the foreign language, read only the daily newspapers of their homeland, watch their national television (by using videos and lately cable TV), keep enjoying their familiar music, or cook and eat the same food they always had back home. In a sense they can try to build their own guarded world, *as if they had never left*. Latin American migrants often regarded such practices negatively as 'living in the past' or 'living in a cultural ghetto'. Such strategies are often adopted as a response to discrimination or when migrants face an obligation to become something else and reject their 'irrelevant past'. Yet, in contrast to those who had never moved, migrants cannot ignore change or see it as part of some 'taken for granted' social reality. There will always be enough daily incidents, return trips, misunderstandings, nightmares, anxiety of cultural loss in seeing their children 'Australianised' (they are often nicknamed *canguros*), desires for assimilation and to be 'changed' or a sense of alienation (often also from the place that was left) to remind them that migration has drastically changed their lives.

Change becomes the constant, even in the enduring love of a homeland and in the desire to 'stay the same'.¹⁹

One of my informants, when trying to explain to me his personal experience of 'change' and migration quoted the words of the famous Latin American song '*Todo Cambia*' 'Everything changes', written by Julio Numhauser and performed by Mercedes Sosa. The poem is written from the perspective of the migrant or the refugee who, despite the fact that everything changes, declares, in the last two sections of the poem, the unchangeable love for the homeland, *mi pueblo y mi gente*, that were left behind.

*Pero no cambia mi amor
por mas lejos que me encuentre
ni el recuerdo, ni el dolor
de mi pueblo y de mi gente.
Y lo que cambi6 ayer
tendr6 que cambia ma1ana
asi como cambio yo
en estas tierras lejanas.*

But my love can not be changed
as far as I will go
neither the memories, nor the pain
of my village and my people.
And the things that were changed yesterday
need to be changed tomorrow
like the way I am changing
in these faraway lands
(My translation).

It is this sort of complex consciousness of change and difference that makes the *fiestas*, as well as other types of social gatherings and performances of identity, operate as cultural expressions that symbolically evoke the 'elsewhere'. Yet such representations are always located within a particular set of social relations. These events generate a sense of 'cultural continuity' by bringing the *Latinos* together and placing them within a particular space, even if only temporal, which is constructed as an expression of their 'culture'. Such public displays of 'culture' are important for creating the feeling of being at home in the new place. The music, the food, the smells and the physical movement of the dancing bodies are all parts of the 'affective blocks' (Hage, 1997:103) that are used to achieve such feelings. The *fiestas*, as public performances, generate familiarity in merging the particular locality that these migrants have left with the new location that they live in at the present. Familiarity

¹⁹ Clearly the migratory consciousness of change is evident mostly across generations. Christos Tsiolkas (1998) began his novel 'Loaded' with the flowing quotation, written by Richard Rodriguez an American writer:

The immigrant child had the advantage or the burden of knowing what other children may more easily forget: a child, any child, necessarily lives in his own time, his own room. The child cannot have a life identical with that of his mother or father. For the immigrant child this knowledge is inescapable.

helps maximise the ‘home-building’ structure of migrant lives as it is ‘generated by a space where the deployment of our bodily disposition can be maximised’. Feeling familiarity in a particular space means that we have ‘a well-fitted *habitus*’ to it. It is a space in which one knows ‘unthinkingly where one is, and where one needs to go for specific purposes and how to get there’ (Hage, 1997:102).

A powerful illustration of the ways by which these events culturally work to bring the place of origin and the new place together is found in the symbol of a map that appeared in many of the pamphlets that promoted such events. Maps, as Liisa Malkki argues, are part of the conceptual ‘national order of things’ whereby each ‘nation’ is presented as if it is ‘fixed’ in a recognisable space (1992:27). It is in this sense that a map of a nation, like other symbols and images of the national ‘culture’ and ‘identity’, are products of a ‘sedentarist assumption about attachment to place’ and the ‘commonsense assumptions linking people to place’ and ‘nation to territory’ (Malkki, 1992:27). Maps, and for that matter ‘nationality’, are common ways of symbolising and marking ‘identity’ and ‘culture’. It is common to find national maps in a prominent place in many private homes. Such maps appear not only as drawings but in various art forms, such as tapestries and other types of *artesenia*.

Considering the iconic position of a map as a localising symbol of a particular ‘culture’ and its attached national identity, it is not surprising that migrants use such maps to illustrate not only the ‘place’ they came from but also their current duality of places. A map of El Salvador was used when a *fiesta* was seen as representing this particular national group and a map of Latin America was used when a *fiesta* was regarded as ‘Latin American’. However, movement itself is also symbolically illustrated with a map. The movement between the different localities is illustrated when the maps of the country of origin appeared alongside or even superimposed on the map of Australia. The *Salvadoran Radio Program* designed its symbol by placing the map of El Salvador, *el pulgarsito de America* — ‘the thumb of America’, as Salvadorans like to refer to the shape and the small size of El Salvador, over the image of the map of Australia. The symbol of the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society (SA) depicts the map of Cuba in the middle of the map of Australia. These kinds of images appeared in many other pamphlets and invitations for different *fiestas* and for other

cultural festivals. The maps of the place of origin (and the one of Australia) are powerful symbolic references to a collective identity. The image of the national map alongside or on top of the map of Australia demonstrates the way by which the 'locality' of the particular *there* is transformed. The map of Australia is 'imagined' as a locality that contained the original 'locality' that the migrants came from. The original place becomes *there* and like the migrant body it is now located *here*.

Salvadorian Radio Program



INVITES You To Celebrate its First Anniversary

Come and enjoy a night dancing to Latin American music

Place: DOM KOPERNIKA HALL
260 GRAND JUNCTION RD., ATHOL PARK

Date: SATURDAY, MAY 15, 1999

Hour: FROM 6:00 P.M. UNTIL LATE

Cost: \$ 10.00 ENTRANCE
CHILDREN UNDER 12 FREE .

Band: **BRAZZA BAND**

Folkloric dance from El Salvador,
Latin-Americans typical food and drinks

**The Funds collected in this activity will be used to cover
production costs of the program.**

**Tickets enquiries in the Spanish Speaking Federation in
Tel. 8212-5556**

Figure 4: Invitation for the Fiesta of the Salvadoran Radio Program.
The Map of El Salvador placed alongside the map of Australia.

The relationship between a particular place and identities is always part of a complex juxtaposition of cultural conditions, collective memory and history (Casey, 1997; Malkki, 1992; Yaeger, 1996). Such a complex juxtaposition makes any abstract generalisation about the relation of 'migrants' to movement and places very problematic. Different sociological and cultural contexts like the historical emergence of nation states (and the bloody conflicts that often escort such an emergence) means multiple relations or claims for a particular place. At the same time it is obvious that

such notions are in themselves social constructions or particular understandings, not only of the particular place, but also of 'place' in itself. For this reason it is probably also incorrect to use the 'place of origin' (usually in reference to a particular nation) as a 'taken for granted' statistical and sociological generalisation. As Langer explains in relation to El Salvadoran refugees she researched in Melbourne.

The Salvadoran case is one with which the assumption that ties of language, cuisine and collective memory bind people together when they become strangers in a strange land is particularly difficult to sustain, for Salvadorans living in 'multicultural' countries like Australia and Canada are survivors of a history which fractures collective memory into competing accounts of nation, and continuously subverts the idea of a unified community (Langer, 1998:164)

If we go back to the poem that opens this chapter, it is clear that the 'Chile' it describes stands for a particular people or a particular localised national identity. From afar, 'after so many years', the Chilean landscape is vividly remembered alongside the celebration of Independence Day. Yet, taking into account the deep social divisions in Chile it is arguable whether the 'Chile' that the poet describes can actually be 'imagined' in such a way. The poem reinforces or celebrates the nation-state as one of the most significant geographical locations that claims, and is often believed, to localise a particular cultural identity.²⁰ To speak about 'Chileans' in Chile or Chileans in Australia is in a way to assume that these people share a collective meaning of their national identity and their 'place' of origin, yet, such an assumption (not only in the Chilean case) is often very problematic. The nation-state in itself, the particular sense of 'place' and the collective feelings of belonging to a particular geographical place are often products of lengthy historical conflicts, multiple migrations and colonisation. The 'nation', 'homeland' the 'land of the ancestors', 'holy land', 'home' often mean different things for various classes, cultural and ethnic groups within and across a

²⁰ There are also of course particular ways in which anthropologists think about the relation of place, space and identity. For a critical analysis of an anthropological conception of locality see Appadurai (1995). For the way anthropologists have used the notion of 'space' as something which was seen as prevailing and separated from that of 'place' see Casey (1997). The assumption that cultures are localised in particular nations, or in other such clearly defined places, is obviously one of the basic assumptions of modern anthropology. For this reason the anthropologist was supposed to travel, to go to a particular 'place' in order to study the 'local natives'. Yet greater sensitivity within anthropology to movement, the complexity of cultural identities and the Western tendency to localise non-Western people as 'natives' mean that this assumption can no longer stand. As Appadurai writes 'Natives, people confined to and by the places to which they belong, groups unsullied by contact with a larger world, have probably never existed' (Cited in Clifford, 1997:24).

particular nation. This is especially true for Latin America and the complex political history, cultural diversity and social conflicts that this region has experienced.

The *fiestas*, in their complex set of performances and the existential circumstances in which they occur, work to produce not one but various stories which the *Latinos* tell themselves about themselves. The participants often see the *fiestas* as an expression of 'our community' or 'our culture', but such references are never clearly defined. The performances of 'our culture' can refer to a particular national identity, in celebrating, for example, particular national holidays, but even then, taking into account the complexity of the nation-state, such a definition may work to exclude other members of the same nation-state. This was evident, for example, amongst Chilean refugees and the local celebration of Independence Day. While, this *fiesta* was organised by a particular social club, it was deliberately avoided by some Chileans who considered themselves as 'political' or from the left. The political situation within Chile had a direct influence on the social relations here. At other times 'our culture' may operate as a reference to '*la comunidad en general*' – 'the community in general', as is evident in the solidarity *fiestas*.

The social event itself, the gathering and the public exhibition of particular cultural embodiments are what in turn create, even when contested, some sense of collective identity. In these ways the *fiestas* are close to what Barbara Myerhoff calls 'definitional ceremonies', performances that work as cultural mirroring in producing 'a self portrait of a collectivity' (1986:262). Such performances, in the context of migration and the desire to create familiarity and reproduce a sense of a different cultural identity, are extremely important because, as Myerhoff explains, 'doing is believing and we become what we display' (1986:268). The *fiestas*, like other social gatherings and representations of the 'community', work to produce a 'kind of collective "autobiography"' (Turner, 1986:40).

From within the migratory movements such relationships to 'memory' and the 'past' are very important. Immigrant representations of the 'homeland' tend to depict such places as 'The Land of Motionless Culture', indicating a mode of anxiety in which the 'past' constantly needs to be represented and where there is 'an impulse to "keep the

culture alive” (Ram, 2000:262). The important thing is to realise that the particular historical and cultural conditions of the life ‘there’, the various reasons for leaving such national ‘homes’ and the ways by which such ‘original’ identity is lived and experienced in the new place are never simple or homogenised. The celebrations of the *fiestas*, like other constructions of the ‘community’, involve not only the ‘new place’ but also complex histories and power relations from the ‘old place’.

Performances and Multiculturalism — or The ‘Dancing Migrant’

Mientras tanto se corre el riesgo de que el llamado ‘Multiculturalismo’ de hoy, se reduzca a crear ‘ghetos’ donde cada grupo mantenga contra viento y marea su bagaje costumbrista, generalmente expresado en superficialidades como los carnavales, con sus trajes coloridos, indumentaria que allá ya no usa nadie y que sólo sirve para disfrazar a las meseras de los restaurantes en los aeropuertos internacionales para atraer turistas; música y danza folclóricas rebuscadas, que ni siquiera en entre las comunidades se interpeta o practican y que apenas gusta entre los viejos como factor renovador de la nostalgia, y el diferente olor de la comida, antes que dar a conocer los genuinos valores culturales que configuran nuestra real identidad, y que allá, las clases dominantes extranjerizadas, han estado matando y suplantando con los productos de la invasión cultural foráneo-dominante (Sarna:210).

At the same time there is a risk that what is today called ‘Multiculturalism’ is becoming a reduction that creates ‘ghettos’, whereby each group tries to maintain ‘by hook or by crook’ its customary baggage. Such baggage is superficially expressed at carnivals with colourful costumes that even in the country of origin nobody uses except maybe as a tourist attraction worn by waitresses in international airports. This manufactured folklore dance and music which maybe the elderly of our communities can enjoy as a renewing source of nostalgia, like the different smells of our food, often seem preferable to any other attempts to portray the genuine cultural values that make up our real identity. Identities that ‘back home’ the dominant foreign classes had killed and replaced with the invasion of dominant foreign cultural products (Sarna, p:210, my translation).

The book *Inmigrante Feliz en Afortunado País* (A happy migrant in the lucky country) was published in Sydney and written by a Latin American immigrant. It is a fictional work that consists of short anecdotes and a humorist critique of the life conditions of Latin American immigrants in Australia. The author uses the pseudonym ‘Sarna’, Spanish for scabies, as a metaphor for the itchy reaction readers should have to this sort of cynical humour and critique. The year the book was published is unavailable on the cover but it seems that it was published in the mid-90s. The above quotation can be read as a critique of multiculturalism’s ‘performances of ethnicity’

from a 'migrant point of a view'. It is a critique which constructs a migratory here / there binary in order to ridicule, not only the 'local' fabrications of cultural identity, but also to criticise the state of such an 'identity' back home. The homeland is a place whereby the 'original' or 'real identity' is being lost and destroyed. This critique of multiculturalism takes an interesting twist when the author who speaks *from a distance* assumes the position of the migrant who from 'here', and maybe only from 'here', holds and maintains a perspective of the 'real' identity. The notion of an 'authentic' Latin American culture is posed as a struggle against the cultural domination of the U.S. The fabricated folklore 'here' is problematic in light of the state of the 'real identity' back home. To keep the real identity 'here' is a form of cultural resistance against *Yankilandia* and *Disneylandia* of the 'culture' back home (Sarna, p:211).

The notion of a 'real' identity is highly problematic especially in the context of Latin America and the complex forms of national, ethnic and indigenous identities that this general term includes. Yet, this statement reveals some of the contradictions and complexities and importance that the performances of (ethnic) identities have in the context of migration — especially in the ways such performances are promoted and celebrated within official multiculturalism.

Anthropologically speaking, we know that performances are extremely important. 'The advantage of beginning the study of culture through expressions is that the basic units of analysis are established by the people we studied rather than by the anthropologist as alien observer' (Bruner, 1986:9). As Myerhoff explains, the anthropological interpretive process is part of an hermeneutical circle, it is a way of understanding 'How people make sense out of themselves, for themselves, and how we as anthropologists develop our interpretive skills in unpacking their symbolic systems ...' (1986:261).

One of the most persistent but elusive ways that people make sense of themselves is to show themselves to themselves, through multiple forms: by telling themselves stories; by dramatising claims in rituals and other collective enactments; by rendering visible actual and desired truth about themselves and the significance of their existence in imaginative and performative productions (Myerhoff, 1986:261).

Performances work to reshape cultural experiences and identities. In the Australian context the performance of 'ethnicity' is often part of the 'carnavalesque pleasure associated with the spectacle of official multiculturalism' (Stratton, 1998:138). And as Hage argues, such performances can be identified with the multicultural fascination of presenting the power of the collector (1998a:157). However, we still need to explain why such performances are important for the migrants themselves. Instead of looking at performances as a fabrication of an 'authentic' culture or alternatively as a mere ideological reduction of complex cultural structures to 'ethnic' food, colourful costumes, dance and music, the emphasis should be on the ways performances are used and applied by migrants to create a sense of belonging to the new place, and the ways by which the 'new place' and the migratory 'locality' are part of complex structures within and across various social fields.

Gunew, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, draws on Judith Butler's theoretical insights in regards to performances and performativity, to point to what she defines as 'performative ethnicity' within state multiculturalism in Australia.

One cannot merely don the accoutrements of ethnicity, though this too has its place in these debates, but must, more pervasively, act out doxa, received wisdom as articulated in discourse and rendered prescriptive there. Althusser's notion of interpellation in which a subject (effect) is hailed into being by certain discourses or institutions is analogous here ... Thus 'speaking as' can only be heard as 'authentic' in certain circumstances. In Australia, what is recognised as 'authentic' has in a sense been reduced to an 'Identikit' of markers that we have been taught to recognise as 'ethnicity' (Gunew, 1996:169).

Clearly, according to Butler it would be correct to argue that the terms 'ethnic' and 'migrant' can be seen to operate as Althusserian interpellations. The initial categorisation of a person as a migrant 'begins a long string of interpellations' (Butler, 1995:203) by which the migrant is defined and redefined as migrant. Yet, such an approach, without idealising otherness, cannot explain the enormous efforts many migrants take in their attempts to remain different, to maintain their language and a sense of 'cultural difference' from what they regard as the dominant culture. There is a distinction between the performativity of language and the interpellation of the migrant by the dominant culture and the act of performance in which bodies, spaces and cultural texts interact.

The fixity of 'ethnicity' and the 'migrant' as discursive regimes can be contested actively by the practices of migrant communities and individuals. Public gatherings and cultural expressions of the migrant 'community' and its 'culture' illustrate that performances of ethnic identity are not merely an outcome of such a discursive regime. Gunew rightfully notes that 'Multiculturalism in Australia is acceptable as a celebration of costumes, custom and cooking' (cited in Stratton 1998:97), however there is, as the *fiestas* illustrate, a categorical difference between the multicultural 'dancing migrant' and the ways and reasons migrants dance.

Dancing, as well as other public performances of 'ethnicity' are extremely important in the context of migration, whereby the visibility of otherness is directly connected to the notion of cultural survival. Dance, was often depicted as a way of marking or trivialising other 'cultures' from within the gaze of the dominant 'collector' who possesses such exotic otherness (Hage, 1998a:157). Yet, dance is also 'a site in which there is continued movement between political, personal, social and cosmological realms' (Henry, et al. 2000:256). While there is no doubt that 'ethnics' often find themselves obliged to operate (or dance) within a doxa of 'ethnicity' not all such performances are part of such a doxa.

A recent intellectual exploration of the relation between dance and the anthropological interest in it, reveals that dance can be studied as 'constitutive expressive phenomena', and cannot be reduced to mere representations of a given identity as it is very much an idiom for bringing identities into being (Ram, 2000). In other words dance is often:

... a dialectical space of performative action where discursive, political, aesthetic, ritual and cultural forms are produced. Attention to the ways in which movement is able to infuse space with socio-religious and socio-political meaning requires that dance practices be viewed as historically embodied, contextual, discursive and interconnected domains of lived experiences (Henry, et al. 2000:256).

In analysing 'Latin' dance, as in the folklore performances or in audience participation within the setting of the *fiestas*, it is useful to draw on the theoretical and practical distinction that Hage makes in relation to the consumption of 'ethnic food' in Australia. Within 'cosmo-multiculturalism', as Hage defines it, those who consider themselves as *cosmopolitan subjects*, consume the ethnic food for its 'authenticity'.

The 'authenticity' of such food operates as symbolic capital in relation to other White Australians, whom the cosmopolitan can now define as 'racists' and lacking the *taste* and cultural sophistication to appreciate other cultures (Hage, 1997). Such practices are entirely different from the way 'ethnic' food is consumed by migrants themselves, mainly as part of their home-building practices in Australia (Hage, 1997:99).

Accordingly, performances of 'culture' and 'ethnicity', their production and uses, ought to have different meanings and ought to be 'consumed' differently by the 'communities', the state and by those who choose to promote and 'package' such 'performances' as cultural products for the cosmopolitan consumer. When we take into consideration migrants' attempts to come to terms with the migratory experience, their sense of displacement and the duality of places, it becomes evident that performances play an important role in this process.

Gillian Bottomley's work with Greek Australians shows that music and dance are far from being empty or nostalgic expressions of the past. Dance is very much part of the present lives of migrants in the new society; it is a way to remember as it 'communicates from body to body and evades words' (Bottomley, 1992:141).²¹ The uses of various dances and musical forms in the *fiestas* are clearly part of an 'identity project' that works to produce a form of belonging. In the context of migration, such an 'identity project' is what 'a group, a people cobble together from the past and present' (Probyn, 1996, cited in Fortier, 1999:42).

By gazing over the dancing crowds at a *fiesta*, participants could tell almost immediately if someone was moving like a *Latina/o*. Once, during a Salvadoran *fiesta* I was standing outside the hall and talking to the women who were making the *pupusas*. From inside the hall we could hear the band playing a rapid *merengue* song. Without noticing I was moving my legs and dancing to the sounds of the song. Roberto, who was standing near by, looked at me and said surprisingly, *Erez, de donde aprendiste a bailar?* — 'Erez where did you learn how to dance?' without thinking and in responding to the amusement in his voice, I replied, *de la mara*

²¹ Ram's (2000) interesting study of the way Indian migrants to Australia use Indian 'classical' dance to transmit their 'cultural past' is also highly relevant in this context.

Salvadoreña — ‘From the Salvadoran gang’. Everyone laughed, especially as I had used the term *mara*, which is Salvadoran slang. Mario, who was listening and laughing, said ‘I think he is becoming a *Latino*, we should call him Alberto Erez’. My bodily movement and my rapid response and proper use of Salvadoran slang was amusing because I was obviously an outsider. Yet, I was no longer a total outsider, I was now seen as *casi Latino*, ‘almost a *Latino*’. My presence at the gathering, my language skills and my dancing body embodied (without realising) a particular way of moving and interacting that Roberto recognised as part of being ‘like’ a *Latino*, and for this reason found it so amusing coming from me. Dancing like a *Latina/o* operated in Bourdieu’s terms as symbolic capital, an embodied behaviour of a particular *habitus* that in its expression in the public setting of the *fiesta*, communicates a sense of a *Latino* cultural identity. It is hard to convey in words what ‘moving like a *Latino/a* means’ yet it involves, for male and female alike, particular body movements and a physical appearance that mark a sort of ‘feeling’ of the rhythm. As I was dancing in the *fiestas* people often looked at me and said, ‘you should move your hips more’, demonstrating a particular way of moving. I began to notice that such lessons were taking place amongst many of the dancers. Young children were dancing with their parents, grandparents with their grandchildren, all talking to each other and communicating through bodily movements. Often dancers would form a circle and each dancer would enter and perform particular sets of movements that the others would try to imitate, or yell encouraging the dancer.

Such an embodied expression of dance, like the gathering in *fiesta* itself, is part of the migratory movement. It is very much an expression of the here / there duality in which to be a *Latino* means to be different from other non-*Latinos*. It is a cultural context in which an outsider who speaks and moves like a *Latino* is amusing because he is after all an outsider. Often, I was told that in order to dance like a *Latino*, one literally had to grow up with the rhythm. In this sense the music and dance operate as boundary markers, an embodiment of a cultural identity and a particular *habitus*. Yet, dancing in the *fiesta* is never promoted in relation to some notion of ‘authenticity’. The constructions of the *fiestas* as *Latino* events mean that the dance, as a performance, is seen as authentic by definition. The reason an assumption of ‘authenticity’ is

important, even when as such it is not explicitly articulated rests, as Bruner explains, in the ways by which performances of 'culture' seem to operate.

All cultures are constructions that take historical elements from different eras and sources: all combine images and words and are based on lived and imagined experience. All constructed cultures require belief; that is, the participants must have confidence in their own authenticity, which is one reason cultures are performed. It is not enough to assert claims; they have to be enacted. Stories become transformative only in their performance (1986:25).

Dancing to the sounds of *salsa* and other popular 'Latin' dance music is not necessarily connected to memory and nostalgia for a particular 'homeland'. I never heard people using national categories in describing someone's dance style. Rather the performances of this music and dance promote a pan-national image of global *Latino* music and cultural identity. *Salsa, merengue and cumbia* songs and the dancing to these rhythms in the setting of the local *fiestas* means to perform or be part of a larger *Latino* context.

Salsa is quintessentially dance music, designed to be performed live at clubs, weddings and open air concerts where *Latinos* of all ages, races and ethnicities mingle and enjoy their artistic creativity as dancers - very often, virtuoso dances. Accordingly, most salsa songs have dealt with the timeless topics of sensuality, romance, and praise of the music itself (Manuel, 1994:24).

Judith Butler's work on the performativity of gender is highly relevant in this context. The emphasis on the embodied performativity of identity is part of the attempt to rethink identities in a non-essentialist way. Of special importance are Butler's theoretical insights regarding the ways in which gendered subjects are situational and constructed through the performative and mimesis. Performativity of gender means that its power is a product of a 'reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer' (cited in Fortier, 1999:43).²²

The *fiestas* are not only about 'ethnicity' but also about different gender roles. The women, even when highly appreciated are still the ones who prepare the 'traditional'

²² Clearly, there is a significant difference between ethnicity and gender. Any analogy between the two, as Bell points out, ignores the ways: '... by which 'culture', including ethnic or religious cultures, 'transport' gender within themselves, and conversely, modes of gendering can 'transport' ethnicity' (1999:153).

food. The Latin dances presented in the *fiestas* are mostly for couples dancing, and as such are also highly gendered and heterosexualised. Some 'Latin' dance forms actually symbolise male domination of the women (Manuel, 1988:29). Even in the circle group dance the dancer in the middle will always invite a dancer from the opposite sex to enter the circle before stepping out of the centre and let the new dancer perform. I once noticed how during such a group dance one of the men in the circle started to enter the centre where another man was dancing, his female partner who was dancing next to him grabbed him and pulled him out from the circle. Everyone laughed because it was obviously a sexual joke that broke the 'normative' order of the dance and gender divisions.²³ This is also why for some participants dancing in the new context illustrated a shift in gender roles. Some males and females saw the fact that women danced alone or together without male partners as a direct result of migration and exposure to more equal notions of gender roles.

There is no doubt that gender is something that needs to be further studied especially in relation to migratory movement and notions of 'ethnicity', 'community' and 'culture'. Clearly, the transplantation of gender relations from the place of origin to the new Australian context is a complex issue, the way Latin American women, for example, are exploited and oppressed within the Australian context is somehow different from such exploitation in Latin America (Moraes-Gorecki, 1991, 1988). Yet, gender, in contrast to the notion of 'cultural identity' and the 'community' was never explicitly evoked in relation to the *fiestas*. This 'silence' doesn't mean that 'gender' is irrelevant, far from it; in fact it is this silence that points to major tensions. Generally speaking gender and different gender roles is a taboo. It is a subject that is never discussed openly or in public settings. The *fiestas* despite their highly gendered performances are not different from many other public settings, including for example the radio programs, that never discussed gender or gender roles.²⁴ Furthermore, it is possible that it is also wrong to simply attribute such silences, gender inequalities and discrimination to the particular 'cultural' background of the participants. Gender is

²³ If it had been two women the 'joke' would not have had the same effect because in the context of the local *fiestas* it is common for women to dance with each other.

²⁴ Most shockingly was a case of a young Salvadoran woman who was murdered by her husband after she decided to leave him. While this event was mentioned and discussed in many private conversations, none of the radio programs 'used' it in order to openly speak about domestic violence or discuss gender issues.

just another issue, like power struggles and 'politics' within such communities, that official multiculturalism tends to ignore or disregard in its homogenised depiction of the 'migrant community'.

The Latin Boom and the New Commercial Fiestas

The global boom of 'Latin' music has recently become evident in the general cultural market in Adelaide. This 'world wide Latino fever' that only began to emerge during my fieldwork, has lately gained immense popularity in Adelaide. There are several new venues that provide dance opportunities and musical performances that draw on the current popularity of *El Ritmo Latino*. These events are essentially different from the 'local' context of the *fiestas* as sites that construct the sense of a 'community' and *Latino* cultural identity. While some of the producers, performers and participants are *Latinos*, in their new cultural context, these commercial *fiestas* adopt and promote a global 'authentic' *Latino* experience.

The main audiences targeted by these new commercial *fiestas* are non-*Latinos*. 'Afro Latino Fiesta' which includes 'Fiesta De Tambores, Adelaide's grooviest Latin percussion outfit'; 'Noche De Cumbia' where you are invited to 'come and relish the rhythmic sounds of Colombia'; 'Mambo Lounge, 'Adelaide's first *authentic* Friday Night Latin night club'²⁵ and an invitation to participate 'in our search for Adelaide's own Ricki Martin and Jennifer Lopez lookalike contest', are just some of the 'Latino events' which occurred in July, 2000.²⁶

These commercial *fiestas* tend to promote specialised dance forms, a *salsa* night, a *cumbia* night or a Cuban night which the community *fiestas* never emphasised. Such a difference shows how, within the communal *fiestas*, a pan-*Latino* consciousness was part of the event. The willingness to dance to the sounds of popular music of many 'different' countries (even when celebrating a 'national' holiday) may suggest that

²⁵ Emphasis in the original promotion paper.

²⁶ All the quotations are from a newsletter titled: 'Hola, Latino music and culture aficionados- three Hot La Bomba Latino events'. *La Bomba*, is a new radio program on 5UV that plays and promotes Latin music in Adelaide. It is interesting to note that Spanish is used in the newsletter even though the promotion is directed mainly at non-*Latinos*. This is a sophisticated marketing strategy that sells to non-*Latinos*, the cultural 'authenticity' of these events.

notions of national identities are not as strong as they perhaps used to be. The dance and music are no longer assumed to be identified with a particular nation or a geographical place but rather are used as a marker of a diasporic *Latino* identity. In contrast, in the commercial context, evocation of particular dance styles has a marketing logic, it enables the promotion of an image of an 'exotic' and 'authentic' other and attaches these dance styles and music to 'exotic' places. Unlike the communal *fiestas* that bring together the 'locality' and 'elsewhere', the new commercial *fiestas* (in emphasising and reproducing the 'exotic' aspects of such elsewhere) depict the 'locality' and the 'elsewhere' as two distinctive places.



Figure 5: An invitation for a commercial fiesta. The images and the names of the bands evoked the exotic image of Cuban music.

There is no doubt that the global market of *Latino* music may have some effect on the local sense of *Latino* identity, pride and the sense of a 'community', yet as cultural phenomena these new venues are very different from the local *fiestas* I have described in this chapter. The images for promoting these new commercial *fiestas* are no longer those of a map or a particular place, but rather of generalised, stereotypical sensual 'Latin' men and women. The consumption of such an *imagined authenticity*, as Hage argues, creates a form of multiculturalism without migrants (1997:134). The community *fiestas* I described above, even when they promote and celebrate a similar image of a global *Latino* identity, are about a particular migratory experience. Dance

and music and the ways by which the *fiestas* bring the *Latinos* together attempt to construct, even if in a very fragile manner, some sense of a 'community' and a 'place' of familiarity in the new place.

Conclusion

I began this chapter with an exploration of the migrant in-between condition, the here / there binary that marks the life experience of those who, after their movement, find themselves living the duality of places. The local *fiestas*, as the main 'community events' of the *Latinos*, were presented as an example of such a duality and as an attempt to construct a locality that symbolically evokes some place elsewhere.

The different forms of performances, as well as the particular occasions that were celebrated, illustrate the complexity of the attempts to be a 'community'. Furthermore, a close look at the *fiestas* as cultural performances of 'identity', challenges any simplistic view of 'performances of ethnicity' as mere multicultural reductions of the migrants' complex cultural identities. The importance of the *fiestas* in using music, food and folkloric dance is found in the ways by which cultural performances provide the *Latinos* (and particular national identities) with an opportunity of displaying themselves to themselves and to outsiders. The production of a 'local' *Latino* cultural identity draws not only from a pool of cultural products from the countries of origin, but also from growing global markets and a sense of a pan-*Latino* diasporic identity. In this context performances and cultural expressions that present themselves as 'authentic' *Latino*, which have recently emerged in the form of commercial *fiestas* in Adelaide, are not necessarily embodied in the migratory experience nor are they attached to a particular local 'migrant community'.

CHAPTER 4

VOICES OF OUR LAND — ‘ETHNIC RADIO’ AND THE COMPLEXITY OF DIASPORIC PRACTICES

This chapter focuses on two separate local ‘Latin American’ radio programs in Adelaide. The two programs illustrate the inherent tension that exists between the multicultural imagery of the ‘ethnic / migrant community’ and the complex experiences of various groups and ‘identities’ within such a categorisation. The different ‘Latin American’ radio programs, like the social gatherings of the *fiestas* described in the previous chapter, are important sites where the ‘locality’ and the relation to the homeland are performed and negotiated. However, this time the representations of ‘culture’ and the ‘community’ are done within the setting of a radio program that broadcasts the ‘voices of our land’ into a public sphere that is different from the social gatherings of the *fiestas*.

The radio programs operated from within a similar institutional setting where they were defined as ‘ethnic community programs’. This helped to present the ‘community’ as a social entity that the programs were merely representing. However a close look at the contents, performances and the actual making of the programs reveals contested views of the ‘community’ and alternative interpretations of the ‘homeland’, ‘locality’ and the migratory experience.

The making of *Latin America Voices* (*Voces de Nuestra Tierra* — literally reads ‘Voices of Our Land’¹) and *The Salvadoran Radio Program*, are presented as examples of different self-definitions of ‘identity’, ‘culture’ and the ‘community’ that are operating and struggling within what is officially defined as a singular ‘ethnic / migrant community’. The programs’ ambivalent position toward the generic category ‘*Latino* / Latin American’ (as a marker of their collective ‘identity’ and of the local ‘community’) was what placed them in opposition to each other. Despite their differences, the two programs provided their makers and their audiences with a way of dealing with the migratory movement and life in the new locality.

¹ For the rest of the chapter I use the abbreviation *Voces* when talking about this particular program.

'Ethnic Media' and Diasporic Practices

The central role played by the electronic media in the construction of diasporic identities has largely been overlooked in anthropological literature on migration and 'ethnic communities' in Australia. Of particular interest for this chapter is what is often defined within the Australian context as 'ethnic media'. The category 'ethnic media' stands for various types of 'particularistic media', which in contrast to the 'majority media' are reconstructing or maintaining 'fragile or imperilled communities — minority groups, migrants, exile and diasporas' (Dayan, 1998:103).²

'Ethnic media' in the Australian context (mainly radio and television) are often regarded as a direct result of official multiculturalism. Such media operate at two different levels. The first level is the national governmental radio and television channel known as the 'Special Broadcasting Service' — or SBS.³ The second level, which is the concern of this chapter, is the media sector that takes the form of various local 'ethnic radio' stations, 'community television' and access 'ethnic programs' within various community radio stations.⁴ At both local and national levels, 'ethnic media' are often presented as one of the main ways by which different migrant groups (often defined as language — ethnic / migrant communities) attempt to retain their original language and voice their particular 'identities'. As such, 'ethnic media' are central to the images and discourses of multiculturalism and are often celebrated and presented as one of the major expressions of multiculturalism and as contributors for social harmony and tolerance in Australia.

² Dayan (1998:109) alerts us to other kinds of media that are highly important in the context of migration and the diaspora. Such media are the 'production and circulation of newsletters; audio and video cassettes; of holy icons; ... specialised shops that sell "ethnic" videos in migrant neighbourhoods ...' but also the 'exchange of letters, photographs, telephone calls, and travellers' that are central to diasporic communication.

³ There are obvious differences between SBS radio and SBS television. Such differences are partly due to the different media and the complex history of their development. Yet both are operating under the same multicultural assumptions and various forms of government control. The term 'ethnic' is no longer used by SBS, which prefers the definition of itself as multicultural television and multilingual radio.

⁴ Community Radio is part of public broadcasting in Australia, which involves non-profit non-government stations serving particular geographic areas. For a detailed political history of the emergence of Community Broadcasting in Australia, see Thornley (1999). Most licensed Community Radio and Community Television stations and the ones aspiring to gain such a licence are part of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), a national representative organisation for community broadcasters.

The emergence in the late 1970s of television and radio programs in 'languages other than English (LOTE)' illustrated the break from previous assimilationist government policies in regard to NESB migrants in Australia. 'Ethnic' radio programs were seen as providing access for migrants to broadcasts in their own languages to their own 'communities'. Yet, the ambiguity of such 'communities' and the way by which the category 'ethnic media' and specific 'ethnic programs' construct the 'community' that they are assumed to represent was totally ignored. This was often misunderstood by policy makers, though not necessarily by the 'ethnics' themselves, who understood that the importance and centrality of such media was not only in representing a given 'community' but also in constructing a particular understanding of the 'community'.

The 'ethnic / migrant community' within official multiculturalism is often depicted as a pre-existing social formation. Yet, such 'communities' are very much the result of particular social practices and discursive regimes that construct them as such. Similarly, 'ethnic media' need to be understood in light of political attempts, by migrants and governments alike, to 'localise' and regulate the notion of the 'ethnic community'. For this reason, despite the growing availability of media that is generated outside Australia, the term 'ethnic media' denotes only the local production of such media.⁵

Like other 'cultural spaces' constructed by official multiculturalism 'ethnic radio-programs' (and for that matter 'ethnic radio stations') are often depicted as 'cultural' sites that provide the 'migrants' with the possibility of maintaining 'culture' and voicing their otherness. 'Ethnic' groups that have their own radio programs are categorised as members of enriching / tolerated 'communities' which are framed as an expression of 'the many voices of one Australia', a single inclusive multicultural nation.⁶

⁵ In this context there is a rather unexplored media form in Australia that is regarded as 'ethnic pay-TV'. During fieldwork 1998–1999, no Latin American or Spanish pay-TV was available in Adelaide. Latin American migrants also had no involvement with ACE-TV, the local community Television station in Adelaide.

⁶ 'SBS radio — the many voices of one Australia' is the jingle of the 'language community' programs of SBS radio that is played every hour.

The category 'ethnic programs' is automatically attached to all non-English radio programs. For a radio station (if it is not already considered an 'ethnic radio station') to be 'multicultural' or to have 'multicultural' programs, means to have radio programs in different languages for distinctive 'ethnic / migrant communities'. At the radio station, as within the official state policy, we can find the 'Salvadoran Program' alongside the 'Egyptian Program' and the 'Dutch program' all assumingly representing distinctive 'communities'; but on another level all seem similar to each other. Together, these programs (or communities) are regarded as part of the 'multicultural' public sphere.

Appearing together on the dial of an 'ethnic radio station' or as 'access' programs within a non-ethnic 'community radio station', the 'ethnic' programs are constructed as a service to 'our multicultural' communities. Yet, each program in its own way and in its own particular social context, does not merely 'reflect' a clearly defined and objectified 'community'. Far from it, such programs need to be understood as diasporic sites, whereby the notion and the experience of the 'community' are produced and negotiated. It is the diasporic character of such 'communities', their negotiation and relation with 'elsewhere' (within the setting of the new 'place') which make such media networks extremely important.

Instead of being unproblematic — given, merely 'factual' — a diaspora is always an intellectual construction tied to a given narrative. Like other types of communities, but more so than most, diasporas are incarnations of existing discourses, interpretants of such discourses, echoes or anticipations of historical projects. They are 'imagined communities' *par excellence*, and they can be imagined in a number of possible, sometimes conflicting, ways. Thus their maintenance, far from being a technical problem, involves a constant activity of reinvention (Dayan, 1998:110).

The programs' cultural and social importance for the producers and their audiences illustrate a set of complex diasporic practices. I use the term 'diasporic practices' in reference to multiple forms of symbolic attachments to the homelands that challenge any simplistic view of migrants (or 'ethnics') as people who 'naturally' belong to a homogenised local 'ethnic / migrant community.' To understand the complexity of the term 'community', it is necessary to look carefully at the various processes and cultural practices by which migrants and their cultural brokers evoke the 'elsewhere' as they produce meanings and come to understand their life 'here' in Australia.

Lo Mejor y Lo Peor 99 — 'The best and worst 99' was a newspaper article written by one of the 'community leaders' in Adelaide to summarise the year and the end of the century. The article, in *Noticias y Deportes*,⁷ sums up the 'best' and the 'worst' of the 'community' during the year 1999. On the positive side the author notes a long list of individuals and groups whose work and efforts promote the 'community':⁸

The perfect and exemplary *fiestas* organised by Rona Perez. The development of the *Salvadoran Radio Program*, the way it became a part of the community and managed to finance itself. The good programs and the formality of the Latin American club. The *Federation* courses in Spanish to help new drivers receive the 'L' plate. The sounds of bands like *Brazza* and *Mestizo* that defend our music with interstate quality. The fusion of Catholic communities as an example of the way faith can work against 'grupalismos' (social divisions or fragmentation to small groups). The Chilean children's folkloric dance group. The idea of celebrating Festival Latino 2000. Our volunteers, at the *Federation*, who are always ready to help. 'Hot Latin Fever Dance Studio' which promotes our 'sabor Latino' (Latin style or flavour). The free English lessons at the *Federation*. The community *Rios De Agua Viva*⁹ that participates in the new project to help our elderly.

On the negative side the author writes about:

The rivalry and sectarianism, that are now part of our community life. The organisations that wanted to join the *Federation*, participated in a couple of meetings and 'desaparecieeeeroooooon' (disappeared). The way the Radio Program *Voces de Nuestra Tierra* forgot (without realising they say) to mention to the *Federation* that they did not pay the station access fees for the last ten months.

In conclusion the author writes, 'as you can see there is more good than bad which proves and affirms that we are for the most part a healthy family with many good people'.

This article is a public representation of the 'community', but like any such representation its importance is in the way it actually constructs such a notion. In the context of this chapter, this particular construction also illustrates the central role of

⁷ *Noticias y Deportes* is a free Sydney-based Australian weekly *Hispanoamerican* newspaper. The newspaper includes a section of Australian, international and Latin American news, sport and commentaries but it mainly consists of accounts of various social activities, services, social clubs and personal commentaries written by members of different Spanish and Latin American 'communities' across Australia.

⁸ The original text is in Spanish. This is my translation based on the article from *Noticias y Deportes*, 23.12.99, page 25. In the translation I took out and altered some of the names of the individuals mentioned in the original article.

⁹ *Rios De Agua Viva*, literally read 'Fresh Water Rivers' a local evangelist church.

the radio programs (like other public representations mentioned such as the festival, folkloric and musical groups) in representing and symbolising the 'community'. The way one program (the Salvadoran) is mentioned in the 'best' section and the other (*Voces*) in the 'worst' side of the equation is also not accidental. The uniqueness and rarity of this report, however, lies not in the particular incidents and individuals that it celebrates or criticises but rather in the way it openly talks about what are normally undiscussed social divisions within the 'community'. This article was seen by many to be very provocative. I met both those who asked with smiles and open satisfaction if I had read the article, and others, like the people from *Voces*, who were rather upset and angry at what they felt was a personal attack.

Interestingly, while the article addresses the issue of 'rivalry and sectarianism' as a main problem of the 'community', it assumes (and therefore constructs) a unified 'community'. Such an assumption is related to the particular social position and the social organisation that the author represents and writes from.¹⁰ Within the complex social relations of the 'community', this particular position is constructed against other claims and attempts to *speak as* the 'community.' The author writes and speaks *as the community* and gives a judgemental summary 'from above' of the healthiness of our 'community' that he is constructing as a 'family'. The positioning of the various organisations and the two radio programs as expressions of the 'community', is part of the desire to construct and represent the 'community' *in total*.

The two radio programs need to be understood in relation to such constructions and struggles over the 'community'. My reading of the radio programs as players within the field of the 'community' focuses on the ways by which their establishment, content and different styles of presentation generate alternative images and representations of the 'community' in relation to a complex set of diasporic practices. Yet, before describing the ethnographic particularities of each of these radio programs it is important to talk briefly about the historic and ideological contexts in which such radio programs are situated.

¹⁰ The author of the article was at the time a member of the *Federation*.

Ethnic Radio, Multiculturalism and the 'Ethnic Community'

Radio was one of the first public spheres to be transformed by the new policy of multiculturalism. The first non-English radio programs in Australia began on commercial radio as early as 1948, in response to the post-war migration. Known as LOTE or programs in 'languages other than English' these programs were mainly designed to provide emergency information for migrants who could not speak English. At the time, and to a certain degree until the emergence of 'ethnic radio' in the mid 1970s, non-English radio programs were seen as potentially dangerous; radio, like other aspects of migrant lives, had to be closely controlled and monitored by the state.

... the government still adhered to its policy of assimilating migrants expeditiously into the general Australian population and was also fearful that politically subversive material might go undetected if broadcast in languages unknown to the authorities during the height of the Cold War. Therefore regulations were introduced in 1952, restricting these programs to the spoken word accompanied by an English translation and limited to 2.5% of a station's programming (Thornley, 1999:146).

In accordance with the assimilation policy the airwaves, like any other public space, had to be Anglo (Patterson, 1981:42). It was not until 1973 that Al Grassby, the new Labor Minister for Immigration, began promoting multiculturalism and cultural plurality as an official governmental policy and lifted the broadcasting restrictions. This is what later (in 1975) led to the development of government funded ethnic broadcasting. The establishment of government controlled 'ethnic radio' emerged alongside the creation of various 'access' community radio stations that had developed a large 'ethnic' component, eventually broadcasting in thirty six languages (Thornley, 1999:153). This important transformation during the seventies was largely based upon complex electoral and political processes. Such processes included the Labor party's resolution to regain power by targeting the 'ethnic vote' and a political decision to publicise the benefits of Medibank to NESB communities via radio.¹¹ Due to the previous strict state control of the media, public ethnic broadcasting was almost immediately presented as a symbol and official acknowledgment of the presence of 'ethnics' living in Australia (Patterson, 1981).

¹¹ Medibank was a national health fund promoted by the Labor party.

At a governmental level, from its inception, broadcasting in what was deliberately called 'community languages' was seen as the best method of familiarising immigrants with the social, economic and political workings of Australian society (Patterson, 1981:45). 'Ethnic media', mainly in the form of radio programs, became not only an exemplary model of multiculturalism, but also one of the main public sites where migrants were 'allowed' to maintain and express their original cultural identities.

The complex political and cultural history that led to the emergence of 'ethnic media' in Australia is beyond the scope of this chapter.¹² Such a political history is certainly important for understanding the institutional context and the 'cultural space' that 'ethnic radio' programs operate within. However, this complex political history was not, in a sense, part of the ethnographic present. In other words, the politics and history of 'ethnic radio' in Australia did not concern the participants among whom I worked. The 'ethnic program' was no longer a contested terminology (for outsiders), and the space for such programs was established and clearly defined within the institutional settings of the radio stations. Migrants could enter a local community radio station, step into the niche of the 'ethnic' and begin to produce their own 'community' radio program with relative ease. Nevertheless, different uses of such media by a particular group of migrants shows how such practices relate to complex diasporic identities that cannot be easily enclosed in the neat category of 'ethnic / migrant community'.

Ethnographically, I had the opportunity to take part in the development of *Voces de Nuestra Tierra* and the *El programa Radial Salvadoreño* or *The Salvadoran Radio Program*, almost from the moment they began operating during 1997 and 1998. The two programs were not part of the local 'ethnic radio' station 5EBI that also has a

¹² It is interesting in this context to note that Adelaide played a central role in the development of ethnic broadcasting in Australia.

Ethnic Broadcasters Incorporated (EBI) was formed in Adelaide in March 1975 with the Dutch and Italian communities gaining access to 5UV as soon as the station moved to the AM band and broadcast restrictions were removed. Broadcasts by Greek, Polish and Ukrainian communities soon followed. ... 5UV charged ethnic groups their standard \$15 per hour community access fee. Some stations had an ethnic council or committee which controlled ethnic broadcasting and at others individual groups negotiated with the station for air time (Thornley, 1999:156).

weekly one-hour *Latin American program*.¹³ Rather, both operated under the category of 'access programs for NESB migrants' at two different local 'community radio' stations.¹⁴

The two programs studied, like other community radio programs, were organised and run by volunteers. The organisers and participants at both programs were mostly active members of various other social organisations and communal activities. In order to work in radio they were trained locally by the radio stations as part of the Australian Ethnic Radio Training Project (AERTP).¹⁵ Both *Voces* and *The Salvadoran Program* were locally produced and broadcasted live for one hour a week. They were funded by their audiences and by 'ethnic program grants' given directly to the stations by the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF).¹⁶ While officially operating under the regulation of the CBF, in reality the programs were self-controlled and were not closely regulated or monitored. Decisions about what and what not to broadcast were mostly in the hands of the participants.¹⁷

As a participant observer of both programs I was interested in finding out why and how the programs operated. I looked at the ways by which decisions about what to broadcast and what was newsworthy were made. In particular I was interested in the radio programs as 'cultural performances' in which particular interpretations of the 'community' and the countries of origin were produced. The two programs related differently to the country (or countries) of origin in selecting particular news and musical items to be broadcast. Yet they also differed from each other in the ways by

¹³ During 1975 a program called *Nuestra America* operated on 5UV in what was then one of the first ethnic radio programs in Australia. After the one-year government grant ran out the program had to go off-air as it could not find support to finance itself. *The Latin American Program* was established later on 5EBI and has been operating ever since. This particular program was not part of my study.

¹⁴ Both stations are part of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, (CBAA).

¹⁵ As one of the volunteers in *Voces de Nuestra Tierra*, I also undertook such training that later enabled me to operate as a replacement 'panel operator' for the Salvadoran Program.

¹⁶ *Ethnic program grants* are available to stations based on the number of hours of non-English programming broadcast. Broadly speaking, a fundable program must:

1) Be in a language mainly other than English, 2) contain no more than 50% music content, 3) have a spoken word content of no more than 25% religious material or references, 4) be produced under the auspices of a recognised local ethnic community language group, 5) be locally produced, and 6) be broadcast between 6 am and midnight. (From CBF web site: <http://www.cbf.com.au>)

¹⁷ Broadcasting in Spanish meant that the programs were also free from close supervision by the station that would normally interfere only in the case of an official complaint.

which such connections were expressed or performed in the programs, and by the ways in which such 'representations' related to particular social relations and by alternative understandings of the generic 'Latin American' categorisation.

Community radio stations cannot afford to monitor audiences like commercial radio stations do. Public funding and some governmental support means that they don't need to constantly try and access large parts of the population.¹⁸ It is sensible, therefore, to argue that community programs will generally tend to reflect more the ideas and feelings of the volunteers than those of the 'community' they service (Whitford, 1992). This argument is no doubt valid also in the case of the 'ethnic community' program. Yet an 'ethnic program' is different from other 'community programs' mainly because its audience is believed to be less 'abstract' and more identifiable. In other words, the audience is assumed to be a 'community' prior to the establishment of the program. In challenging such an assumption I was interested in studying the process by which an 'audience' is turned into a 'community'. Yet, I was mainly studying the organisers and the programs as social events and cultural performances. As such I came to see how the audience was imagined and constructed by the programs, rather than studying the 'real' audiences and the ways that they perceived these programs.

Voces de Nuestra Tierra: An Electronic Home Away from Home

Voces de nuestra tierra began to broadcast during 1997 as an alternative program to *The Latin American Program* that operated weekly at the only local ethnic radio station in Adelaide. The initiative for a new 'community' program came from the *Federation* and the various organisations that it represented at the time. These various groups felt that the established *Latin American Program* did not represent their own understanding and experience of the 'community'. Broadcasting for one hour a week, the *Latin American Program* plays popular Latin American music, broadcasts some personal greetings (*saludos*) and provides information about different social activities

¹⁸ This however does not mean that community radio stations are financially secure, far from it (Whitford, 1992). The stations constantly need to search for funds and get the financial support of their listeners. One source of revenue comes from fees paid by access programs like the ones I am describing in this chapter.

and various organisations. Yet, in its attempt to represent the 'community' *in total*, and evade accusations of being non-representative, the program avoids broadcasting news items and does not play controversial musical items (e.g. political or protest music). For example, after a rare but violent attack on a Chilean supporter of Pinochet during a community event in Adelaide¹⁹, the presenter of the program announced angrily on-air that she would never talk about politics, never mention the names of any Latin American General, and never play protest music — which she perceived as divisive of the 'community' and a thing of the past. In a way the program adopted a 'neutral' position, one that provided access for various individuals and organisations that wished to publicise a particular social activity, but it refused any further involvement with any particular group or organisation in the making of the program.

The *Federation* had a similar claim over the 'community' and the various organisations that it represented felt that they had no influence on the format and content (musical and otherwise) of the *Latin American Program* which was basically organised and controlled by one person. Part of the problem was in the way that this particular program predated the arrival of most of the Salvadorans and many other migrants and refugees who saw themselves, as being part of the 'Latin American community'. This is in not to say that the *Latin American Program* totally ignored or was not influenced by its audience, rather it seems that the operator of the program decided, for her own practical reasons, to avoid affiliation with any specific group within the 'community'. Such a strategy was the only way she felt she could represent the *entire* 'community' which she perceived, like many other Latin American migrants, to be highly divided. As a result, the program was usually referred to by many Latin Americans as 'Claudia's program', the name of the presenter, and not by its official name nor even as 'our' program.

In its declaration of principles *Voces* presented itself in the following manner:

¹⁹ This incident occurred after the arrest of General Augusto Pinochet in London during 1998. The unknown attackers vandalised a car of a local Chilean family who was known as a supporter of Pinochet. It is not clear if the attack was actually motivated by such political tensions. Many of the people I spoke to said that the motive was probably personal, yet the attackers sprayed the car with graffiti slogans that indicated identification with the Chilean left.

Este programa radial nace como un medio de difusion alternativo y complementario, a los ya existentes en la comunidad de habla hispana, con el proposito de abarcar temas de contenido cultural, social e historico para asi poder profundizar y compartir la riqueza de valores de nuestro pueblos, brindando, a la vez, un espacio a aquellos nuevos talentos que vitalizan y perpetuan el canto, poesia y toda arte de nuestras raices indigenas y populares.

This Radio program is born as an alternative and complementary means of dissemination to the existing programs for the Spanish speaking community. It proposes promoting cultural, social and historical themes in order to promote and share the richness of the values of our people. It also offers a space for new talents that vitalise and perpetuate through song, poetry and other art forms, our popular and indigenous roots.

In accordance with the reference to 'Spanish speaking communities' in the *Federation's* name, the new program also defined its audience as consisting of a particular 'language community'. Due to the fact that the program was initially organised by people from various nationalities and as a representation of these various nationalities, its name in Spanish did not allude to any specific cultural, national group ('voices of our land'). The reference to 'our land' was inclusive of all 'Latin Americans' and the program deliberately avoided its identification with a single 'national' identity. Yet, categorised by the radio station as an 'access-ethnic program', the English name of the program had to refer to a specific 'ethnic community'. Because, as I explained in the first chapter, the official 'Spanish speaking' definition of the 'community' was deliberately avoided and because the *Federation* saw itself as representing mainly the 'Latin Americans', the English name of the program became *Latin American Voices*.

As outlined in its declaration of principles *Voces* regarded itself as an alternative to the existing Spanish language programs. Being such an alternative, according to some of the organisers, implied that *Voces* would adopt critical and political views regarding the situation in South and Central America. According to these organisers such a political position was not provided by any of the other programs in Spanish, including the national SBS programs.²⁰

²⁰ SBS presents its programs as language programs (68 in total) and not as programs which are directed at a specific ethnic or national group. For example, the 'Spanish' programs include Latin Americans and Spaniards who are deemed to be members of a single 'Language Community'. As Jakubowicz (1989:111) explains this definition was a result of a decision taken by the SBS management in order to prevent nationalist and ethnic separatist groups taking control of the programs.

As soon as *Voces* began to operate, however, such political commitment became a source of tension amongst its various organisers. Different people had very different ideas regarding the role and the character of the program. Arguments between the Chilean members of the program and the Salvadoran migrants (and others) were conducted about every musical item that was chosen, as well as about the form and content of the program. Roberto, one of the Chilean organisers, was telling me about these conflicts that had occurred a short time prior to my arrival and participation in the program:

When we began broadcasting there was this Argentinian woman who wanted to join us and be part of the program, I don't think that you know her. Anyway I wanted to play a song by Mercedes Sosa and she said that she hates this music and that I should not play it. She was saying that in Argentina everyone hates Mercedes Sosa because everybody knows that she is a communist. Can you believe it?

With the Salvadorans we had different sorts of arguments, they only wanted to play Cumbia and Merengue, and there was this one person who wanted us to read the weather report from El Salvador. I thought that this was ridiculous, why speak about the weather in El Salvador when you are living in Adelaide? They [the Salvadorans] wanted us to read news from El Salvador and to do it in a Salvadoran accent.

On the other hand when I spoke to Eduardo, one of the Salvadorans who left *Voces* shortly after it began broadcasting, he argued that the problem was that the Chileans took over the program that was supposed to be inclusive of all the community:

These Chileans are really 'sinvergüenzas' (dishonest, shameless). They did not want us to play our music and literally took over the program. Who wants to hear their old political music anyhow? We need our own program as Salvadorans because we cannot work with these Chileans. And anyway they are so divided. We have some divisions amongst ourselves but not like them. It is just that we are from two different cultures. Maybe they will tell you that the Salvadorans took over the Federation but this is because when they controlled it they only looked after themselves.

The argument about the music is the core of the division because it is the music that symbolised the 'political' identity of *Voces*. Some of the volunteers in the original team who had initiated the program were political refugees, who had been members of left wing opposition groups in Chile and shared similar experiences of persecution and torture by the regime. As such they saw the importance of the program in promoting issues such as human rights abuses in Latin America, the situation in Cuba, the

struggle against U.S. global capitalism and the commemoration of important political events, such as the military coup in Chile or the Cuban revolution. There is a clear division amongst local Chilean organisations, such as *Casa Chile*, or *Centro Cultural Pablo Neruda* which identifies with the Chilean left, and the other main Chilean organisation, the *Chilean Club*, which regards 'politics' as divisive and forbids any discussion of politics on its premises.²¹ As a 'Latin American' program *Voces* was constructed as part of the political and social struggle of the 'left' in 'Latin America'. The main understanding and imagery of such a political struggle was based upon personal life experiences of sufferings and resistance to the military regimes in Chile and other parts of Latin America.²²

Those who were opposed to these political aspects of the program were mainly Salvadorans and other Latin Americans who did not share the same political views and had had totally different personal and collective histories from those of the Chilean political refugees. Yet, the struggle within the program was not only about different political views. The opposition was not directed towards 'left' politics as such, but rather against the relevance of such 'politics' in the setting of a local 'community' program. The main argument of the opponents was that the political aspect of the program portrayed a particular Chilean point of view and history that did not represent or speak to the larger 'community'. What led to a total break down in communication was the way the Chilean political refugees, defined derogatorily by their Salvadoran opponents and by other Chilean migrants, as *los politicos*, interpreted such accusations as attempts to silence them by undermining their political commitment and censoring the program.

Clearly, this conflict needs to be understood in the context of the way many of these migrants had experienced the media (and politics) in their own countries. Especially where the media was used by the military regimes across Latin America to impose a

²¹ The historical division within the Chilean club, that led to the establishment of the separate 'political' organisations, happened several years ago and is often depicted as a division between '*los politicos*' and '*los futbolistas*' (the soccer people) who did not want the club to have any political identity.

²² Without understating the horrendous suffering caused by torture and persecutions that was endured by these individuals and their family members in Chile or undermining their political commitment to struggle and resistance across Latin America, it is important to note that the military regime no longer existed in Chile after 1989, when a slow transition to democracy began.

'truth' which no one could challenge. It was in this context that Mario, one of the Chilean political refugees who ran the program, argued that the importance of this local broadcast was not to represent the local community, but rather to bring 'alternative' information to listeners in Chile who could tune in to the program via the Internet. In an interesting diasporic twist, the migratory 'voices of our land' had become 'voices *for* our land.' The program was now seen as a means to be heard, not only in the 'new' (multicultural) locality, but also as a way to participate in, and be part of the 'original' culture, and its political space 'back home'.²³ The paradox of such an argument lies in the way by which the radio program itself used the Internet to download 'alternative' information from Chile and elsewhere. The Internet played an important role in the program as it facilitated the gathering of specific information that suited the organisers' particular political views and interests. *Punto Final*, a left wing Chilean newspaper, and the official Cuban newspaper as well as other such 'alternative' news services were preferable to mainstream newspapers which were regarded as governmental propaganda.

This remark about the 'true' audience of the program was made in defence of the crisis of legitimation (to *speak as* a community) faced by the 'political' organisers of *Voces* who, due to these initial conflicts, decided to break away from the *Federation*. At the same time, the uses of 'new technologies' illustrate that the imagery of the 'community' and its social networks are not necessarily bound to a particular geographical locality of an 'ethnic community' in Australia.

The conflict at the radio program was part of a larger political struggle within the *Federation*. Social and political struggles were common in many of the local Latin American organisations and often led to the establishment of alternative and competing organisations. Such social relationships are characterised, as one of my informants described it, in an organisation like the *federation* where members are *juntos pero no revueltos* — 'together but not mixed'.

²³ One of the interesting aspects of what is often called 'long-distance nationalism' is exactly the way by which physical 'distance' disappears and 'is becoming of minor relevance in modern nationalist struggles' (Skrbiš, 1999:3).

Due to the 'political' aspect of the tensions surrounding the content and meanings of the radio program, this particular division was soon interpreted, as the quotes above indicate, as a conflict between the 'Chileans' and the 'Salvadorans'. It is important to note however, that such tensions and conflicts were rarely expressed openly. Instead of open confrontations, the tension and conflict worked more at the level of gossip and complex networks of groups and individuals. This is what made such tensions much harder to resolve and they usually led to further divisions. As the 'Salvadorans' gained control of the *Federation* and left the program, *Voces* declared itself to be an independent radio program, and came to be known amongst other *Latinos*, though not by the organisers, as the 'Chilean program'.

Due to that initial conflict and the fact that the people who remained in the program shared similar political beliefs and had similar personal histories, there were no further discussions (or conflicts) about issues the program should promote or express. An unstated understanding of what was important or appropriate for broadcasting, a particular presentation style and a distinctive musical content emerged, which no one tried to challenge. It seems that in order to avoid further conflicts no one tried to 'take control' and shape the program in a particular direction. Instead, different roles emerged and each member fulfilled a particular function without any kind of formal decisions about the content or format of the program being made. The decisions that had to be taken (for example, which text to read in a particular program) were normally made shortly before each program. Each person prepared a particular section of the program (the news, the community announcements etc.), and shortly before they began broadcasting they sat together and quickly showed each other what they had brought, usually without any debate or disagreements.

The team that ran the program at this stage consisted of two young women (one Chilean and one Mexican) and three men, all Chilean. The Chilean men, and to a certain degree the Chilean woman, shared similar political beliefs as well as personal histories of political persecution in Chile. Whilst the Mexican woman could identify with some of the political views expressed by the others, she was of a different nationality and saw herself mainly as a migrant rather than a political refugee. It is also possible that as a woman she felt that she could not be too aggressive, or demand

that particular changes be made. As such she often felt that she was not *really* part of the group and had very little influence on the content or presentation style of the program. The two women at the program were also younger than the men which added another dimension to their position within the team. There were, however, subtle ways of influencing the program, such as adopting a different presentation style, bringing a CD to be played or by selecting a particular text to be read.

The one-hour program contained alternative musical items / songs and prepared items to be read. As with other radio programs, the process of broadcasting alternated between the 'off-air' sections, in which music was played, and the 'on-air' in which the mikes were open. *Voces* had a particular structure that included distinct sections. Alternating between the musical items, the 'reading' sections were comprised of 1) the *Theme of the day*, usually a text concerning current political developments in Latin America; 2) a *Cultural Theme*, which included general subjects regarding a set of ideas or a particular point of view — taken from the opinion section of various Latin American newspapers; 3) a *Latin American News* section referring to different countries in Latin America; and 4) a section of *Community Announcements* where information about different social activities and local organisations was read and various governmental and non governmental services were promoted. In some cases, short news items about Australia, mainly political news, were translated and read during the program under the category *Australian News*. On rare occasions an interview was conducted in the studio, normally with a promoter of a particular social activity or a special guest.

This particular structure led the presenters into a style of presentation that minimised any personal commentary or informal conversations during the program. The texts, taken from various Internet sites, were often read as they were written without any form of editing or rewriting or personal commentary. There was also a deliberate decision, in differentiating themselves from the other 'Latin American' radio programs, to avoid any commentary or further reference to local social events. Sports, *fiestas*, religious celebrations and even political activities, apart from announcing the dates and locations, were never talked about on the program. Despite repetitive acknowledgment that the program should promote local 'Latin American' artists and

give 'voice' to the 'community', the presenters rarely conducted interviews with local artists or other 'Latin Americans'. While it is hard to say exactly why this 'formal' style of presentation was adopted, it seems that it was partly related to the notion of the program being an alternative voice to an existing local radio program. The 'seriousness' of the program was achieved not only via the 'important content', that is, the 'political' and 'serious' texts and music that were presented, but also in the 'performance' itself. In other words, to be an 'alternative' program meant, amongst other things, avoiding the 'fun' image of 'Latin American' culture and music.

It was mainly Mario, one of the Chilean political refugees, who ran the program and who provided most of the music broadcast on the program. His personal collection was comprised of over 900 cassettes, videos and CDs of Latin American music that his relatives in Chile had recorded and sent to him over the years. Private collections of significant 'cultural products' from the homeland are typical of many migrants. During fieldwork I met a Chilean migrant who had an impressive collection of Latin American books, traditional musical instruments and a big collection of SBS programs and films related to Latin America, which he had recorded and indexed over the years. When the exhibition of 'Expressions of Latin America' was organised at the State Library most of the items exhibited came from such private collections. It was this privately 'collected' music that contributed to *Voces* being considered an 'alternative' program to the other local 'Latin American' programs.

The preference was towards protest music, or what is known in Chile and across Latin America as the 'new song' or *nueva canción*. The Chilean 'new song' developed its own underground distribution mechanism that escaped censorship under the repressive Pinochet regime, and became a symbol of the political struggle against corrupt and murderous regimes across Latin America (Manuel, 1988:7). These *canciones de lucha* (songs of struggle) are songs that usually talk about social injustice in Latin America and the need to struggle for revolution and liberation. *La canción es también un arma de la revolución* — 'The song is also a weapon of the revolution' as it came to be known in Chile and other parts of Latin America.

The *nueva canción* is a living reflection of the world it comes from; it bears all the wounds of the struggle for the social and economic emancipation of Latin America, as well as its hopes, its doubts and its victories. Because of

this it does not need anyone to tell it what it has to do. Its commitment is a spontaneous one and it becomes part of the history of the people to the extent that it assumes the role that the people assign to it. Sometimes it serves the purpose of a political tract and its only value is to have acted as witness to the moment that gave it birth; at times it simply repeats old songs from the past, while at others it rises to high levels and becomes the universal expression of the blossoming of the Latin American soul, to remain, like all true art, part of the innate consciousness of the people. (Pirard, 1982:612)

For the organisers of the program the act of broadcasting this sort of music in Adelaide was seen as a continuation of the role this music had played in Latin America. As Mario explains:

The music is very important for me. It is an educational tool. You can pass a message by using a song, to teach something. There is a Sandinista song that tells you how to build and use weapons, this is one way a song can teach people how to fight and change things. I like Latin American bands that use their music in order to protest and try to improve things.

The music in the program needs to reflect the difficult social realities in Latin America, the drugs, crime and poverty. Some people don't like it, they say that I only show the bad things in Latin America and that I never talk about the good things, but this is the reality and this music reflects it. To play only happy music is senseless especially when there are real problems.

Furthermore, it was the music that symbolised the program as 'Latin American', as this short incident from my field notes recalls.

I told Mario that I have a good CD of Radio Tarifa. 'But they are Spanish he said'. So what, I ask, why can't you play Spanish music on the program? Mario proudly points to the identification card of the program that he is wearing, where it says 'Latin American Voices'. 'Can't you read it? We are Sudacos' he says. I ask him what the term Sudacos stands for and he explains that it is racist term used by the Spaniards when they refer to the Latin Americans. 'And if we are Sudacos, then on our program we play only Latin songs'.

The organisers regarded the broadcast of this music in *Voces* as promoting a pan-national 'Latin American' identity. According to Mario, this particular music was not familiar outside the continent, where 'Latin American music' is often identified as dance music. 'People need to know that Latin music is not only Salsa and Merengue' as he explained. Interestingly, such a statement totally ignores the heavily political message within *salsa* music. It is possible, however, that for Mario, as a Chilean political refugee, the revolutionary messages of the *nueva canción* are considered 'truly' political in contrast to the commentary in U.S. *Latino salsa* music.

Collecting and publicly playing such 'political' music in the context of migration is clearly more than a political statement. The collection of significant cultural 'objects' and their presentation helps generate a sense of a 'homely' feeling in the new place. It is based on 'a desire to promote the feeling of being there *here*' (Hage, 1997:108) As Hage explains, such practices are often part of a 'positive experience nostalgia' that helps 'foster intimation of homely feelings. ... Song and music, in particular with their sub-symbolic meaningful qualities (see Kristeva), are often most appropriate in facilitating the voyage to this imaginary space and feelings' (Hage, 1997: 108,107).

Interestingly, while the 'political' aspect was the core of the program, it was never discussed or expressed openly on-air. *Voces* never declared itself to be a political program. Such an ambiguity, as one of my informants (who was not part of the program) told me, was a common practice adopted by the opposition forces in Chile in order to avoid arrest, torture and elimination under the military regime. Some Chileans talked about the need to hide your 'political' identification in Adelaide, as a way to avoid 'burning' yourself. Others claimed that the military regime had previously sent agents to locate political-enemies abroad, including in Australia. While these claims are possible, it is interesting to note that at present such 'secrecy' was based more on the polarisation of the Chilean society during the 1970s and the 1980s, than on a fear of political persecution. This type of political positioning generated further criticism as it contradicted, according to some, the program's claim to be an inclusive 'community' program. As Eduardo, one of the Salvadorans who had left the program after the initial conflict remarked:

'Voces' are broadcasting to a fictitious community, they don't even know who is listening to them. I listened yesterday to the program and they talked for 10 minutes about Pinochet. For them the word 'community' is just a word, nothing more, because they are not part of the community.

Others were suspicious that the program had a hidden agenda. Some even regarded the program's slogan — *Voces de Nuestra Tierra — Cada Miércoles, la primera a la izquierda del dial* — 'Voices of our land — every Wednesday, on the *left side* of your dial', as evidence of the program's real political identification.

Such statements need to be understood in relation to the political and symbolic struggle to represent the 'community'. What the speaker challenged is the legitimacy of *Voces* to talk from a position of the 'community' as an *authorised* 'voice' of, and for the 'community'. To 'talk for 10 minutes about Pinochet' is an indication of the gap between what *Voces* say they are (a community program) and what they actually do. According to Eduardo and other Salvadorans who felt that the program excluded them, instead of being a 'community' program *Voces* was non-representative and in fact a Chilean 'political' program. It is important to note that the struggle is not about the 'representations' of the 'past' (in Latin America) or the 'present' (of the local community). Rather it is a struggle about entering an authorised position which is very much a product of official multiculturalism. The people of *Voces*, from the perspective of their opponents, forcefully took control of what was supposed to be a 'community' program. In Bourdieu's terms, they gained control of an authorised space from where they spoke *as if* they were the 'community'. As 'Chileans' and as political refugees the people in *Voces* denied access to Eduardo, the Salvadoran player, who struggled to gain entry into a social position from which he, as a 'Salvadoran' (and from his perspective a 'real' member of the 'community') wanted to speak *in the name* of the 'community' (Bourdieu, 1982:212).

Voces, as an alternative program, rejected the idea of being representative, yet by making the program and by being recognised by the radio station as representatives of an 'ethnic community', it still had a claim to be speaking for the 'community'. At the same time, however, the program adopted a very critical position towards the people that it was supposedly representing. Attempts to talk about difficult social realities or to provide what the organisers saw as a more 'objective' or 'truthful' image of life in 'Latin America', meant that *Voces* resisted the presentation of the local 'community' (its *fiestas* and other social activities) as an 'ethnic community'. *Voces* refused to be part of or express 'fun' — *Latino* culture and memories. This aspect, while appreciated by some, was seen by others as evidence of the program's arrogance in presenting itself as better than the rest of the 'community'. This is how Rodrigo, a Chilean migrant who was not involved in the making of the program described it.

As 'Voces de Nuestra Tierra' goes, I thought it was innovative, but that doesn't mean it was good. They were just starting out and realistically the development of any project takes a long time, it should be considered as an

experimental stage, and if it is a program representing a community it should represent the community, not think itself above the community which is what 'Voces de Nuestra Tierra' thought of itself.

'Voces de Nuestra Tierra', wasn't natural, they were 'try hards', but I am biased, this you know, because I know these people; they get caught up in unresolved passions. Try hard intellectuals I call them.

The program and its organisers occupied a marginal position in relation to what they saw as the rest of the 'community'. Yet it was a position which, from their perspective and in contrast to the other radio programs and social organisations, represented the 'true' Latin American identity and history. Being 'political' even if this was not openly stated was to represent the 'real' Latin America. As Mario explains:

I hate it when people call me 'politico' not because I don't like the term but because I think it is important to be political. Because of such stupidity, when I first came here, other Chileans warned me not to deal with politics, they told me that it is dangerous. There was a real social pressure not to speak about politics because some were really afraid that if they did they would be sent back to Chile. They call us 'políticos' but they forget that they are all here because of political persecution. For some people everything you say is politics. Is it being political to talk against Pauline Hanson? I cannot understand it. We are lucky that at the moment, here in Australia, it is not yet dangerous to say what you really think.

The position of 'speaking the truth' needs to be understood not only in the historical and political context of Chile, but also in the migratory anxiety of 'change' and the fear of forgetting or loosing one's original identity. It is in this sense that the category 'political refugee' was often used, especially amongst Chileans, as a form of social distinction. Being a 'political refugee' operated as symbolic capital that evoked connotations of collective struggle and exile, in contrast to those other 'opportunistic' Chileans who, for personal reasons, merely 'invented' such a category in order to migrate to Australia. It was typical to hear remarks made by people like Mario who define themselves as 'political refugees' referring to other 'Chileans' as those who, 'say that they are political refugees but are not really so'.

The radio program and the 'alternative' music in *Voces* operated as a boundary marker between the 'non-political' and the 'political', without ever stating clearly such a position. There is a need to remember that the general category 'Latin Americans', like many 'migrant communities', stands for migrants and refugees who came to

Australia from extremely divided societies. In this sense *Voces* was operating locally with various social distinctions from Chile and other Latin American countries, as much as it was conducted in relation to the migratory experience in 'Australia' and the particular social relations constructed through the notion of the 'Latin American community'.

For the volunteers, however, the actual making of the program was more than just a mere claim to represent the 'community'. For the participants in the studio, *Voces* operated as a collective gathering and a 'nostalgic' cultural performance. Clearly, the term 'nostalgic' cannot be understood simply as something of the past, which undermines the symbolic power of the program, but is rather something that 'embeds the past in the present in a dynamic way' (Probyn, 1998:37). The program, like the *fiestas*, worked as symbolic acknowledgment of the continued attachments with the 'homeland'. By playing 'political' music, and singing along with the songs (off-air), by reading 'alternative' news articles and by broadcasting other important 'voices' from the past, the participants utilised the program as a weekly ritual. *Voces* became another form of migratory gathering that enabled the organisers (and perhaps their audience) to re-live important events from their personal and collective memory and current life in their homelands. The making of the program was a way of generating the feeling of being at home, *here* (Hage, 1997).

As a cultural performance, *Voces* worked to transplant the memories of the homeland into the particular present. One such interesting example was a special program that was produced for the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the military coup in Chile. This traumatic event was captured for many Chileans by the last speech of president Salvador Allende.²⁴ Radio *Magallanes*, a governmental Chilean radio station in Santiago, transmitted this historic speech on the 11th September 1973, as the armed forces began bombarding the presidential palace at *La Moneda*. Taking into account the stress and the fears felt during the first hours of the military coup such a transmission was one of those media events that becomes inscribed in the collective memory; 'everybody was glued to the radio that day' as one Chilean recalled. By replaying the voice and last words of the dead president, *Voces* worked as a

²⁴ For a fascinating historical and personal account of this collective trauma, see Dorfman (1998).

commemorative ritual. It enabled the reliving of an event that symbolised the destruction of the dream of a 'peaceful road to socialism' and the years of terror and torture that followed.²⁵

In the context of migration such 'voices' are often related to an imaginary space of the original 'home'.

Like listening to the taped message of the relatives sent with the recent arrival to Sydney, the voice operates as a conduit to the imaginary world of the homeland (as 'back home'). ... The voice operates as an imagined metonymy, in the sense that it is metonymic of a totality that does not and has never existed, but which is imagined as a homely totality from the stand point of the present (Hage, 1997:107).

In some of the Chilean houses that I visited a poster with the last words of Allende was placed in a prominent location. Allende's last speech was also played at various political rallies and at a demonstration in front of the South Australian Parliament House after the arrest of Augusto Pinochet in London in 1998. Playing such a tape privately is of course different from hearing it in a public space. Clearly, the emotional effect of such a public broadcast is very powerful as for some it brings back, not only memories of the 'original' home, but also the stressful and traumatic moments of the military coup.²⁶

Even at such a dramatic moment for the participants who had been persecuted and victimised by the regime, there was no room for any 'on-air' personal comments. It was as if the 'personal' could not and should not be part of the 'political'. In a way, being politically committed from 'here' reminded the participants that they were no longer 'there'. The participants never articulated such a conflict, which could undermine their effort to see themselves as relevant to the political struggle 'back

²⁵ For an English version of Allende's last words see Galeano (1989:214).

²⁶ It is obviously very difficult to tell if this broadcast had such an effect, especially as the program's contact with its audience was minimal, yet from my own observation of other situations where Allende's last speech was publicly played I believe it is possible to conclude such an effect. Personally, I had experienced a similar transformative effect when I recently heard on the Hebrew program on SBS radio a recording of the official announcement of the death of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Israel shortly after his assassination at the peace rally in 1995. I believe that the emotional effect of hearing such broadcasts in retrospect is so powerful (also in its nostalgic political context in the country of origin) because these occurrences were often, to a large degree, experienced collectively as media events.

home'; it was mainly their opponents who, by ridiculing the *políticos*, talked about those who are 'revolutionaries' from afar.

The 'voices of our land', therefore, had no room for the 'local' and the personal voice of those who had left their homeland. An interesting case was the arrest of General Augusto Pinochet in London. Almost overnight the history of the military regime in Chile became a news item. Several Chilean political refugees were interviewed in the Australian English media and asked to relate their personal experiences of torture and express their feelings about the news of the arrest in London. I approached one of the organisers of *Voces* and asked him if it would not be a good idea for the program also to carry such an interview. He, however, rejected the idea on the grounds that it was not necessary, 'We all know these stories' he said, 'it would be too much'.

As a form of cultural performance, *Voces* was both about memory and the present. *Voces*, in its musical and 'political' content, was about saying we are still the same even when we are here; despite the distance we are still part of what is going on over there. From the organisers' perspective the program was not regarded as 'nostalgic' or of 'the past' because it was about being Chilean, Latin American and revolutionary. Yet because of these aspects some Latin American migrants who had different personal histories and political identities to the organisers criticised the program as being merely nostalgic and non-representative or relevant to the local community. As Joaquín, a Chilean migrant who disliked the program explains:

The music that they play is not interesting and the weekly themes are always very political, and many Chileans here just don't like it. Instead of playing popular music they put on these old songs and they always have to be political songs. They should talk about the situation in Chile today and not about what happened there in Pinochet's time. They think that their political position sounds good but the reality is that it is not representative of the way people think here. I think they find it hard to understand that there are many Chileans who are just not interested to hear about what happened in Chile. These Chileans live now in Australia and this is what interests them and if they show any interest in Chile it is not about what happened there in the past but about what is happening there today. The people in 'Voces' cannot understand that most Chileans here don't want to be part of a Chilean Ghetto. The problem is that they are doing this program for themselves and not for the community. If they want to be more relevant they need to go and talk to the people, they need to be part of the community and speak about things that happen here and not to live in the past.

It is important to note that the program's contact with its audience was minimal. The phone was never used during the programs and listeners hardly ever rang the station during the broadcast. The organisers of *Voces* did talk at times about the need to do something about this, and often joked about an imaginary single listener who never misses a program, but nothing eventuated. This is not to say that the program had no listeners at all, but that, in a way, the audience was not that important to the organisers. In a similar manner to a clandestine radio station, the political message and the desire of *being* 'political' in making the program, was more significant than trying to locate the listeners or make them interact with the program.

The social marginalisation of the organisers and the program's alienation from the local 'community', amongst other things, were what eventually led to its downfall. Due to the funding system it is essential for such radio programs to find some method of collecting money from their audiences (the grant covered only half of the costs). Other programs relied on donations collected in *radiothons* (normally run by the station and not by a particular program), sponsors and *fiestas*. *Voces* was officially the responsibility of the *Federation* and as such it was this organisation that had to pay the bill. The program managed to collect some funding towards its bill by organising barbecues for supporters and family members and by promoting a few local Latin American businesses as the program sponsors. Yet, as the *Federation* was the official body that signed the contract with the radio station, *Voces* left the bill for this organisation to pick up.²⁷ The members of the *Federation*, who felt that the program had been 'taken over' by the individuals who ran it, refused to pay. The station waited for them to pay their bill but was not too insistent. Yet, after not paying their fees for several months and when the radio station decided to shift all its 'ethnic' programs to different broadcasting times, *Voces* was kindly advised to sort out their financial situation before they could go on-air again. In other words, the radio station eventually shut down the program. In total *Voces* had operated for two years.

²⁷ In a way, and in their defence, it is important to say that there was no deliberate attempt to damage the *Federation*. The program did try to alter its position by becoming an independent program but no one wanted to take responsibility for the financial aspect and it was easier to wait and see what would happen than to try and solve it or do something about it.

The Salvadoran Program

The Salvadoran Program began operating in mid 1998 as an alternative to *Voces*. The same Salvadoran migrants who had initially organised *Voces* as part of the *Federation*, and who felt that this original program had been 'taken over' by the Chileans, were now organising the new radio program. From its inception, however, the new team decided to try and access large parts of the 'community' and as such deliberately avoided any divisive political or religious themes. After their experiences in *Voces*, the organisers defined the new program as 'Salvadoran' and the 'community' they represented as the 'Salvadoran community' and not as 'Latin American'. This narrow national definition was made deliberately to deny access to non-Salvadorans who might have wished to join the program. Yet, almost from the moment the program began operating, the idea was to try and be inclusive of other 'Latin Americans' and not to be a program just for the Salvadorans. As Roberto, one of the organisers explains:

The other radio program (Voces) was too political. They were also too Chilean, they never talked about other countries in Latin America. Our Salvadoran program is not only for El Salvadorans, we also bring news from other countries in Latin America as well as other parts of the world. We are now organising the rules of the program. Our goal is to create commitment to the program. As the director of the program my goal is to eventually make it a program for all the Spanish speakers here in Adelaide. We want to invite people from different organisations such as the Chilean Club or the Latin American Club. We want to use the program in order to create a community. We have to find out who is listening to our program. We already have some indication from the people who ring us and send us letters. We know for example, that we also have some Chilean listeners. We prepared a questionnaire in order to find out what the people want to hear and what they think about our program.²⁸

This statement indicates that in a way the *Salvadoran Program* was also established in opposition to the *Latin American Program*, and not just as an alternative to *Voces*. The same original motivation for challenging the *Latin American Program* that led to the establishment of *Voces*, was also what motivated the making of the new program. The demand to avoid politics and religion was presented to the organisers by the station

²⁸ According to the questionnaire that they distributed at various social activities such as fiestas and the soccer matches they found out that 84% of the listeners were Salvadorans and the others consisted of Latin Americans from other nationalities. Such data is of course partial because the sample was very small and not representative.

manager as part of the funding regulations of the Community Broadcast Foundation (CBF).²⁹ This restriction was not seriously explained nor even closely regulated yet it was interpreted by the organisers as a demand to completely avoid any reference to religion and Australian or Latin American politics. This demand suited the desire expressed by the organisers to represent the entire 'community'. As Laura, one of the participants and organisers of the program, explained:

Some people in our community are from the right, others are from the left. The only way to overcome that gap is to avoid it altogether and not to take any political sides in our program. The program has to be a program for everyone — we should be like one big family for the sake of our children.

Yet, the formal definition of the radio program as *Salvadoran* and not as 'Latin American' (or for that matter 'Spanish speaking') was immediately criticised by non-Salvadoran *Latinos* as creating further divisions amongst the 'community'. The people from *Voces* and some members of the *Federation* who worked to construct a notion of a 'Latin American community', saw such an expression as exclusive and divisive. As Silvina, a Chilean and a member at the *Federation*, explains:

I listened to their program when I heard that they called themselves the Salvadoran program. When they played the Salvadoran national anthem I turned my radio off. This was not a program for me. It is like in the book of Galeano [Open Veins of Latin America³⁰] who said that even if we all speak Spanish, Latin America will never be united. In my opinion they chose to break away from the Latin American community and to separate themselves from other migrants.

Such a criticism is similar to the way *Voces* was accused of usurping the position of *speaking as* the 'community'. In this case, like in the previous one, such an accusation is part of the struggle over the symbolic definitions of 'community' that is carried on within the construction of a *local* 'Latin American community' which is supposedly above any particular national (or political) identities. A member of the *Federation* and a non-Salvadoran 'community leader' told me that he would never speak on a radio program that defines itself as 'Salvadoran' because in principle he opposes any organisation or social group that chooses to define itself according to a narrow national basis. The organisers of the program, however, claimed that while the

²⁹ See footnote 16.

³⁰ Galeano, E. 1973 *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*, Monthly Review Press, New York.

program is a Salvadoran program, other *Latinos* were always welcome to participate, at least in promoting their cultural and social events. In a way the organisers chose to narrow their 'definition' of the 'community' (and the program) to its 'national' context to avoid the criticism *Voces* encountered in presenting itself as a 'Latin American' program. Being openly defined as a 'national' program meant that the organisers, as Salvadorans, saw and defined themselves as one section of the 'Latin American community'. In a way, their definition not only as 'Salvadorans' but as the 'Salvadoran community', needs to be understood in relation to the definition of the 'Latin American community' from which they felt excluded. To a certain degree the narrow 'national' definition was deliberately chosen and vigorously guarded in order to avoid (after the experience in *Voces*) possible struggles over the program's definition and its musical and cultural content with other (national, political, religious) groupings within the category of the 'Latin American community'.

An important aspect of the difference between *Voces* and the *Salvadoran Program* was in the distinct 'Salvadoran' experience of 'living' a sense of a 'community'. Due to the hardship of life in El Salvador and its extensive civil war, many Salvadorans had migrated to Australia accompanied by their extended families. Furthermore, most Salvadorans tend to live in the northern suburbs of Adelaide. As such many of the Salvadorans are actually related to each other, know each other from El Salvador and meet almost on a daily basis at their local shopping centres. These aspects resulted in the 'Salvadorans' developing a sense of a local neighbourhood which most other *Latinos* do not have. Interestingly some of the members and participants in the radio program were distant and close relatives that gave the program and relations between organisers the sense of being a family.

Another important factor that contributes to their sense of a particular Salvadoran identity was the feeling that the Chileans often discriminated against them and treated them as inferiors. It is very hard to pinpoint particular cases of discrimination, yet it is clear that the national identification (Salvadoran, Chilean) was the main form of social distinction under the general category of the *Latino*. Some Salvadoran migrants often interpreted the struggle with the Chileans in terms of superior / inferior categories. It was also rather common to hear Chileans speaking about the Salvadorans in a

patronising manner. At the same time, however, I also often heard similar derogatory remarks made by the Salvadorans who argued that the local Chileans were mostly uneducated and from lower classes than the Salvadorans.

The radio program adopted particular Salvadoran markers of identity. This was evident in the way it was framed. The program usually opened with the traditional sounds of the *Carbonero*, a type of folkloric Salvadoran music played on the *Marimba*, and closed with the national anthem of El Salvador. Like *Voces* the program was promoted and explained as a means of educating and maintaining 'cultural identity'. Such a definition was not a direct result of the ways in which official multiculturalism defines 'culture' and the 'community', but more a product of the migratory anxiety of living in a different culture where there is a need to 'keep the culture alive' (Ram, 2000:262). As Roberto, a Salvadoran 'community leader' and one of the organisers of the program, explains:

Many people do not know our culture. Even people from El Salvador who came here do not know our culture. We need to educate them. Our program is about culture, music, and information about our country, about our history and our forefathers. It is not only for the young but also for the adults who will have the opportunity to learn more about their culture.

In contrast to *Voces*, the *Salvadoran program* set out immediately to involve its audience in its making. Symbolically speaking, the 'community' was invited to participate in the making of the program. One of the most important aspects of the program was the broadcasting of *saludos* (greetings) to friends and family members. The *saludos* gave the program a form and means to communicate directly with its audience who, by requesting a particular song to be played, often influenced the musical content of the program. The '*saludos*' also worked to communicate important social information in a direct or subtle manner. When someone, for example, asked for a very sad and romantic song to be played for his wife, it was immediately assumed that they must have had a fight.

As I became more involved in the radio program and the 'community' I also became part of the *saludos* system. I once, however, experienced personally the vicious side of the *saludos* when, as a joke, one of the presenters improvised such a *saludo* and gave

it a romantic hint (a very, very, very warm greeting to Erez from ...). After the program ended the woman who sent me the *saludo* called my home crying, telling me that her father had heard the program and was very upset, as it sounded as if we were having an affair. The interesting aspect of this story is in the way even the most innocent *saludos* were decoded and interpreted as carrying social knowledge and assumed to be publicly communicated with important social consequences.

The *saludos* and the way the program was constructed and addressed its audience as a 'community' made it into a virtual public meeting place of various family members and friends. In more than one sense, the *saludos* marked and recreated the different social networks and boundaries of a 'community' as it was experienced for these individuals and social groups. Many of the programs, for example, opened with *saludos* to particular families and individuals who the presenters knew and presented as 'listeners' or as members of the 'Salvadoran community' even if there was no particular request for such *saludos*.

Like *Voces*, the program provided a news section, but in contrast, the news focused mainly on El Salvador and avoided any political criticism. In a way, the program was simulating radio programs from El Salvador by broadcasting the 'National News' (from El Salvador) as well as 'Departmental News' from different regional zones within El Salvador. However, by presenting El Salvador in such a way they were criticised by some other El Salvadorans. The argument made by several people was that by reading the official newspaper from El Salvador *El Diario de Hoy*, the program was already being 'political' and voluntarily broadcasting governmental propaganda material. While *Voces* was criticised for not representing the *entire* 'community' and for being politically biased, the *Salvadoran program* was criticised for presenting El Salvador in an idealised way that avoided mentioning, criticising or explaining the harsh realities of life there.

To a certain degree the *Salvadoran Program* operated as a form of 'long distance nationalism'. The local 'Salvadoran community' was constructed as part of the national 'imagined community' of El Salvador and the diaspora. In some of the programs the 'Salvadoran family' as the audience of the program was extended to

include Salvadorans living in other parts of Australia and even in other countries. *Saludos* were sent, for example, to family members living in Canada. The program evoked the images and rhetoric of the national 'imagined community' as the basis of the 'community' life in Adelaide.

This 'Salvadoran' effect was achieved by selecting few common characteristics and presenting these as markers of Salvadoran 'culture' and 'identity'. The term *Guanacos*, for example, is an image invoked by Salvadorans when referring to themselves as members of a national collectivity.³¹ One section of the program was therefore named *raices guanacas* — 'Guanacos' roots', and the audience of the program were often addressed as the *Guanacos* in Adelaide. Initially this section was called 'our land' (*nuestra tierra*) but the organisers felt that this name was too close to *Voces de nuestra tierra* the name of the competitive program and as such decided to change it. During one of the programs they asked the listeners to propose a different name for this section. Most of the suggestions alluded to the 'Salvadoran-ness' of the programs such as *somos Salvadoreños* (we are Salvadorans), *mi tierra* (My Land), *mi raíz* (my roots, my origin), *mi Cuscatlán* (My Cuscatlán — the indigenous name of El Salvador) and *raices guanacas* that was eventually chosen. This particular section of the program presented a short historical account, a discussion about particular Salvadoran celebrations, a poem or a popular folktale. The participants, according to the presenter of this section, saw it as a means of teaching 'our children as well as other Latinos about our Salvadoran history and culture'. Yet there were many other less structured or formal references to 'national' identity that were often made during the program. The presenters used particular ways of talking, language and jokes that were all constructed as distinctively Salvadoran. In addressing the audience as *La familia Salvadoreña en Adelaide* — 'the Salvadoran family in Adelaide' they constructed the audience as part of a 'Salvadoran' imagined national community.

It is important to note that the Salvadoran program operated very differently to *Voces*. Besides being there for the program itself, the team met at other times almost on a weekly basis to prepare the texts to be read and discuss different issues regarding the program's content and formation. Such meetings, even when the decisions were not

³¹*Guanacos*, are members of the camel family and are South America's largest land mammals.

fully implemented, made the program more of a collective effort than *Voces* ever was. These conversations, training sessions and even rehearsals of the performance (in reading and editing the text before the program) helped to establish particular meanings and ideas that the program promoted. Here is a description from one of the meetings that reveals the way such decisions were taken.

Roberto gives everyone copies of the script for the program that includes all the Salvadoran news, international news and the part, which for the moment is still called 'Our Land'. Each presenter in turn reads aloud the text that he / she will have to read tomorrow on-air. One of the stories is a report that appeared in 'El Diario de Hoy' and relates to the local community here. The report is about the project of Luz y Esperansa that was organised by some Salvadorans in Adelaide in order to send aid money to the children who live in the rubbish tips in Nejapa near the capital San Salvador. The report in the newspaper tells how the Salvadoran community in Adelaide read the story on the Internet edition of the newspaper and decided to do something about it. They then collected money (by organising a fiesta), bought some essentials and sent it to the children who live in the rubbish tip. This action, the newspaper says, was a big surprise for the locals when they realised that they received help from their Salvadoran brothers ('hermanos lejanos') from such a long distance, while in El Salvador no one ever did anything for them. While reading the story at the meeting, Ricardo, one of the presenters, suggested that in the program the next day, it would be better not to say that the children live at the 'rubbish crematorium', as it was put in the paper. 'This is because they don't actually live there, and what they collect is different materials they can use and sell and not scraps of food'. Ricardo said. Roberto, supporting Ricardo's view, explained that the newspaper used such language in order to make people feel sorry for these people and to give them money and social aid. Eventually the decision is to take the word crematorium out of the text and to read the story without it.

The above is an example of the way the program was operating and the way decisions about what to read and how to read it were taken. As we can see, such decisions involve concern about representations and 'images' that the program should promote.

Like *Voces*, the program was not only about particular representations but became a social event in itself. The Salvadorans would literally take over the small radio station when, apart from the organisers and the presenters, friends and people who did not actively participate in the program would show up and sit outside the studio. The drama outside the studio was as important as what was going on within the studio and what was broadcast on-air. At times there would be up to five people in the studio and a similar number of people outside the studio. During the off-air sections, when the music was playing, people would come in and out from the studio, bring the *Saludos*

and joke about a particular song or a particular mistake that was made in the readings. The team that ran the program consisted of people from different age groups and more or less the same numbers of female and male organisers and presenters. The programs were often accompanied with food and drinks and the participants tended to stay, talk and tell jokes long after the program ended. It was also common to organise a *pupusiada* to mark birthdays and other special occasions for the participants.³²

As in *Voces*, the program had a section dedicated to *community announcements*, but seeing themselves as a 'community' program meant not just announcing but also talking about different local social activities. The program reported, for example, the results of local amateur soccer matches. Interestingly, such a 'locality' was also constructed in relation to the 'imagined community' in El Salvador. The sports section provided the results of soccer matches played in El Salvador alongside the results of 'local' matches. As such the program created a cultural space that brought together life for Salvadorans 'here', and the present life in the homeland.

The music on the program was also very different from the music played on *Voces*. Initially, the intention was that the program would broadcast music 'for everyone'. The broadcasters, therefore, categorised the music according to musical styles that they saw as suited to the particular social characteristics of the 'community'.³³ They looked for 'songs for the oldies', 'songs for young people' and even 'children's songs'. Most of the songs played during the program consisted of popular 'Latin' music such as *merengue*, *música tropical*, *cumbia*, *salsa*, *bolero* and *balada romantica* or romantic songs. The preference was for popular music that could be heard in many parts of Latin America as well as amongst the large Latin American diaspora, and especially in the U.S. In this sense the music was not 'Salvadoran' per se, even when it was clear that this sort of 'Latin' music was very popular in El Salvador.

³² Such a *pupusiada* would normally take place after the program at a private house of a Salvadoran family that operated as a restaurant where they prepared and sold the *pupusas* and drinks.

³³ In the questionnaire that I mentioned above under the question: 'what kind of music do you think that the program should play more or less of?' these categorisations appeared: '*Rancheras que dan colera, Románticas, Tangos, Cumbia, Música viejita, Tríos, Merengue, Vallenato, Rumba, Rock en Español, Otra*'.

Interestingly the different musical character of *Voces* from the *Salvadoran Program* was explained as a cultural difference between the Chileans and the Salvadorans. This is how Monica one of the participants in the Salvadoran program puts it:

Last week I met someone who is what you can call objective, he is not a Salvadoran and not a Chilean. He asked me why 'Voces' is always so political and why the music they play is always protest music while in our program we play music that is much happier and we never talk about politics. I told him that this is so because we see life differently from the Chileans. We as Salvadorans suffered a lot, probably more than the Chileans, yet we always try to continue with our lives and not to see our lives as that of a victim. We take responsibility for our lives and do not try to look all the time for someone to blame for our situation. It is important to change, to continue your life despite the sufferings and the painful memories.

It is interesting to note that popular music in El Salvador (and elsewhere) is not necessarily 'Latin' music, rather it often includes many songs and musical genres in English, mainly from the U.S. Yet, due to the migratory experience an 'ethnic radio program' is always about a particular 'identity' and as such will tend to play only music that is considered to be part of the 'original' identity. This is also true in the case of *Voces* whereby the music that was presented as 'truly' Latin American was consciously selected in contrast to the more popular 'Latin' music.

One of the most striking differences between the two radio programs was the style of presentation. The two programs differed not only in the claims they had for particular 'identities' and their different interpretations of the local 'community', but also in the performance itself. This is how Pablo, a Chilean migrant who was not involved in the making of these programs but normally tuned in to listen to both, described to me this difference.

In terms of presentation, I thought they [Voces] were very boring. You can't compare it to the Salvadoran program, for example, which is natural, has a great flow, it's edgy, has a rhythm and I'm not talking about the music, I'm talking about the on-air communication and presentation. It's a very community focussed program and represents all branches of the community. I think they have done a great job of learning from the defects of other programs.

Such a statement should not be read as if the *Salvadoran Program* was simply better than *Voces*; rather, it shows how the different style of presentation, more than the content itself, became one of the major distinctions between the two programs. As in

Voces, the news and other texts presented at the *Salvadoran program* were also read almost unedited, yet the Salvadoran presenters developed an informal way of addressing each other, and talking to each other 'on-air'. This type of *Bla Bla Bla*, as the participants described it, made the presentation style of the program more fluid and rapid than the formal 'reading' in *Voces*.³⁴ This vivid style of presentation was important in the way by which it worked to construct a particular Salvadoran 'essence' of the presenters and the program. The 'Salvadoran-ness' of the program was exhibited and performed on a level that was very different from simply reading the 'national news' or playing the national anthem. 'Being' Salvadoran was about the particular way language and speech were being used. The particular accents and use of Salvadoran 'slang' and jokes became an important part of the program.

Voces, in contrast, had never emphasised 'language' in such a way. The presenters' accents and way of speaking Spanish had no special role in the program. It was the 'political' message or the political identity of the program that was stressed and performed, rather than a particular accent or 'slang'. In contrast, some of the Salvadoran programs included a section of talking about or speaking *caliche*, Salvadoran slang, whereby the idiosyncrasy of 'our Salvadoran way of speaking' was celebrated.

Such expressions worked in a similar fashion to the section of *raices guanacas*, yet this section was often performed in a particular way. One of the presenters read a weekly report that he wrote and performed as if written by a fictional figure of a 'typical' Salvadoran caricature. The volunteer who invented, wrote and performed this unique character was highly talented in performing 'high' and 'low' language styles and using particular expressions and language used in El Salvador. As a fictional figure, even when everyone knew who he was, he managed with a lot of humour to present important ideas and even to provide critical observations of the 'community'.

³⁴ In the questionnaire under the question 'do you think that the program should have more or less of the following'. The category 'Bla, Bla, Bla' appeared as one of the sections of the program. These are the categorisations used in the questionnaire: *Noticias, Música, Bla Bla Bla, Chistes, Infantiles, Culturales, Comunitarias, Entrevistas, Otro, Sin respuesta*. (News; Music; Bla Bla Bla; Humour, Children's themes, Cultural themes, Community announcements, Interviews, Others, No answer.) Interestingly from the answers it was clear that listeners wanted more music and less talking including less of the Bla Bla Bla.

The idea of being Salvadoran was celebrated via the particularities of the language itself. Talking *caliche*, and having a Salvadoran accent operated here in a similar manner to the way *Voces* used its music. It was a boundary marker, something that only Salvadorans could understand and be a part of. Interestingly the use of *caliche* also generated criticism by some Salvadorans who felt that this type of 'bad' language had no place on radio.³⁵ The presenter, who was highly aware that some words he used (mainly those with sexual connotations) might offend some people, saw such criticism as a positive sign that the program was relevant to its audience and that people listened to it even if they were getting upset. Talking *caliche* on the radio program about events that happened locally was seen as the real connection to El Salvador.

Yet, the adoption of this blatant national identity often collided with the construction of the Salvadorans as part of the larger 'Latin American community'. In fact being 'too' Salvadoran was always seen as potentially alienating for non-Salvadoran listeners. In order to combat the criticism of being a program *just for* Salvadorans, the presenters decided to mention other *Latinos* when addressing their audiences. 'This program is your program for the Salvadoran family and all other *Latinos* who live here in South-Australia.' This statement was deliberately promoted on various programs in order to be more inclusive of the non-Salvadoran listeners. In that sense, as much as it was about a particular 'identity', the program was also seen by some of the participants as a means of uniting 'our' 'Latin American community'.

One interesting example of the collision between being both 'Salvadoran' and *Latino* was evident when it was decided to broadcast a special fundraising program for the victims of the massive devastation in Central America left by Hurricane Mitch. It was immediately contested whether the *Salvadoran Program* should collect money only for El Salvador, or whether it should collect and send the money to the rest of the countries that were affected by the hurricane. Those in favour of the exclusivity to El Salvador argued that as Salvadorans, 'we need to help, first of all our families and our compatriots', especially when world attention was on Honduras, which had been devastated to a much larger degree. Those who were against such a particularistic

³⁵ This criticism reveals an important social division amongst Salvadorans mainly in relation to religion. Most of the complaints were believed to have come from Evangelistic Christians who regarded such language as immoral.

position claimed that privileging El Salvador would be seen as Salvadoran egoism. The program found itself in a difficult position. While presenting itself as a Salvadoran program, helping just the Salvadorans would drive off any other *Latinos*, especially those from the countries that were badly devastated who would see it as an insult. It was finally decided to ask the listeners to name the country to which they would like to donate. The feeling that it would be 'unfair' to privilege El Salvador illustrates how in one sense the *Salvadoran program* (which in the first place was defined as 'Salvadoran' in relation to the idea of a general 'Latin American community') always had in mind the rest of the *Latinos*.

Having a dual Salvadoran / *Latino* identity meant that the program made special efforts to interact with its audience. Yet, such a duality was also part of the symbolic struggle to create a position from which the organisers could speak, not only as the 'Salvadoran' section of the *Latino* 'community', but also as the 'community' itself. The program celebrated annual fundraising *fiestas*, and even distributed questionnaires amongst their prospective listeners asking about the preferred music to be played on the program and giving the listeners the opportunity to express their opinions about the various sections in the program. Such an approach enabled the Salvadoran program to develop, and move to a longer, one and a half-hour-broadcasting slot. This in turn gave the program more room to be 'less' Salvadoran and become more 'Latin American' by providing, for example, news items from various countries in Latin America. These efforts were highly appreciated by some of the program's audience. This is how, for example, Rodrigo, a Chilean listener, summarised his understanding of the *Salvadoran program*.

I think the Salvadoran program has its merits because it attracts people who know how to treat people respectfully. This is the outside view. Who knows what crap they have to deal with, but it doesn't come out on-air they are able to deliver quality and the big key is they have support ...

In this sense the *Salvadoran Program* came to see itself as an 'electronic street corner society', a *rincon latino* whereby 'community' members (Salvadorans and others) were 'gathering' together to be part of the 'community'. By adopting a particular national identity the program had also become a place where special national holidays were marked and celebrated by dedicating a particular program and playing particular

songs and encouraging listeners to send special *saludos* for these occasions. 'Teacher's Day', 'Independence Day', 'Father's Day' and 'Mother's Day' were all mentioned and celebrated according to their calendar dates in El Salvador. Like the commemorative aspects in *Voces* the celebration of national holidays at the *Salvadoran Program* worked to promote the imaginary world of the homeland in the new locality (Hage, 1997:106), even if these took on very different forms and expressions.

Conclusion

There is a need to distinguish between the 'official' definition of the 'migrants' and their 'communities' within the multiculturalist imagery, and the various ways by which 'ethnic' media operate as social constructions about, by or for, a particular minority group. The music, the cultural content of the programs, their style of presentation and the ways by which their performances of 'culture' become a form of migratory gathering, enable the cultural brokers and the audiences to construct a feeling of being at 'home' in the new place. The 'ethnic programs' are not only a result of the state reification of the 'localisation' of 'ethnicity' and the 'community'; rather, despite such official discourse, migrants construct and generate contested experiences and interpretations of the 'old' and 'new' place in ways that compound this duality into a particular diasporic 'locality'.

The point of the comparison between the two radio programs is not to argue that one was better than the other, or merely that the two were very different from each other, even though they were both officially operating under the same framework and from a similar cultural logic. Nor was the point to show that the *Salvadoran program* was more 'community' oriented in contrast to *Voces* that was more 'nostalgic' in its reference to the 'past'. Instead, I would argue that both programs were attempting to construct diasporic identities and perform different interpretations of the migratory experience.

'Ethnic media' are often idealised within official multiculturalism. Such media are presented as one of the main achievements of the policy and are seen as evidence and

an expression of 'cultural diversity', and as sites where 'ethnic / migrant communities' are 'tolerated' while 'enriching' the Australian nation. Yet the actual use of such media by different migrant-groups points to the complexity of the diasporic position and the 'duality of place'. The media, while undoubtedly a site of struggle over the 'community' and 'locality', are also where the diasporic experience is being constructed and particular 'identities' are performed.

Being 'from another place' (Bottomley, 1992) and the attempts to stay connected to their countries of origin, are the means by which migrants come to understand and experience their new life. Such attachments are not merely an act of nostalgia or part of the effort to maintain culture, as depicted by multiculturalism. Rather, relations with the homeland are part of the ambiguity of 'home and away' that constitute the life experiences of many immigrants and construct their various ways of generating 'communities' in their new context.

The two radio programs show different ways of relating to the idea of the 'community' while both assume and construct the 'community' as a 'social fact'. Despite the social tensions between (and even within) the programs, both operated from within an assumption of a 'migrant community' and a 'locality' that they helped to reproduce. Participants see both programs as a means of 'maintaining' links with their homeland(s). Yet in their different constructions of the 'place of origin', both are torn between an emphasis on a narrow (national or political) 'identity' and attempts or claims to construct a single unified 'Latin American community' that emerges partly from within the institutional multicultural position they are operating from.

The next chapter will look at various other forms and public representations of the 'community'. Yet, in contrast to the *fiestas* and the radio programs that operate inwardly (in Spanish and for the community) I investigate next a cultural exhibition at the State Library of South Australia which constructed an image of the 'community' and its 'culture' for the gaze of outsiders. Just as the *Latinos*' inward representations of the 'community' are located within complex relationships to the diaspora, homelands and the particular locality, the outward representations are also produced within a symbolic struggle over the content and meanings of 'our culture' and

‘locality’. The ‘cultural’ exhibition reveals the ways by which the ‘Latin Americans’ are constructed as ‘people of culture’ while they are struggling amongst themselves over the legitimate right to define and represent ‘culture’ as part of the migratory desire to gain visibility and be part of the ‘foreign’ social context.

CHAPTER 5

EXHIBITING CULTURE — REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ‘LATIN AMERICAN COMMUNITY’ IN THE MULTICULTURAL REALM

To name is to possess, to domesticate is to extend a patronage. We are usually only willing to recognise differences so long as they remain within the domain of our language, our knowledge, our control (Chambers, 1994:30).

Why travel around the world when you can discover all the different cultural flavours right here at the Barr Smith Lawns. Scrumptious & finger-licking good food at affordable prices. What more can you ask for? (Promotion for Multicultural Week 2000, at Adelaide University.)

This chapter analyses the cultural exhibition *Expressions of Latin America* that was held at the State Library of South Australia during 1998. This exhibition demonstrated some of the difficulties, importance and different meanings that these sorts of cultural representations hold for Latin American migrants in Adelaide. The cultural exhibition is analysed as a site that expresses an ‘exoticised’ view of ‘culture’ and the ‘community’ to an audience that is constructed as different from the ‘culture’ being represented. In analysing the cultural logic of the display the chapter explores the different ways in which the exhibition-space operates for the ‘insiders’ and the ‘outsiders’ who consume these cultural representations.

Previous chapters dealt with ‘constructions’ of the ‘Latin American community’ in sites that operate within the cultural space provided by multiculturalism. The various types of social gatherings and the diverse ways in which the ‘community’ is constructed within such sites demonstrate the intricacy of ‘identities’ and the multiplicity of places that shape the migratory experience. In light of the migratory movement and structures put in place through multicultural policies and funding schemes, participants and organisers of such communal sites tend to define these gatherings as ways of maintaining ‘culture’ and their particular ‘identities’. Such sites, however, are defined and experienced by participants as *interior* community spaces, where alternative and different notions of ‘identity’ and ‘community’ are played out and contested. Despite the homogenised and reified (official) multicultural discourse, the communal *fiestas* and the radio programs contain performances that are, to a large degree, stories the *Latinos* tell themselves about themselves. In contrast, the exhibition space is structured in a way that is deliberately designed to represent ‘culture’ (and the

local 'migrant community which possesses such 'culture') for the gaze of the 'outsiders'.

Much has already been written about the representation of 'otherness' within official multiculturalism and the phantasmic assumptions such an exoticisation is based upon (Gunew, 1996; Hage, 1998a; Stratton, 1998). However, not enough attention has been given to the complex ways by which such 'exhibitions' of culture are employed by the migrants themselves. The centrality of 'representations of culture' within official multiculturalism makes such representations one of the main sites of social struggles, debates and cooperation or alignments within the 'community'. Various individuals, groups and different 'identities' framed by a multicultural ethnic category such as 'The Latin American community', come together and often compete against each other for the right to speak as the 'community' by producing representations of the local 'community' and its 'culture'.

Exhibitions of 'cultures' are central to official multiculturalism which constructs the 'ethnic / migrant community' as an enclave of cultural difference. The visible and sensual *difference* of other 'cultures' is essential for a national imaginary, which depicts the nation as a collection of distinctive cultural communities. For the migrants themselves, however, such cultural visibility is a strategic imperative for being noticed and for gaining entry into the multicultural realm and in constructing a sense of pride and 'community' in relation to the migratory experience.

The exhibition *Expressions of Latin America* was organised by the *Federation of Spanish Speaking Communities* jointly with the State Library as an expression of Latin American cultures and local Latin American artists in Adelaide. As part of the three-month exhibition the State Library also held weekly story telling sessions for school children and an event titled *Earth Wind and Fire* — a 'cultural evening' of poetry readings and Latin American music.

The exhibition space and the Latin American evening that I discuss in this chapter, like other public expressions of culture, frame and identify local Latin American migrants and the 'community' as bearers of 'culture'. Such 'cultural' visibility helps

define the 'community' through the multicultural rhetoric and the eyes of 'outsiders'. To paraphrase Charles Horton Cooley, this process may be regarded as 'looking glass ethnicity' that operates within the symbolic power of official multiculturalism. The representation of 'our culture' enables the cultural brokers or 'community representatives' to gain authority and legitimacy to speak as / for a distinctive 'community' within the multicultural field.

On Becoming Visible: The Construction of the 'Ethnic Community'

Most Latin American migrants and refugees in Adelaide are undoubtedly visible as 'ethnics', especially those who carry their 'marks of difference' (Joan Scott, cited in Gunew, 1993:54) in the colour of their skin and appearance. At the same time they are also literarily *invisible* as Chileans, Salvadorans or even as *Latinos*. The 'invisibility' of the *Latinos* as a distinctive racial / ethnic category can be seen positively; it means that in Australia (in contrast to the U.S.A.) the category *Latinos* is not threatening. In its local context the term *Latinos*, as I explained in the first chapter, is used by the migrants themselves as an abbreviation for the Spanish term *Latinoamericanos*, rather than a reference to *raza Latina* (Latin race or 'people of colour') as we find in the U.S. context (Mato, 1998; Taylor & Villegas, 1994).

The Australian equivalent of the U.S. racial fear of being swamped by *Latinos* is obviously that of the 'yellow peril', the fear of being swamped by 'Asians'. In contrast to 'Asian' migrants, Latin American migrants in Australia are psycho-geographically 'non-threatening' and even invisible. This is quite different from the situation in the U.S., where the flow of *Latino* migrants back and forth to Latin American countries has created public anxieties not unlike the flow of boat people to Australia in recent years. At the same time the 'invisibility' of the *Latino* is problematic within the Australian context where in order to gain entry into the multicultural space and institutions the construction of the 'Latin Americans', as a separate and distinct 'ethnic community' is essential.

The imagery and 'visibility' of the 'Latin American community' (within multiculturalist discourse) needs to suit institutional ways of being such a

‘community’. One such demand is that the ‘community’ presents itself in a way that erases any major distinctions and conflicts between various groups and ‘identities’ (national, political, religious, regional, ethnic, etc.) within that ethnic category. This is partly why (according to official multiculturalist imagery and rhetoric) all ‘ethnic / migrant communities’ tend to resemble each other. A ‘community’ is always a singular entity or at least should aim for such a goal. Clearly, the migratory experience itself erases many previous social positions and ‘identities’ that cannot be easily ‘transformed’ to the new place. The actual village or town and many other distinctive social categorisations become irrelevant when the ‘country of birth’, the ‘foreign’ language, and what is loosely defined as ‘ethnicity’ subject the ‘migrants’ to bureaucratic governmental and popular definitions of the ‘ethnic community’.

There are of course many other limitations to the ‘visibility’ of the ‘community’ and representation of its ‘culture’. Any emphasis, for example, on a non-Australian national identity is seen as a potential ‘problem’ that needs to be addressed, policed and controlled.¹ Official multiculturalism recognises, of course, that migrants are from somewhere else, however, its main interest and national goals are based on the ‘inclusive’ assumption that define the migrants as people ‘from somewhere else who have made Australia home’ (Thompson, 1993). The reification of the ‘ethnic culture’ within state multiculturalism defines the Australian ‘locality’ and the ‘place of origin’ as two totally separate locations. So while to be ‘from there’ means that you are not ‘from here’, to be ‘here’ means that you are no longer ‘there’. As such, the policy, like other ‘techniques for the nationalisation of space’ (Appadurai, 1995:214), works to localise the ‘migrant culture’ to a particular Australian national space.

This aspect is what makes the ‘multicultural festival’ so central to official multiculturalism. The festival, as well as providing a sensual experience of other cultures, helps to localise the ‘ethnic communities’ and makes them appear as homogenised enclaves of cultural *difference*. At the same time, by celebrating the

¹ As I mentioned in previous chapters SBS Radio defined its audiences as ‘language communities’ and not as nationalities. Similarly the Australian Soccer Federation (ASF) prohibits soccer clubs from using particular nationalistic names and symbols in order to prevent ‘ethnic violence’ during matches. I am not defending here any kind of nationalistic violence, however, I want to problematise the automatic categorisation of such practices as ‘un-Australian’ and reject the simplistic view of ‘ethnic violence’ as ‘harmful’ baggage that ‘ethnics’ bring with them into Australia.

nation's 'cultural diversity' and the 'collection of otherness' that such celebrations normally offer (Hage, 1998a:161), the festival renders all 'ethnic communities' similar to each other and contains them within the temporal and spatial boundaries of the festival.

Objectifying multicultural categorisations such as that of the 'language community' or the 'ethnic community' are obviously stereotypical and often operate, in Bourdieu's terms, as forms of symbolic violence and as instruments of domination. However, it is in light of such symbolic power that we need to look at attempts made by those classified as 'migrants' (or 'ethnics') to establish institutions and produce images of the 'community' and its 'culture' for the gaze of 'outsiders'. Such representations are often promoted and understood by migrants as a way of showing their presence and gaining visibility, even if this can only be achieved in very limited and 'exotic' venues. The paradox of such activities for the people who organise and participate in them is a result of the ambivalence of both visibility and invisibility. The desire to be seen as a 'community' and gain symbolic and political recognition runs the risk of being exoticised as different or as exciting 'others'.

Yet, creating an image of the 'community' in the eyes of the others is important because, as Cooley explains, 'The thing that moves us to pride or shame is not a mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind' (1956:184). What is important, therefore, is not only the stereotypical way in which the 'others' see the migrants or the way they make them appear exotic, cultural, vibrant, dangerous etc., but also the way migrants see themselves in the eyes of the others. Migrants may utilise different forms of demonstrating their 'culture' in order to construct a sense of a local 'community' that is not necessarily confined to the official multicultural rack. The 'imagined effect of the reflection' is crucial for understanding the migrants' attempts to become a 'cultural community'.²

² For this reason we often hear about migrants who complain about representations of their countries of origin in the Australian media. After almost every documentary, fictional film and even news items, migrants ring SBS (as it is often reported on *Hotline*, a viewer feedback program), and complain that a particular program was unbalanced or that it showed only the 'bad' aspects of their country etc. The logic behind such complaints is not necessarily that the program did not 'represent' us but rather a concern about the way that such representations are seen by the 'others' who view the program. The

Expressions of Latin America — ‘An inspiring and beautiful representation. We’re lucky to have such richness here’³

Extra, the quarterly newsletter of the State Library of South Australia, was one of the main forums for promoting *Expressions of Latin America* the new State Library exhibition. A colourful segment of a tapestry *Hilados de un Tejido Cultural* (Threads of a Cultural Cloth) woven by local Latin American women in 1992 in commemoration of the 500 years of Spanish colonisation, decorated the newsletter cover. Inside, an article promoting the new exhibition of the State Library presented it as an opportunity for South Australians to ‘experience the creative expressions of these [Latin American] cultures in a 3-month exhibition’. ‘Latin America’ itself was defined as a unique place of ancient but ‘vibrant cultures’.

The Spanish language has linked these countries for hundreds of years. But the echoes are enduring of distinct and strong, ancient societies whose resourcefulness has helped their culture survive (*Extra*, 1998).

The colourful image on the newsletter cover and the two-page article, accompanied by photographs of two very colourful paintings by a local El Salvadoran artist, evoke an attractive sense of ‘cultural exotica’. The colourful tapestry becomes a metaphor of the ‘colourful’ cultures of Latin America that the exhibition claims to depict: ‘Latin America is an incredibly diverse spread of vibrant cultures which weave across the landscape from Mexico down to the southern tip of Chile, like a multi-coloured tapestry’ (*Extra*, 1998). Visiting the exhibition within the comfort of the familiar locality is presented as a form of ‘travelling’ to a different cultural landscape even if, in the context of migration, it is the ‘cultural objects’ that have made the actual act of travelling.

The works of South Australians originally from these countries will be enriched by the works they have brought with them to Australia of other Latin American artists and writers. Of great interest will be the intriguing range of cleverly designed and richly decorated utensils, crafts and ceremonial items from ancient times (*Extra*, 1998).

sensitivity of the migrants who complain is about what they believe the ‘others’ see when they watch such (mis)representations.

³ This quotation is taken from the Visitors’ Book of the exhibition ‘Expressions of Latin America’ in the State Library.



Figure 6: 'Hilados de un Tejido Cultural' as it was presented at the State Library Exhibition — 'Expressions of Latin America'.

For the local Latin American artists, the exhibition was presented as an opportunity to express 'their pride in creating a new place for their culture and works in multi-cultural South Australia' (*Extra*, 1998). Or, as it appeared on a panel text the entrance to the exhibition itself:

This exhibition reflects the cultural wealth, the thought, the feelings and the soul of South Australian artists from Latin American countries. They have brought with them to South Australia their vibrant cultural heritage and creative skills, and in the process, enriched this community.

Expressions of Latin America was organised by the *Federation*, staff members of the State Library, and various Latin American artists and volunteers who provided their time, artistic work and efforts to make the exhibition. Apparently, the first initiative for the exhibition came from the *Multicultural Curriculum Centre of the Ministry of Education*, which had collected various Latin American artefacts that were normally used in school 'cultural' presentations. Someone in the department thought that it would be a good idea to exhibit these artefacts to a larger public. The *Multicultural Curriculum Centre* contacted the *Cultural Diversity Services* of the State Library (a department that was established in 1993 to provide services to NESB migrants and people with disabilities) and the Library then approached the *Federation*. The *Federation's* role was to make the necessary contacts with local Latin American artists and the 'community'.

The work on the exhibition had begun almost one year prior to my fieldwork. Arranging a space to 'represent' the diverse interests, history and 'identities' (artistic, national, political, cultural, etc.) of the individual Latin Americans organising the exhibition was undoubtedly complex.⁴ What I describe here, however, is the 'final product'. The exhibition is analysed as a constructed space that operates within official multiculturalist definitions. It is this ideological context which produces the particular ways of 'exhibiting' cultural objects, texts, images and music that are placed in ways that aim to produce particular feelings in the spectators. However, as I will show these feelings cannot necessarily be predetermined.⁵

My interest is in analysing the various meanings and interpretations of the spatial narrative that this exhibition produces. For example, the particular 'objects' that were selected and presented (within the 'authority' of the exhibition) and the way these 'cultural objects' were assumed to give 'voice' to 'members' of the 'Latin American community' (in representing their 'culture') are extremely important. Analysing the exhibition helped to expose the ambivalence of the visibility / invisibility settings and the ways in which Latin American migrants are depicted as a 'cultural community' within the official multiculturalist discourse. I obtained such interpretations by direct observation of spectators in the space of the exhibition and the remarks from the Visitors' Book, which became one of the 'objects' displayed within the exhibition space.

⁴ Similar processes were part of the organisation of 'Festival Latino 2000' that was organised by a group of Latin American migrants and a local council in Adelaide. As part of my fieldwork I participated as one of the members of the organising committee and witnessed many of the debates and struggles surrounding the actual making of the festival and the representations it eventually produced. Despite the different contexts of the museum exhibition and the cultural performances at the Festival, similar issues of the 'community' and its 'culture' appeared at both settings. I decided to base this chapter on the exhibition alone because unlike the Festival it enabled me to study the reactions of visitors (Latin Americans and others) to the 'cultural representations' with which they were presented.

⁵ Baxandall (1991:36) suggests seeing exhibitions as a field in which 'three distinct terms are independently in play — the makers of the objects, exhibitors of made objects, and viewers of exhibited made objects'. All these terms are active and relatively 'independent' of each other as each player is playing 'a different game in the field'. While I generally agree with such a model I believe that the field in which an exhibition operates should be defined on a larger scale. For example, in the context of this chapter it is clear that multiculturalism, as an official 'national identity', provided the general 'field' in which such exhibitions of 'cultures' operate, even if naturally not all the artists, organisers and viewers 'read' and experience the exhibitions in these terms.

Clearly the making of such a space and the modes of exhibiting particular artworks and cultural objects is also about assuming a 'typical' viewer and developing particular 'ways of seeing' (Alpers, 1991:27). In this particular exhibition, for example, it seemed that the organisers and the writers of the exhibition text had an audience in mind that was largely seen as non-*Latino*. Efforts were taken, like the 'exotic' images used to promote the exhibition, to make its space applicable and 'attractive' to an audience of non-*Latinos*. Furthermore, from an institutional perspective the exhibition was part of a pedagogical multicultural space in which exhibitions of 'other cultures' are believed to promote cultural understanding and operate as a means for achieving a harmonious and tolerant multicultural society. Despite the above assumptions, the 'real' audiences of the exhibition, as it emerged from the remarks in the Visitors' Book, were very diverse, and included people from different social and cultural backgrounds who had very different contexts from which to 'read' and view the exhibition.

When reading the remarks in the Visitors' Book it becomes evident that the exhibition space had numerous meanings for different people. Such interpretations are products of different 'readings' not only of Latin America and its 'culture' but also of the way in which cultural objects and images that were positioned at the exhibition space become 'representative' of 'culture'. As Ivan Karp puts it: 'When people enter museums they do not leave their cultures and identities in the coatroom' (1992:3). Or as Coxall argues, quoting Sapir, 'We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation' (Sapir, 1941 pp.75–93; cited in Coxall, 1997:100).

As such, the cultural objects presented, their form of presentations and the remarks in the Visitors' Book can be interpreted not only as individual decisions and personal opinions but also as cultural readings and interpretations that are often part of the 'multicultural' field the exhibition operates in and reproduces.

The role of the Visitors' Book is of course also open to different interpretations. While we can assume that the Book is there in order to 'monitor' the audience reactions to the exhibition display, and to give the visitors a 'voice', visitors actually do very

different things with it. Some remarks in the Visitors' Book appeared in Spanish or in other languages. Some are 'negative' or critical remarks and many are 'positive'. Some are only a one-word remark like 'excellent', while others took an entire page to express their experiences and thoughts. Some people wrote remarks as a response to remarks they had read in the book. Some people wrote down their name and address and others decided not to provide such details. The most important aspect of the Visitors' Book, as I see it, is in the way that it had become a part of the exhibition. People who choose to write in the book wrote their remarks as a message for the 'organisers' but also for the other visitors to read.

Obviously, my own interpretation of the exhibition space and my analysis of the remarks in the Visitors' Book is only one possible 'reading' of the exhibition in a way that is no more 'objective' or truthful than any of the 'original' meanings the organisers had intended. I do not claim, therefore, to speak about the 'real' meaning or even the intended meaning of the exhibition, rather I take a theoretical position according to which the meaning of the exhibition, as with any other text, is not necessarily the one that was intended by the writers. What my analysis aimed at achieving is to interpret the different interpretations of the exhibition space by looking at the 'different ways of seeing' that the exhibition space produces in different visitors to the exhibition.

For example, the remark in the Visitor's Book, 'An inspiring and beautiful representation. We're lucky to have such richness here', can be read as a remark by a supporter of multiculturalism who writes from a position of Australians as 'we' who are lucky to be enriched by Latin American migrants, and are lucky to *have* (here) access to *their* 'rich' cultures. Such a remark was no doubt written against the background of 'racist' views that see migration as threatening to the local Australian 'we'.⁶ In contrast we also read, 'Where are the REAL artefacts. Is Adelaide that shitty that we have to remain deprived?' This remark can be seen as a criticism from a person who (as a 'local') feels deprived of the authentic 'exotica' she hoped to

⁶ During 1997 and 1998 what is often called the 'race debate' within Australia became prominent due to the emergence of 'One Nation'. This new political party headed by Pauline Hanson called for a 'united and strong Australia' and evoked the 'national' fears from 'multiculturalism', Asian migration and Aboriginal land rights as issues that may lead to the 'eventual Asian takeover of Australia'.

encounter in the exhibition space. What this person had experienced was not 'convincing' enough because she felt that the objects displayed were not 'REAL', and which proved to her that Adelaide (in contrast to Melbourne, Sydney?) is shitty. Someone else, in a kind of dialogic play that we find in some of the comments in the book, took the effort to write a reply: 'they are real artefacts'. Interestingly, the 'we' that is deprived from the 'REAL artefacts' is equivalent to the enriched 'we' that appeared in the first remark. It is a 'we' that is categorically defined as different from the 'culture' that is being exhibited.

These remarks point to two different possible readings of the 'exhibits' and the exhibition yet both can be interpreted as sharing a similar view of the exhibition as a representation of a different 'culture'. Such 'openness' of the interpretation shows that there is no such thing as *the single, the correct or the right* meaning of the exhibitions (or to the remarks in the Visitors' Book), and yet such interpretations (and the interpretations of these interpretations) are not totally arbitrary because they are located within a particular social fields and institutional settings and constructions of the 'locality' and the exhibition space (Coxal, 1997:101).

The exhibition was set in a large room that normally holds short-term exhibitions and is located within the State Library building very close to the entrance. This space is central in the sense that any visitor to the library will notice it almost immediately. Its centrality is also a result of the way in which exhibitions are promoted in the main street next to the library entrance. In the case of *Expressions of Latin America* a large colourful banner outside the library depicted a flying condor, the name of the exhibition and an image of a decorated artwork cover with Aztec designs situated within a dramatic landscape.

The exhibition space itself was organised around a few central themes. In the middle of the large room dividing walls were placed in a way that provided more exhibition space and allowed the visitors to walk in a circle around the exhibits. The various walls presented images, written information, handcrafts and artwork. Glass cases along the walls held particular objects related to the main theme of each section. There was a wall dedicated to music and dance and alongside it glass cases that presented

traditional indigenous and non-indigenous Latin American musical instruments. Another wall was dedicated to Latin American literature and poetry. It had images of famous Latin American writers and a short explanation of their work. Its attached glass case showed some of these writers' works, old books and old maps of Latin America from the library's collection of rare books. Other glass cases held indigenous artwork and what looked like archaeological artefacts. There was also a wall that located the geographical and historical context of 'Latin America' by presenting various maps and information about the indigenous peoples prior to the arrival of the European conquistadors. Another wall depicted Latin American *artesanía* (craft work) such as weaving and pottery.



Figure 7: Musical instruments at the State Library Exhibition
— 'Expressions of Latin America'.

The exhibition displayed two main kinds of objects as 'cultural expressions' of Latin America. The first were representations of the 'original' cultures in Latin America. 'Latin America' was represented by displaying various 'culturally purposeful objects' (Baxandall, 1991) from *there* such as traditional costumes, maps, musical instruments, indigenous artefacts as well as images of landscapes, traditional dancing, literature and poetry. Continuously played sound tracks of music from various countries and cultural traditions across Latin America (indigenous, folkloric, and *nueva canción* but not *Salsa*, *Merengue* or *Bolero*), added another dimension to the 'Latin American' feel of the exhibition.

The second kind of objects were various forms of artwork produced by local Latin American artists. These included artistic works, such as paintings, photography, poetry, tapestry and pottery. Some of these works evoked Latin America in their subject matter and style. There was, for example, a series of paintings that depicted the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, an *arpillera* (tapestry) that depicted the struggle against Spanish Colonialism and the military regimes in Latin America, and a bust sculpture of Pablo Neruda made by a local Chilean artist. Other works evoked Latin America in a very different way. A young Salvadoran artist presented her work titled 'A Day at the Market', which consisted of a series of close-up photographs depicting her own screaming and anguished expressions as part of her personal experience and memory of the civil war in El Salvador. The original work, as the artist told me, included a sound track she had made of her memories from an incident of shootings and bombings at a crowded market in El Salvador. This, however, was not played in the space of the exhibition because, as she told me, the organisers felt it would be too confronting. Other artworks in the exhibition did not evoke in their style or subject matter any direct reference to Latin America but were simply included because Latin American migrants had produced them.⁷

It is clear that objects exhibited, like any other cultural objects, can never be interpreted from an ideology free zone: '... facts *never* speak for themselves, but are always *made to speak* by a network of discursive devices' (Zizek, 1999:64).

All exhibitions are inevitably organised on the basis of assumptions about the intentions of the objects' producers, the cultural skills and qualifications of the audience, the claims to authoritativeness made by the exhibition, and judgments of the aesthetic merit or authenticity of the objects or setting exhibited (Karp, 1991:12).

The connection between the images and cultural objects from 'there' and the work of artists 'here' was made via the salient notion that depicts the local Latin American migrants as carriers of 'culture' and members of a local 'migrant community'. As one of the Latin American organisers wrote in one of the text panels:

⁷ It is important to note that the category 'Latin American artist' is somewhat problematic. While some of these migrants saw themselves as artists others, even when they produced artwork, did not see themselves primarily as artists. Furthermore, most of the artwork presented had not been produced especially for the exhibition but rather for various different personal circumstances of the artists' lives.

The Latin American exhibition reflects the cultural wealth, the thought, the feelings and the soul of our artists who have migrated to South Australia. They have brought with them particular skills and values, which are priceless tools in the process of adjusting to a new society. This exhibition is a reflection of their values and beliefs.⁸

The exhibition space created a direct link between the 'original' culture and its local carriers. There was, therefore, a double meaning to the exhibition name *Expressions of Latin America*. On the one hand it referred to 'cultural objects' *from there*, as representations of the rich diversity of cultures in Latin America. On the other hand the exhibition defined the artistic works of Latin American migrants in Adelaide as work produced by members of a local 'ethnic community' who not only brought with them some of their 'original' culture but also in their work *here* expressed their (Latin American) culture and identity.



Figure 8: The exhibition space at the State Library.

In analysing the exhibition space and its cultural objects it is important, as I mentioned above, to read the remarks in the Visitors' Book. These remarks add another dimension to the analysis of the various meanings that the displayed cultural objects and the exhibition place itself had for different visitors.

⁸ This quotation also appeared in the article in *Extra* mentioned above.

The Gaze of the Tourist

There are various distinctive 'readings' that emerge from the Visitors' Book. For some viewers the most attractive aspect of the exhibition was the evocation of the elsewhere; these remarks express a feeling of travel. The exhibition was judged according to the proximity that it had to the 'exotic' image of Latin America that tourists might have when they are searching for an 'interesting' place to visit. Clearly an exhibition is a substitute for the real thing, but nevertheless the experience of visiting such a place is that of the tourist. Such remarks came from people who had travelled before or those who wished to travel to Latin America. The locality or the existence of *Latinos* in Adelaide was in a way less relevant than the desire for the experience of visiting a far-away place. One of the remarks in the Visitors' Book stated: *It's a beautiful place!!!* It is hard to tell if the adjective 'beautiful place' refers to the 'exhibition' or to the 'real' place (Latin America). In a way a distinction between the 'representation' and the 'real' is artificial from the gaze of the tourist for whom the exhibition space is experienced as a substitute for travelling. Here are some of the remarks that describe the 'experience' of the exhibition through the eyes of the 'tourist':

I can suppose I'll never get there. This was a beautiful and interesting substitute.

Fantastic! Take me there — wonderful!!

I travelled through some of these beautiful countries last year and fell in love with them, thank you for provoking many beautiful memories of the people, the land and the music.

Lovely exhibition, a nice taste of Latin America.

Wonderful! It took me back to the best overseas trip any Australian could wish for.

In relation to the notion of 'travel' and of Latin America as a place worthy of exploration there is the idea that such cultures are exotic, ancient and indigenous. However, even when the indigenous cultural objects, images and music exhibited evoked Spanish colonialism, the presentation tended to depict the 'indigenous' as 'people of culture' and as such remained largely at the level of the attractive 'exotica'.

The exhibition takes for granted the western outsiders' view of 'indigenous' and their cultural objects as markers of 'exotic' or 'disappearing' cultures.⁹

Indigeneity and the Exhibitions Space

At the opening night of the exhibition I asked one of the organisers from the *Federation* in what ways he believed such an exhibition could help the 'community'. I was quite surprised when he answered that the exhibition would show the 'Australians' *que no somos indios* — 'that we are not Indians'. What he meant was that the exhibition would demonstrate that Latin Americans are people of sophisticated cultures, artistic, musical, literature etc. To be represented in a sort of museum setting at the State Library was seen by him as an important recognition and acknowledgment of the presence of Latin Americans in Adelaide. 'Not to be an Indian', however, means that the representation is believed by the speaker to depict Latin Americans as 'civilised' people of high cultural value who are unlike the 'barbarians' or the 'uncivilised' *indios*.¹⁰

The speaker made a distinction between the image of Latin America as part of the Third World (and therefore the view of Latin Americans as people from undeveloped countries, less modern if not primitives) and the 'high' cultural achievements that he believed the exhibition demonstrated. The use of the derogatory term *indios* was ironic. The exhibition openly celebrated the indigenous cultures of Latin America and, in a way, through the choices made in selecting the objects and the forms of display, actually encouraged the visitors to see the Latin American migrants as 'indigenous'. Such representations are related to the western context in which the 'indigenous' people are romanticised as 'noble savages' (spiritual, closer to nature etc.) even when

⁹ When a Mapuche political activist came to Adelaide as part of an international campaign to stop the Chilean government's plan to build six hydroelectric dams on the Biobío river that would flood a large part of traditional indigenous land, he did not bring with him, at least in his public appearance, any marks of an 'exotic' indigenous identity. This is not to say that Mapuches do not wear their traditional costume or that their forced assimilation made them 'lose' their culture, but that the images that we have of indigenous people are often very far from the reality of their everyday life. For more information about the struggle over the Biobío river see Brown (1998).

¹⁰ The category *indio* should not always be interpreted as a reference to the indigenous populations, and in different countries in Latin America may have different meanings. For example in the Dominican Republic the concept *indio* refers to skin colour and not to an Indian race. Dominicans who define themselves and are regarded by others as *indios* are those who have brown skin (Sørensen, 1997:293).

such a 'positive' evaluation is done in the name of the struggle and survival of 'disappearing' indigenous cultures.¹¹

Interesting and moving display. Keep up the good work. Indigenous cultures mustn't be lost.

This is one of many visits. The vibration of the indigenous cultures is felt here as well as the vibrations of the organisers of this exhibition and the people portrayed. Thanks a Million.

A sign of hope and inspiration in these dark times. An expression of the strength vibrancy and faith of indigenous people everywhere.

One of the interesting remarks in this context was made by a Maori visitor who expressed a kinship affiliation with the indigenous people of Latin America that he automatically identified with the organisers of the exhibitions.

I am a Maori from N.Z. and we're related in some way because our land our home is where you are from but we left years before you were discovered by the Spanish. Great work brothers and sisters.

These aspects are also what made the exhibition be seen as a valuable pedagogical tool, an aspect that was evident in the weekly story-telling sessions for school children entitled *Weaving Tales and Tapestries*. These story-telling sessions, presented by Anna (a Latin American volunteer at the *Federation*), included a story about the dramatic moment of the meeting point between the Spaniard conquistadors and the *Indians*, the Aztecs and the Incas. The school children were also taken through the exhibition and were asked to weave their own tapestry as a demonstration of the ways Indians in Latin America produced clothes and artworks. Here is a section from my fieldnotes that describes the way indigeneity, culture and Latin America were expressed and performed in this particular setting.

Anna stands in front of the school children. On the wall behind her are different maps of Latin America and a large image of Machu Picchu. 'I come from Colombia' she presents herself. 'Who knows where Colombia is? Who can show me on the map where Colombia is?' One student gets up and points to Colombia on the map. 'Yes, very good' Anna points to the map, 'This is

¹¹ Malkki (1992:30) argues that 'indigenous people' are often seen in ecological terms, as if they are somehow fusing with the forest. 'Like the "wild life," the indigenous are an object of inquiry and imagination not only for the anthropologist but also for the naturalist, the environmentalist and the tourist' (Malkki, 1992:30). Talks about the preservation of the indigenous cultures often affiliated with the ecological context of 'native' plants and the environmental struggle to save the planet, in which the 'indigenous' are elevated to a spiritual and moral value because of the ways they are imagined to be rooted in their soil.

modern Latin America, we call it Latin America because we speak Spanish and Portuguese. And this is the old Latin America' she points to another map which depicts the different indigenous groups of Latin America prior to Spanish colonisation.

'When the Spaniards came 500 years ago they found some tribes of Indians and these Indians were very, very civilised, very well developed. The Indians in Colombia are called Chibchas¹² and they made this kind of work in gold'. Anna points to a poster on the wall which shows Indigenous artwork from Colombia. 'This type of work shows the ceremonies that the Indians had in a lake. They were afraid that they were not purified so the Chibchas' main boss would go to a lake and the Indians would surround him with gold and precious stones and emeralds, and when the Chibchas swam in the lake they would throw in all those beautiful stones. These Chibchas were very, very clever they made all these beautiful things of gold with very little tools'.

Anna takes off a necklace she is wearing, 'This is an imitation of the kind of jewellery they made; the stones are 800 hundred years old but it was not made by the Indians it is only a replica. There was so much gold in Latin America when the Spaniards came; there were packs and packs of gold especially in Peru. The Spaniards became very greedy with all that gold so they decided to kidnap the Chief of the Incas, and now I will read to you a little bit of what happened. The name of the Inca Chief is Atahualpa, have you heard about Atahualpa? He's very famous they even made a movie about him, Christopher Plummer played Atahualpa and he looks exactly like that, like a real Indian, like a snake, he would go like that' Anna sticks her tongue out imitating a snake 'like a real snake to the Spaniards' she repeats.

Anna read a famous story about the death of Atahualpa, the last Inca ruler, as a consequence of the Spaniards greed for gold. This story and the images that accompanied it (as she spoke Anna showed the students images of Inca ruins and archaeological findings) presented the meeting of the Spaniards with 'Latin America' (and the children in the session) as a meeting with an exotic people who have different customs and 'strange' belief systems. The story repeats the colonial narrative of discovery. The 'Indians' are presented as civilised and 'well developed' from the perspective of the Europeans who 'discovered' them. It is the conquistadors that are active (they discover the Indians, steal their gold, kidnap their king and eventually kill him) and it is them (us) that evaluate the 'Indians' as civilised from the privileged position of civilised people. The Indians, in contrast, are the victim and the passive 'other', their 'indigeneity' is depicted as exotic and different and the setting of the story (and the exhibition?) reduce it to the level of 'people of culture'.

¹² The *Chibchas* (also called *muisca*) are one of the main indigenous groups who at the time of the Spanish conquest occupied the high valleys surrounding the modern cities of Bogotá and Tunja in Colombia.

It is important to note that the organisers from the *Federation* and some of the artists themselves even when expressing their support and affiliation with the indigenous people usually did not claim an indigenous identity.¹³ Most Latin Americans in Adelaide do not see themselves as 'indigenous' even if some often talk about Latin American culture and themselves as *mestizos*, who, like many Latin Americans, have some 'Indian blood' in their ancestry. Only those Latin American migrants who identified with the political 'left' were usually the ones supportive of indigenous rights and their struggle in Latin America and in Australia. Other Latin Americans were indifferent and sometime even hostile towards any identification as Indians or *indios* which, as I said before, is a derogatory term.

This does not mean that deep feelings and affiliations with indigenous cultures do not exist. Public affiliations with the 'indigenous' were often expressed by inviting local Aboriginal performers to participate in political demonstrations or in Latin American 'cultural nights'. There is at least one Latin American band that wrote a song in English about Aboriginal suffering and the 'stolen generation' in Australia and even a case of a Chilean migrant who gave his son a Mapuche name as an act of solidarity with the indigenous struggle in Chile. For example, Paulina, a Chilean political refugee, defined her own personal relationship to the 'Indian' culture in this way:

I have always been attracted to cultures other than Chilean ... as I have been all my life psychologically part of the 'Indian' culture ... although I never had the opportunity to live as an 'Indian' I always felt 'Indian' even in Chile, even as far as I remember this is the case ... so my metamorphosis really started very early on in the piece ... when I came here my most important relationships were with Aboriginal people, I think this is a factor that must also be acknowledged ... I don't look at 'Australia' through the 'white Australian' eyes; I have been provided with the other history, the one most people are ignorant of, so when I talk about this land I am referring a lot to the Indigenous sense of being Australian ...

At the same time Paulina is careful not to appropriate the 'indigenous' voice by emphasising her mestizo ancestry and by making a distinction between her 'feeling' as an 'Indian' and actual 'Indian' culture and 'identity'.

¹³ During 1996, a 'Festival of Indigenous Cultures of the Americas' was organised by the *Federation*. Yet, such an affiliation was always seen as problematic, when organising the same festival to be celebrated in 1997 the organising committee decided to change the name to 'Latin American Fair' arguing that it is misleading to call the festival an indigenous festival 'when we are not really indigenous'.

I am the product of the conquest... I should have been a Mapuche woman, living in Mapuche land and under Mapuche lore... I am a mixed race person instead, brought up in a country with a tremendous inferiority complex towards Europe and in particular the U.S. I can't say I am Mapuche, because I think this is something that I should earn by being with Mapuche people... it is only the Mapuche people who can define me as one more 'Person from the Land'... I can't take this liberty... in my heart I am an 'Indian' I have always been and always will be...

The Colourful Other

Many visitors to the exhibition reacted to the exotic images and culture presented not only at the level of the 'indigenous' but also at the level of the Latin Americans themselves as 'colourful' people. The image of 'colourful' cultures was evoked, as mentioned above, with the analogy of Latin America as a 'multi-coloured tapestry'. This image was supported not only by the 'colourful' objects presented (paintings, photographs, craft work) but also in the presentation of multi-coloured maps displaying different countries and different indigenous people across the continent. Some visitors 'approved' the value of the objects and culture exhibited when they stressed that such 'objects' ought to be displayed and admired in the setting of a museum. In a way, Latin Americans themselves are seen as colourful 'objects' that are worthy of such a display.

I love the historical artefacts. Adelaide should have a place where everybody can admire Latin American History any time they want. Maybe the Museum should sit up and take notice of this exhibition.

Bright and colourful people.

Latin Americans are really gifted in art and music. Thank you for giving a wonderful space to be inspired.

Fascinating piece of history, showing how we are starving of any spiritual food.

You have contributed enormously to my fabulous museum of living memories enriching it in the process.

The setting of such a (multicultural) lesson / experience in the context of a cultural exhibition is based on what Alpers (1991:27) calls the 'museum effect'; a way of seeing that produces a particular understanding of the objects and stories exhibited. 'The products of other cultures are made into something we can look at' (Alpers,

1991:32). Alpers talks about the 'we' that he posed in contrast to 'other' cultures. 'It is to ourselves, then, that we are representing things in museums' (1991:32). As such he identified the practice of exhibiting objects and 'cultures' in 'museums' as 'western' and adopts the problematic worldview of the 'west' and the 'rest'. Yet, it is exactly such assumptions about a homogenised 'we' or 'us', in the context of societies that declare themselves to be multicultural, that need to be problematised, even if such unreflected notions continue to prevail alongside multicultural images and rhetoric. It was in this context that the experience of many visitors to the exhibition was that of viewing a *different* culture from their own. What made the exhibition 'valuable' was a particular way of *seeing* that depicted another culture as something that was visually 'interesting' and culturally enriching. These aspects were also evident from some of the remarks in the Visitors' Book that responded to the feeling of visiting a different 'culture'.

A beautiful and informative display — what a rich and valuable set of cultures!

This place is very respectable and cultural. An excellent display.

We really enjoyed your Latin American display. It was a wonderful experience learning more about such a different culture.

It is good to be reminded of the richness of other cultures.

Very beautiful display of the essence of Latin American cultures.

*The display is much better than I expected, because I'm not a culture freak!
At school we learn Spanish so I understand some untranslated words and I'd like to say 'Muy Bien'.*

All such readings of the display refer to the way the exhibition space promoted 'culture' and Latin America as 'exotic', visually interesting, rich 'colourful' and essentially different to Australia, which, in contrast to 'Latin America' is seen as a place where 'we are starved of any spiritual food'. The exhibition as an expression of the interesting 'cultural' life in Latin America revealed, for some of the visitors, the lack of 'culture' of Australian society.

Beautiful exhibition bringing great beauty and awareness of the struggle in Latin America to this often unaware apathetic country.

Time our community in Australia got to know the neighbours of the Southern Hemisphere continent better + understanding its cultural richness.

Such comments return again to the visibility of the 'other' and the invisibility of the dominant 'culture' which is 'unaware' or ignorant about such 'cultures' but as the remark above indicates can also be enriched by the 'cultural others'. These aspects are what made the exhibition operate as a sort of a tourist and pedagogical space that teaches the visitors about Latin America's unique 'collection of cultures' which is very different from their own.

Enriching Cultures and Multiculturalism

In their genealogy, such displays of exotic 'otherness' go back to the colonial 'ethnographic showcases' where objects and people taken from the colonies, such as 'exotic' savages and animals were exhibited in the 'world fair' (Hage, 1998a:157). The colonial practice of exhibiting a 'collection of otherness' is a unique type of collection in which 'the elements that constitute a collection tend to lose any meaning derived from their original context and usage and, instead, obtain their significance from their presence in the collection' (Hage, 1998a:159). In the colonial context the 'collection of otherness,' as Hage explains, is a direct expression of the collector-power over the exhibited others. The collected objects become an extension of the exhibitor power of classification.

In Australian exhibitory multiculturalism, of which the Latin American exhibition is a clear example, the idea is not only to depict far away places but also to show the nation as a 'collection' of cultural others. Australian exhibitory multiculturalism can be seen, therefore, as a postcolonial version of the colonial fair, because:

... while White multiculturalism requires a number of cultures, White culture is not merely one among those cultures — it is precisely the culture which provides the collection with the spirit that moves it and gives it coherence: 'peaceful coexistence' (Hage, 1998a:161).

The existence of the exhibition as an expression of multiculturalism is no doubt part of the institutional logic of the display, which is why it is not at all surprising to find many remarks in the Visitors' Book that either directly or indirectly evoke multiculturalism. In addition to the 'exotic' experience of the exhibition, such remarks promote multiculturalism as a form of cultural enrichment, where different cultures

are not only shared but also where the 'richness' and the 'collection of culture' is turned into something Australia possesses. In contrast to the 'exotic' readings of the exhibition which depict Australia as a place that in comparison is 'not exotic', the reference now is towards the presence of the 'others' here, who turn Australia into an 'interesting' and 'enriched' place.

It is encouraging to see that so many countries are present in this exhibition in their own right. The cultural diversity of Latin America is well portrayed in this exhibition. The excellent quality of the crafts and the very interesting written information help to avoid stereotypes. A really good contribution to the knowledge and understanding of other cultures — hopefully it can increase awareness of the real meaning of living in a multicultural society. Thanks for the effort the time and care taken in organising this exhibition.

A well presented exhibition. Informative characteristics and interesting. Our community needs more of this kind of exhibition as one of the paths leading towards mutual understanding between different cultures. Thanks so much to all the organisers who made it possible.

Thank you very much for going to so much trouble to show us part of your very rich culture. May you all continue to retain your culture and share it so openly.

Great to find such a colourful exhibition. How lucky this country is to have such migrants!

Thanks for a great multicultural experience we enjoyed it a lot, great craft and work, very colourful.

We can see how the presence of the 'other', even if it is acknowledged positively, does not really challenge the definition of Australia as a locality that is essentially *different* from the 'new' culture that is being incorporated. The 'new' culture is classified as another 'exciting' addition to the collection of 'cultural diversity' that 'we', the non-cultural (in Rosaldo's (1989) terminology) already 'have'.

The Exhibition from the 'Migrants Point of View'

The 'readings' presented above are very different from the ways in which *insiders* to the 'community' or other Latin American visitors saw and experienced the exhibitions. For the Latin Americans organising and visiting the exhibitions, such an expression is related mainly to migratory experiences. Many of the objects displayed were taken from the private homes of Latin Americans where they were often

collected and displayed as part of the migratory home building process. Presented within the space of the migrant homes, however, such objects operated as symbolic references to the 'original' home, not only as markers of 'identity' but also as a way to remember. While for non-*Latino* visitors the exhibition may remind them of a place they visited in the past or wish to visit in the future, for many Latin Americans the exhibition space evoked memories from home.

I feel homesick I love my country.

*Solo con el corazón puede ver, Muchas gracias! (Only with your heart you can see it. Thank you!)*¹⁴

Thank you for transforming me back to South America. As a proud Argentinian I would like to say that the red and Black 'Poncho' in this exhibition is from my home city (Salta) Poncho Salteno. Gracias.

It is very nice to see and feel things from home. Beautifully expressed.

Excellent! I love hearing about my homeland.

'Viva Chile' forever.

As we can see there is a real sense of pride in seeing the familiar in the context of a foreign place. While for non-*Latinos* the 'exhibition' was 'interesting' because it displayed the 'other', for some migrants the exhibition evoked a sense of achievement in managing to stay different, to maintain relations with the 'original' culture despite the move. The panel text that escorted the work *Hilados de un Tejido Cultural* (Threads of a Cultural Cloth) used the image of the 'cloth' and the act of 'weaving' as a metaphor of the migratory transplantation and translation of cultural experiences. The work, woven in 1992 by a group of Latin American women in Adelaide in commemoration of the 500 years of Spanish colonisation, is presented as a political affirmation of '... the existence of civilisation before the arrival of Christopher Columbus and questions the premise of "Discovery"'. However, this particular *arpillera* (tapestry) and the image of 'weaving' is also translated in the context of the exhibition as a way of:

... exploring our feeling as migrants striving to survive in a new continent. Are we repeating history? What have we brought with us? Our traditions are valuable elements to be continued and added to the evolving culture of Australia. Can our cultural 'threads' be woven into the 'cloth' or do we present a conflict? How do we resolve the need to be ourselves?

¹⁴ All the translations of the original remarks in Spanish are my translations.

While for 'outsiders' the exhibition presented the 'culture' of Latin America as a remote and exotic place, for Latin American migrants themselves the expression of 'our culture' was interpreted and framed in relation to the new place. The existence of the exhibition itself provides the 'proof' that the 'original' culture is still alive.

Que bueno que la gente latina de aquí de Adelaide aunque están tan lejos de sus países tratan de conservar sus tradiciones y expresar las por el medio de la arte. Los Felecito (How wonderful that the Latin people here in Adelaide, even when they are so far away from their countries, try to keep their traditions and express them through their art. I congratulate you.)

Primero que nada quisiera felicitarnos por su exhibición me da gran alegría saber que queda gente Latina que aún sigan reconectando su país. Un país Latino Americano lleno de ilusión y esperanza — suerte. Sigam creiendo la comunidad Hispano Hablante. (First of all I would like to congratulate you for the exhibition I am very happy to know that there are still Latin people who continue to reconnect with their countries. Latin American countries filled with illusion and hope, 'good luck'. May the Spanish speaking community continue to grow.)

This last remark shows how the 'maintenance' of the 'original' culture is attributed to the 'community'. The exhibition is seen as proof that the 'community', identified here according to its multicultural terminology as a language community, is managing to maintain its culture.

Me gusta bastante, me gusta ser latina y ver a la comunidad que junta puedan hacer algo hermoso. (I really love it, I love being Latina and see that together the community can do something so beautiful.)

Excelente exhibición la federación debe estar orgullosa de su lado y valioso parte en Sur Australia. (An excellent exhibition the Federation must feel proud of its role in South Australia.)

At the same time there is a sense of achievement in the way the exhibition presented to the *outsiders*, normally defined simply as 'Australians', 'our' true cultural value as Latin Americans.

Me parece muy bueno lo que han mostrado de nuestra cultura. (I think it is very good to make Australia know what the Latin American culture is like.)

Pienso que está muy bueno lo que han mostrado de nuestra cultura. (I think that what you showed of our culture is very good.)

Muy interesante. Excelente presentación para expresar nuestra cultura historia de nuestros países latinoamericanos. Sigamos adelante. (Very

interesting. Excellent presentation to express our culture and history of our Latin American countries. Carry on.)

It is very good to show other cultures this is 'Multiculturalism', thanks for the opportunity to show my culture.

Although some of the comments above and short texts presenting the artists and organisers linked the exhibition to Latin Americans in Australia, the exhibition did not depict the local 'community' as a subject to be represented. The history of Latin American migrants in Adelaide, different sites, organisations or non artistic cultural expressions of the local community in Adelaide were not presented or referred to. The gaze, in depicting the diverse cultures of Latin America was directed 'elsewhere' towards the 'exotic' aspects of Latin America (mainly indigenous cultures prior to the Spanish colonisations) and local artistic expressions that were 'colourful' and 'interesting' enough to be exhibited. The current 'cultures' in Latin America and that of diasporic global *Latino* culture as well as everyday expressions of such cultures in Australia were totally excluded from the exhibition space. The remarks in Spanish, made by those who identified themselves as Latin Americans, also in a way regard 'culture' as something which relates to elsewhere and is merely 'maintained' in the new locality. What is common to such readings of the exhibition space is the way in which 'culture' is reduced (or elevated) to particular representations and artistic expressions. It is not the 'lived' culture but rather the 'exhibited' culture that is seen as the real achievement of the organisers and participants.

At the same time, the exhibition assumed and promoted, as part of its multicultural experience, the idea that these 'cultural expressions' are embodied within a local migrant community. Like the 'collection of otherness' that Hage (1998a) identified in the context of Australian multiculturalism, the local 'community' defines itself via the presentation of its own 'diversity of cultures', which is then celebrated, paradoxically, as an expression of a single unified 'Latin American community'. Part of the problem lies with the term and history of Latin America itself, especially in light of the diversity of cultural, ethnic and national identities that such a general term includes. Yet, the making of a local 'Latin American community' and its representation in a setting of a cultural exhibition needs to be understood from within the context of Australian multiculturalism. The representation of 'our culture' is derived from the

attempt to become part of the 'multicultural' arena, to become a 'cultural community', like other such 'communities' in South Australia.

These aspects were especially prominent in short texts presented at the exhibition alongside the works and in reference to some of the organisers. These 'presentations of the self' provided important insights into the ways in which these people saw the 'exhibition' and themselves, as 'Latin Americans' within the setting of the exhibition and the 'community'. One such self-presentation by a person who defined himself as a 'community leader' stated:

As a member of an umbrella organisation [the *Federation*] which shelters itself a multicultural identity, I have a commitment to promote the integration of our people within South Australian society while preserving the values of our own cultures.

As a community leader of Latin American background it is a challenge for me to transfer our roots into the Australian environment and develop a new identity enriched by the values of many cultures that exist in this country.

The project 'Expression of Latin America' comprising in this exhibition, music, poetry readings, dances, story telling sessions and weaving demonstration, is an invaluable opportunity for our people in South Australia to unfold our ancient and modern cultures in this most prestigious institution, the State Library of South Australia.

The making of the 'community' and the desire to be rooted in the Australian soil assume the need to become a 'cultural community'. Another member of the 'community' wrote, 'Being South Australian of Latin American background means to me a fusion of two completely different cultures'. And the exhibition, she argued, is 'a great opportunity for the people of Adelaide to have a glimpse of our culture. It is like a window opening up all of a sudden in the middle of Adelaide'. The visual imagery was not accidental. It rendered the visibility of a *different* cultural identity and provided the cultural brokers, the people who are producing such representations and themselves as the representatives of the 'community', an opportunity to *speak as* the 'community'.

A few days after the exhibition opened I met Laura, a Chilean migrant, who (from the little I knew about her at the time) used to be highly involved in various organisations and the 'community'. I asked her if she had seen the exhibition and wanted to know

what she had felt about it. 'It is all lies', she said. 'What do you mean?' I asked, a little puzzled. 'You know it is the way they tell lies to the Australians about who they are and what they are. I really don't know why we [Latin Americans] always need to lie to the Australian people.' Likewise, two other Latin Americans I met (who at the time had taken a stand against the *Federation*) argued before they even visited the exhibition that it had no 'real' artistic value. They explained: 'What is considered here as Latin American art is what any first year art student can produce back home'. Other Latin American migrants criticised the exhibition for not being 'political' enough. Arguing that because the organisers tried not to upset anyone (by not being too 'political' for example) the exhibition, as they put it, was really about nothing.

In my fieldnotes I wrote that such remarks might indicate that there is a gap between what some Latin Americans view as the romanticised representations of the 'community' and what other migrants (like those in the radio program *Voces* that I presented in the previous chapter) see as the 'real' or true culture of Latin America, and the local 'community'. However, as I later realised, what such remarks express is not necessarily an argument about the representation or the exoticisation of Latin American culture. Rather, it is often a personal attack against the producers of the representations. The accusation is that the people who produce the images, those who speak for the 'community', have a 'hidden agenda', a set of personal motives behind the images that they produce. In one case a Chilean migrant tried to convince me that all the Chileans in Adelaide who say that they were tortured and persecuted for political reasons by the military regime in Chile are actually 'lying'. The reason for such 'lies' he argued is because they want 'Australians to feel sorry for them' and other Latin Americans to see them as somehow heroic and truly 'political'. Clearly, such an accusation is totally false but it needs to be understood in the context of the political and personal rivalry that exists amongst different Latin Americans (mainly Chileans) and the struggle over the 'right' to speak as a political refugee. For example, in this particular case this migrant expressed his hatred towards those who identified with the political left while at the same time he argued that he himself had been tortured, and as such has the right to speak as the only 'real' political refugee in Adelaide.

Similar gossip was often evoked against any person who attempted to commercialise, usually with some success, a particular aspect of Latin American culture. It was often said that the work of musicians, poets, painters or other artists who expressed aspects of Latin America in their work was appreciated here merely due to its 'exotic' value and not for its 'real' value. Latin Americans 'accused' in this manner often attributed it to what they regarded as the Latin American 'illness' of *envidia* or jealousy. Such criticisms, in the context of the exhibition, challenged the claim of the organisers to *speak as* the 'community' and rejected their use of representations of 'culture' as a source of legitimisation to do so. The labelling of such representations as 'lies' assumes that the producers were not really promoting the 'community' but rather themselves as individuals.

A similar sort of criticism appeared in the exhibition Visitors' Book:

Latin America does not only include El Salvador, Peru, Colombia and Chile. If this was to be a Latin American exhibition it should not only include Chile, El Salvador, Peru or Colombia, what about the others such as Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Argentina and the rest of the Latin American countries? It's supposed to be Latin American, but it doesn't say nothing about Latin America. If you wanted this exhibition to be Latin American then include all the other countries. Why include only the countries of the stupid people involved in the Federation community (eg the people who run the Federation) Why not the others. Don't you know what countries form Latin America then CHECK THE MAP.

Underneath this remark someone had added:

(just calm down mate).

What begins as an argument about a 'wrong' representation ends with the 'accusation' that such a misrepresentation was deliberately made by members of a particular organisation. This remark was undoubtedly the most noticeable and talked about remark in the Visitors' Book amongst the organisers and other Latin American migrants who visited the exhibition. Some speculated that the anonymous writer was an Argentinian who felt insulted that there was not enough space given to that particular country. While no one doubted the anonymous writer was a Latin American, some argued that the remark was deliberately written in English in order to create more damage and that the writer resented particular individuals at the

Federation — meaning that this attack was made because of a personal motive and not from a substantive argument of the representation in the exhibition. The voice underneath the remark '*just calm down mate*' may be the voice of an 'Australian' for whom such a remark challenges the image of a harmonious multicultural nation, as it exposes the tension within the so called 'ethnic community'. It is possibly the authoritative voice that Hage (1998a) identified as belonging to the multicultural manager, a voice that exposes the limits of White multicultural 'tolerance'.

Roberto, one of the organisers of the exhibition, explained this particular remark in the following way:

Someone wrote a very nasty remark in the visitors' book. I think it was someone who wanted revenge, someone with a lot of hatred towards the Federation. It was very specific and that guy took the whole page to write it on. From the way the letters are, it looks like it was a child or a young person that one of his parents told him what to write. And this person contradicted himself he mentioned like six different countries and then said that it only represented the stupid people from the Federation.

The reason this remark was so noticeable and offensive is because it challenged the image of a unified 'community' the organisers tried to promote. For the people of the *Federation* this remark was an expression of one of the main problems in 'our community' in which people prefer to criticise and destroy, rather than join in and help us build the 'community' together. 'This is so immature, these people are like little children who spit the dummy and say I don't want to play with you any longer. Instead they could come and be part of it, after all it is all done for the community', as one of the members of the *Federation* argued.

For the artists themselves the issue of the 'community' was not as important as their desire to reach an audience, and even to try and capitalise on the 'exotic' sentiments their work provoked.¹⁵ One of the artists, whose work appeared in the exhibition, wanted to organise what she called a *Barrio Latino* (a Latin neighbourhood). The idea was to establish a small artistic commercial centre of Latin American products, a

¹⁵ Another example of such a process is the appearance of *Salsa* nights, various Latin bands and several Latin Dance Studios that emerged in Adelaide during 2000, in a direct response to the emergence of a global market of *Latino* music and dance styles. These new venues exploit and reproduce the 'exotic' image of the *Latinos* in promoting their activities.

workshop and artwork. This idea never eventuated but it indicates the desire of artists to find audiences in the new place even if such space and interest is initially a product of the view of them as 'different' and 'exotic'.

'Earth, Wind and Fire'

As mentioned above, the exhibition the State Library organised also included an event titled *Earth, Wind and Fire*, a cultural Latin American night of poetry reading and music. The audience was invited to: 'Experience the places, poems and music of Latin America ... Enjoy the vibrant music of the region and hear the power of its poetry all performed by members of SA's Latin American community' (*Extra*, 1998). The night itself was held at a lecture theatre provided by the State Library. In contrast to the exhibition that attracted many people who went through the library the evening attracted a relatively small numbers of participants, many knew each other from similar such activities or knew one or several of the artists who performed during the night. The event was also promoted on various Latin American radio programs yet there were not too many *Latinos* in the audience.

The night involved a lecture and various other forms of performances such as poetry readings, folkloric dance and music. The author of the *Lonely Planet* guides to Chile and Argentina gave the first lecture and showed slides that emphasised what he called the landscape of two of South America's most dramatic countries. It was this lecture that generated the Latin American 'elsewhere' as 'exotic' while it used the landscape itself as an explanation for such an exoticisation. The dramatic landscape that was so different from Europe, he explained generated the myths and the fascination that Europeans have always had with South America. Most of the other performers who followed were local Latin American artists who were involved in organising the exhibition or whose work appeared in the exhibition. The poetry readings included some original works by local Latin American poets, and other works by famous poets from Latin America. Each of the Latin American presenters represented a particular country as she/he read poems from the country of origin. All the poems were recited in Spanish and English. The second part of the evening included various Latin

American musical performances, Salvadoran folklore dancers and a demonstration of *Merengue* and *Salsa* dance.

Clearly, the attraction of such a cultural night is not only the 'exotic' Latin American cultural landscape, but also in the way in which, by reading poetry for example, it depicts itself as 'high culture'. For the Latin American performers and artists the night, like the exhibition itself, was seen as an expression of 'our culture' to an audience that consists mainly of *outsiders*. The lack of Latin Americans in the audience was not seen as a problem because in accordance with the cultural logic of the overall exhibit an audience of non-Latin Americans was seen as an opportunity to show the 'Australians' some important aspects of 'our culture'. This is how one of the organisers and a participating artist explained to me the evening and the reasons why such presentations are often more attractive to non-Latin Americans.

It is important that Australian people hear our voice. Some Latin Americans do not want to improve the level of our culture; the Australians who come here tonight are happy to hear something new. Many Latin Americans do not realise how important it is to have events like this so our children will keep our culture and not just keep it but develop it. Some people in the community have a wrong view of the community, or they think that all the organisations should do is fiestas or sport events and that they should not be involved in politics at all. Others think we are not political enough. There are a lot of superficial people who do not participate in anything. Our participation and the support we received from the State library are very important. The library has the program of cultural diversity where they present and help different ethnic communities, they are the ones who asked us to organise this night.

The cultural texts that were presented during that night, like the objects and texts displayed at the exhibition, had particular meanings for the Latin Americans who participated and organised the event. The reference to 'politics' in the above quotation shows that the speaker recognised the presentation as 'political'. Furthermore, the reference to the superficial people whose only interests are sport and *fiestas* indicates that the texts chosen have particular symbolic capital within the field of the 'community' (and in Latin America) as it helps define the participants as 'cultural' in contrast to merely being 'superficial' migrants. These 'political' and 'cultural' aspects were evident in the selection of the poems and general images of Latin America that the night promoted. Reading poems by Pablo Neruda, Gabriela Mistral, Octavio Paz and Luis Borges amongst others was a statement about the importance of these works

and the cultural and political value that such writers have in Latin America. Like the exhibition space, however, there is always a need to ask what happens to such texts when they are presented through the framework of 'exotic' otherness. The performance of 'our culture' is not just about the meanings or feeling that such images, texts and ideas evoke for different audiences. In its new cultural context such representations are also not solely about the 'original' historical and political context that these poems have in Latin America. Rather they need to be analysed in relation to the people who represent them and the organisers' own positions within the field of multiculturalism and the 'community'. The gaze of the outsiders partially frames such cultural performances and the performers themselves as embodiments of a *different* culture.

An account of this particular 'cultural night' appeared in *Noticias Y Deportes*. The article celebrated the night as an important achievement which gave recognition of the 'culture' and the 'community'.¹⁶

We have to feel very proud of the results, it was an event for everyone made by everyone. It was an important event as it helps to dissipate the general image according to which fiestas, soccer and corruption are our cultural highlights, as Don Simon Bolivar would say. This is still a current concept, which comes as a result of our indolence in the promotion of the great values that we know we have. We remember them [the great values] with pride but when we display ourselves, we usually don't go further than presenting our colourful handcrafts, Andean music, Salsa and Cumbia. It was a valuable act, an important tribute to what is best of our roots, and it was respectfully presented like it should always be, in a bilingual manner. (My translation.)

The 'cultural night' was important, according to the author, because it exposed the audience, and Latin Americans themselves, to a 'cultural' experience that was different from the 'normal' and superficial representation of 'our culture'. But while the article acknowledged that representations of 'our culture' are often superficial it did not challenge the 'exotic' demand for such representations. In his conclusion the author presented the night as an important political achievement. The article ends by celebrating the respectable and 'cultural' presentation as an expression of multiculturalism.

¹⁶ The original article in Spanish is: 'Tierra — Viento Y Fuego: Una Velada Cultural Latinoamericana' in *Noticias y Deportes* (16.7.98) — 'Earth Wind and Fire: A Latin American Cultural Night.'

This is a reality that has a name which Miss Hanson and perhaps Mr. Howard, find so difficult to pronounce:
MULTICULTURALISM.

To all those who in an act of solidarity made this encounter with the giants of our culture possible and the State Library which offered us unconditional help, the Federation of the Spanish Speaking Communities, in the name of all Latin America, says: GRACIAS. (My translation.)

The author as an actor within the field of the 'community', adopts the view that multiculturalism is mainly about representations of culture. The respectable exhibit of 'our culture' is celebrated because it is within such representations that the 'cultural community' is made.

In examining the cultural exhibition and the way such an exhibition was linked to the idea of a local community, I wondered if it is not the multicultural imagery that in the first place constructs the Latin Americans as a 'community' that needs to be represented in such a way. During fieldwork, as I witnessed and participated in similar 'Latin American' and 'community' representations of culture, I often asked myself what I would have chosen to bring if I had to represent my 'Israeli culture' in a similar setting. By posing such a question I was not only reflecting upon my own cultural background (which is very different from the people with whom I worked) but I was also thinking about the way such choices require particular notions of 'otherness', constructed by those who are 'other' to me. 'Strangers' need constantly to look at the way that the 'others' see them, and to interpret that mirror image in order to assess their 'selves' and their 'identity'. Representing their 'culture' already assumes that they not only carry but can also express their difference. Thinking about themselves as the 'others' means that they are imagining some 'other' who is not like them and who sees them as the 'other'. Within the migratory experience such reflections are often the product of movement itself, of the experience of living in a different place, of suddenly needing to consciously evoke 'a' culture, have 'culture', represent and perform it as something which can no longer be taken for granted or simply 'lived'.

In the context of the exhibition and the 'cultural night' it is clear, therefore, that there is an intention behind the particular way the exhibition and the cultural objects were

organised and presented. Furthermore, as Baxandall argues, any exhibition that comes under the rubric of 'representing culture' also includes a 'theory of culture' (1991:36).

It seems axiomatic that it is not possible to exhibit objects without putting a construction upon them. Long before the stage of verbal expositions by label catalogue, an exhibition embodies ordering propositions. To select and to put forward any item for display, as something worth looking at, as interesting, is a statement not only about the object but about the culture it comes from. To put three objects in a vitrine involves additional implications of relations. There is no exhibition without construction and therefore — in an extended sense — appropriation (Baxandall, 1991:34).

The existence of such a 'representation of cultures', within the Australian context, is undoubtedly a product of the multicultural discourse. *Expressions of Latin America* delineated itself as an exhibition that aimed to promote and represent a particular set of cultural identities of one of South Australia's 'migrant communities'. Clearly, the relation between 'identity', 'culture' and exhibitions is a complex one, particularly when an exhibition is set in advance to articulate a *different* cultural identity. Such exhibitions as Karp (1991) explains, '... are privileged arenas for presenting images of self and "other"', because 'when cultural "others" are implicated, exhibitions tell us who we are and, perhaps most significant, who we are not' (Karp, 1991:15).

What is problematic in such 'exhibitions of culture' is the attempt to generate an image of 'culture' and the 'community' that are somehow unified and clearly marked. When arranging their own 'cultural exhibition' the Latin Americans had to avoid any idiosyncrasy, complexity or incompatible difference and advance instead a romanticised (multicultural) image of Latin American cultures that, in the context of migration, is now harmoniously lived within the framework of a unified local 'ethnic / migrant community' in Australia. Obviously, such 'exhibitions of culture' cannot solely be attributed to the ideological project of constructing the 'multicultural nation'. And yet for many migrants who find themselves in such a setting there is a need to adopt, translate and use such images for establishing their local version of a visible 'cultural community'.

Conclusion

It is very hard to determine to what degree such images and cultural presentations actually produce a feeling of a local community amongst individual migrants. What is evident, however, is that because of the centrality of such representations in the multiculturalist national imaginary, it is often the representations that become a source of struggle (and a way of accumulating symbolic capital) among various groups and individuals within the 'migrant community'. Such representations may offer a limited conceptual space through which some migrants can lobby to be heard, gain visibility and be recognised as members of a 'local' Australian place. Yet, representations that supposedly create the desired visibility of 'cultural diversity' and celebrate the migrants' presence in Australia do not pose any real challenge to the power relations that position the migrants at the level of the 'exotic' others. Migrants are tolerated as long as they are seen as a source of enrichment to the lives of the situated locals. If we compare the presence of the *Latinos* in Australia to the way 'Asian' (and similarly Muslim) migrants are defined and feared, we can argue that their exoticisation is possible because in the first place, as 'Latin Americans', they are not seen as posing a real danger to the Australian 'national' identity. This exotic imagery however, cannot challenge the 'understandable' intolerance that will rear its ugly head, once there are 'just too many of them', when the migrants become too visible and their otherness is no longer seen as 'exotic' and as a colourful addition to the nation.

In the next chapter I look again at the idea of the 'community.' However, this time I will not look at collective representations or social gatherings. Rather my aim is to present the complex relations that different individuals have with what they see and experience as the 'community'. I analyse the motivations and strategies expressed in these narratives.

CHAPTER 6

I AM MY OWN CULTURE: INDIVIDUAL MIGRANTS AND THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE 'MIGRANT COMMUNITY'

I love the fact that there are so many different kinds of people, I am honoured to have been privileged with this knowledge because this freed me from having to 'belong' anywhere, I choose to belong nowhere ... if I say I would be Latin American I say so in hypothetical terms, if I have to define myself in national terms, I would say I am Latin American, and I agree that it is also an artifact, the same that it is to say I am Chilean, because even within Chile there is great variety; if you go to the north and then to the South you would realise people are different again, so what the heck it is to be Chilean ... well there is a constitution, there is a republic, and so on ... more and more artifacts ... (Paulina, a Chilean political refugee in Adelaide.)

'Since the history of the individual is never anything other than a certain specification of the collective history of his group or class, each individual system of dispositions may be seen as a structural variant of all the other groups or class habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977:86, cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1993:38)

This chapter takes as its subject matter the 'individual migrant' and looks at the ways by which different individuals develop their own 'understanding' of the 'community' and their various 'identities' in the context of migration. Such personal positions and understandings are essential for tracing the various meanings of the 'community' for those who see themselves and are often categorised by the state as members of a distinctive 'migrant / ethnic community'. There is a need, therefore, to problematise the category of the 'ethnic / migrant community' not merely as an ideological construct of the state, but also in the context of individual migrants who negotiate and construct their different 'subjectivities' in relation to their interpretations and experiences of the migratory movement.

The previous chapters looked at different constructions of the 'community' as a social field that can never completely escape its official multiculturalist definitions. The formal definition of the 'ethnic / migrant community' structures and shapes the formation of the 'community' and its particular activities. Due to its centrality in governmental discourse and funding schemes, the 'ethnic / migrant community' becomes a site of public cultural representations that encourages the emergence of new collectivities but also contributes to multiple social struggles. Various individual players, social groups and different organisations, who regard themselves as part of a

‘migrant community’, come together to construct their new place and ‘locality’ while they struggle against each other within its symbolic boundaries.

Despite my criticism of the official discourse, this chapter does not attempt to redefine the ‘migrant community’ at the level of the individual participant. Such a proposition, (found in the political context of individual liberalism) ignores the complex ways in which social structures shape individuals’ understandings of themselves and undermine the way power operates within such social structures. I reject a perspective that defines individuals as rational actors who, as part of their ‘optimising strategies’ and a ‘rational calculus’, choose to be part of a ‘community’ or ignore it. I also, however, want to avoid the image of a powerful state ideology which constructs the category of the ‘ethnic / migrant community’ as a manipulative means of social and bureaucratic control. Such a view leaves individual migrants no room to resist or transform the ideological ‘fiction of the community’ that is imposed upon them.

Instead, by centring the discussion around the personal stories, interpretations and practices of individual migrants, I present the ‘migrant community’ as a system of dispositions that involve the migratory past and present in what is perceived to be a different cultural context. Bourdieu’s definition of *habitus* is highly relevant here because it provides an interesting answer to the structure / agency problem of social theory. Bourdieu’s model of social practice rejects the two exclusive alternatives of viewing agency or structure as if one determines the other. Instead, the notion of *habitus* is presented as a system of dispositions that exists within particular social fields (Bourdieu, 1990:52). ‘Culture is conceptualised as practices following common master patterns that range over cognitive, corporeal, as well as attitudinal dimensions of action’ (Swartz, 1997:290).

Instead of seeing structure as oppressive to the ‘individual’ who mechanically obeys exterior rules or alternatively assuming a ‘pure’ subject who has free choice, Bourdieu’s arguments help to analyse the complex relation between structures and individuals as actors within the field. The ‘migrant community’ cannot be seen as a restrictive structure only created through oppressive state ideology, nor can the ‘migrant community’ only be understood as a construction by individual migrants

who try consciously to improve their life conditions in the new place. Rather the 'community' (and the 'meaning' of the migratory movement itself) is often a result of previous dispositions and social fields from the 'place of origin' that, in the new place structure and limit 'individual' choices, innovations and life strategies.

Such a perspective helps in understanding the notion of the 'community' and the different actors who experience it locally as a way of 'belonging'. What makes the 'community' important is the 'naturalness' of the previous life (and 'collectivity') that can no longer be 'taken for granted' or assumed. The personal positions and narratives of individuals in relation to the 'community' illustrate the complex nature of 'belonging' that simultaneously implicates and separates these individual migrants from the Australian multiculturalist policies and imagery.

Before presenting the narratives (or the differentiated positioning toward the 'community') of different individuals, it is important to explore the notion of the 'individual migrant' in the context of the official multicultural definition of the 'ethnic / migrant community'. It is the national aspect of official multiculturalism that creates discrepancies between the desired forms that the 'ethnic / migrant community' should adopt and the reality of diverse 'identities' and the diasporic experiences that mark the life of many migrant groups in Australia. While, it is very hard to determine the exact effects of such policies and images on the lives of different migrant groups and their 'identities', it is clear that such effects are far from straightforward.

What often becomes evident for many researchers, participants and others who closely work with 'ethnic / migrant communities' is the 'fiction of the community' (Langer, 1998:167), whereby the representations of the migrants as members of a community fail to acknowledge the dynamism and heterogeneity of such social worlds. The danger of taking for granted reified notions of the 'ethnic / migrant community' and its 'culture' (as it occurs in some academic studies and other representations of such communities) is in the risk of creating '... a binary relation between the 'ethnic communities' and the 'Australian society', as if the two were mutually exclusive, internally homogenous entities' (Stratton & Ang, 1998:158).

What looks like unity from the outside is invariably diverse and conflictual from the inside, particularly when the historical conditions under which 'communities' have been constituted are taken into account. ... The fact that the fiction of 'community' survives at all might thus be seen as the hegemonic achievement of those who have mobilised it as a rhetorical strategy in the competition for, and distribution of, state resources (Langer, 1998:169).

Langer's (1998) arguments are extremely important especially in the way she exposes the interest of various participants, including what she called the 'multiculturalism research industry' and migrant leaders themselves in promoting the 'fiction of the community'. This is how she describes the academic and institutional presumptions of her own work amongst Salvadoran refugees in Melbourne:

The study on which this paper is based, for example, was initially framed in terms of a logic which assumes the prior distinctiveness and stability of both 'ethnicity' and 'Australian-ness' and constructs the 'ethnic community study' as one in which the task of the social researcher is to document the 'difference' and tease out its implications for settlement and intergenerational 'problems'. This logic did not survive the first months of fieldwork, in which we encountered not a discretely bounded 'ethnic culture' but 'life worlds' that had to a greater or lesser extent incorporated elements of global culture. Salvadorans were certainly 'different', but the difference was often more to do with life-shattering historical trauma and economic deprivation than with 'cultural alterity'. (Langer, 1998:171)

In criticising the 'anachronistic fantasy' of the 'community' Langer points out the 'global cultural influences', a concept she uses in reference to the consumption of similar cultural products and cultural tastes across the world (what she calls the 'Coca-Colonisation' of the world), as a new social reality which makes any assumption about 'ethnic culture' as a distinctive identity even more problematic.¹

We can find a similar argument in Skrbiš (1999) who prefers to use the term 'diaspora' and 'diaspora organisations' in order to avoid two different paradoxes that he identified within the category of the 'ethnic community'. The first paradox is that

¹ Langer uses the 'Coca-Colonisation of the world' to attack official multiculturalism assumptions of the migrants' 'cultural difference' (Langer, 1998:171). However, such an attack is possible only if you accept the definition of 'cultures' and 'identities' as homogenised and relatively stable social formations. What I want to argue is that the global consumption of similar cultural products does not necessarily lead to a lack of cultural difference. While there is no doubt that globalisation transforms many distinctive cultural practices and that it generates more similarities across the world than before global influence, it is still important to take into account the particular reactions, cultural / political effects, particular histories and forms that globalisation takes in different places.

of *abstract inclusion*, where all migrants of the same birthplace are categorised as members of a homogeneous 'ethnic community'. What such a categorisation ignores is the fact that many of the people who are abstractly included in the 'ethnic community' may actually have very little in common with each other. Such a categorisation is typically made by outsiders, or the 'border society' which defines the 'ethnics' according to their assumed cultural difference and disregards 'the intensity of commitment to ethnicity by people who are constructed as "belonging"' (Skrbiš, 1999:60).

The second paradox is *the paradox of exclusion* in which only those from a particular ethnic background who participate and are represented in recognised social organisations are seen to be part of the 'community'. Such approaches, which are often promoted by academic studies of these 'communities', assume a set of 'core values', common 'cultural patterns' and a 'typicality' that are shared by members of the 'ethnic' culture.

What these approaches actually presume is that *all individuals* of particular ethnic backgrounds participate in ethnic cultures which are, by and large, defined through 'ethnic' clubs, 'ethnic' congregations, 'ethnic' schools, and other similar institutions (Skrbiš, 1999:62, emphasis added).

These arguments are undoubtedly true for the Latin American migrants I studied in Adelaide. However, I would argue that in understanding the experience of the 'community' it is not enough to identify the ideological constructs within official multiculturalism and other hegemonic institutions which produce and obscure knowledge about the 'ethnic / migrant community'. Rather, we need to look at the various meanings that such constructs and the idea of the 'community' itself have for the various individuals who participate in, as well as those who choose to distance themselves from, such 'imaginary' or 'real' social worlds.² Factoring in the individual is essential for understanding the effects, dangers and the limitations of the categorisation of the migrants as members of 'ethnic communities'. At the same time

² Skrbiš (1999) regards the term 'diaspora' to be better than that of the 'ethnic community' because according to him 'it implies no value bias.' I accept the problematisation of the terminology and believe that imagining migrants as 'diasporic communities' is important in rejecting the simplified multicultural imagery of the 'ethnic community'. However, I think that instead of searching for a better analytical definition it is important to study how common definitions such as 'ethnicity' and the 'community' operate in the daily lives of migrants, their various institutions and self representations.

such an approach may expose the symbolic power of such concepts in shaping individual discourses and experiences of 'belonging' and not 'belonging' which still renders the 'community' as a key-framing concept through which different individual positions are reached.

Hence, individuals are not the passive recipients or objects of structural process. They are not such '*tabulae rasa*, to be injected or even constructed with the ideology of the day' but are constructively engaged in the securing of identities (Rowbotham, 1989:18; cited in Brah, Hickman & Mac an Ghaill, 1999:4).

This last point is extremely important in the context of migration where notions and an understanding of 'community', for example, may relate to different and complex histories and social worlds that may have little to do with such definitions in the new place.

The 'individual' is of course a social construction that is often based on a fantasy of a clearly defined 'self' or 'author' of a stable or whole 'identity'. Such 'continual fabulation' deliberately ignores and conceals the fluidity of 'identity'.

Just as the narrative of the nation involves the construction of an 'imaginary community', a sense of belonging sustained as much by fantasy and the imagination as by any geographical or physical reality, so our sense of ourselves is also a labor of the imagination, a fiction, a particular story that makes sense. We imagine ourselves to be whole, to be complete, to have a full identity and certainly not to be open and fragmented; we imagine ourselves to be the author, rather than an object, of the narratives that constitute our lives. It is this imaginary closure that permits us to act. Still, I would suggest, we are now beginning to learn to act in the subjective mode, 'as if we had' a full identity, while recognising that such fullness is a fiction, an inevitable failure (Chambers, 1994:25).

An individual migrant may therefore see herself or himself as a member of a particular 'ethnic / migrant community' but such a membership and the meanings of the 'community' may take different forms and be of varying intensity, in relation to their own definitions and perceptions of themselves as individuals.

‘I Am My Own Culture’

The multicultural assumption of the ‘community’ and its simplistic view of ‘culture’ may blind us to the immense variety by which migratory movement can be experienced by people from the same cultural backgrounds and similar circumstances of arrival to Australia. I was often surprised to see the different meanings that the migratory experience held, not only for different people from the same ‘place’, but also for different individuals within the same family. It was common to see families in which the wife was much more ‘positive’ and happy about the migratory move than her husband. I would often hear talk about a family member who still ‘lives in the past’ and refuses to adapt to the new place, or alternatively about young children, who are already ‘too Australian’. Such idiosyncratic feelings are the tip of the iceberg in revealing the complexity of different reactions and understandings of the migratory movement.³

Any search for common social factors and social characters that influence such different experiences can often lead to empty or simplistic generalisations. There is no single explanatory variable, like class, ethnicity, gender, age, time spent in the new place, educational skills or even the circumstances of arrival that can determine the different reactions of different individual migrants to the new situation in which they find themselves. Rather there are always varieties of complex life circumstances, belief systems, a different *habitus* and personal histories as well as all of the above social characteristics that influence the interpretation of the migratory movement and shape the new locality that the migrants encounter and help to construct.

Clearly there are also many ‘collective’ factors that bring migrants to form their particular social groupings as well as avoiding many other groups which they see as ‘collectively’ different from their own experiences. The various formal and informal

³ An interesting case study is research conducted by Kay (1987) who studied exiled Chileans in Glasgow and found striking distinctions between the way men and women recount their experiences of the three years prior to the military coup in Chile.

These men and women spoke a different language, had different experiences of loss and gain from social change and their reconstruction of the past bore little similarity. Dates which were engraved in the men’s memories as marking decisive battles in the class struggle did not form part of the women’s memories at all. Their version of history was marked by key dates in the family calendar (Kay, 1987:4).

social groups of Latin American migrants in Adelaide, those which are normally seen by participants as being part of the 'community', and even those that are excluded or exist outside this 'imagined' category are all based upon some kind of collective experience. These different 'common grounds' like linguistic, national, religious, regional along with political identities and social class are often consciously articulated, and work as symbolic boundaries that may help to maintain the group cohesiveness. However, even in such settings individual participants tend to see themselves as different from the 'collective' definition of the group.

Early on in my fieldwork I realised that presenting myself as a researcher who was studying the 'community' was more acceptable and less threatening than any other possible self-presentation. The 'community' was assumed to exist at a level that is beyond the 'individual', a public place in contrast to the private sphere of the 'home' and the 'family'. In a way the 'community' was always seen and recognised as something that is different from the individual participants and even from the particular groups in which such individuals participated. That is why Latin American migrants often presented me as a 'friend of our community', a definition which helped them to accept and explain my interest and presence amongst them.

The idea of a unified 'community,' as *una familia latinoamericana* (a Latin American Family) was always presented in various settings and social organisations as a desired goal for the future, while at present the 'community' was seen as something that is characterised mainly by personal intrigues and mutual suspicions. In reflecting upon their inability to work together as a 'community' Latin Americans often talked about the problem of 'individualism' that they attributed to their 'culture' or the 'Latin American mentality'— a mentality, as I was often told, of suspicion and jealousy which is a direct outcome of the need to survive the harsh economic and social realities of life in Central and South America. The Salvadoran *dicho* (saying) *Cada cabeza es un mundo* (literarily 'every head is a world on its own' which means 'every person is different') was often mentioned in reference to the difficulties of bringing people to work together and in acknowledging individual diversity. Community leaders and organisers, who themselves were always suspected by other Latin Americans of promoting their own personal agendas, often talked amongst themselves

about the difficulty of working with people who are selfish and who put their personal needs at the forefront. 'The problem with our community is that each person thinks: *Primero Yo, después Yo y al final Yo*' (first me, then me and finally me) as one Salvadoran migrant described it. Such statements evoke the 'community' as an ideal or a moral obligation that frames relationships within a sanctioned collective, yet such a collectivity is always fragile because it is constantly challenged and threatened by 'individualism'.

Leaving aside simplistic and stereotypic statements about 'Latin American culture' or 'Latin American mentality', there is still a need to account for the ways by which the migratory movement itself enables people to become 'individuals'. Migration allows for some to distance themselves from their previous social definition and their 'old' and 'new' social categorisations. Living 'between cultures' is also fertile ground for reflections and thoughts about identities and one's own social and cultural associations that can no longer be taken for granted. Furthermore, the Australian 'way of life' is often perceived by migrants to be highly individualised. Private homes and the ability to maintain personal and social distance from other people helps some migrants to claim their individuality in a way that they had never experienced before. Some may even consciously decide to keep their (physical and social) distance from other Latin Americans, and search for different and new communities and self definitions that have little or nothing to do with the particular places they came from.⁴

Clearly, there are always various cultural and social factors that limit such 'inventions' of the self, especially if one remains close to people who know 'where you come from' and your 'real' social position. Chileans, for example, often quoted the saying *no nos podemos leer la suerte entre gitanos* — 'Amongst Gipsies we cannot read the future' which means that you cannot deceive the people who 'know who you really are' and 'what you really are'. This phrase emerged in conversations

⁴ Once I asked an El Salvadoran elderly woman who told me that her son lives in Canada why she had chosen to live in Australia and not in Canada. She said that apart from the better weather she prefers to live here where she has her own privacy and distance from other Salvadorans. After visiting her son in Canada she realised that many Salvadorans there live in apartment blocks and everyone could see when you go and when you come back. While this statement is merely a personal experience what I find interesting in this remark is the value that is attached to the ability to have one's own distance from other migrants.

and gossip as an explanatory device that testified to the ability of the speaker to identify other migrants who try to adopt or claim social positions or 'identities' that they never had back home. Such 'lying' was attributed to the desire on the part of the 'liars' to impress the 'Australians' or as an attempt to gain access to particular social groups or even just in order to 'put down' other Chileans. And yet it is exactly for these reasons that the possibility of losing one's 'old' identities and creating distance from the 'community' by adopting 'new identities', is often seen as leading to upward mobility or as a positive and attractive opportunity to make a fresh start.⁵

I will now present three individuals and their stories in order to illustrate some of the complexities that the idea and experiences of the 'community' have for different people. All three are Chileans and shared similar life circumstances that made them come to Australia. All three regarded themselves as political refugees and shared similar political views. Despite this 'common' background they had very different experiences and ways of participating in what they regarded as the 'community'.

Paulina

I met Paulina soon after I officially began my fieldwork. We met at a *fiesta* where I introduced myself as an anthropologist who was studying the 'community'. At the time I was still very much an outsider and was largely unaware of the various personal and collective differences that existed amongst different Latin American individuals and groups. For the practical purpose of doing 'fieldwork' I regarded Paulina, like the other participants and organisers of this particular event, as a 'member' of the 'Latin American community' and I mentally marked her as one of my potential informants. However, very soon I became aware of the problematic position that Paulina occupied within the field of the 'community'. I visited Paulina at her house several times and talked to her at length about her life circumstances and her migratory experience.

⁵ The desire to integrate in the new place was often seen by some Latin Americans as a good thing that should be encouraged. Individual migrants and social groups who promoted and guarded particularistic identities were often criticised as living within a cultural ghetto.

Paulina is in her late thirties, she is a single mother of two teenage sons and since her arrival in Australia has dedicated most of her time to the gaining of further professional, artistic and academic education. She arrived in Australia as a University graduate with some knowledge of English which enabled her to master the new language, undertake further tertiary education, learn new skills and to become a graphic designer. Despite her professional skills and being highly educated she found it very difficult to find a permanent job in Adelaide and was dependent on social welfare which also entitled her to live in a house that is owned and subsidised by a governmental housing-trust scheme. She decided to open her own business where she worked from home and took care of her sons. Yet the business did not generate a secure income. Ultimately she managed to find short term contractual positions where she was able to use her artistic and professional skills.

Paulina's migratory story is, as she puts it, 'typically' Chilean. 'You can take my story and multiply it by thousands' she once told me. She came to Australia in the late 1980s as a political refugee after experiencing the trauma of arrest and torture for her political activities by the murderous regime of General Augusto Pinochet. When she first arrived in Adelaide she took an active role in various political groups of Chilean exiles and refugees that supported the struggle against the dictatorship from afar. However the transition to democracy in Chile in the early 1990s and her disillusion with the 'political' Chileans who she met in Adelaide made her stop her participation altogether and instead she dedicated most of her time to her studies and her family.

During my fieldwork Paulina led a very busy life. She was constantly working on several projects while trying to establish her own independent business. Her family life as a mother of two meant that she had very little time for my inquisitive presence, or for any further participation in the various 'community' organisations and social groups that I targeted as potential field sites. We began, therefore, to talk on the phone and e-mail each other. The e-mail relationship, in Spanish and English, developed into deep and long letters that enabled me to talk to Paulina about her personal experiences in Chile and her understanding of the local 'community' in Adelaide. I shared with her many of my feelings and thoughts about my own personal migratory experience and talked to her about the fieldwork process and my observations and interpretations of

the 'community'. In her e-mails she would often quote philosophical, historical, sociological and feminist writings and ideas that she had carefully studied. Paulina's unusual and profound ability to reflect upon her life with a rich and sharp intellect helped me question many of my previous assumptions and understandings of the migratory experience and the 'community' that I was studying. This type of interaction meant that in comparison to my everyday involvement with other Latin Americans, I knew little about Paulina's daily life and social network of friends (Latin Americans or others) who I did not meet and only learnt about if they were mentioned in our conversations. During fieldwork we met in person on only several occasions, but our constant, almost daily, exchange of ideas, insights and life experiences turned into a real intellectual challenge as I attempted to understand the depth of her feelings and insights.

To a certain degree it would be correct to say that during fieldwork Paulina did not see herself as part of the social world of the local 'community'. She maintained some social relationships with a few Latin American friends and was aware to a certain degree of what was going on, but she made a conscious decision to distance herself from any active participation and involvement in what she critically defined as the 'gossip community'. When I asked her once to explain her decision to break away from the 'community' she wrote:

I found it terribly boring to be around petty wars all the time, which is a pity because the only thing that we have for sure is a limited amount of time, that's it, it is wiser using it for growing, knowing, and things like that.

Life is funny, and as Sartre said 'hell is other people'. I don't like to be involved and I use the term 'involved' and not 'to participate' because this is what happens, I prefer not to know, not to be around, and enjoy my blissful removed state of affairs, rather than that of being involved by / within a web of gossip and 'petty intrigue' and general stupidity.

Gossip is of course an important factor that often helps define the boundaries and to maintain group cohesiveness. As Skribš argues in relation to the Slovenian and Croatian diasporas in Adelaide:

The 'ever-present gossip network is an important source of information because honour and prestige are generated and evaluated by gossip' (Bottomley 1992:96). The importance of a gossip network within diaspora organisations should not be underestimated. It is one of the most powerful

factors that reinforce group cohesion. Its significance was perceptively analysed by Gluckman (1963:313) who argued that 'gossiping is a duty of membership of the group' which strengthens the feeling of belonging to the group (Skribš, 1999:68).

While there is no doubt that gossip is an integral part of 'community' life and that it helps generate social networks and social knowledge about different members of the 'community', it can also have a devastating effect on group cohesion — it may push many people totally out of it. Most of the Latin American migrants I met regarded gossip (*chambre*, as the Salvadorans called it or *pelambre* in Chilean slang) as one of the most negative and destructive aspects of the 'community'. The Chilean phrase *Pueblo pequeño infierno grande*, 'Small village big hell' was often mentioned as a reference to the mistrust and even hatred that is generated by gossip, especially when it appeared in its most destructive form of *calumnia* or slander. Paulina, due to various reasons (as I later realised) had in the past been a victim of such malicious gossip, which she had understood to be deliberately directed against her.

Gossip related to many aspects of personal and communal life. It covered many different issues from stories about adultery, dishonesty regarding the use of grants or other public funds, sexual relationships, fights between individuals, family break ups and even stories about particular organisations and individuals within these organisations. It was often hard to determine how a particular rumour or gossip began but usually these stories related to present or even old struggles and tensions which existed within particular groups or amongst individuals.

During the initial stages of fieldwork, as an outsider, I could not yet tell what was regarded as 'gossip' and what was common social knowledge. To engage in gossip effectively and recognise it as such one needs to have enough social knowledge about the relationships within the group and to be able to locate the individual telling a particular story and the subjects of the story. I once accidentally repeated to Paulina a biographical detail about her that I had heard from other people without realising that this was gossip and untrue. She was highly offended and managed to guess almost immediately who had told me that particular detail. A few days later after my sincere apologies and while acknowledging that she thought that I would find it

‘anthropologically interesting’, Paulina explained to me the way gossip works within her ‘community’.

A word of warning: there is no INNOCENCE in going around and saying stuff like that about other people ... when you told me about this I could have told you 100 stories about Eduardo, his wife and their friends but I am not interested in gossiping like that ... and once one starts a comment (calumnia) there is no way in the world one could have control of who should hear it or not ... this is the nature of gossip, if I really wanted to do something I could sue Eduardo for defamation but who really cares about what he or the whole ‘community’ might think or believe about me or anybody else ...

Clearly there was an important lesson in this incident for me; I learnt to be much more careful about what I said and never to share with others what I heard if the source of the information could be easily identified. The envy, gossip and constant fighting were some of the negative aspects of the ‘community’ that Paulina decided to stay away from.

I would rather be amongst people who I choose to know. I wait for a long time before I become involved and certainly before becoming a friend ... I think there is a lot of envy around and although I never try to portray myself as ‘superior’ (that is really stupid!) some people still believe that I think very highly of myself ... which I don’t by the way ... I am always learning, I might be good but I KNOW I can always be better ... and I don’t like to compare myself with other people and I like taking people for what they are ...

Paulina was in no sense indifferent to what she saw and understood as the ‘community’. She obviously rejected the idea that she somehow neutrally belonged to it, ‘I would rather be amongst people who I choose to know’ but in a way she accepted the ‘community’ as a referent of her original collective ‘identity’. In other words, Paulina’s particular version and experience of the local ‘community’ had significant implications for her understanding of her own ‘identity’, even though she no longer saw herself as part of that particular ‘community’ and was also very critical of her ‘original’ belonging to a ‘national imagined community’ back in Chile.

In a way Paulina’s distance from the ‘community’ is also a distance from Chile and from her Chilean-ness. From a distance, she questions her sense of belonging not only to the local ‘community’ but also to her specific national collective.

The way I relate to my Chilean-ness is through trying to understand who I am here, and how can I put the puzzle together ... for a long time I felt I was

dismembered, I tried to meet different people and to find different ways of dealing with the past ... for me the real link to Chile is the project Chileans once shared for the country where class differences were going to be 'abolished' ... and I think this is the problem, if we Chileans had had the opportunity to determine our own destiny we would have done very well, but we didn't, and for two decades Chileans have been brought up and exposed to cultural crap, and I don't relate to or like the results ... I relate to the Chile of today through my friends who have life sentences and who will die in jail if we don't do something, and doing something for these people is very hard because not even the Chilean Left acknowledges them ... this is where I have my commitment and imagination ...

Paulina's distance from the 'community' is largely based on the way she interpreted her own life story and her 'original' sense of belonging in relation to her experience of the migratory movement itself. Apart from the pain and loss, Paulina regarded her movement to Australia as a move to a refuge and saw it as an opportunity to reflect upon her various personal and collective identities. The migratory movement provides her with a different understanding of history and has enabled her to construct a version of what she called 'her Chile', and of herself as someone who is no longer part of the 'original' place.

I am not interested in the Chile of the soap operas, or Chilean sport, or the Chile 'I am better than you because I earn more money or wear nicer clothes or because I believe I am higher up in the social structure ... or whatever'. I am one of the losers in the battle for a better Chile ... so my motion is to reach the sky again, I believe the only way to really contribute to a collective is by first and foremost developing one's unique individuality ... my life in Australia is nothing but that ...

Paulina's political worldview and her poverty when she first arrived were other factors that made her distance herself from the 'community' where she had experienced what she regarded as replications of social injustices and discriminations that are 'typically' Chilean. These aspects were extremely difficult for her to accept because she felt that the same Chileans who were now treating her badly were themselves 'victims' of similar kinds of discrimination back in Chile.

Most of the people who are in Adelaide would be considered 'guachacas'⁶ by Chilean upper class standards, did you know that? You check how many people come from Vitacura, or Las Condes, not the town of course but the suburb, or Apoquindo or maybe Providencia,⁷ not many you can rest assured

⁶ 'Guachacas' is one of the derogatory terms for poor people in Chile. The term is derived from the word *guacho*, which is the son of a sole parent (usually a mother). It was used mainly for children who were born to poor women who gave birth to the illegal sons of their patron.

⁷ All these are rich or upper middle class suburbs in Santiago Chile.

... what is very sad and wrong is that people here have replicated this system within the community ... the way it works is: 'let me see your car, and your house, and how "wealthy" (not only ridiculous, but pathetic considering the amounts), and then I will position you and me accordingly' ... I have been treated with scorn by some of the 'important' people, so I know this happens, of course I don't take it and of course I never go back for more, and why? Because I looked very poor, and at the beginning I was very poor, so my clothes put me in a position where some people thought they could treat me like a dog ... what about the people who believe and live this? They never like it, but if you accept it what happens is that one day if you ever climb a little bit in the social structure you will be treating others with scorn ... so I believe this is one stream that contributes to the problem this community has ...

The experience of the 'community' can, therefore, be rather oppressive for those who are categorised and seen as 'different'. Social positions such as ethnicity, class, gender and embodied behaviour or a particular *habitus* in Bourdieu's sense, are all part of the positioning and particular experience of 'community'. As Thomas (1999:40) argues in relation to Australian-Vietnamese '... there is an ongoing dynamic between the embodied experiences of the earlier life in other spaces and those in the newly adopted country'. Clearly, such bodily dispositions operate in the new cultural context where the 'migrant' is defined as an 'outsider', but the *habitus* 'tends to ensure its own constancy and its defence against change' within the field of the 'migrant community' that emerges in the new context (Bourdieu, 1990:60). The embodied dispositions from *there* can be maintained, continue to govern different practices or lose their original structuring functions in the context of the new field of the 'migrant community' and the exposure to an alternative *habitus*, practices and social structures.⁸

Paulina talked about her clothes and her 'poor' look as the basis for her being discriminated against and her understanding of how such social positioning works back in Chile and amongst Chileans in Adelaide. Such transplanting and the transformation of *habitus* is even more interesting when we realise that, in comparison with others refugees, Paulina comes from a relatively privileged upbringing and social position which politically and ideologically she had rejected back in Chile. At the same time, adjustment to the new social context (for example speaking better English or with the proper accent) which was always linked to the previous *habitus* and

⁸ In this way we can explain the individuals who invented a particular social background that they never had. But more significant is the 'accuser', who is accumulating symbolic capital in exposing the 'fake' and positioning herself as the 'real' thing. As I explained before, the self-definition 'political refugee' operates in a similar way.

dispositions that migrants bring with them, becomes a basis for discrimination and the other power relations within the field of the 'migrant community'.

The Chilean people who saw me as 'poor' are people who have been in Australia for a while and enjoy some sort of status in the community ... they had more and when I came here they did have better jobs and connections and some could speak English 'without an accent' (WOW!!!!) ... I was always very badly dressed and at the time I was into trying to be humble ... but humble doesn't work with people who are insecure and somehow acquire 'a little bit of power' (wow again!!!!) so they exercise this power with vengeance and treat people in a very paternalistic / pedantic way ... anyway they look down upon people.

In that sense the accumulation of bodily dispositions and other forms of symbolic capital in the new context (Hage, 1998a:54) have a direct effect on the field of the 'migrant community' where the new symbolic capital is 'used' to discriminate against others who have not yet accumulated such capital. Paulina's habitual strategy of being humble revealed a crisis in her *habitus* resulting from her lack of capital (symbolic and economic) within the new setting. Clearly an important factor in Paulina's position within the 'community' was her understanding and experience of the new 'locality' in a way that transcends or rejects her belonging to a 'migrant community'.

Unlike many Chileans and other Latin American migrants who I met during fieldwork, Paulina had no problem in defining Adelaide as her home. Yet the idea of 'home' for her was not about the particular locality or 'community' but rather about her way of being in the world.

For me 'home' is where your heart is, and my heart is here with me and I am in Adelaide therefore I can call this place home. I think this might be a defence mechanism because I know that it is not good to be somewhere physically and somewhere else mentally and emotionally. I really consider myself a creature of the cosmos, this also helps a lot with location, and it expands the horizon to infinity.

Such a positioning shows again how the 'original nation' and 'community' framed Paulina's understanding of herself. Her 'Chilean-ness' was not something of the 'past' or even of her 'origin', as it was still very much an important aspect of her self-understanding in a way that enabled her to position herself as different from the other 'Chileans' she met in Adelaide. The interpretation of 'home' as a 'defence mechanism' is also interesting because it reveals the creativity that enabled her to be

herself in the context of the migratory movement and her feeling of being 'dismembered' during her initial sense of loss. From her letters emerged a complex worldview that constructs an interesting and eclectic cosmology and spiritualism, which Paulina often liked to define as her 'own culture'.

I have developed my own system, it might look eclectic with a bit of this and that, but the good thing about it is that it is custom made, this is the way my inner self understands reality. I don't need recipes, or books, or special guards to tell me the truth, nobody does, but I am glad that I have given time and effort, and lots of thought to the real questions of life, or what I believe are the real questions in life, because after all the only thing we have is a little bit of time and the responsibility to make the most of it!

The eclectic spiritualism that Paulina created for herself enabled her to 'move' beyond the local 'community' and 'narrow' definitions of national and cultural identities. She often talked about her experience of change and maturity that gave her a better and deeper understanding of her position in the world and the universe.

One of the life experiences that Paulina regarded as essential for understanding her particularistic worldview and personal interpretation of her life was the traumatic experience of torture. At the public level, personal stories of torture and sufferings by the military regime were often told during the annual commemoration day of the military coup in Chile.⁹ This event was normally organised by one of the local Chilean political and solidarity organisations and mostly involved the few active members of this particular organisation. Other venues in which torture was debated and discussed were 'human rights' gatherings and public events like 'Refugee Week' where some Chileans and other Latin Americans told their personal stories and experiences of human rights abuses. The issue of torture also emerged at several organised political activities and at a news conference held after the arrest of General Augusto Pinochet in London in 1998.¹⁰ The complex issue of torture and the denial of the crimes

⁹ In Chile the commemoration day of the coup is often marked by political demonstrations and violent clashes with police. This is because the coup is still a very loaded memory. In an attempt to defuse the commemoration day there is a call to turn it into a day of reconciliation. It is only recently, however, that serious attempts to talk openly about the coup and the dictatorship in Chile have begun to emerge.

¹⁰ Interestingly amongst Salvadoran refugees the issue of torture and the sufferings of the war were hardly ever talked about publicly. This was maybe because many of the Salvadoran refugees in Adelaide did not see themselves as 'political' and avoided any discussions about subjects that were considered divisive to the 'community'. Torture was seen as divisive because it had originally been part of a 'political' system. As such it was evoked mainly by the political victims of this system and could never be divorced from the political context in which it occurred.

conducted by the military regime in Chile are important for Chile as a 'nation' as it is constructed within Chile, most significantly in the unfolding drama of putting Pinochet on trial.

The suppressed 'past' needs to be dealt with collectively, as Ariel Dorfman writes when he explains the questions and issues that his famous play 'Death and the Maiden' raises in relation to the transition to democracy in Chile.

How can those who tortured and those who were tortured co-exist in the same land? How to heal a country that has been traumatised by repression if the fear to speak out is still omnipresent everywhere? And how do you reach the truth if lying has become a habit? How do we forget without risking its repetition in the future? Is it legitimate to sacrifice the truth to ensure peace? And what are the consequences of suppressing that past and the truth it is whispering or howling to us? Are people free to search for justice and equality if the threat of a military intervention haunts them? And given these circumstances, can violence be avoided? And how guilty are we all of what happened to those who suffered most? And perhaps the greatest dilemma of them all: how to confront these issues without destroying the national consensus, which creates democratic stability? (1995a:49)

These fundamental questions are highly relevant to the families of the many who were killed or 'disappeared' as well as the living victims of the regime, like Paulina, who escaped Chile and settled elsewhere.



Figure 9: Chilean refugees protesting on the steps of the South Australian Parliament House after the arrest of Pinochet in London 1998.

The horrible mental and physical scars of torture are also very personal and affect victims in different ways. Paulina regarded her own experience of torture as one of the major influences that had made her develop her 'idiosyncratic' worldview.

That line you quoted from Dorfman — 'Private life is an illusion in our world, Barbara. When you can torture one person, private life ends for everybody else.'¹¹ — is how I felt when I was being tortured, the whole social structure collapsed in front of my very eyes because there is no reality in a society where that kind of horror happens and it is officially denied, almost daily ... that and coming to Australia are probably the two most significant events that made me look for the answers myself ... after the torture I stopped believing, I did not trust social norms and forms in general because they weren't real, they were just a cover for the real interaction that took place in secret headquarters ... and coming to Australia because I just simply didn't know the social rules ... so I have invented my own and taken others that I consider important ... and basically my only rules have to do with creating as little disharmony as possible.

We can see how the experience of torture and the 'coming to Australia' are presented as the most important factors that led Paulina to search for her own answers and develop her personal understandings of life and her identity. Such traumatic collective and personal histories have a direct effect on the experience of migration and the understanding and feeling of being Chilean.

I have succeeded here the same way as I succeeded against torture ... torture literally destroyed who I used to be ... I was a human rag at the end of the torture and incarceration and I have built this new person in spite of all the trauma ... after the torture I lost all my friends as well because I became too dangerous ... as everybody else who was tortured in Chile, I just accepted it as a matter of fact, I didn't look for sympathy or support and this is something I believe all Chileans need, HEALING ... the scars only cover the surface the real illness is deep down inside ...

The distance from the local 'community' is also a distance from simple definitions of 'culture' and 'identity'. The 'place of origin' in Paulina's personal narrative is clearly not a source of nostalgia, or even that of cultural loss; there is no real desire to 'go back' to what she negatively defined as the 'national cocoon'. Accordingly, for Paulina, one of the most attractive aspects of living in Australia is the ability to 'distance' herself from any particular collective national definition and to experience instead the diversity and accessibility of 'cultures' from all over the world.

¹¹ The quotation is taken from the play *Konfidenz* by Dorfman (1995b).

I had an opportunity to break my 'national cocoon' and this has expanded my horizon in terms of understanding more people and in terms of perceiving the fallacy of 'belonging because I was born' ... as most people would live their lives in the place (country) where they were born, this is a non issue for most people ... I believe it is an extraordinary gift to have been able to 'see' how many and varied human beings there are in the world ... I believe the truth lies in all those many cultures, we would all benefit from learning and understanding how different cultures resolve, interpret and deal with the big and little issues of existence.

The migratory movement for Paulina is also a move of her consciousness. Her sense of belonging is not directed backward towards the 'place that she was born' but rather becomes part of a narrative of hope, of moving forwards, of 'belonging to the stars' as she wrote in this same letter, of adopting identities that are truly universal, multicultural, eclectic and inclusive.

I am not interested in any sort of 'we are the best', 'we are a special country', 'we are different from the rest'. What I understand now is that any group can claim these same ideas, which is really ridiculous if you think about it. For these reasons I think it is better not to have national roots, as time goes by I feel that I am becoming more and more universal. National and cultural limits can easily become a trap that if you cannot escape from them they might make you rapidly lose the important vision that all the cultures reflect the psychological, social, political, and economical life of human groups. All cultures are valid, all cultures can enrich other cultures, we can all learn from and teach each other, and we are all special in one way or another ...

This worldview illustrates a particular migratory creativity in which 'belonging' and 'distance' are operating together. The way Paulina opposed the idea of having a clearly defined 'national identity' illustrates the way in which the migratory experience can distance the individual migrant from any homogenised notion of 'community' or sense of an original 'localised' identity.¹²

You will never hear me saying 'I am Chilean and I am proud of this fact' because to me such a statement simply doesn't make sense ... Violeta Parra wrote these lines ... 'El Indio tiene una pena mas negra que su chamál, ahora son los chilenos los que les quitan su pan' (The Indian has a sorrow blacker than his dress, now it is the Chileans who deprived him of his bread). This is Chile, a country where if you would like to utterly insult somebody you would call that person 'Indian', a country where the dominant class has one of the greatest inferiority complexes I have ever witnessed ... I am not proud of being Chilean, not really, however, I do have strong psychological

¹² This is also what makes the migratory experience one of loneliness. Some of the people who I met, despite their participation in communal events, often seemed to me to be terribly lonely and isolated in particular when they had no close family and could not speak English.

connections with the people and the land I was born in, the fact that somebody decided to call this portion of the earth the Chilean Republic doesn't mean anything to me ... boundaries only serve to isolate people from one another, to control people ... I just simply do not believe in this at all!

Paulina's movement and dislocation contributed to the evolution of 'new identities' that cannot be easily reduced or attributed to the 'place of origin' or to some original 'cultural' identity and clearly are not related to the dominant ideology of the host society. In contrast to official multiculturalism, which always sees and defines the migrants as members of 'ethnic communities', Paulina's self-definition (and social position) was much closer, according to her own definition, to that of a 'multicultural subject'.¹³ She did not see her 'identity' in relation to a particular national group and cannot be easily defined as a migrant or a refugee who had 'assimilated' or 'culturally integrated' into the new Australian 'national' or 'host society', mainly because she herself resisted any such categorisation.

And yet it would be wrong to portray Paulina as a person who somehow managed to 'reinvent' herself and break away from all her previous cultural identities and sense of belonging. Like many migrants and refugees, her constant thinking about the meanings of her migratory movement, even if she chooses not to resolve it by being part of a local 'community', is still framed in relation to what I defined as the 'migratory duality of place'. The 'original' place or the alternative life that she could have led is now part of the way in which she sees her 'new' self and identities. The 'original' place, due to changes she endures, can now be perceived only from the perspective she has gained in the new place.

I have a feeling that Latin America will be a major part of my life in the future ... I don't know how or when this will take place but I can sense it ... when I think like this I realise that being away is part of a larger canvas and we, the ones who live lives in other lands, have new options, new air to bring back into our land ... I am slowly moving towards my Latin American cultural background ... I don't have the desire or the need to force emotions or dreams or goals ... I have surrendered to the great spirit long ago and I am very happy I am able to let go of my 'human confusion' that we can plan and shape our lives ...

¹³ I discussed in the second chapter the possible contradiction between official multiculturalism and what is often defined as the 'multicultural condition'. It is in this sense that Paulina saw herself as 'multicultural'.

I hope one day I will go back to Chile I don't know how this will happen or when, but when I get back it won't be me, the one who left, it will be me, the one who has known people and cultures and ideas from all over the world, me who has found what the feminist women have to contribute to my intellect and my life experiences, it will be me who has lived in a country where there is still independent press, me who has seen the world from a very different perspective ...

Paulina's letters and life story are much more complex and rich than the short paragraphs I have quoted above. Her self-definition and the critical position she has adopted toward the 'community' reveal the problematic way by which any analytical and practical construction of a 'typical' migrant or the 'migrant community' reduces the complexities of identities and the various interpretations and experiences that different individual migrants have. Paulina's case is very interesting because of the questions it raises in relation to individual constructions of the migratory experience and personal interpretations that cannot be easily classified or simplified to that of 'culture' or the 'community.' Such self-constructions, even when they are not as creative and elaborate as Paulina's, are always dynamic; they evolve over time and may find different expressions and a centrality for different individuals within the various social positions they find themselves in.

As Paulina's case shows, individual migrants and their constant interpretations of the place that they are from and the place that they find themselves in, may challenge such collective 'identities'. The migratory movement helps to re-create but also to expose the *illusio* of belonging to a clearly defined national collective or a particular 'culture'. There is never an *a priori* unchangeable identity that is maintained or totally lost in the migratory process. And yet, as Paulina testified, her particular interpretation of her Latin American 'cultural background' is still very significant. Her 'identity' as Chilean and Latin American is part of her personal narrative despite the distance that she has created from the 'community'.

Rodrigo

Rodrigo's life's story resembles in many ways the story of Paulina. He also arrived in Australia as a refugee after suffering from torture and political persecution at the hands of the military regime in Chile. Unlike Paulina, however, Rodrigo came from

one of the poor suburbs of Santiago and was definitely not a person who would write or talk freely about his experiences and personal history. And yet once I came to know him better I realised that like Paulina, but in his own special way, Rodrigo was also constantly reflecting about Chile, his past and his sense of self and his identity.

Rodrigo is in his late forties and married to Julia, they have four children all of primary school age. In contrast to Paulina who could speak English fluently, Rodrigo found it very difficult to speak and communicate in English. This had drastically limited his employment possibilities. For some years after his arrival he had managed to find casual work in a factory as a labourer but after working in rather difficult conditions he injured himself and his employment possibilities became even narrower. His wife managed to find occasional work as a kitchen hand which helped the family to survive. Despite their difficult financial situation, Rodrigo and Patricia decided not to join one of the Spanish speaking housing cooperatives, which they felt would limit their possibilities of making their own decisions, and bought instead a house in one of the poorest northern suburbs of Adelaide.

In more than one way during fieldwork Rodrigo also distanced himself from, and was very critical of, what he saw as the 'community'. However, instead of developing an 'individualised' sense of identity he worked to establish '*Verdad y Justicia*' — 'Truth and Justice'¹⁴ a local Chilean solidarity organisation, and had created for himself a small social network with other Chileans who shared his political views. In contrast to Paulina, Rodrigo's personal interpretation of the 'community' and his particular sense of his Chilean and Latin American identities were expressed 'collectively' in the activities organised by *Verdad y Justicia* that he had helped to establish and maintain. Strategically speaking, this solidarity organisation claimed entry into the field of the local 'community' while it promoted its own particular political meaning and interpretations of Chile and Latin America.¹⁵

¹⁴ I use the pseudonym *Verdad y Justicia* in order to protect the identity of Rodrigo.

¹⁵ Like many other local 'community' organisations *Verdad y Justicia* had difficulties engaging new members in its activities. At one of the fundraising activities in which I participated one of the organisers gave a speech in which she argued that the 'community' would disappear without more organised activities because of the very small numbers of newcomers. She also openly criticised all those Chileans who had left for other cities in Australia as well as those who had returned to Chile as another factor that makes the local 'community' shrink and could lead to its total disappearance.

Rodrigo's gaze was always directed 'back home'. Many aspects of his life expressed a nostalgic image of the 'past' and his life in Chile. Yet, such nostalgic practices helped him live the life and 'identities' from 'there' in the context of the new locality. By surrounding himself with as many Chilean and Latin American cultural products as he could, he felt as if he was 'living' his Chilean life from afar. Such a strategy meant that Rodrigo developed an effective way of blocking out what he perceived as the outside 'Australian' social world. He often attributed his inability to learn to speak English to his unconscious refusal to learn and speak the language of a place he never wanted or desired to come to.

Like Paulina, he was grateful for the ability to find refuge in Australia however he felt that this refuge was enforced on him (he was given two weeks to leave Chile and landed in Australia without any preparation — in other words he had no say in coming here). In this sense he saw himself as more of an exile than a migrant. Rodrigo was constantly trying to 'hang on', to 'stay the same', despite his forced movement from his homeland. Such practices, however, do not mean that Rodrigo is actually 'living in the past' or that he ignores the change in his life, rather it should be understood as a way of dealing with change, a way his *habitus* structures his life in the new place.¹⁶ Despite his feeling of being in 'exile', his realisation of change and difference that made him acknowledge that he would never go back to Chile. He was always, for example, very critical of other Chilean migrants and refugees who has decided to return. 'It is always the same story', as he told me once, 'they sell everything they have here and two years later they come back to Australia'.

For Rodrigo, the company of other Latin Americans and mainly that of other Chileans was not something he could 'choose' to be or not to be part of. His lack of English meant that he constantly needed the company of other Latin Americans in order not to feel isolated and lonely. However, he was also very selective about the people whom he regarded as the 'community' and those who he saw as his friends. Such selections were partly based on Rodrigo's political beliefs and worldview.

¹⁶ Bourdieu (1990:55) speaks about *habitus* as the 'art of inventing' as 'what makes it possible to produce an infinite number of practices that are relatively unpredictable but also limited in their diversity'.

His politicised worldview was a direct product of the highly polarised Chilean society of the 1970s and the long years of active resistance to the military regime. Like many other Chileans in Adelaide he often categorised people according to their political affiliations. 'We all know exactly to which political group or party each person in Adelaide belongs to', as he once told me. Political divisions, which during the first years after arrival were much stronger than at present, included not only a division of 'left' and 'right' but also that of the particular political party that different individuals identified with back in Chile. The various political organisations in Adelaide maintained formal but often not directly stated affiliations with different Chilean political parties like the Chilean Communist Party, or MIR (Left Revolutionary Movement). Some Chileans down played the 'political' divisions instead referring to them as social divisions, the result of personal resentments that exist amongst different individuals. Rodrigo himself was categorised by some Chileans and other Latin Americans as one of the *políticos*, a derogatory term that meant that he 'lives in the past' and claims a political and revolutionary identity from the comfort of life in Adelaide.¹⁷ Such categorisations and criticisms need to be understood in relation to the power struggles within the 'community' and were often aimed at excluding Rodrigo and his social group from the general category of the 'Latin American community' in Adelaide.

When I started my fieldwork Rodrigo was one of the active actors in the field of the 'community'; not only was he a member of *Verdad y Justicia*, but he also spent long hours as a volunteer representative of his organisation at the *Federation*, where he helped to organise several social activities and communal projects. He was also one of those who had led the struggle within the *Federation* (as mentioned in chapter three in relation to the radio programs) against the Salvadoran newcomers. After the Salvadorans gained control of that particular organisation he no longer showed up and continued instead to organise occasional informative meetings or fundraising activities in *Verdad y Justicia*. Rodrigo's marginalisation was partly due to the way that he was seen by other Chileans and Latin Americans who regarded him as a very difficult

¹⁷ It is in this context that *Verdad y Justicia*, despite its affiliation with the Chilean left wing parties, was never defined by its members as 'political' but rather as a 'solidarity' organisation.

person to work with — someone who was always very critical and at times even aggressive in his refusal to accept other people's ideas and positions.

When I first met Rodrigo I became fascinated by the way he created his own 'nostalgic' version of Chile as a place which he constantly lived 'in' and vigilantly guarded. In the private space of his home he would watch Chilean news reports and current affairs programs that his sister sent him from Chile on a weekly basis. He would sit for hours and listen to music from Chile and Latin America and recorded and sent his own video letters to his family back 'home'. With the help of television programs, film and music he was able to stay in touch with what he defined as the 'real' Chile. 'There is the real Chile and the Chile that is in your heart; I like to be part of the real Chile and this is why I like to watch the current affairs programs and not the soap operas that have little to do with the real Chile', as he explained. This particular selection of programs enabled him, he argued, to hand on to his children in Australia the experience of 'real' Chile. In contrast to other Chileans who forgot, idealised or romanticised 'Chile' and which, as he explained, resulted in total shock when they or their children went back for a visit, his sons on a trip back to Chile knew exactly what to expect — they knew the 'real' Chile from the videos and programs they had been exposed to.

Discussions of the social 'reality' of poverty, manipulation and oppression in Chile were often regarded as a political act, mainly because, amongst other things, the aim of the dictatorship was to silence and destroy any alternative views or criticism of the official fabricated 'reality' and images that the regime had created. A similar motivation was also evident in the local radio program *Voces de Nuestra Tierra*, described in chapter four, where the main argument of the presenters was that theirs is the only radio program that represents the 'reality' in Latin America. Because of such a political worldview, Rodrigo, was also very critical of those Chileans who developed an idealised version of the past and refused to acknowledge the difficult and unjust social realities in Chile.

You talk to these people and they always say that Chile is much better than Australia etc. They don't want you to talk about the poverty and problems in Chile because this destroys the ideal image that they created for themselves, but then a week later they will take all their old clothes and even canned food

and will send it to their families in Chile, if it is so good there why do they do that?

Television and music, Rodrigo argued, are also what enabled his children to learn how to speak Spanish and maintain their culture. The TV programs and the large collection of audiocassettes and CDs helped Rodrigo to reproduce his own sense of 'cultural difference' from the 'outside' world. At the same time it enabled him to differentiate himself from other *Latinos* and in particular from other Chileans whom he regarded as people who had changed, and had given up their 'original' cultural identity to become something else.

The critical view that he adopted about 'change' made Rodrigo's presence almost intolerable to many other Latin American migrants who regarded him negatively as someone who 'lived in the past'. In other words the way he behaved was regarded by other Latin Americans as something that did not belong here, 'I really don't understand why he never went back to Chile' as one Chilean migrant told me. For Rodrigo such an accusation was based on a false and simplistic assumption that one could easily 'change' in the new context. 'Some people say that I live in the past, but how can you forget the past? It is like a book that you take 200 pages out. You cannot do it, you cannot take these pages out and say this is a new life.' Rodrigo himself was highly intolerant of people like Paulina, who from his perspective had suddenly become different and 'lost' their original identity. His contempt was directed mostly at those other 'political refugees' who, as he put it, suddenly decided that they are no longer part of what is going on in Chile. 'Look at this person' he said, 'he used to be a real Communist and suddenly he went totally crazy and became an evangelical Christian; or 'Look at her — she used to be very committed politically, she even represented our organisation in an international conference once, and now she will have nothing to do with us, I really cannot understand it'. For Rodrigo this kind of sudden 'change' gave him proof that such people were never really 'political' refugees. 'There are many Chileans here', he once told me, 'who just got on the train; they claimed to be political refugees just in order to get out of Chile'.

Interestingly, a similar argument was often made by the few Chileans in Adelaide who did not consider themselves to be political refugees and were opposed to any kind of

general categorisation of the Chileans in Adelaide as members of left wing groups or 'refugees'. Their argument was that some lied about being 'political refugees' not in order to come to Australia but rather due to social pressure in the local community where to be 'political' meant access to various community organisations and social relations with other Chileans. The 'lie' was not towards the 'Australians' but rather toward the political Chileans who, symbolically speaking, took over the 'community'.

While Rodrigo acknowledged that *todo cambia* (everything is changing), he argued that in contrast to those other Chileans he had kept and would always keep his political beliefs and that he had remained the same person that he was back in Chile. 'I really don't understand it; look — I have changed, I am older, I have a family but I have not changed like them. There, back in Chile, these people were one thing and here they have become something else'. A local Chilean poet expressed this same feeling when he told me once: 'I came to Australia 20 years ago but I never left Chile'.

For Rodrigo, the desire to keep his political commitment meant that he continued to resist the people who tortured him. This personal experience of horror was always there, always part of his silence and hostility towards other people who did not share his political views or relate to his pain and suffering. Torture, as he explained to me once, was what motivated him, more than anything else, to resist any change; to 'change' meant to forget, and to let go of the past was like 'losing' the struggle. Memory, as Boyarin (1992:1) explains, is always about forgetting; the two are inseparable from each other and are often located within a particular 'place'. While Paulina saw herself, and her memories of Chile, as one of the losers of the struggle for a different Chile, Rodrigo, despite his life in a new place, refused to give up the 'original' fight.

One of my other Latin American informants regarded such a mentality as 'victim mentality'. Rodrigo, she said, 'can only concentrate on his own suffering and pain, it is as if he is the only one who has suffered, or that he is the one who has suffered the most. This is why he can never acknowledge other people's sufferings. This is why he can never talk to other people about what has happened to him'. At first I could not

really understand Rodrigo's 'aggressiveness' towards those who did not share his political views. I also found it difficult to explain the feelings of resentment that his presence evoked in others. While I personally often perceived him as a closed and somewhat shy person, others described him to me as aggressive and confronting. Later on, I started to realise that the problem was largely in relation to the guarded and excluded social world that he had created for himself. This particular 'personality', like the case of Paulina, needs to be understood in relation to the particular *habitus* and ways of resistance which Rodrigo was very much constructed by. As such, he could not tolerate any interpretations or experiences of the 'past' or of the local 'community' that he perceived as a demand to 'change' and to compromise or to disregard his 'self' and his 'original' identity.

Rodrigo's relationships with the other migrants (and with the general foreign social environment) were always about protecting a particular 'Chilean' culture of struggle and resistance. Clearly such a position was similar to Paulina's distance from the 'community', however Rodrigo's position towards 'Chile' and his claim to be a 'better' Chilean was also a construct of his position within the field of the 'community'. Paulina defined her 'Chilean-ness' as something that she had managed to grow out of (her 'national cocoon' in relation to Chile and the local 'community'), while Rodrigo argued that he was one of the few who did not 'change'. Yet, for both the notion and experience of their 'Chilean-ness' was framed in the relationship they had with the 'original' place and the 'migrant community' in the new locality.

I once witnessed an interesting argument between Paulina and Rodrigo when they accidentally met at an informal social setting that I attended. The argument was about the new Salvadoran Radio program. Rodrigo argued that such a program just proved once again that Latin Americans can never 'get over' their particularistic national identities. The Salvadorans, he argued, were dividing the 'community'. Paulina, claimed that the new radio program indicated that the Salvadorans actually realised that there wasn't really a 'Latin American community': 'The community doesn't exist', she told Rodrigo. 'It is always the same six people who think that they represent the community.' She upset Rodrigo even more when she added, 'look for example at *Verdad y Justicia* that you are part of, what does this organisation do?

Nothing'. Paulina's 'individualisation' of the activists, or the main players in the 'community', is a common criticism made by people who decided to distance themselves from that social field. Clearly this argument needs to be understood in relation to the personal tensions and left-overs of old fights that Paulina and Rodrigo dragged into the present argument. However, what this incident also revealed was the different positions and interpretations that these two individuals had of the 'community'. Rodrigo was critical of the divisions but he spoke as an actor within the 'field'. He saw himself as a member of a pan-national 'Latin American community' even if he deliberately ignored the fact that it was he (amongst others) who had helped to generate some of these divisions that he was criticising. In his attempts to define the character and boundaries of the 'community' he refused to give the Salvadorans a place to represent their interpretations and experience of the 'community'. Paulina on the other hand, was no longer participating in the game; she refused to take part in it and challenged people like Rodrigo who claimed to represent the 'community'. Her criticism was a direct result of positioning herself as an outsider of the 'community'. She challenged the 'representatives' of a 'community' which from her perspective no longer existed.

Yet both Paulina and Rodrigo needed the 'community' in order to frame their particular positions, and neither could be indifferent to the social structure that framed them as 'members' of such a 'community'. Their notion of the 'community', however, was not the formal or official definition of the 'migrant community'; rather the 'community' was a construction that integrated their personal histories and their past and present lives in a new 'place'.

Raul

In contrast to Rodrigo and Paulina, Raul was one of the persons who saw himself, and was often identified by others, as one of the main actors in the 'Latin American community'. He became a kind of public intellectual where, in various contexts like schools, cultural nights, various political organisations and rallies, he would often speak publicly about his experiences as a political prisoner and as a victim of torture

in Chile. Raul was always searching for new venues and audiences to whom he could present his personal / collective story and his Latin American 'culture'.

Raul is in his early forties, he arrived in Adelaide in the late eighties escorted by his wife and two daughters. They were one of the last Chilean families to arrive in Adelaide as 'political refugees', a fact that Raul was very proud of. Like Rodrigo, Raul is also from one of the poor neighbourhoods of Santiago. And like Rodrigo he had arrived with hardly any knowledge of English. Yet, in contrast to Rodrigo, Raul and his wife had made a decision to learn and speak English. Despite their involvement in various social and political organisations that were often included in the category of the 'Latin American community' they both opposed the idea of living, in what they view as a Latin American cultural ghetto. They worked instead to establish for themselves complex social networks of friends from diverse cultural backgrounds, in which only a few were of Chilean or Latin American backgrounds. They had also become active members of a local Christian Evangelist Church which they regarded as their 'community' in Adelaide.

As a writer and a journalist in Chile, Raul had been one of the many victims of the regime. Like Paulina and Rodrigo he had been arrested and tortured for his involvement in political groups that had resisted the regime and had been outlawed by the dictatorship. In Adelaide he had found it rather difficult to translate his intellectual skills into a paid position and therefore invested most of his time working in different voluntary organisations and writing. He self published a short book in Spanish that he had written about his life in Chile. He was occasionally invited to schools to present his work and to talk about his experiences in Chile. His wife worked part-time in a community centre. Due to their low income they were entitled to receive some social welfare and most importantly to live in a house that belongs to one of the housing trust organisations in Adelaide.

For Raul, the 'Latin American community' was neither something from which he wanted to distance himself, as Paulina had done, nor was it something that he challenged and criticised, as did Rodrigo. Rather Raul saw the 'community' mainly as an objective 'cultural' space that needed to be developed and promoted in Australia.

'Our culture' was what he felt the 'community' should establish, not in relation to a particular place, but rather in various representations of the history and literature of Latin America. From this perspective, the 'community' was not the mere aggregation of various social clubs, organised political and festive activities or even complex informal networks of gossip and social relations. Rather, Raul placed the emphasis on what he called the 'concept of the community' as a cultural site that needed to be promoted and developed. It is this stress on 'culture' that he constantly evoked in the various representations that he had organised for insiders but mainly for interested outsiders.

Raul was one of the active organisers of various social activities and a volunteer in several organisations, some of which he had helped to establish. He was an active member of the *Federation* but also participated in various cultural and political organisations outside the 'Latin American community'. As such I met him almost on a daily basis in various social settings. I had many informal conversations with Raul and came to know him quite well. Raul was also one of the people whom I found very useful to interview formally because of the particular position that he took in relation to the 'community'.

Q: What is the 'community' in your understanding?

R: First we need to see what the concept of the 'community' means. For me the concept of the 'community' means that there is a common identity, which is expressed, in different elements, for example religion, culture, habits and common values.

Q: But don't you feel then that in that sense there are actually many different such 'communities'?

R: I am not talking about the different groups like the 'Salvadoran community' or the others but rather about a 'Spanish speaking community'.

Q: Do you think that there is a Spanish Speaking community or do you think that there should be such a community?

R: I am not talking about the interconnections but if there is or there isn't a community. Do you understand? The interactions or actual relationships are a different subject. If you look at it from a general perspective you can say that in South Australia we have individuals and families who are living some elements of their original experience and continue to develop these original experiences via their language, their values including the political, social, cultural, religious elements, and on the other hand in their food and sport, you see what I mean?

It is interesting to see how in the interview Raul insists on a definition of the 'community' as a common cultural and historical background that is somehow different from the actual social relations or social divisions of the particular social locality. This concept of 'community' challenged my own observations and my anthropological view of the 'community' that attempted to ground the abstract notion of 'culture' or 'community' in particular social contexts and situations.

Q: I can see that there are relationships and that there are people who participate in some of the different activities but in reality, in my experience, you cannot say that there is a community, mainly in the sense of the interactions, and that people feel that they are similar, or feel that they are part of a unified community.

R: I am not talking about that, I am talking about the concept of the community. I am not talking about the relations as a community. Now, if we try to define the interaction between different groups or people from different national communities this is a different story. Here we can find the different groups. For example those who are organised around the media, as in the radio programs, or around art, literature, sport, religion etc. But the elements that unite us are real, independent of the results, independent whether I like it or not, this is reality. The Spanish Festival is a reality, whether I like it or not, you can think that it is a good festival or not so good but the participants are Latin Americans and Spaniards. If this is good or bad, inclusive or not is another story, but this is an expression. I am not trying to be smart, all I am saying is that this is an expression, the same goes for my work in the schools, it is an expression of the interactions of our common language and culture.

Multicultural festivals, cultural exhibitions, cultural nights, political demonstrations and other such 'cultural' projects were the main sites in which Raul worked to represent his 'culture' and the 'community'. These expressions and the (multiculturalist) demand for cultural representations suited his understanding of 'culture' and the 'community'. It is in fact the demand for such representations that, according to Raul, prove that the 'culture' is, and should be, separated from the particular localised subjects who live it.

When they invite me to a school they want me to express my culture, to talk about art and literature, other people are invited to talk about music or theatre. There is a local Chilean poet, for example, who always comes to speak about poetry; these are cultural interactions amongst people from different nationalities, Spaniards and Latin Americans.

Another aspect is the regularity or the organisation of these various nationalities into a single organisation, which represents the Spanish speaking community; this is another thing that we can discuss. What we have at the moment are various elements of the Spanish speaking community, different sorts of interactions; some are positive and some are negative.

In contrast to Rodrigo's gaze that was always directed back towards Chile and Latin America (and as such to the local Latin Americans), Raul adopted the official multicultural definition of the 'migrant community' and its 'culture'. As such he was always involved in various sites and projects (like the cultural exhibition in the State Library analysed in the previous chapter) that aimed to represent and promote the 'ethnic community' as an expression of a different culture.

Metaphorically speaking, while Rodrigo stayed monolingual and 'spoke' only to people who shared similar political convictions and interpretations of Chile and the 'local' community, Raul was always translating, always bilingual, always talking to 'others' and not in particular to the *Latinos*. Another interesting comparison is with Paulina. In her interpretation of 'belonging' Paulina regarded herself as a 'multicultural subject', Raul, in contrast, was working very hard to establish himself and be recognised as a 'subject of multiculturalism'. He was willingly and creatively attempting to become a 'cultural representative' of the 'Spanish speaking community' within the cultural field of multiculturalism.

For these reasons Raul's definition of the 'community' was very different from the way in which Paulina and Rodrigo understood and experienced it. For Raul the 'community' existed first and foremost as a cultural entity. By 'cultural' I mean not only that Raul had an inclusive idea of the 'community' which included all Spanish speakers, but also that it was 'culture', represented through particular histories, language, art, poetry, music and literature, that defined the 'Spanish speaking' as a distinguished collective. Such a broad definition provided him with larger access to sites and institutions, like schools, that consumed and promoted similar images and representations of 'culture'. He became one of the main 'cultural brokers' who promoted the idea of the 'Spanish speaking' as a 'cultural community' in light of official multiculturalism's view of 'culture' and for the gaze of the 'outside' world.

However, because of such a strategy Raul was always criticised by those who regarded themselves as 'insiders' in the 'community'. Raul's representations, which were highly appreciated by non-Latin Americans were often trivialised and rejected by some Latin Americans, who saw him as a *figurón* (someone who shows-off, often

by pretending to be something he/she is not). One Chilean confessed to me that she gets really upset when she hears Raul speak (in various settings where he represented the community) because as she said 'she knows that he is lying'. This resentment and derogatory term *figurón* was attached to many who attempted to 'become something else' or to gain some public recognition or power position within the field of the 'community'.¹⁸

To understand better the cultural context of the term *figurón* it is interesting to read the words of Lucho Abarca, a Chilean writer who lives in Sydney and wrote a short satirical description of '*La Plegaria del Emigrante Figuron*' — 'The Plight of the Show-off Migrant'.

Santo Señor que estás en los Cielos. A tí me encomiendo en cuerpo y alma. Por favor te lo pido, hazme conocido en toda nuestra comunidad. Que se hable de mí, por favorcito te lo pido. Que me critiquen, que me envidien, que me odien, lo que sea, pero que hablen. Cualquiera cosa, todo lo resistiré, menos que me desconozcan o me ignoren (Abarca, 1992:63).

Dear God in heavens. To you I commend my body and my soul. Please, I beg you, make me known in our community. Please, I ask you this favour, make it so that they will speak about me. They may criticise me, they may envy me, they may hate me, whatever, as long as they speak about me. Anything, I can stand anything, other than not being recognised, or ignored. (My translation.)

Such criticism may again be related to the notion of symbolic capital. Raul's creativity is rejected because for the *insiders* it is regarded as an 'act' that he is performing for the gaze of the outsiders. While *outsiders* may see Raul as an authentic embodiment of a different (and exotic) culture, *insiders* may envy him but feel that they can expose his 'act', they 'know' who he really is, and what his real motives are, and therefore cannot be deceived.

Like Paulina and Rodrigo, Raul's experiences of political imprisonment, torture and his political ideology shaped his understanding and experience of the migratory experience and the 'community'. The social divisions within the local 'community' which Raul saw as personal tensions amongst individuals, were nevertheless explained in an historical and political manner.

¹⁸ In a similar context was the accusation that the exhibition 'Expression of Latin America' was a form of lying promoted by individual interests and not a true representation of 'our culture'.

One of the great 'achievements' of the dictatorship in Chile was to divide us. The dictatorship and imperialism with its means of repression worked to divided us, to break the resistance into small groups, but it also united us and at the most critical moment. Clearly, we cannot say that all our divisions are the work of Pinochet, the CIA and imperialism, these problems are currently lived in Chile. We have a real problem with people and parties who refuse to get over these old divisions. But in Chile there is political unity of the various left parties. Here in Adelaide there is no political unity, but these are personal problems, not political problems. Here it is like 'you treated me badly and I don't want anything to do with you.'

There is also this mentality here in the community that if you are identified with or belong to a particular party then you are immediately stigmatised as if this is all that you are. People don't see me as Raul, but rather they will say that I am a 'Mirista' as if this is all that you are. This is really stupid, people here are stuck in such old frames of mind which, I really don't want to be part of.

Raul regarded the 'concept' of the 'community' not only in the perspective of Australian multiculturalism but also according to his political beliefs as a site of resistance to capitalism. The 'community' was for Raul a place where individuals could resist imperialism and global capitalism, which, according to his political understanding, is the main force which turns us all into individualised consumers. At the same time in the context of migration the 'community' was also where the old 'culture' can be maintained and lived.

Q: Why do you think it is important to have a community? For example someone can say I am not interested in any of these organisations or I don't want to be part of any of the activities, I don't want any contact with the community or with other Latinos.

R: I think it is important to have a community. Clearly it is very difficult, but what you are suggesting is like deleting your brain, taking out all of your previous experiences, not just the personal but also your collective ones and throwing it all to the rubbish heap and then take a new Australian brain — this is absurd. We need to keep both cultures the past one and the present one, and see how to join them. Obviously you can come here and live for forty years earning money that in the end will give you nothing and you will achieve nothing. I believe that if you are a person, Christian or not, there are always other motives to life, there is always a need to give something to others. This is something we lost in our community, to give something to your parroquia (parish). No one wants to look after the parroquia; no one wants to give to the community.

Q: This is something that happens only here or in other places as well?

R: I think there is a movement in humanity towards individualism but there are also forces that promote the idea that we should feel for the others. There are persistent people who never give up and I am one of these people. I will never stop supporting the community, with or without money, because the day

that I will stop doing it I will die. I am part of the community physically and mentally.

The 'community' for Raul is partly the 'ethnic community' but it is more than that. The way he uses the term *parroquia* to define the 'community' is also not accidental. The 'community' is not only a site where the original 'culture' could be maintained and relived in relation to the migratory movement, it also implies a moral obligation. Like Rodrigo he needed a 'community' to express and live his 'original' identity; but in contrast to Rodrigo, and maybe like Paulina, he did so by creating networks and new communities that could not be limited to the 'ethnic community' where he felt people criticised or misunderstood him.

Each person has different reasons for coming here to this country, each has their own reasons. But if you came to live here you need to have some relations with the other people who live here, you need to learn and know the local culture, you need to see the good and the bad, you need to join in. Some people only participate in it via their work and others join in different ways like sport, cultural, social and even political activities. Now when you try to incorporate into the new place you still need to keep your identity, you can't just let it die. I can't imagine that I will let all my experiences and all the things that I learnt in Chile, for example, the cultural aspects just die. How can I let go of my experiences of Pablo Neruda, Victor Jara or Roque Dalton? Can I forget these poets and never talk about them? For me to let it die is as if I die, or will no longer have any meaning in my life.

I am not talking about egoism, the way some people often accuse me, as if all I want is to show off, or promote myself. No, because I see myself as an instrument of that culture because I love it, and it is because I love it that I want to share it with other people, with the children in the schools for example. I cannot forget these poets, it will be treason, if I forget them I will be the Judas of these poets.

What is this thing that Raul cannot let 'die'? In a way it is similar to the experience of 'culture' that Rodrigo has. The need to keep one's ('original') identity as something that makes you what you are, as something which is inscribed in you, in your body and soul. Yet, while Rodrigo looks at the 'original' home in order to avoid 'change' Raul works hard to be part of the new place, to integrate as a 'Chilean' or 'Latin American' cultural performer and as an interpreter in the broad sense of this word. His way of dealing with migratory change is to become a cultural representative; to interact in the new place as a cultural ambassador from another place. In that sense he becomes a cultural gatekeeper or a 'cultural broker' who positions himself as a representative of the 'community' and its 'cultural' identity.

Raul's political and religious beliefs helped him join other such 'politicised' communities. For example, he established strong political affiliations with Aborigines and political activists in Adelaide, with whom he shared similar ideas about resistance, colonialism and the 'dominant culture'. It was in this aspect that he positioned himself in contrast to people like Rodrigo and other 'community' organisations, who according to him detached themselves from their new social context.

I am not living in the past. I am working hard to create cultural interaction I want to make the idea of the multicultural a reality. I try to create such interaction via art, religion and my political participation. I participate in Aboriginal activities, I participate in activities in support of East Timor, and I participate with Australians. I live with them. The 'community' and my culture are not only my past but also my present. This is my life.

Despite such political commitment and resistance Raul's intellectual position (and his desire for 'cultural' and 'identity' maintenance) sits well within the official discourse of multiculturalism. Yet, like Paulina and Rodrigo, such adaptations are always (re)constructions of something much more complicated. Raul's reactions to the 'community' and the 'new' place are a product of a particular position within the 'community' that frames collective and personal identities, in particular ways.

While it is interesting to contrast these three different positions within the 'community' it is also important to see their commonalities. Despite the different strategies and experiences of the 'community' it is that category, more than any other, that shapes and defines these three different individuals. In particular it is their 'individualised' interpretations of 'self' and the 'community' that are constructed and structured by the migratory movement.

As Iain Chambers reminds us in his reflections on migratory movements, it is often the 'movement' itself that enables the sense of 'I' to emerge. It puts us in a position that demands the re-working and re-telling of 'ourselves' to 'ourselves' in relation to the 'others' that we encounter and become.

None of us can simply choose another language, as though we could completely abandon our previous history and freely opt for another one. Our previous sense of knowledge, language and identity our particular inheritance, cannot be simply rubbed out of the story, cancelled. What we inherited — as culture, as history, as language, as tradition, as a sense of identity — is not

destroyed but taken apart, opened up to questioning, rewriting and re-routing. The elements and relations of our language can neither be put back together again in a new, more critically attuned whole, nor be abandoned and denied. The zone we now inhabit is open, full of gaps: an excess that is irreducible to a single center, origin or point of view. In these intervals, and the punctuation of our lives, other stories, language and identities can also be heard, encountered and experienced. Our sense of being, of identity and language, is experienced and extrapolated from movement: the 'I' does not pre-exist this movement and then go out into the world, the 'I' is constantly being formed and reformed in such movement in the world (Chambers, 1994:24).

Raul, Rodrigo and Paulina have different life strategies, and their alternative 'interpretations' and experiences of the 'community' indicate that migratory movement is more complex and ambiguous than the way it is normally depicted and represented in Australia. Taking 'migratory movement' as a multiple constituted analytical concept may explain better the particular social realities that Paulina, Rodrigo and Raul are part of. Studying the complexity of such social worlds helps us to rethink the 'migrant community' as a complex site in which the 'migratory condition' is lived. This understanding not only challenges the multiculturalist imagery and the representation of the 'ethnic / migrant community' (as an enclave of cultural difference), but may also provide better ways of understanding the migratory experience itself. As Chambers explains:

To come from elsewhere, from 'there' and not 'here', and hence to be simultaneously 'inside' and 'outside' the situation at hand, is to live the intersections of histories and memories, experiencing both their preliminary dispersal and their subsequent translation into new, more extensive, arrangements along emerging routes. It is simultaneously to encounter the language of powerlessness and the potential intimations of heterotopic futures. This drama, rarely freely chosen, is also the drama of the stranger. Cut off from the homelands of tradition, experiencing a constantly challenged identity, the stranger is perpetually required to make herself at home in an interminable discussion between a scattered historical inheritance and heterogeneous present (Chambers, 1994:6).

Conclusion

I began this chapter arguing that the individual migrant needs to be problematised in any discussion about the 'migrant community' and its assumed 'cultural identity'. The 'ethnic / migrant community' is never, as official multiculturalism wants us to believe, a simple cultural enclave of homogenised others. The various interpretations of and participation by different individual migrants within the 'community' are always part

of complex cultural and social contexts that involve the 'new locality' and the emerging social networks of which these migrants are a part.

Can we as anthropologists easily categorise, include, or reject such 'custom made' cultural identities in our discussions about a particular 'migrant community'? I believe that we can and should take into account the complexity of the 'migrant community' as a social field which responds to the migratory experience. Such a position should resist and expose the symbolic power within the official definition and the positioning of the migrants as 'people of culture' and members of homogenised 'ethnic communities'. The three individuals presented above have much in common relative to other Latin American migrants and refugees in Adelaide. They are all Chilean political refugees who shared similar experiences of imprisonment and torture. Yet despite these similarities they have very different senses of 'identity' and different ways of dealing with their 'pasts' and what they saw as the local 'community'.

Paulina created her own 'universalistic' but idiosyncratic worldview and rejected the idea of an 'original' localised cultural identity. Just as Edward Said talks about the experience of 'exile' Paulina's position is an illustration of the way by which 'Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience' (Said, 1990; cited in Chambers, 1994:2). Rodrigo, on the other hand, retreated to his own nostalgic, guarded world, where he tried to prevent the loss of the 'original' identity. His resistance to change helped to marginalise him despite the claim, the desire and the need that he had for the company of other *Latinos* within the cultural space of a 'migrant community'. Raul, reinterpreted what he saw as his 'cultural identity' to suit the demands and cultural market of the new place. Despite his marginalisation within the social world of the 'community', he made himself a cultural representative of the 'community' and often participated and produced cultural representations of the 'Latin American' and the 'Spanish speaking community' to outsiders.

These three individual refugees are part of a general field of the 'community' and are only examples of much greater and more complex differences and similarities that exist and struggle against each other within this general field. The 'community' is obviously only one of various other social fields of which these three individuals are

part of. By taking into account such a complexity we are in danger of losing the category of the 'community' as an analytical concept even in its relatively loose image as a social field. In other words, when we take into account the different places, particular life circumstances and various interpretations that other individual Latin American migrants and refugees have, the notion of 'community' begins to crumble, and we are in danger of losing any sense of the analytical and practical usefulness of such a category.

Yet it would be wrong to ignore the way by which the migratory experience as well as the particular cultural policies in the new place help to create a sense of common ground, often shifting and fluid, which connects and brings together different individuals. The struggles over the 'community' are fought amongst individuals and groups who have different interpretations of the migratory experience and the boundaries of the 'community'. Such struggles take place in relation to the multiculturalist space and governmental definitions of 'community' that need to be followed in order to gain access to government grants allocated to the 'ethnic community'. Yet, the 'migrant community' is always more than that. When responding to the migratory movement migrants develop their own understanding of 'community' that relates to their particular histories and experiences of their 'homelands' and 'identities' in the new place. The 'migrant community' is not an empty social construction of the multicultural nation-state. Rather it is a site of struggle and reflection about identities and belonging. It should never be simplified or made to fit the stereotypical representation of 'culture' that we often find and identify with the notion of multiculturalism in Australia.

FINAL REMARKS

Exile

What is the distance that separates a Bolivian mining camp from a city in Sweden? How many miles, how many centuries, how many worlds?

Domitila, one of the five women who overthrew a military dictatorship, has been sentenced to exile by another military dictatorship and has ended up, with her miner husband and many Children, in the snows of northern Europe. From where there's too little anything to where there's too much everything, from lowest poverty to highest opulence. Eyes full of wonder in these faces of clay: Here in Sweden they throw in the garbage nearly new TVs, hardly used clothing and furniture, and refrigerators and dishwashers that work perfectly. To the junkyard goes last year's automobile.

Domitila is grateful for the support of the Swedes and admires them for liberty, but the waste offends her and the loneliness troubles her. These poor rich folk live all alone before the television, drinking alone, eating alone, talking to themselves:

'Over there in Bolivia', say — recommends — Domitila, 'even if it's for a fight, we get together' (Acebey, 1984; cited in Galeano 1989:258–9).

I began this thesis by problematising the popular image of Latin American migrants and refugees in Adelaide as members of a distinct 'migrant community'. Official multiculturalist images of the 'ethnic / migrant community' tend to reify and simplify the complexity of migrants' lives in Australia. The massive movement of people and 'cultures' around the world made redundant the metaphor of the world and nations within it as separate pieces of a large cultural mosaic (Hannerz, 1992:218). Australian multiculturalism is a policy that aims to construct a cohesive national identity in an attempt to 'solve' such complexities by portraying the nation itself as a 'cultural mosaic'. This desire is evident in the slogan of 'unity in diversity' which depicts multiculturalism as a model for the harmonious nation. Yet more than seriously dealing with 'cultural diversity' this idealised model reveals the shortcomings of such an official national imaginary. For achieving its unifying goals, official multiculturalism reifies 'culture' by positioning the 'ethnic communities' as separate parts of the national mosaic. Migrants are assumed to 'naturally' belong to 'communities' where they supposedly maintain their *different* and *distinctive* cultural identity.

The definition of Australia as a multicultural nation means amongst other things that the state, in contrast to previous migrant policies, should not only tolerate but also actively support these enclaves of cultural differences. Such policies and images are based on particular power relations that depict the 'migrant' or the 'ethnic' as the other and mystify the power of the dominant 'White manager' (Hage, 1998a). The 'ethnisation of minority cultures depends on the prior existence of a non-ethnised Australian cultural centre' (Stratton and Ang, 1998:158).

In the book *Inmigrante Feliz en Afortunado País*, the protagonist, a Latin American migrant in Australia, has this definition of multiculturalism:

Vamos, a mí me parece que no hay tal mezcla; echar aceite y agua en mismo vaso, eso no es mezcla. Permanecen juntos, pero no revueltos. El aceite será lo Anglosajón, y lo demás serán gotas de distintas aguas, pero agua al fin y al cabo. Y el aceite siempre flotará por encima (Sarna:210).

Lets see, to me it looks like there is not a real mixture. You pour oil and water into the same glass; this is not a mixture. They are together but they do not mix. The oil is the Anglo-Saxon, and the others are different drops of water but nevertheless water. And the oil always continues floating on top. (My translation.)

Official multiculturalism ignores the relation of power and generates instead a view of the migrants as members of homogenised collectives and as 'exotic' others. Such images and representations omit the historical circumstances and complexities of migrants' lives in their homelands and in Australia.

The process of becoming an 'ethnic community' within the Australian multicultural framework has a paradoxical result. Attempts by different migrant groups to organise themselves as recognisable 'ethnic communities' by expressing their 'unique cultural difference' result in all such groups resembling each other. The collection of such groups, as something that Australia 'possesses', reinforces their collective marginalisation and perpetuates their *difference* from 'non-migrant' Australians. Instead of being inclusive such imagery depicts the ethnics / migrants as 'people of culture' whose presence enriches the nation.

Amongst the migrants themselves we often find individuals and groups who are actively seeking to become visible as a 'community' and establish themselves in accordance with the forms and structures provided by Australian multicultural policies and institutions. Identifying with such a categorisation encourages specific types of 'collectivity' that may often contradict complex migratory and diasporic experiences of life in the new place.

Yet there is a danger in rejecting multiculturalism and the terminology of the 'migrant community' as mere ideological figments of official discourse. Arguing that the 'ethnic / migrant community' cannot be taken for granted and that such associations and representations are products of multicultural policies alone, might be interpreted as saying that the 'community' doesn't really exist. Such a reading may provide ammunition for political groups and individuals who regard multiculturalism as divisive and see 'ethnicity' as a social vice that leads to 'ghetto-isation', 'ethnic particularism' and 'tribalism' in the nation. It is in this context that we hear remarks made by nationalist and racist politicians about the 'Multicultural Lobbies' or the 'Multicultural Industry' (and often about the 'Aboriginal Industry'). Such people attack multiculturalism for being a deliberate fabrication made by elite groups (and intellectuals) who use the power of the state to control and manipulate ordinary Australians (Campbell and Uhlmann, 1995:2).

When rejecting such views migrants are often encouraged by supporters of multiculturalism to reproduce specific representations of 'culture'. Celebrating 'diversity' and different 'cultures' is usually seen as an opposition to racism, an example of tolerance and an appropriate answer to those who regard 'ethnic communities' as threatening. However, such representations are often far from conveying the complexity of the migratory experience, the different ways of belonging and the different interpretations of a new locality as these aspects are lived and negotiated by the migrants themselves. Instead of rejecting the term 'ethnic / migrant community' as a mere 'ideological' fabrication of the state or celebrating it in the reified and romanticised manner by which official multiculturalism demands, it is preferable to acknowledge the complexities and fluidity of such a social construction. The official category of the 'migrant community' both enables and restricts

‘individual’ and collective migrant groups in their adjustments to the new set of circumstances.

My fieldwork sites, as I explained in the first chapter, were all part of a fluid social world that for the practical purpose of this study were categorised as part of a *Latinoscape*. Different individuals and organised social groups who are part of this social world have different levels of intensity and participation in it. People are constantly moving in and out of the ‘community’, ‘appearing’ and ‘disappearing’ according to their different life circumstances and changing needs. Furthermore, the diasporic characteristic of this social world means that its ‘locality’ and situational formations are constantly shifting in response to the ‘elsewhere’ that these migrants have come from.

Due to such changing social relationships and complex identities amongst individuals and groups the ‘community’ can never be assumed *a priori*. These complex social relationships and identifications may take place within the framework of organised groups (social clubs, sport, radio programs, churches, political groups, national groups, dance groups etc.) but also in non-organised social settings, where individual migrants and their families create social networks and interact with other migrants and people from different social and cultural backgrounds.

The various communal sites that I have researched and presented in this dissertation illustrate the complexity of the ‘community’ as a lived social relationship and the different ways migrants attempt to interpret their collective and individual migratory experiences. The *fiestas* presented in chapter three indicate the importance of migratory gatherings and cultural performances for the feeling of being at home in the new place. The here / there duality of place that is lived in such settings illustrate the way performances are constitutive of the experience of community and a *Latino* cultural identity in Adelaide. Clearly the performance of such events in the new ‘locality’ may provide migrants with the ability to remember their past and their previous life in the homeland, and yet the *fiestas*, like other migratory gatherings, are always more than that. Similar celebrations around the world connect the participants to a common time zone or a particular *ethnoscape* and as such work to transform

particular localities. The celebration of a *fiesta* helps create not only the 'local' or even, 'national imagined community' but also a sense of a *Latino* diaspora.

Such settings illustrate the complexity of the 'community' in ways that are very different from the notion of the 'migrant community' and 'ethnic cultural performances', as these are celebrated within official multiculturalism. In order to understand the importance of the 'community' in relation to the migratory movement, we need to try and study the practical uses of this term for the migrants themselves.

The radio programs presented in chapter four showed how the diasporic experience generated the making of various media representations of the 'community' and the 'homeland'. The radio programs defined as 'ethnic media' operate as part of the multicultural discourse of 'cultural maintenance' and as representative of the localised 'ethnic community', yet in their different practices these programs illustrate the way migrants 'use', negotiate and transform the 'ethnic niche' allocated to them. The programs reveal the importance of such media as cultural performances of particular 'identities' that struggle against each other within the generic 'ethnic' categorisation. Such representations and performances are powerful as these enable the participants and their audiences to relive and re-member their 'community' and the 'original' identities by using particular musical, verbal and textual representations. The struggles amongst the various groups and individuals who made these programs, however, were not only about the 'representation' of the 'community' or the 'homeland' but also about the right to speak *as* the 'community' and *for the* 'community'. Such struggles are an outcome of the official definition of the 'ethnic community' and alternative interpretations of the migratory movement and the diasporic experience.

The cultural exhibition presented in chapter five indicates how easily migrants are categorised as 'people of culture'. The presentation of the 'cultural other', in museums, festivals and other settings renders the dominant culture invisible and reproduces the imagery of the us / them binary even when it claims to evaluate the 'other culture' positively, as an important contribution that is enriching and colourful. It is in this context that the Latin American migrants are depicted as 'indigenous' and 'exotic'.

Yet as the remarks in the Visitors' Book indicate the exhibition space generated alternative readings for various audiences. From an institutional perspective the exhibition space was seen as a pedagogical lesson, where the exposure to a different 'culture' assumes to generate tolerance and to contribute to the 'multicultural nation'. For the Latin American organisers the exhibition space provided an opportunity to promote the idea of the 'cultural community'. Such a representation was seen positively as a means of gaining 'visibility' and constructing the community for the gaze of the outsiders. For some of the artists the exhibition was seen as an opportunity to reach a new audience even when this meant that their work attracted interest mainly because of its 'exotic' feel. For many other Latin American visitors the exhibition provided a sense of familiarity and the feeling of being at 'home' in the new place. Yet other Latin Americans rejected the authority of such an exhibition to represent them and exposed what they saw as the individual interests of the organisers.

There is, however, a price to be paid for such cultural representations and the kind of visibility that these seem to promote. Instead of 'celebrating diversity' such exhibitions of cultures frame the 'migrant' and the 'community' as 'others' and as such further marginalise them and conceal the hegemonic side of the official multiculturalist discourse.

The Latin American migrants in this study belong to multiple communities and different social contexts. Membership and participation in the symbolic space of an 'ethnic / migrant community' is only one of many potential associations. What makes the 'community' an interesting analytical concept is the way in which it contains the migratory ambiguity of place, multiple movements and the ongoing relationships with some place elsewhere. The here / there framework and the multifaceted relationships with 'elsewhere' make the localised category of the 'ethnic / migrant community' even more problematic. This is especially so when we realise that the original 'localities' in themselves are complex and disputed. Many Latin American migrants and refugees in Australia fled national 'localities' that were characterised by intensive social conflicts and complicated historical circumstances (Langer, 1998). Furthermore, there are migrants who, for various reasons, prefer not to participate or

be part of any of the various 'community' organisations or the non-organised local migrant social groups.

For these reasons it is important to look at individual migrants and study their relationships and understanding of their 'community' and the migratory experience. Such an individual positioning, as presented in the sixth chapter, shows the complexity of the 'migrant community' as a field which frames the individualised interpretation of migration and defines particular social positions within it.

Throughout this dissertation I have deliberately avoided 'representing' the 'Latin American community' as a set of distinctive (and 'exotic') cultural patterns. My focus has not been '*Latino-culture*' in Adelaide as something that is expressed or that can explain the different sites and migratory gatherings that I studied. The Latin American 'culture' that I studied was constructed partly in the way that participants themselves were using the term. A particular concept of 'culture' is central to official multicultural discourse. It tends to use symbolic representations of the 'migrant community' as an expression of 'cultural diversity' to help depict Australia as a 'vibrant multicultural society'. Yet it is important to remember that it is often the migratory movement that makes the migrants conscious of 'culture' in the first place. The *fiestas*, the radio programs, the exhibition and even individualised strategies for dealing with the migratory change, are not simple expressions of 'culture' and the 'community'; rather they are sites and locations where 'culture' is produced reproduced and transformed on a daily basis.

I hope that this dissertation encourages further research into the complexity of the 'migrant community' as an analytical and practical concept in which migrants are not simply thought of as representing 'culture' but are recognised as struggling with the difficult and demanding experience of life in a different place. I believe that a better understanding of the migratory experience and 'community' can challenge official multiculturalism and help migrants themselves become aware of, and strategically challenge the multiculturalist definitions and practices of inclusion and exclusion that (inadvertently) mark them as (inferior) 'others'.

Can we maintain a definition of Australia as a distinctive national space and be inclusive of the multiple worlds, stories and experiences of migrant groups in Australia? As long as the current official definition of multiculturalism remains a national policy it runs the risk of undermining the complexity of the migratory experience. As long as it continues to celebrate fetishised representations of 'culture' and migrant communities, it ignores and further marginalises the particular localities and social worlds that migrants construct and experience on a daily basis. Migrants themselves, as this research indicates, through organising communities, transcultural networks and cultural representations as part of their lived realities in Australia, may transform the multicultural rhetoric and generate greater diversity in facilitating the emergence of diasporic and hybrid migratory settings.

As a response to the resurgence of racism and intolerance in Australia there is a need to go beyond the rhetoric of official multiculturalism and recognise the complexity of migrants' lives in acknowledging publicly the multiple 'localities' that shape the everyday lives of many people in Australia. Is such a process truly possible? In light of the rhetoric of decline (loss of national 'core values') put forward by reactionary and conservative voices against refugees, migrants and Aborigines in Australia, it is imperative for heterogeneity to be recognised to help generate a society where racism and discriminatory exclusion will be a thing of the past.

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