

**SLOVENIAN FOLK MUSIC AND  
IDENTITY MAINTENANCE IN  
PORT LINCOLN, SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates how residents of Port Lincoln, South Australia, with Slovenian heritage use music to maintain a sense of cultural identity. This thesis looks in particular at how music can act as a symbol of cultural identity, enabling a person to create a sense of community. Thus, community and imagined community (Anderson 1983) is a focus of discussion in this thesis. A significant finding of the study is that music, or more specifically the memory of Slovenian music, has continued to serve as an important mark of cultural identity even for individuals who rarely listen to Slovenian music in either live or recorded contexts.

The investigation employs ethnographic methods including surveys and interviews among a small core population to explore the issues of localized definitions of folk music and related experiences in remote communities. The main fieldwork took place in Port Lincoln but fieldwork also occurred in Adelaide (South Australia), Trieste (Italy) and in Ljubljana and Lokev (Slovenia). This enabled the collection of data from family and friends of Port Lincoln participants. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected through the use of self-completed questionnaires and semi-structured one-on-one interviews. The collection of data occurred between 1997 and 2004.

In Chapter One definitions of key terms and parameters for this study are established. Chapter Two examines how Slovenians themselves decide on the criteria for defining "Slovenian." It investigates the cultural beliefs of Port Lincoln informants and argues that, for these people, there are essential characteristics that determine what it means to be a Slovenian in Port Lincoln. Chapter Three seeks to define Slovenian music with reference to definitions created by Port Lincoln Slovenian residents themselves and examines the ways Slovenian folk music is used for identity maintenance. It considers musical examples to demonstrate the flexible approach that Port Lincoln people have to define music that can be used for maintaining their identity. It demonstrates that these people rely on memories of music and illustrates how these memories help connect them with a range of communities that in turn

also assists with maintenance of their identity. Finally, it concludes that even when residents do not play music themselves, they use the memory of folk music as symbolic of Slovenian culture in order to evoke multiple imagined Slovenian communities whether founded in Port Lincoln, Adelaide, Italy or Slovenia.

## DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the 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 has been made in the text.

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