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Dancing the city of diversity:
An exploration of dance, identity,
culture, and place.

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Dance Studies

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Abstract

In answering the research question, 'How do dance practices of different cultures contribute to Auckland as a place of diverse communities?' this thesis explored relationships between dance practices, identity, culture, belonging, and urban space/place. Constructionism and phenomenology provided the ontology and epistemology for this study, and ethnography and narrative inquiry the research methodologies. Concepts situated in social geography concerning 'space', 'place', and movement in urban environments were debated, including Henri Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis, Michel de Certeau's practice of everyday life and Nigel Thrift's non-representational theory.

The field research was undertaken within three significant migrant communities which have a long-term history of migration to New Zealand: Indian, Samoan, and Croatian. The research confirms that dance practices are strongly embedded in these Auckland communities and are essential for sustaining cultural heritage.

Dance practices connected the research participants within their cultural communities, which correlates to Robert Putnam's (2007) 'bonding capital'. Across the studied spectrum dance facilitated extensive learning about own culture with some New Zealand-born research participants identifying it as their main learning site. This group also highlights that the acquired knowledge forms the basis for their cultural confidence and for making informed choices about their individual cultural identity and affiliation.

In this study dance was identified as (re)constructing culture in the doing. Dance participants were active agents in this process, re-enacting heritage on their own terms and valuing the concept of tradition *plus* contemporaneity. In this process Auckland-specific urban identities were constructed.

A further research finding was that dance practices facilitated for participants a transnational web of connections to places where they feel culturally affiliated, thus creating global citizens. Theories of transnationalism and glocalisation are discussed to frame this phenomenon.

This study established that dance significantly contributes to Auckland's cultural vitality. It further confirmed that Auckland's many dance and cultural festivals foster awareness and appreciation of other cultures. However, research participants also highlighted segregation and lack of knowledge about each other.

This research identified culturally specific dance as offering a unique and non-threatening way to learn about other cultures, through experiencing culturally specific ways of relating to space, time, body, and each other. Therefore, this thesis suggests that the existing dance practices and festivals could fulfil a significant role in developing a dynamic diversity in Auckland if more meaningful inter-cultural engagement was embedded in these events. This approach would employ 'bridging capital' (Putnam, 2007) so that culturally specific dance practices can become substantial building blocks of the future 'city of diversity'.

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1 Introduction

1.1 City, people, migration, dancing cultures

This thesis explores the intersections of dance, identity, culture, and place in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. It is about people dancing, about their motivations, thoughts, feelings, connections, and understandings of self and other in the context of Auckland, their city, our city. It is about people dancing their cultural identity in a city of many cultural identities. It is about people continuing the dance practices of their birth place and about people dancing the culture of their forefathers who migrated to New Zealand. It is about how we construct, re-affirm, and live every day our multi-layered cultural identities in the city of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

This thesis is also about migration and transnationalism. It is about the complex web of transnational social spaces that make up people's lived experience in Auckland and in many other cities around the globe. It is about finding the local, the embodied here and now, within cultural practices that have migrated. The study looked at how these practices are maintained and how they change in a new environment, in a different country, in a unique urban environment; and how the global and the local combine to become the 'glocal'.

This thesis is about multi-culturalism and diversity. It is about how we live together in a city comprised of many cultures. It is about how we acknowledge, value, and celebrate other cultures and their diverse practices. It is about the frictions that occur within communities and between cultures. It is also about why (or why not) people decide to join the dance practice of a culture different from their own. It is about how we dance culture in a diverse and multi-cultural place.

This thesis is about Auckland as an example of urban life in the 21st century. It is about urban space and how people imbue it with energy, life, and presence through dancing. It is about how people bring this city to life; how they connect within their communities through cultural practice. It is about what makes the city special, what makes people feel at home, and what makes a city feel 'their place', what makes this city 'our place'.

1.2 Framing the study

This research is an interdisciplinary socio-cultural study of dance, bringing together theories and methodologies from dance studies, social geography, anthropology, sociology, and political science. It engages with dance as an urban cultural practice in the diverse environments of Auckland, and acknowledges its individual as well as its communal character.

The study used multiple case studies for data collection; the chosen case studies were Croatian/Dalmatian, Samoan, and Indian dance practices. I conducted semi-structured interviews, where participants talked about the meaning of their dance practices to them and their communities. Furthermore, I pursued in-depth contextual research and kept a comprehensive journal. These three avenues provided a multitude of data.

The ontological pillars of this study are non-dualism, constructionism, and phenomenology. Non-dualism acknowledges the unity of body/mind/emotions/spirit and the connectedness of humans with each other and within environments. Constructionism defines the social world as constructed through human perceptions, interactions, and practices. Phenomenology offers ways of conceptualising the dancing person as a body/mind unit and considers human experience from the first person perspective. Those three pillars form a suitable framework for this study about the physical, emotional, social, and cultural experience of dancers in Auckland.

1.3 Research objectives

City living in multi-cultural situations is increasing around the world and is very pronounced in Auckland, New Zealand's largest urban settlement. This thesis aims at contributing to debates about how Auckland can become a dynamically diverse and liveable place. At the start of the journey I asked how important dance practices are for Aucklanders in the context of liveability, and then set the goal to achieve a deeper understanding of the role of dance practices in Auckland's culturally diverse communities. I aimed to investigate dance in Auckland as community self-expression, a meeting place, and contributor to the participants feeling connected in their city. An additional question was whether, where, and how inter-cultural encounters through dance occur and what their impact is; furthermore, how a possible 'Auckland identity' may be expressed in the dance practices. The interviews were intended to hear the voices of practitioners, teachers, participants, and supporters with the aim of understanding how they placed and valued their culturally specific dance practices, and how they perceived their role in the context of cultural diversity.

The research question was, 'How do dance practices of different cultures contribute to Auckland as a place of diverse communities?'

The significance of this research may be found in understanding how dance contributes to making the city gel and to making its inhabitants confident in personal and cultural identity, belonging, and in their multi-layered cultural affiliations. Putting these questions into a wider context also means exploring if and how dance adds to vibrant, dynamic, and diverse urban experiences.

1.4 Research niche

The present study links dance, culture, identity, and city in a unique way. Previous New Zealand research in related realms concerned the festivalisation of culturally specific performing arts (Johnson, 2010; Johnson & Figgins, 2005; Mackley-Crump, 2012); studies on Samoan dance (Enari, 2007; Simon, 2001; Vercoe, 1994); and teaching culturally specific dance in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ashley, 2010, 2012). Doctoral studies on kapa haka practices and Auckland's ASB Polyfest are currently conducted. International studies on culturally specific dance in urban contexts are discussed in the Literature Review.

This thesis presents research about the social construction of Auckland as a diverse and transnational place, filling a gap in place-specific research about processes of social construction identified by British social geographers Jackson and Penrose (1993). German social geographers Dirksmeier and Helbrecht (2010) "identified a clear lack of contemporary research which addresses the fluidity of encounters in the city and the ephemeral character of interaction in urban spaces" (p. 160). Even though this research is not specifically about ephemeral encounters, their work and this study share the focus on inter-cultural urban encounters.

The World Dance Alliance's 2008 Global Summit covered five pertinent research areas: transcultural conversations, sustainability, body/mind connection, and how we make and teach dance. All five areas have been covered or touched upon in this study; however, as suggested by Wong (2011), the overused and insufficiently defined term 'sustainability' was exchanged for liveability. Jane Desmond (1997) identifies "dance as an extremely underanalyzed bodily practice" (p. 1) and suggests that non-theatrical dance needs more investigating and its international aspects need to be highlighted.

Like any research this study has gaps and limitations. As presented in the conclusion, some findings opened up further avenues of research which could not be accommodated within this study.

1.5 Terminology

1.5.1 New Zealand specific terminology

Several New Zealand specific terms need clarification. Firstly, 'Aotearoa' is the Māori name for New Zealand, meaning 'land of the long white cloud'. In contemporary discourse New Zealand is often called 'Aotearoa New Zealand' or simply 'Aotearoa'. This thesis uses all three terms synonymously. Auckland is increasingly referred to as 'Tāmaki Makaurau', its Māori name, which I have also adopted. 'Ngāti' is the word for tribe and some tribes include it in their name, for example the 'Ngāti Whātua', the first settlers of Tāmaki Makaurau.

In 1840 chiefs of most Māori tribes and the British Crown signed the Treaty of Waitangi which made New Zealand a British colony but equally promised sovereignty to the tangata whenua, the indigenous people. The English and Māori version of the Treaty differ significantly; therefore, its exact meaning and significance is contested to this day. Nevertheless, it serves as the founding document of New Zealand signed by equal partners and is the basis for Waitangi Tribunal rulings about Māori land claims (State Services Commission, 2005). Important for this thesis is that concepts of multi-culturalism in Aotearoa in my view need to be framed within the context of New Zealand's bi-cultural situation based on the Treaty of Waitangi.

Since the late 19th century Māori (meaning 'normal, ordinary, usual' in the Māori language) have used the term 'pākehā' to describe settlers of European descent. The exact etymological origin of pākehā is unknown, and it has been contested for various reasons by some non-Māori. However, my research did not discover any convincing reasons to reject the term as Māori used it in a non-defamatory way to signify people different from them. I use pākehā in this thesis when referring to New Zealanders of European origin. Pākehā can be a problematic term, particularly when migrants from non-European countries are the topic. The question arises whether, for example, Indian or Samoan migrants are pākehā. I do not use it in this sense; and only time will tell which meanings pākehā will take on with the ongoing diversification of New Zealand's population.

'Kiwi' is a conversational and newer term which bypasses the above conundrum by including everybody residing in New Zealand. It is used in everyday language to express things specific to New Zealand such as 'Kiwi culture', 'Kiwi accent', 'Kiwi attitude', or 'Kiwi passport'. It is often commented by New Zealanders that some migrants become 'real Kiwis' meaning they have adapted well into New Zealand life. Conversationally I label myself a German Kiwi, as I am not completely comfortable with simply Kiwi, New Zealander or pākehā as

any of these would seem to downplay the German part of my heritage and leave me with a sense of being assimilated.

1.5.2 Dance specific terminology

In the section on dance and culture in chapter 5 definitions of dance are discussed. The present section discusses thorny issues relating to the labelling of dance practices rooted in a particular cultural heritage. The often used terms ethnic dance, folk dance, cultural dance, world dance, character dance, indigenous dance, national dance, or traditional dance contain aspects of bias or are therefore too narrow for this study.

In general language use, 'ethnic' is often used to describe non-European people, food, and art forms (Chao, 2009; Fleming, 1995) which is a biased usage considering that Europeans equally have an ethnicity. No logical reason exists why European dances should not be called 'ethnic' as well. This common language is a means of framing the 'other'; as Jackson and Penrose (1993) state, "[I]t is always the subordinated Other who is designated as "ethnic" rather than the dominant self" (p. 18).

Dance anthropologist Joann Keali'inohomoku (1983) believes that western dance scholars in the middle of the 20th century started using ethnic dance as a euphemism for 'pagan', 'savage' or 'exotic', because an awareness of the judgmental nature of the latter terms emerged at that time. Bruce Fleming (1995) writes that "the labeling of anything non-western as 'ethnic' is clearly a value judgement" (p. 11). He welcomes replacing ethnic dance with 'world dance' as a step in the right direction but says that 'world dance' can be a form of appropriation by western artists and art consumers who get bored with their own cultural and artistic heritage and the resulting artistic output. Gregory Sporton (2004) calls this the "West's propensity to devour the culture of others in search of new food" (p. 87).

Ethnic dance is a difficult term for a second reason. In her seminal writing *An anthropologist looks at ballet as a form of ethnic dance* (1983) Keali'inohomoku suggests that all dancing has ethnic origins. Since her article, a wider acceptance has formed that even classical ballet, often thought of as 'pure dancing', is a western construct; it is full of western ideas, rituals, demeanours, costumes, and values, and has its roots in European court dancing and folk dancing. It may only look 'pure', value free, and of universal appeal from a viewpoint inside western culture.

Europeans tend to call their traditional dance practices 'folk dance' which is historically understandable because many of the dances originated in rural areas and were practised by peasants. The members of the Dalmatian dance

group participating in this study labelled their dance practice 'folk dance' in situations where people do not understand 'kolo', which is the Serbo-Croatian word for circle dance and the term they would normally use. Their attitude was plausible as Dalmatian dance fits the category of European folk dances, but this terminology did not fit the Samoan and Indian case studies.

'Cultural dance', even though less biased, still conflicts with the fact that ballet, jazz dance, or modern dance also originate from within particular cultures. Therefore, I chose to use 'dance practices of different cultures' and 'culturally specific dance' in this thesis, as these terms recognise in a non-judgmental way that the explored dancing has strong roots in cultural practices of different peoples.

A word of clarification is needed regarding dance and performing arts. In many cultures performing arts exist as a unit of music, acting, dancing, and storytelling. Dance is an inextricable part of these practices. This study's focus on the dance component of performing arts reflects my being situated in dance scholarship but does not imply a perceived superiority of dance over the other performing arts elements.

1.5.3 Miscellaneous terms

To describe meeting points and interactions between cultures I preferred the term 'inter-cultural'; other terms such as 'cross-cultural' and 'trans-cultural' appear mostly in quotations. These three terms are used synonymously. Multi-cultural is applied when referring to the co-existence of cultures but without noting inter-cultural relationships.

I initially started this project with the idea of exploring dance practices of 'minority' cultures. However I quickly abandoned this term because there is barely a majority belonging to the same distinct culture in Auckland anymore and, judging from projections, this will be even more exacerbated in the future. Clearly, British culture has set the social, political and legal frameworks for New Zealand and therefore is the dominant cultural framework ruling public life. Consequently, the question emerged how the dominant political and cultural frameworks present the multitude of cultures living in Auckland today.

For simplicity I decided to mainly use 'social geography' throughout the thesis despite the fact that some scholars cited work in 'human geography' departments and call themselves human geographers.

In regard to the case studies many terms needed clarification which is discussed in the introduction to chapter 5.

1.6 The project and I

My reasons for choosing culturally specific dance practices as a topic are multi-faceted. My experience of living as a German migrant in Aotearoa New Zealand and the fact that Auckland, my home for the last 25 years, offers a remarkable cultural mix, both contributed to my ever growing interest. The disconnection from my own cultural heritage and my search for identity as a German New Zealander also come into play.

Having grown up in post-war Germany of the late 1950s to the 1980s I experienced an atmosphere where the interest in 'folk' traditions was the realm of racists and reactionaries. Nazi Germany had exploited the notion of being German, body (blood), mind, and soul to the furthest possible extreme so that for several decades following World War II many people shunned everything which seemed to relay 'Germanness'. New Zealand-German dance scholar Alexandra Kolb (2007) in a conference paper about the globalisation of Schuhplattler (a South German and Austrian folk dance), quotes German historian Konrad Jarausch: "Since Hitler has conflated his own movement with the German nation and misappropriated many of its traditions, subjects as innocent as folk songs became tarnished and were therefore taboo" (Jarausch cited in Kolb, p. 141). In my experience the same is true for German folk dancing. German choreographer Johan Kresnik used Schuhplattler as a symbol of Nazism in one of his ballets (Kolb, 2010) which highlights the connotations that are attached to folk dance in Germany.

Due to this situation, at least one generation of Germans was to a large degree severed from our cultural heritage. My dance training in the mid-1980s included two lessons of 'folklore dancing' a week, learning European and other culturally specific dances. However, in those three years we never learnt a single German folk dance! I am aware though that this changed after I graduated.

My encounters with Māori and learning how important whakapapa (genealogy) is for them initiated reassessing my negatively tinted self-image as a German. I came to accept that my ancestry will always be there even if I feel uncomfortable about some aspects of it, and even if I integrate other facets of identity such as being a pākehā New Zealander. During my studies at The University of Auckland, through engaging with fellow students, lecturers, and academic literature, I learnt to look past the horror and shame of the Third Reich and acknowledge German history and traditions in their entirety and complexity, and found a comfortable place to position myself within my culture. The University was also the place where I finally learnt a German folk dance – from a young German exchange student. My research for this thesis discovered no

German folk dance group in Auckland, in my view reflecting the uneasy relationship many Germans have with their cultural heritage. Individual German folk dances, however, may be practised in recreational folk dance groups that have a mix of dances from across Europe in their repertoire.

What a revelation it was for me to experience the dance scenes of Aotearoa where culturally specific dance practices are perpetuated with pride. Coming to Auckland has certainly changed what kind of dancing excites me. My first encounter with Pacific dance at Pasifika Festival about 20 years ago is etched in my memory. I remember watching a group of bare-chested men perform a Samoan sasa, a seated dance, accompanied by live drumming. The movements were mostly gestural and obviously represented rowing, scraping of coconuts, and other everyday activities. The dancers clearly enjoyed themselves thoroughly and so did the audience. I was transfixed, fascinated, elated but the experience also left me confused and bewildered. I remember consciously going through what I thought made 'good' choreography, such as covering many levels in space, and comparing it to what I had just witnessed. The performers had sat right through, so I asked myself how it could be that I witnessed an engaging dance, but it did not fit the criteria I had learned in a western dance education context, or at least how I interpreted those criteria at that time.

Through these cultural meetings in Auckland I continuously discovered diverse meanings of dance, and opened new registers of cultural understanding for myself. I realised I had to come from a 'clean slate' position to make sense of and do justice to dances from cultures foreign to me. From here, a very interesting journey started; and Auckland was the best place possible to pursue it.

1.7 Researcher positionality

I am aware that even if a non-judgmental stance is taken, the researcher's position is never neutral. In research that crosses cultural boundaries, an insider-outsider situation develops which poses challenges but also offers advantages. An outsider can misinterpret; but s/he can ask questions that an insider would not. For example, New Zealander Declan Patrick (2010) said about his doctoral research that, "The questions I asked were the sort of questions that could only have come from a foreigner, and furthermore, a foreigner who was unfamiliar with the workings of Philippine dance" (iii).

Researchers need to be aware of their own social position and the ensuing implications. Jackson and Penrose (1993) suggest that it is vital to become aware of our own 'difference' and how this difference is central to creating our

identity. They say “in exploring constructions of “race”, place and nation, we have been forced to confront the construction of ourselves” (p. 209). How I place myself in Auckland as a German New Zealander is discussed above.

My previous experience of teaching and conducting research in diverse situations in Auckland proved as helpful experience for negotiating the multi-layered cultural contexts I entered. Furthermore, to safeguard against cultural blind spots on my part, multiple coding was applied as a research method, meaning continuous discussions with supervisors, fellow doctoral students, and other colleagues. Compared to culturally specific research conducted abroad, researching in Auckland had the advantage that the participants and I shared a language as well as an understanding of New Zealand’s western culture, which provided clear anchoring points.

1.8 Preview of chapters

The present chapter introduced the research goals, researcher’s positionality and clarified the terminology used. Chapter 2 introduces Auckland and conceptualises the culturally diverse city. The methodology chapter discusses interdisciplinarity in dance research, and introduces the ontological and epistemological basis of this research: a non-dualist worldview, constructionism, and phenomenology. The chapter continues explaining this study’s qualitative and ethnographic methodology and it finishes with presenting the data collection methods.

The literature review covers the following topics: dance and space/place; culture and place; dance and culture; and reviews twelve studies on urban dance practices of different cultures across the USA, Canada, the UK, the Caribbean, South America and Europe. The three case studies conducted in Auckland are presented as separate chapter sections in chapter 5. Each case study report begins with a summary of the historical and socio-cultural context of the studied dance communities and highlights spatial, cultural, and aesthetic aspects inherent to the dance forms.

The results chapter presents the themes that have emerged through the constant comparative analysis of the interviews and the researcher’s observations. This chapter is driven by the participants’ narratives and highlights similarities and differences between the case studies. Within the discussion chapter the research findings are framed in a constructionist paradigm combining it with participants’ accounts of their lived experience, thus marrying constructionist and phenomenological approaches. Theories from urban sociology and political science are applied to discuss the research findings. The conclusion offers a brief summary of the results, summarises the significance of

the findings, identifies further research needed, and presents recommendations for Auckland.

2 The city of diversity

Whenever I travel around Aotearoa New Zealand some people from outside Auckland ask me incredulously, “Why would anybody want to live in Auckland?” I often counter, “Where else in the world can I watch Samoan siva, Hawaiian hula, bharata natyam, Chinese dragon dance, Dalmatian kolo, and Somali drumming in one day?”

2.1 Auckland

“Auckland can make you like that. Transcultural.” (Samant, 2010, p. 13)

Auckland is, with 1.4 million inhabitants, New Zealand's most populous city and its fastest growing region (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Since the 2010 local government reform it stretches 140 kilometres from north to south along an isthmus. Despite increased outward migration to other New Zealand regions, since 1996 Auckland has experienced population growth from natural increase (with Māori and Pacific populations having the highest birth rates) and from overseas migration, thus becoming an increasingly diverse city. The list of ethnic backgrounds and spoken languages in Auckland is extensive and two in five Aucklanders were born overseas (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). About 55% identified as ‘New Zealand European’ in the last census, still forming a majority. However, if current trends continue, people with European heritage will soon be outnumbered.

The *Royal Commission on Auckland governance* report (Bazley, Salmon & Shand, 2009) acknowledges that Auckland's growing diversity needs to be considered in future planning: “Auckland needs governance structures that promote the benefits of diversity and support culture and recreation” (p. 3). Unfortunately, this report has been largely ignored by the current National Government, but its spirit has been picked up by the current mayor of Auckland, Len Brown, and his council. The Council's central goal, as declared in the Auckland Plan (2012), is for Auckland to become the world's most liveable city. This is reasonable considering that Auckland is internationally recognised as an attractive city and was in 2013 labelled tenth most liveable city in the world by *Monocle* magazine (Bloomfield & Booth, 2013, July).

The *Immigration and ethnicity of the Auckland region* report (Auckland Regional Council, 2007) states that the obvious outcomes of migration

are the evolving 'ethnoscapes', a term used to describe the visible and not-so-visible changes which new migrant groups contribute to a place. ... Behind all these changes the multiple identities of Aucklanders are evolving and will continue to evolve, and this will result in changing expectations and opportunities in the economic, cultural and political spheres of the Auckland region. (pp. 23-24)

The "polynesianisation" (Lay, 1996, p. 13) and "browning" (Anae, 2013, p. 9) of Auckland has received particular attention. Melani Anae (2013) states that "Auckland is the Polynesian capital of the world and has become the showplace of Pacific cultures and the strong and vibrant Pacific identity in and around Auckland is there for all to see" (p. 3). She elaborates that,

The 'browning of Auckland' is unparalleled in the world. The 'browning' of sport, the arts, fashion, academia, business, and the corporate world, politics, music, performing arts in New Zealand has created a unique Auckland identity and one that should be celebrated. (p. 9)

Acknowledging the polynesianisation of Auckland is important considering our position in the South Pacific. Auckland's diversity reaches far beyond the Pacific though. In public discourse Auckland has been portrayed as 'super-diverse', 'multi-cultural', and 'trans-cultural', but cultural ignorance and racial intolerance are equally bemoaned (Anae, 2013; Hisco, 2013; Salesa, 2013). This researcher suggests that Aucklanders have to develop a higher level of cultural maturity.

Since the early 1980s the city's promoters have labelled Auckland the 'city of sails'. This may have seemed a perfect branding at the time, using Auckland's stunning geography, and acknowledging that the largely pākehā population loved water sports. However, how relevant is this for many Aucklanders today? Who has access to the expensive boats sailing the Hauraki Gulf? To what extent is this recreational activity part of migrant cultures? It is reasonable to surmise that more than 20 years of neo-liberal economics and extensive housing inflation have left many Aucklanders too cash-strapped and too time-poor to pursue expensive recreational activities such as boating.

Internationally renowned policy analyst Simon Anholt (2009), who creates city and national brand indices, points out that city branding should be about **who we are as a city**, not about how marketing people would like the city to be portrayed. Considering his point this researcher suggests that for too long the branding of Auckland has been guided by ideals which originated in Auckland's colonial legacy. The city's spirit does not lie in boats or architecture. Auckland's richness and spirit lives in its people and their diverse cultural heritages! The

time has come to think about Auckland's identity in connection with the cultural practices of a large proportion of its inhabitants. Maybe it is time to consider Auckland the 'city of diversity'!

2.2 Cities

“The city is both a great problem and the great resource of XXI century for humankind. ... [It] is the most important expression of human capacity to know, to remember, to elaborate and to represent. Men and women narrate their histories, cultures and arts in the cities by the stones, the architectures, by public and private spaces.” (Clemente, 2009, pp. 669-670)

The world is currently experiencing a rapid urbanisation and more than half of the world population now lives in cities (United Nations Environment Programme, 2010). This trend has resulted in Auckland currently housing one third of New Zealand's population. A discernable rift exists between Auckland and the rest of the country, also between the much smaller capital of Wellington and the metropolis of Auckland. Unfortunately, in the current New Zealand political climate the transformative role of large cities is not recognised and a failure to think about how the whole of the nation works together is also evident (Maclennan, 2011) as is the fact that cities are becoming more multi-ethnic and multi-cultural.

This study conceptualises cities as places of human activity and encounters, social events (de Certeau, 1984; Esposito De Vita, 2009; Sepe, 2009), and nodal points of social interactions that can be transnational (Easthope, 2004, 2009). Everyday life and everyday practices are seen as the foundations of our experience of the city (de Certeau, 1984; Edensor, 2010; Lefebvre, 1991; Tonkiss, 2005). This research recognises that people create the city through ongoing activities, particularly movement-based activities, which European urban social theorists such as Walter Benjamin realised in the early 20th century (Benjamin, 1970/1978; Tonkiss, 2005) and French philosophers Michel de Certeau (1984) and Henri Lefebvre (1991, 1974/2004) theorised further in the late 20th century.

In this study urban environments are understood as places that touch people beyond the cognitive and places that can be imbued with character, spirit, and meaning by human activity. City dwellers' cultural identities, networks, histories, and memories need to be acknowledged because culture, art, and leisure have "intangible energies that can be turned into economic and social resources" (Sepe, 2009, pp. 130-131). In this thesis dance is identified as a major mediator between built environment, the moving body, cultural heritage, and everyday

life. Culturally specific dance practices are found to pass on cultural knowledge and at the same time help migrants to 'ground' themselves in Auckland.

This researcher posits that peoples' emotional reactions to the city need to be acknowledged – how they feel it and whether they can “live the city as a satisfying experience” (Sepe, 2009, p. 131). Many urban planners (Beasley, 2010; Gehl, 2010) advocate (re)establishing the human touch to the city by focusing on the visceral feel of the city and tapping into people's heart felt responses. Place-making and human encounters have to become central to city planning; it is necessary that people are back in the streets, because according to Beasley (2010) place-making and strong neighbourhoods go together.

Urban environments influence and shape people's perceptions and behaviours, but in reverse people also actively form places through social action. The case studies conducted for this research revealed that the urban environment and context influences the dances, with choreographers producing 'glocalised' (global/local) versions of 'traditional' dances, and choreography that combines the spirit of the original place with other influences, thus being fundamentally new work. The latter indicates that people have agency, and are in charge of their artistic creations which corresponds to British social theorist Fran Tonkiss (2005) calling the city a “site of agency” (p. 7).

2.3 The inter-cultural city

“In the interethnic city, each community participates to the creative process of urban transformation.” (Clemente, 2009, p. 672)

Cities are places of exclusion and inclusion; they can harbour exclusive spaces as well as inclusive and caring spaces (Thrift, 2006). Access to public spaces is essential for creating an inclusive city, paramount for cultural practices to flourish, for community networks to (re)produce, and for feelings of belonging to develop (Tonkiss, 2005). Subsequently, the question arises how the different cultures communicate and cohabit, where and how they meet. This thesis advocates dynamic diversity based on intercultural dialogue, correlating to Giddens' (2012b) 'sophisticated multi-culturalism'.

Also relevant in this context is political scientist Robert Putnam's (2007) differentiation between 'bonding capital' (within communities or between individuals that have much in common) and 'bridging capital' (across communities or between people of different backgrounds and views). This thesis suggests that culturally specific dance practices have both. They bond and strengthen communities and are a form of inter-generational education

about cultural heritage. Dance practices can equally be a vehicle for learning about other cultures. This research found that the bridging capital of culturally specific dance practices is underused as a means of intensifying inter-cultural encounters in Auckland.

Many social geographers and urban planners make a connection between inter-cultural cities, creativity, and liveability, and argue that attention to interactions between cultures is crucial for the city of the future (Clemente, 2009; Esposito De Vita, 2009; Helbrecht, 2004; Sepe, 2009). In summary, this study proposes that Auckland needs approaches to place-making that invite inter-cultural encounters, grass roots practices, a **felt** connection and a **felt** quality of life, and acknowledgement of the city dweller as a holistic human being with visceral, emotional, and spiritual responses to the urban environment.

2.4 The Auckland Plan

Cultural diversity is an advantage which can be harnessed economically and socially. The New Zealand Local Government Act 2002 acknowledged this by adding 'cultural well-being' to the existing list of local government responsibilities, which until then had encompassed social, economic, and environmental well-being. Cultural well-being is defined as,

The vitality that communities and individuals enjoy through:

- participation in recreation, creative and cultural activities;
- and the freedom to retain, interpret and express their arts, history, heritage and traditions.

(Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2012)

The Auckland Plan (2012), as the über-plan for the region's future development, acknowledges that cultural diversity is Auckland's core feature. In the introduction to its Arts and Culture chapter the plan states that,

A diversity of cultures forms the heart of Auckland. It is who we are. It is the key to our past, and who we might become in the future. (chapter 3, paragraph 288)

Furthermore, it recognises that,

Arts and culture are central to Auckland's character and identity. (chapter 3, paragraph 287)

Consequently, the plan encourages community events and cultural festivals that reflect Auckland's diverse cultures, advocates strengthening the creative sector,

and identifies the need for a range of facilities to cater for diverse forms of participation and performance.

In the Recreation and Sport section, it is acknowledged that because of cultural, age, and gender differences “different ways of engaging with people” (chapter 5, paragraph 346) are needed to attract people to physical activities. Dance is unfortunately not explicitly considered in this section. As the Langi Mai experience, discussed in the Samoan case study, shows, culturally specific dance forms can entice people to participate in physical activity that they would otherwise not do.

In sum, the Auckland Plan has set comprehensive and progressive parameters. The example above shows that some opportunities to utilise culture strategically may have been missed though. Furthermore, the pivotal point will be how the plan is implemented. This will largely lie in the hands of Auckland’s many Local Boards who decide on key projects in the community.

2.5 Aucklanders and the arts

Performing arts practices are strongly embedded in many cultures residing in Auckland. They are practised as a way of expressing and celebrating culture, and for keeping traditions alive. Consequently, Auckland houses many performing arts festivals. These include the annual ASB Polyfest, the largest Polynesian performing arts event in the world, with more than 9000 secondary school students participating and 95,000 spectators in recent years (University of Auckland, 2013). Also included are Pasifika Festival, Auckland Lantern Festival (celebrating Chinese New Year), International Cultural Festival, Diwali Festival of Lights, and the Southside Arts Festival, all happening annually. In March 2014 the first Folk Fortnight will feature music, dance, and culture. Then there is Bollywood, which reaches not just people of Indian descent but far beyond; arts projects for refugee youth that include dance; English and Scottish country dancing; Irish dance; Italian, French, and English Renaissance dancing; Bulgarian dancing; African dancing; Israeli folk dancing; and South American and Spanish dancing. This is by no means a complete list, only an indication of the existing cultural richness whose potential has been overlooked for too long. Participation numbers prove that culturally specific dance attracts many Aucklanders as active participants, supporters, coaches, or spectators (Colmar Brunton, 2012). Auckland also brings forth a large array of fusion dance forms, some of which are described in chapter 5.

A recent arts participation survey (Colmar Brunton, 2012) established that 80% of Aucklanders thought the arts define who we are as New Zealanders, and 76% supported public funding for the arts. Regional cultural institutions were

perceived as the most important aspect of becoming the world's most liveable city, followed by events celebrating Auckland's diversity. The poorer and "brownier" South and West Auckland reported more attendance and active participation in the arts than the "white" affluent north, suggesting that arts practices in Auckland are not primarily attracting educated elites. Performing arts music events were found to have the highest attendance rate, followed by dance and theatre.

The snapshots of dance practices which this research explores, reveals relatively healthy dance spaces which are nevertheless in need of nurturing and several suggestions relating to this are presented in chapters 7 and 8.

2.6 Migration

"New Zealand was viewed by successive governments as a Utopia for the chosen few; preferably white, Protestant British." (Brooking & Rabel, 1995, p. 23)

This chapter section serves as a summary of New Zealand's immigration attitudes and policies of the last 150 years and thus traces the developments which led to Auckland becoming a multi-cultural place. There is a focus on the rulings affecting Dalmatians, Indians, and Samoans and the case study reports in chapter 5 discuss further case specific issues.

Humans have migrated across the world for millennia; however, in recent decades this has accelerated greatly. Today about 214 million people, roughly 3% of the world's population, live in countries where they were not born (Giddens & Sutton, 2012b). New Zealand receives many voluntary migrants, who come for education, employment, or lifestyle reasons, plus a United Nations refugee quota of 750 per annum.

New Zealand is a classic immigration country. Māori started arriving about 1000 years ago and extensive Anglo-Celtic migration began in the late 1820s (Phillips, 2013). To realise a "Britain in the south seas" (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012), Protestant Anglo-Celts could migrate without restrictions until the 1970s. Other migrant groups such as Dalmatians, Chinese, Indians, and German Jews fleeing the Holocaust were discriminated against through immigration regulations, and often treated with suspicion (Brooking & Rabel, 1995).

Immigration control began in 1881 when the Chinese faced restrictions and continued in 1899 with an act curbing entry for all non-British or non-Irish people (Beaglehole, 2009; Pio, 2010). Many following acts aimed at stopping Asian migration, such as the draconic poll tax which Chinese paid until 1934.

Dalmatians were also discriminated against, and for decades at the end of the 19th and in the first half of the 20th century Indians, Dalmatians, and others could not bring wives as there was a fear of distinct non-British communities developing (Brooking & Rabel, 1995; Trlin, 1979).

The Undesirable Immigrants Exclusion Act 1919 was aimed at prospective migrants from Germany and Austria-Hungary (Brooking & Rabel, 1995; Phillips, 2013); an amendment in 1920 curbed migration from India. As subjects of the British Empire, Indians had the right to freely migrate within the Empire which New Zealand would not tolerate, hence the amendment permitted access for people of 'British birth' but not for 'aboriginal natives' (Swarbrick, 2011). These acts were basically valid until 1974 (Beaglehole, 2011).

After World War II New Zealand perceived the need for further population growth and assisted migration schemes were established which lasted until 1975. More than 100,000 people settled, mostly from Scotland and England but also from The Netherlands (Phillips, 2013). Emigration countries were chosen according to how well the people were expected to assimilate into the British culture of New Zealand. A senior immigration official, Reuel Lochore (1951), said that, "We must make new Britishers: by procreation, and by assimilation; by making suitable aliens into vectors of the British way of life" (p. 89). All non-British migrants were labelled 'race aliens' and until 1977 had to carry an alien passport with a photograph and a thumb print. Migrants were expected to assimilate.

The most significant change for New Zealand occurred when Britain joined the EEC (later European Union) in 1973, ending free access between the two countries. From then on the preferred countries and ethnicities ideal was progressively eroded and New Zealand started to orientate towards Asia and the Pacific (Beaglehole, 2011). Migration from the Pacific accelerated in the 1960s and '70s. When economic difficulties occurred in the mid-70s Pacific 'overstayers' were rounded up in so-called 'dawn raids' which left scars on New Zealand's race relations for decades (Anae, 2012; Salmon, Ellmers & 'Ilolahia, 2010). Compared to all other non-British migrants, Samoans had an advantage because they were not required to carry an alien passport due to the Friendship Treaty signed after Samoa's independence from New Zealand in 1962 (Lay, 1996). In 1982 New Zealand's highest court, the Privy Council in Britain, deemed Samoans born before 1962 to have the right to New Zealand citizenship, but the ruling was overturned immediately by a new New Zealand Government law. This situation has never been resolved.

The Immigration Act 1987 was a complete turning point, as it selects migrants according to professional skills, business acumen, and has an emphasis on letting families migrate. Immediately, a significant diversification of the migrant population happened and the path was paved for a multi-ethnic New Zealand. Despite small changes which regularly adjust migration flows according to perceived socio-economic needs, the 1987 act is still in effect. Since then attitudes towards migrants have slowly changed; however, this is an ongoing process.

Most migrants to Aotearoa New Zealand first arrive in Auckland and a high number of non-European migrants settle here (Collins & Friesen, 2009). Auckland's demographic changes are more profound than elsewhere in the country, thus it becomes a 'superdiverse' place (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012).

2.7 Summary

The current chapter traced New Zealand's immigration history and how this impacted on Dalmatian/Croatian, Indian, and Samoan communities; also how it resulted in Auckland becoming a multi-cultural place. The chapter established that cultural diversity is an advantage for cities and a value to be harnessed. It also determined the necessity for accessible space and opportunities for people to maintain existing or create new cultural practices in urban environments. Equally, the importance of inter-cultural encounters was highlighted. Furthermore, the chapter introduced the Auckland Plan and presented survey results which prove substantial arts participation across Auckland, hence stressing arts practices as an existing and available vehicle for inter-cultural encounters.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the paradigms, theories, and methodologies underpinning this doctoral study. First-up it discusses why this researcher chose an interdisciplinary approach. It then moves on to ontological and epistemological considerations, followed by the presentation of a theoretical perspective. The last part of the chapter introduces the chosen research methodologies and presents the research design including data collection and data analysis methods.

The methodology and research design for this project were chosen to serve the purpose and goal of the project. Methodology refers to the researcher's chosen way of exploring, reflecting on, and discussing the researched field and her/his chosen path in how to answer the research question (Taylor & Bogdan, 1997). Methodological considerations are about ontology, epistemology, theory, and perspective and additionally the researcher's identity, experiences, interests, and assumptions influence the choices. Dance scholars Green and Stinson (1999) suggest that "the choice of methodology is based not only on philosophical beliefs about reality and knowledge, but also on personal preferences and on the aims and purposes of the research. Personal preferences are important" (p. 113).

This researcher adopted a methodological framework which offered appropriate and clear parameters for exploring and discussing in a meaningful way the research question, 'How do dance practices of different cultures contribute to Auckland as a place of diverse communities?' The chosen methodologies met the researcher's personal preferences and skills, and the study's intentions alike.

3.2 Interdisciplinarity

“As I sought to make sense of my studies I wanted to pass on the insights I gained, but ... it would require a historian-linguist-folklorist-musicologist-dance ethnologist-literary specialist-art historian-religion scholar, to name only *some* of the relevant modifiers, to present a complete picture of Korean dance.” (van Zile, 2001, xviii, italics in original)

This thesis posits disciplinary confines are an artificial construct, and dance studies are an excellent example for this premise. Considering the manifold contexts where dance may be practised and performed clarifies that to capture it comprehensively requires investigations from many angles. Confining dance research to a ‘one-eyed’ discussion led through the lens of only one discipline may result in not doing a research topic justice (Burt, 2009; Franko, 2009; Sheets-Johnstone, 2009; van Zile, 2001).

As Judy van Zile demonstrates in the above quote, any reflection on dance practices involves so-called ‘outside’ disciplines such as music, theatre studies, anthropology, cultural studies, movement science, or formal aesthetics. In fact it could be argued that disciplinary boundaries as they exist in western understandings of art are attempts to categorise art forms while disregarding that many cultures make no distinction between music, dance, acting, and storytelling or even everyday life and ‘art’.

Dance happening within a specific cultural framework has traditionally been studied through anthropological methodologies. Investigating dance practised by migrant cultures in urban contexts additionally asks for the application of theories in social geography in order to conceptualise urban space and urban life. Akin to dance studies social geography and urban studies require an interdisciplinary approach as Fran Tonkiss’s (2005) quote, “No single discipline can lay claim to the city” (p. 2) highlights.

Taking into account that dance studies as an academic discipline within tertiary institutions is a comparatively young discipline clarifies why dance researchers started to borrow methodologies from other disciplines such as history, social studies, cultural studies, and psychology. In this historical process cultural studies and dance studies have been perceived as naturally affiliated; however, this ‘natural affiliation’ has recently been questioned (Franko, 2009; Morris, 2009).

Borrowing methodologies has been a contentious issue in dance studies with some scholars arguing that dance needs to adopt a stronger focus on the actual dance and its inherent methods. Ramsay Burt (2009), however, warns against establishing “a binary distinction between interdisciplinary and medium-specific approaches to dance scholarship” (p. 4). He argues that dance needs to draw on both to explore the relationship between dancing and its context. Franko (2009) points to the importance of how dance scholarship approaches “the question of the inter versus the intra” (vi) in order to establish dance studies as a discipline in its own right.

Some forms of dance-based research approaches (what Franko calls the ‘intra’) have existed since the 1920s, notably Laban Movement Analysis. Such forms of movement analysis are significant in dance research for documenting choreography, and for offering a shared terminology for dance discourse, but they cannot facilitate answering the ‘why’ questions. To paint comprehensive pictures contextual information is needed, particularly if it concerns dance from a culture foreign to the researcher or reader. Contextual information is not extractable from the movement itself even with the best forms of movement analysis. It is available in dancers’, choreographers’, and historians’ narratives, therefore this study chose narrative inquiry as a methodology. Movement descriptive methods were also applied at times but were less important.

Efforts to expand existing and create new dance-based dance theories are ongoing. Somatic research approaches, working from the somatic ‘inner’ lived experience of individuals, are valuable in research that investigates the personal experience of dancers, choreographers and audience members (Barbour, 2002, 2004; Fraleigh, 1987, 1991, 2000; Ness, 2004; Sheets-Johnstone, 1966, 2009). The phenomenology part of this chapter discusses this topic in more detail.

Practice-led research, which is being introduced into many academic institutions worldwide, is an interdisciplinary approach that aims at integrating practice and research. Joining different approaches for practising and studying dance brings forth challenges, but following this path is paramount for achieving more meaningful research outcomes and therewith strengthening dance studies as an academic discipline.

Judy van Zile’s quote at the start of this section clarifies that no researcher can apply all constituting disciplines simultaneously, a point also supported by dance scholar Mark Franko (2009). Therefore, choices had to be made about which disciplines serve best the specific focus of this study, and social geography and dance studies were selected.

Even though interdisciplinarity is widely applied in contemporary research, its flaws, traps, and limitations need to be acknowledged. Most scholars are academically trained in only one discipline and they often apply the second or third discipline after a relatively short encounter with it. Unconscious assumptions can creep in and concepts may be misunderstood or misinterpreted. Wong (2011) suggests that for interdisciplinary research to be successful, a common language between the disciplines needs to be found. In this thesis the terms 'space', 'place', 'everyday practices', and 'movement' are used across disciplines, and their uses in dance studies and social geography are correlated. This researcher was highly aware of the inherent dangers of interdisciplinary research and was extremely diligent to make sure concepts originating from disciplines outside her immediate previous academic experience were discussed thoroughly and applied after careful considerations.

3.3 Philosophical, ontological, and epistemological frameworks

This chapter section brings together the ontological and epistemological frameworks underpinning this study: a holistic non-dualist worldview, social constructionism/constructivism, and phenomenology.

3.3.1 Non-dualist worldviews

“Through its Cartesian legacy, the body was consistently presented as mere handmaiden of an all-powerful mind, a necessary but ultimately discountable aspect of cognition, intelligence, and even affectivity.” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2009, p. 2)

A non-dualist worldview, which validates and embraces physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and cultural aspects, was helpful for framing this study's explorations of dance in urban environments in Auckland. It was important for this researcher because discourse on dance has for over two hundred years suffered from persisting ill-considered dualist (body/mind split) thinking and ensuing misrepresentations (Albright, 1997; Barbour, 2002, 2004; Foster, 1996; Fraleigh, 1987; Sheets-Johnstone, 2009; Sklar, 1991). 17th century French philosopher Rene Descartes has left the western world with a pervasive legacy of dualist thinking; his famous ontology "I think, therefore I am" emphasised the cognitive, the reasoning, placing it before being-in-the-world. The application of dualist thinking in the form of a perceived superiority of the rational mind over an "animalistic" body has led in the western world to ignoring, downplaying, or at least viewing with suspicion bodily ways of knowing, including dance. Elizabeth

Grosz (1994) calls this rejection of the body "somatophobia" (p. 5), a fitting term indeed.

This research is based on a non-dualist interpretation of the world. Monism, dualism, and non-dualism are divergent worldviews and cosmologies based on different philosophical assumptions. Monism may be defined as an approach where the whole is seen as more important than its constituting parts; while dualism may be seen as a reduction of the whole focusing on the constituting parts. In a dualist approach wholes get broken apart and the parts become analysed separately from each other to the point that it is difficult to comprehend the whole unit any more. A non-dualist worldview in contrast is holistic in that it defines wholes as inherently interconnected systems (Broomfield, 1997; Panikkar, 2010; Sunde, 2003; Varela, Rosch & Thompson, 1991). These different worldviews are the basis to how we conceptualise human beings as either holistic systems or as consisting of relatively independent parts (i.e. body, thought, emotion, soul; or liver, kidney, stomach; or individual, society, nature). It also applies to how humans are connected to the environment, as part of it or separate from it (Ahmed, 2004; Broomfield, 1997; Heshusius & Ballard, 1996; Sunde, 2003; Varela et al, 1991).

This study takes the stance that humans are holistic beings who are part of nature in a non-dualist way. Anthropologist John Broomfield (1997) supports this perspective saying that "nature is not "the other", out there, separate from us. It is in us and we are it" (p. 135). He emphasises the importance of "the pattern which connects": body with mind and spirit, mind and spirit with culture, individual with community, humans with nature" (p. 140). Many dance scholars align with a non-dualist approach and understand the body as having interrelated social, cultural, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual knowledge (Albright, 1997; Barbour 2002, 2004; Bright, 2010; Fraleigh, 1987, 1991; Ness, 2004).

Charlotte Sunde in her PhD thesis on cross-cultural issues regarding the management of the Whanganui River, New Zealand, claims that connecting non-dualism and cross-culturalism forms a basis for better dialogue across cultures. She says that "the nondual approach fosters a dialogical and open attitude to cross-cultural understanding, which is crucial to addressing complex environmental issues" (2003, p. 5). Her approach is helpful when addressing any socio-cultural issues in a cross-cultural context and therefore is also valid for this research project.

3.3.2 Constructionism/Constructivism

“What then is constructionism? It is the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42, italics in original)

The first pillar of the research paradigm utilised within this study are the 'twins' of social constructivism and social constructionism. They provide an ontology, epistemology, and learning theory that views individual and collective meaning making as a constructing process involving individual and socio-cultural context (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Crotty, 1998; Dewey, 1959; Jackson & Penrose, 1993; Schwandt, 2007; Vygotsky, 1986). The term 'constructivism' is used in reference to individual meaning making and is thus pivotal in educational theory. The term constructionism is applied to collective meaning making and the transfer of collective knowledge and hence applies when studying culture. The latter paradigm was more important for this study as it explored how groups and individuals create their social realities. In a constructivist/constructionist research paradigm subjectivity and multiple truths are accepted and meaning is not found but co-constructed by participant and researcher.

As anyone with a migrant experience knows, human behaviour varies from country to country, or culture to culture. The question arises why this is the case. German-American anthropologist Franz Boas, building on Darwinism, recognised in the early 20th century that cultural behaviour is learned. Since then it has been widely acknowledged that culture is a social construct, which means that culturally specific understandings, behaviours, and practices are not inherited but taught and learned inter-generationally (Appadurai, 1996; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Crotty, 1998; Jackson & Penrose, 1993). In fact many scholars across several disciplines (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Giddens, 1991; Vygotsky, 1986) extend this notion further suggesting that all human experience is mediated through socialisation.

Across many disciplines scholars have for a long time recognised the constructedness of culture and society, and constructionist theories have been applied to researching issues such as racism, gender, multi-culturalism, nationalism, and transnationalism (Appadurai, 1996; Giddens, 1991; Grau, 2001, 2008; Hall, 1996, 2006; Ignatieff, 1994; Jackson & Penrose, 1993; Maners, 2006, 2008; Winlow, 2009). Geographers Jackson and Penrose (1993) highlight the fact that humans constantly categorise and classify: “At its simplest, social construction theory is concerned with the ways in which we

think about and use categories to structure our experience and analysis of the world” (p. 2). Important for framing this study is their following stance: “Social construction theory rejects the longstanding view that some categories are “natural”, bearing no trace of human intervention” (p. 2).

Sociologist Stuart Hall (1996), using the example of perceptions of ‘blackness’, argues that the creation of individual, cultural, and ‘racial’ identity varies considerably, bearing aspects of communal and individual construction, and is heavily influenced by the person’s background and social position; in brief her/his ‘lived experience’. The point taken from Hall’s analysis is that an individual’s way of constructing her/his cultural affiliation needs to be acknowledged foremost.

The fact that constructionism contests assumptions about perceived ‘natural’ categories such as ethnicity, race, cultural identity, nation, and belonging predestined it as a paradigm for discussing the research results of this study. Within this research those categories are seen as not only constructed but also as changeable and in constant flux. Conceptualising these categories as driven by human actions and choices means accepting their mutability and in this light can be viewed as the ever-changing dimensions of human diversity and difference. As Jackson and Penrose (1993) state, “All constructions of “reality” must be seen as a product of the human capacity for thought and, consequently, are subject to change and variability” (p. 3).

As this research addresses the knowledge construction of researchers and research participants and dancers as learners, it considers constructionism as an epistemology. In educational theory the term constructivism is used for a constructionist understanding of knowledge acquisition, suggesting that knowledge is created not found (Eisner, 2002; Dewey; 1959; Schwandt, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Within this paradigm learning is understood as a process which happens through actively engaging with the world and taking a personal journey of discovery. In Schwandt’s (2007) view it is a social process which happens through interaction between peers or between teacher/knower and learner. Vygotsky (1978) even suggests that all sophisticated cerebral functions develop from social and cultural interactions.

Framing this study in a constructivist paradigm had several implications. It commits to finding ways of bridging the gap between teacher/knower and learner and equally between researcher and researched. It is a non-judgmental approach which accepts the multiple ways of meaning making arising from the person’s engagement with their lived world (Crotty, 1998). Constructivist learning theories were also relevant for discussing a teacher-centred pedagogy

in the teaching of culturally specific dance, as reported by some interviewees, and for comparing it to a learner-centred constructivist pedagogy which was followed by other practitioners.

Constructionism highlights the relational character of being and learning, and claims that we interpret our experiences against the backdrop of previous knowledge and shared understandings within our society, community, and culture (Schwandt, 2007). Therefore, this researcher acknowledges that all narratives (meaning all data) collected in this study are mediated accounts on the part of the participants and the researcher. The researcher's own cultural background, previous teaching appointments, research projects, and encounters in life shaped a particular perception of the research field. However, the co-constructing properties of the chosen research methodologies and interview techniques facilitated the emergence of the participants' meanings and understandings and mediated (but admittedly did not rule out) possible distortions by the researcher.

Some aspects of constructionist thinking can cause thorny issues which in the context of this study needed consideration. Departing from the understanding that social life is shaped by 'artificial constructions' leads to the question, what is the reality, value, and significance of these socio-cultural constructions? This thesis posits that social constructions are important to humans because we feel, think, and behave according to them; they are our socio-cultural guidelines. Jackson and Penrose (1993) explain that "the objective is not to expose the falseness of constructs but rather to expose the falseness of our unquestioning acceptance of these constructs from which their legitimacy derives" (p. 3). Therefore, constructionism is not about judging the fact that humans construct, but about highlighting that socio-cultural constructs are open to scrutiny and change, and that no categories are more essential or natural than others.

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996) refined the constructionist view by referring to "imagined selves" and "imagined worlds" (p. 3). Discussing the 'imagined' essentialist understandings of ethnicity, belonging, and nationhood in the Balkans (Ignatieff, 1994; Maners, 2006, 2008), as applicable to the Croatian case study within this research, offers opportunities for constructive reflection on history, and for possible re-interpretations and reconciliation.

The use of the term 'imagined' in the work of Appadurai (1996) and Benedict Anderson (2006), if interpreted in an unbalanced binary way, causes political and ethical difficulties as it can be used to challenge cultural and ethnic self-identification on the basis of them being 'imagined' or 'constructed'.

Unsurprisingly Jackson and Penrose (1993) describe a political backlash within

literary criticism regarding this issue. Unbalanced constructivist perspectives could also be used to question inter-generational connection to land and therewith the legitimacy of land claims. In the New Zealand context this weakness of constructionism has to be considered carefully as it has the potential to collide with the legitimising and asserting of rights by Māori.

The main philosophical issue for this study was how constructionist and non-constructionist (essentialist) views could be mediated. The term 'essentialist', as used here and discussed in detail in the phenomenology section, refers to a philosophical position that assumes and emphasises an essential human existence before any form of social construction. A perspective that sees these two positions as irreconcilable binaries thwarts acknowledging the multi-faceted ways of being-in, perceiving, and engaging the world and hence may lead to an incomplete understanding of people's lived experience.

Many dance scholars have acknowledged the constructedness of dance practices (Buckland, 2006; Desmond, 1997; Kaeppler, 1999; Maners, 2006; McFee, 1992; O'Shea, 2006; Patrick, 2010; Peterson Royce, 1977; Pietrobruno, 2006). Prominent dance anthropologist Adrienne Kaeppler (1999) says that "dance is not something that is 'out there' ... but a socially constructed system of knowledge" (p. 22). Stephanie Burrige (2011), in a book on dance in India, connects the idea of constructed memories and dance making. She says that "memories are embodied, constructed and deconstructed, encoded and decoded into new themes and movement vocabularies in powerful and poignant moments" (xvi).

In urban research it is important to acknowledge that 'place' is a social construct (Casey, 2001; Cresswell, 2009; Easthope, 2004; Edensor, 2010; Gieryn, 2000; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1995; Taylor, 2009), and 'space' is always under construction and only meaningful as 'lived space' (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005; Morton, 2005; Relph, 1976; Thrift, 2006; Tuan, 1977).

In summary, constructionism offered a paradigm to frame multiple aspects of this study. Applying constructionist understandings of how humans create notions of ethnicity, cultural belonging, place, and nation offered valuable insights into Auckland's migrant communities and their cultural and artistic practices. The constructivist lens was also successfully applied to topics covered in the literature review, such as movement in urban space, dance ethnography, dance history, and transnationalism. Furthermore, constructivist perspectives guided discussions about notions of tradition and change presented in the dancer's narratives, as well as in reviewed rationales for cultural events in Auckland.

3.3.3 Phenomenology

“The world is not what I think, but what I live through.” (Merleau-Ponty, 2003, xviii)

“The body is the general medium for having a world.” (Merleau-Ponty, 2003, p. 169)

Constructionism and phenomenology each facilitate telling a good story, but it will always be just half the story. Therefore, phenomenology provides the second pillar of this study’s research framework in order to acknowledge subjective experience (without judging its ‘constructedness’) and to highlight individual perception, meaning making, and voice. It hence has a balancing function, safeguarding from disconnecting theoretical reflections from the practical and experiential. This researcher understands constructionism and phenomenology as complementing each other but acknowledges that they can contradict each other depending on the exact school of thought and on the topic investigated. Exploring what phenomenology may offer to this research brought forth aspects that were valuable but others that were contentious.

Emphasising the aliveness of being right in the middle of the world while living and creating it seemed fitting for framing the dance experiences conveyed in the research interviews. This researcher connected to Merleau-Ponty’s description of phenomenology as offering “an account of space, time and the world as we ‘live’ them” (2003, vii), and hence this study is underpinned by the principles of the ‘lived body’, and ‘lived experience’. For this study on communal dance practices it was important that phenomenologists such as Hannah Arendt and Merleau-Ponty clearly account for individual experience AND human interrelatedness. Merleau-Ponty says that “the phenomenological world is not pure being, but the sense which is revealed where the paths of my various experiences intersect, and also where my own and other people’s intersect and engage each other like gears” (xxii).

The non-dualistic approach taken in this study relates to Merleau-Ponty’s (2003) rejection of an inner self which expresses itself through the body. He instead embraces the idea of the “person in the world”, saying “there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself” (xii). Many dance scholars (Barbour, 2002, 2004; Farnell, 2000; Fraleigh, 1987, 1991, 2000; Ness, 2004; Sheets-Johnstone, 1966, 2009; Sklar, 1991) have equally taken up non-dualist understandings of human existence, integrating body, mind, emotions, and senses in their accounts of dance.

This researcher has often pondered what humans essentially may be if they were stripped of culture. What is beyond the cultural façade? How would humans place themselves in the world without cultural ‘guidelines’, or negatively put, cultural ‘baggage’? This leads to the question how we know what is cultural about movement and whether there are ways of stripping the cultural away and arriving at a more immediate movement experience. What would human dancing be if that dissolution was possible?

In contemplating these thoughts this researcher faced a dilemma. On the one hand, the idea of stripping humans down to an essential being seemed unrealistic as humans are social and relational, therefore they cannot extract themselves from the world they inhabit and also not from socio-cultural influences, constraints, and biases. On the other hand, the notion of being able to free oneself from beliefs, conventions, and expectations opens up opportunities for new thoughts and ways of being, and therefore brings potential for agency, empowerment, and change – a theme which was prominent in the research interviews and is hence visible in the results and discussion chapters.

Extending the above thoughts into more general realms brought forward a clear point of contention with phenomenology for this researcher. As the philosophy of essences (Merleau-Ponty, 2003), phenomenology deals with the idea that “objects have essences – that is, intrinsic identifying or characterizing properties that constitute their real, true nature” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 89). This is a tricky concept, and the question arises how things are defined in phenomenological terms then. How is being German defined? What makes someone else Samoan? What is my essential ‘femaleness’? Such judgments can be contentious as they are based on prior assumptions and thus fail to account for the multi-layered ways of being in the world. For example, if being a woman is defined by having certain behaviours, attitudes, or talents, then applying essentialist thought is indeed problematic. In regard to dance it could be equally contentious to assume that, for example, all Africans are born with an essential talent for rhythm and dance, a theory which has been disproven by Hensley (2010) and others.

This researcher rejects the thought that one essentially IS who one is in an unchangeably way, such as being a certain ethnicity, nationality, race, personality, or even of certain dispositions and talents. Rather, this researcher perceives humans as constantly in process, as changing and becoming, which also showed in the research participants’ emerging personal and cultural identities as conveyed in their narratives.

Dance scholar and somatics teacher Sondra Fraleigh (1987) as well as New Zealand choreographer Michael Parmenter (2010) see the basic idea of phenomenology in things speaking for themselves in their own voice. The resulting notion that dance speaks for itself is in this researcher's view not universally applicable. Dance can only partially speak for itself; as discussed above, full meaning cannot be extracted from the movement itself. This topic is further pursued in the 'translating dance' section of the literature review.

This researcher finds some truth in Fraleigh's (1987) argument that dance has special status amongst the arts practices as it is the only one which is entirely and unreservedly embodied. She says that compared to painting "dance cannot exist outside the body; it is wholly lived" (xviii). For this reason, dance is a good medium to learn about culture; it inherently entails embodied, experiential, and non-abstract learning.

In sum, the value of phenomenology for this research lay in recognising the lived experience and personal meanings of the phenomena of cultural dancing and cultural identity. Furthermore, the work of dance ethnographers such as Cynthia Novack, Sally Ann Ness, Brenda Farnell, Deirdre Sklar, and dance phenomenologists Sondra Fraleigh and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone offered ways of framing dance as being, doing, and creating before representing. Also of importance for discussing the research results was the view that dance is the only wholly embodied arts practice (Fraleigh, 1987).

3.3.4 Summary

This study adopts a constructivist ontology and epistemology and operates in a phenomenological paradigm underpinned by a non-dualist worldview. This research recognises that culture, human behaviour, and social practices are products of social construction processes. This stance does not negate the paramount importance social and cultural constructions have in people's lives; it does accept that anything from language through arts practices to cultural rituals is inextricably interwoven with people's identity and understanding of self within communities, and that often a strong emotional attachment to culturally specific behaviours and practices exists. These cultural and social practices and behaviours encompass and embody people's lived experience, and this fact needs to receive primary recognition in any research.

3.4 Theories of practices and the 'two-eyed vision'

The literature review discusses and relates to each other diverse conceptualisations of dance, culture, space, and place. The following section serves as a brief introduction to these theoretical perspectives and aims to clarify how ontology and theory connect in this study.

In the past, philosophers have said little about dance (Sheets-Johnstone, 2009), neither have sociologists (Thomas, 1995, 2003), or human geographers. This researcher appreciates that British philosopher, geographer, and social theorist Nigel Thrift (1997, 2008, 2010), and other geographers such as Derek McCormack (2002, 2008), Tim Cresswell (2006), Catherine Nash (2000), Shannon Hensley (2010, 2011) and George Revill (2004) engage with dance. Reading their accounts initiated an intense research and discovery process for this researcher.

Nigel Thrift's theories build on earlier work by Michel de Certeau (1984) and Henri Lefebvre (1991, 1974/2004) who consider the city a social event and a human experience. De Certeau (1984) devised the notion of *the practice of everyday life*, and asserts that urban space is defined by bodily practices such as the movements of pedestrians in the city. Lefebvre's (1974/2004) *rhythmanalysis* is based on observations of the rhythms and repetitions of everyday life; it also emphasises the constituting role of affects in place making and sense of belonging.

Drawing on these ideas, amongst other theoretical influences, Thrift formulated non-representational theory (NRT), which he calls a theory of practices (1997, 2008) and a "geography of what happens" (2008, p. 2). He explains that NRT is not concerned with "representations and meaning, but with the performative 'presentations', 'showings', and 'manifestations' of everyday life" (1999, p. 127). This approach views humans as perceptive and an embodied mind rather than primarily ruled by logic and abstraction.

To illustrate the significance of a non-representational research approach, British geographer Hayden Lorimer (2005) states that to achieve a meaningful understanding of gardening in allotments the processes and practices need to be studied not the vegetables and flowers, which are the end products. This correlates to studying dance practices as social process as opposed to analysing dances. Lorimer (2007) fittingly calls NRT a "process-based ontology" (p. 90).

Thrift frames dance as having the potential to facilitate "resistance" (1997, p. 124) and "alternative modes of being in the world" (p. 125). It is this dance researcher's opinion that his explicit writing on dance (discussed in chapter 4) fall short of convincing rationales. However, despite failing to offer an all-encompassing theory for studying dance in cities, NRT with its leitmotif of movement and its focus on everyday practices facilitates valuable insights for dance research. Ilse Helbrecht's (2004, 2009) 'two-eyed vision' for conceptualising the city (also discussed in the literature review), which

combines non-representational and representational views, provides a more comprehensive framework.

3.5 Methodologies

Completing the application required by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee forced a thorough engagement with legal, cultural, and ethical issues and resulted in a carefully developed research framework. The search for the right research methodologies is underpinned by epistemological questions as it refers to how the researcher acquires knowledge for the study; it is hence about the relationship between the researcher and the researched field (Creswell, 1998).

3.5.1 Qualitative research approach

This research project applied a qualitative methodology and framework (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Creswell, 1998; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Eisner, 1991; Flick, 2007; Green & Stinson, 1999; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Adopting this approach offered an appropriate framework for uncovering and exploring diverse meanings of cultural dance practices in Auckland. In qualitative research, subjectivity and multiple truths are accepted and meaning is not found but co-constructed by participant and researcher. This meant acknowledging and valuing the specific observations and then connecting the found data from different places of observation with each other and correlating them to theory (Creswell, 1998). Participants could communicate a personal perception of their dance experience as part of their lived reality. The chosen process ensured that equal value was placed on all perspectives heard throughout the research process; personal experience was validated and multiple truths were inevitably created.

Qualitative research is a voyage of discovery; it is contextual, descriptive, narrative, and interested in textures and shading (Green & Stinson, 1999; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998), "the phrase qualitative methodology refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data - people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior" (p. 7).

A wide spectrum of qualitative research understandings exist. The empirical data collected in the research process can be seen as either a collection of data that create a mosaic formed by different viewpoints or as 'proof' for a social reality that can to a large degree be objectively known through solid qualitative research done by an unbiased researcher. This researcher worked from an

understanding of qualitative research as offering the opportunity to gain valid data about the research fields, and saw it as an endeavour to explore some shared reality as well as some opposing perceptions of participants and researcher alike.

3.5.2 Ethnography

The multi-cultural nature of the dance communities explored in this research invited ethnographic research methods. Ethnography is applicable where culture is central to the research, but contemporary ethnography has extended its realms by incorporating any 'community of practice', thus reaching across disciplines. Communities of practice can be tied by a shared cultural heritage, or they can convene because they share a belief, a concern, or an interest (Wenger, 1999). Therefore, belonging to a community of practice can happen through either genealogy or participation.

Even though ethnography originated in anthropology it no longer is bound to a discipline, neither is it attached to a theoretical perspective. Simon Coleman (2005) describes it as a methodology to conduct "small scale studies of banded groups through in depth participant observation technology aimed at understanding group culture" (p. 264).

Ethnography writes about people, their everyday lives, their experiences, activities, perceptions, joys, misfortunes, and challenges (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995). The descriptive nature of ethnography provides the opportunity to explore the complex layerings of contexts and experiences of the researched field, focusing on detail and diversity, thus often producing multi-dimensional results (Frosch, 1999).

Dance scholars (Frosch, 1999; Quigley, 1998) describe dance ethnography as offering a framework for exploring dance communities in regard to attitudes, practices, and interactions (within the group or between groups of practice), thus offering a fitting methodology for this study. Dance ethnography offers possibilities to frame dance within its socio-cultural context and recognises dance as cultural knowledge (Albright, 1991; Buckland, 1999; Frosch 1999; Sklar, 1991). Frosch calls it poetically "tracing the weaves of dance in the fabric of culture" (p. 271).

To do worthy ethnographic research the researcher needs to understand behaviour as culturally determined, and recognise her/his own cultural background(s) and resulting biases just as a psychotherapist needs to understand her/himself before becoming a good therapist (Agar, 1996). Having an awareness of one's own behaviour and that of others helps to constructively frame encounters in research situations.

Every research project investigating a community which the researcher is not part of creates an insider-outsider dilemma (Agar 1996; Bishop, 2005; Creswell, 1998; Smith, 2005). This is particularly pronounced if the researcher enters an environment outside her/his own culture. Wide support exists in dance scholarship to apply participant observation as a way of mediating this issue (Green & Stinson, 1999; Ness, 1996; Sklar, 1991).

In sum, ethnography was chosen for this study because it is a qualitative methodology which employs narrative and description, values first-person perspectives, and offers a framework to explore dance in its socio-cultural context.

3.5.3 Narrative inquiry

A second mode of inquiry utilised within this study was narrative inquiry.

Narrative inquiry explores everyday experiences and practices; it is situated, particular and individual, giving voice to 'normal' people's experience (Bowman, 2006; Chase, 2005). Bowman states that,

Narrative lends itself especially well to conveying the shape and character of human experience, and should therefore be regarded as one of the basic ways humans create and share meanings (p. 7). ... Narrative is how people weave identities for themselves, with pasts linked to presents and futures (who are we in relationship to who we were and to who we are becoming?) (p. 8).

Therefore, narrative inquiry offered a fitting approach for capturing people's dance narratives in Auckland. It offered a platform for retelling and reflecting upon experiences of migration, personal and cultural identity construction, and cross-cultural encounters as well as bodily sensations that may accompany these journeys.

This study applied narrative inquiry because it facilitates hearing grass-roots voices that may be overlooked or subsumed by abstraction and theorising (Bowman, 2006). This researcher wanted to hear first-hand the dancers' narratives without reducing them to 'examples' or 'data' viewed and interpreted from an outsider's perspective. This way of framing narrative inquiry can be seen as a means of empowerment. At the very least it is a "from the bottom up and from inside out" (Bowman, 2006, p. 13) approach.

In this study research participants were understood as narrators whose voices are mediated through socio-cultural contexts (Bowman, 2006; Chase, 2005). This researcher refrained from calling it an 'authentic' voice, rather acknowledging it as a personal, temporal and situational account which can

change. It was nevertheless viewed as a worthy finding as it captures a valuable snapshot in time.

Narrative inquiry works hand in hand with a constructivist epistemology as "speakers *construct* events through narrative rather than simply refer to events" (Chase, 2005, p. 656, italics in original) and social life can be defined as "enacted narrative" (Bowman, 2006, p. 14). Narrative inquiry also links in with phenomenology as it validates the lived experience of people and the first-person perspective.

3.6 Research design and research methods

This study understood research design as a flexible tool (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) which weaves in with the position taken that qualitative research is a journey.

3.6.1 Data collection

Data collection was conducted in three in-depth case studies: Samoan, Indian, and Croatian dance practices in Auckland. The applied methods were ethnographic field work which included participant observation, one-on-one interviews, journaling, and wide contextual research.

3.6.1.1 Case studies

Multiple case studies were the chosen form of data gathering. Robert Stake (2005) explains the rationale for multiple case studies:

The [cases] may be similar or dissimilar, with redundancy and variety each important. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases. (p. 446)

The case studies were selected purposefully according to the following criteria: cultural and ethnic diversity (covering migrant groups from different parts of the world), and history of the migrant groups (covering 19th and 20th century, plus recent migrants). Accessibility was another important selection criterion as an accessible case offers a better chance for a meaningful and successful inquiry. Stake comments that,

My choice would be to choose that case from which we feel we can learn the most. That may mean taking the most accessible or the one we can spend the most time with. Potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness. (p. 451)

It is this researcher's opinion though that any chosen case brings forth stories and offers opportunities to learn and discuss.

In case studies the activities and the functioning of groups are studied with an interest in wide contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Therefore, in this study preparations for the fieldwork included researching in detail the socio-cultural and historical contexts of the chosen case studies, including migration histories, history of their performing arts at the original place and in the diaspora, as well as social and cultural change in the diaspora.

The case studies fulfilled this study's purpose of exploring urban resident's felt experience of Auckland and their felt connection to their cultural communities. To accommodate this intention a narrative form of presenting the results was chosen. The chosen case studies revealed similarities as well as differences in practice, motivation, physical settings, and lived experience. All findings were considered valuable by this researcher as they helped collate a diverse picture of dance communities in Auckland.

3.6.1.2 Participant observation

Participant observation, the main research method of ethnography, helps to build an evenly balanced relationship between researcher and interviewees. Dancing with the research participants offered the opportunity to be literally on an equal 'footing', and to be accepted by the group. Dance ethnographer Deirdre Sklar (1991) calls it an "engaged relationship with those studied" (p. 9). Participant observation brings into the research process the 'lived body' and 'lived experience' of the research participants and the researcher alike (Ahmed, 2004; Ness, 2004; Sklar, 1991). The researcher can through kinetic empathy use her/his "body and feelings as a research tool" (Ness, 1996, p. 12). This felt 'data' becomes part of the data analysis but needs verification against the participants' experience (Frosch, 1999). As this researcher entered domains of cultural dancing unknown to her, it was important to gain tacit and explicit knowledge, making participant observation a suitable research method.

It is suggested that a considerable amount of what a researcher learns about people's experiences is acquired through the body as tacit knowledge (Coy, 1998; Desjarlais, 1992; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). This is particularly applicable if the research takes place in fields that contain strong elements of physicality such as dance, healing, music, and so forth. For example, Desjarlais (1992) describes his experience living amongst Nepalese shamans as encountering "new styles of behavior, ways of being and moving through space that I did not previously have access to. By using the body in different ways I stumbled on (but never fully assimilated) practices distinct from my own" (p. 27).

Even though this researcher acknowledged the points presented above, she was aware that applying an embodied practice as a data collecting method creates a conundrum, a point also discussed by Sally Ann Ness (2004). Ness cautions that embodied methodologies such as participant observation are underpinned by the assumption that there is something to be discovered in the embodied doing that is otherwise inaccessible. She raises a valid point, because the observer, particularly if trained in movement analysis, can extract much information from watching. The question is, which additional information can be extracted from the doing? The problem is that researchers may use their own embodied experience to jump to conclusions without realising their own (embodied) biases and assumptions. This researcher believes careful consideration and reflective practice are needed in those instances. Ness acknowledges the fact that it may be impossible to strip ourselves from cultural inscription and points out the paradox of using a method that proclaims to facilitate going beyond cultural inscription while cultural understanding is the actual goal. Ness questions that embodied methodologies have created a significant epistemological shift in dance research saying that “the philosophical outlines and foundations [of the new trajectory] have not yet come clearly into view” (p. 140). However, she still acknowledges its capacity “to yield very different forms of cultural insight” (p. 138).

Participant observation consists of two elements: the participating and the observing. This means joining the activities, feeling them physically and emotionally, and keeping field notes. Every researcher has a different way of keeping field notes, often using single words, abbreviations, and sketches on site, and then later writing them up in more detail. It works for me to take short notes on the spot and expand those notes soon afterwards. My field notes contained details such as the perceived atmosphere, physical place, interactions, conversations, acceptance of researcher, and what sort of learning environment it was.

Every researcher has to decide on the extent of participation. Participation happens on a continuum between passive, moderate, active, and complete participation (Spradley cited in DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). The specificities of the chosen research field and the study’s goal determine the choice as much as the researcher’s personality and skills. If the researcher is a good multi-tasker, has good observation skills and memory, a deep level of participation may be possible and not impede on the quality of field notes.

In this research my involvement was planned as active participation with the caveat that participation was limited to casual dancing and not extended to other roles such as performer, teacher, or organiser. Realising full participation

proved easier in some cases than in others, I fully participated in the Croatian study, which facilitated a satisfying tacit and kinaesthetic experience of the dance form. In the Samoan case study fewer opportunities to join arose, which was unexpected and much regretted. Reminding myself that the epistemological gains from embodied immersion are limited helped me to deal with my regret. The two situations where I joined a siva lesson were nevertheless intensely enjoyable and much appreciated. In the Indian study the observing and communicating was at the fore, but I still felt involved and engaged.

Participant observation requires the researcher's self-reflectivity and details of her/his immersion need to be thoroughly considered (Green & Stinson, 1999). In this research, participation was a way of bonding and an opportunity to have an embodied experience of the practised dance forms, which facilitated heightened empathy with the participants. However, it was not a prominent data collection method. I was committed to constant self-reflective practice and discussed issues arising from my participation with supervisors and colleagues.

3.6.1.3 Interviews

Apart from the field observations, one-on-one interviews were the most important research tool used in this study. In order to value the "gift" offered by the participants (Limmerick, Limmerick-Burgess & Grace, 1996) the interviews were conducted at a location and time determined by them.

This research accepts that inherent power problems exist in regard to interviewer-interviewee relationship. Some scholars even see the terms 'interviewer' and 'interviewee' as problematic because they could be interpreted as implying an active-passive relationship and a uni-directional information flow (Limmerick et al, 1996). Within this research the interviewer-interviewee relationship was primarily seen as one of narrator-listener, meaning an understanding that is different from the traditional research interview (Chase, 2005). It is obvious that the researcher-researched relationship is a political and social relationship which works best where a balanced 'power' relationship between the interviewer and interviewee becomes established (Limmerick et al, 1996; Tripp, 1983) which I strived to achieve.

For the purpose of this study a conversational interview style was adopted and the interviews were conducted in an open, accepting, and flexible manner. Questions were open-ended and presented in a way that encouraged narrative rather than short answers. During the interview the lead was taken from what the interviewees' main topics were and the level of depth that participants decided to share was accepted. Some interviewees found their topics quickly

and unassisted, others needed more questions. Generally, at least one open-ended question in regard to each main topic was asked.

3.6.2 Data analysis

Including some technical procedures to the data analysis adds validity to the research (Barbour, 2001; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Stake, 2005) and therefore triangulation, respondent validation, and multiple coding were selected for this study.

Triangulation means using more than one data collection method. This study applied field observations, journaling, interviews, and contextual research. Triangulation adds validity to the research as it offers the opportunity to receive more detailed and varied data and hence may achieve a more fine-tuned picture of the researched field (Barbour, 2001; Cohen & Manion, 1989; Stake, 2005). However, it has to be acknowledged that striving for validity can be seen as a belief that a clear, unbiased reality is to be found. Consequently, in qualitative research where the researcher accepts complexity and diversity of perceptions, it should not be viewed as a 'fix' for the possible ambiguity of results (Barbour, 2001), but rather as a way of using multiple perspectives to clarify meaning. According to Robert Stake (2005) "triangulation helps to identify different realities" (p. 454).

For this research project two further procedures were useful: respondent validation, which is a cross checking with participants to give them the opportunity to comment, and multiple coding, which means cross-checking by an independent researcher. Adding an 'outside eye' offers another perspective or way of interpreting. This researcher involved a fellow doctoral student for this purpose.

In the first phase of data analysis the interviews were transcribed, then returned to participants for checking. In the second phase a constant comparative analysis was applied (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), searching for themes and parallels relevant in regard to the research question. In fact, all emerging themes were treated with equal respect and put through a creative and intuitive process of evaluation.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter describes the ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies and research methods which formed the backbone of this study. The beginning of the results chapter refers back to the current chapter, reflecting on how the research design facilitated the research process and the discussion of results. It further describes the useful as well as the challenging aspects of the research design, and how these challenges were confronted.

It seems appropriate to conclude this chapter with a quote by Robert Stake (2005): "Many researchers would like to tell the whole story but of course cannot; the whole story exceeds anyone's knowing and anyone's telling" (p. 456). Every researcher knows the truth of this statement and needs to make decisions about which parts of the collected data to use for presentation in the thesis and how to weave the chosen data together in a meaningful way. My intention was to create a picture, a 'mosaic', of the chosen pockets of dance in Auckland, an approach that Norman Denzin (2005) calls "making 'bricolage' (quilt making)" (p. 4).

4 Literature review

4.1 Introduction

In answering the research question, 'How do dance practices of different cultures contribute to Auckland as a place of diverse communities?' this literature review explores the triangle of dance, place, and culture, in the process crisscrossing the borders between ethnography, social geography, and dance studies. The review first examines the phenomenon of space and the place-making qualities of dance, weaving together models pertaining to space and movement in dance-based theories and theories situated in social geography.

The second section of this literature review explores the relationship between culture and place. Themes encompass ethnicity and culture no longer being place-bound and the ensuing development of hybrid identities, as well as the transnational (non-place bound) and 'glocal' character of dance practices.

The third section provides the connecting side of the dance-place-culture triangle. It discusses the relationship between dance and culture drawing on literature in dance anthropology and ethnography. The last section of this chapter reviews selected studies on dance practices of different cultures in urban contexts.

4.2 The dance-place-culture triangle I: Dance and place

This section discusses concepts of space, place, belonging, rhythm analysis, and non-representational theory as they contribute to a theoretical framework for this study on urban dance practices of different cultures. The goal is to theorise the relationship between space/place and movement in urban situations from the perspective of the moving person.

The first part of this section provides working definitions of 'space' and 'place'. The adopted definitions are embedded within constructionist and phenomenological worldviews. 'Space' and 'place' are regarded as different entities within this research; however, the terms are at times used interchangeably in the literature as in some conceptualisations meanings overlap.

4.2.1 Defining space

“[Space] is the name for that most encompassing reality that allows for things to be located within.” (Casey, 2001, p. 404)

What then is space? Does it have implicit shape or form? Or is a space that is empty and without reference points simply a void? Is space just a locality where things are positioned or where things happen?

Many different approaches exist to conceptually frame the elusive space. Diverse disciplines like geography, sociology, architecture, dance studies, and the arts have engaged in discussions about what space is, how humans relate to it, and how they attach meaning to it. For the purpose of this study approaches from different fields have proven valuable.

The following five premises have emerged from the literature review:

1-space has to be lived to be meaningful

2-space is always under construction

3-space is constructed through movement

4-the moving body has a dual function in relationship to space

5-spaces are caring but also in need of care

The first premise applied in this study is that space needs to be 'lived' to be meaningful. Abstract space has no form and as it relates to nothing it has no

meaning; it is just emptiness. Geographer Edward Relph (1976) suggests that “space is amorphous and intangible and not an entity that can be directly described and analysed” (p. 8). In his view space receives meaning as ‘lived’ or ‘experienced space’.

The second premise of this study is that ‘space’ is always under construction; it is subjected to constant change. Social geographer Nigel Thrift (2006) proposes that space is porous and in constant motion, always allowing for processes to happen. Doreen Massey (2005) equally contends that space is always in process.

Nigel Thrift (2006) suggests that everything, be it small like an atom or large like the universe, is spatially distributed, meaning spaces come in many guises. Doreen Massey (2005) poses two further propositions: space is a product of interrelations, and secondly space is the sphere of ‘contemporaneous plurality’. For her, like for Thrift, “the spatial is political” (p. 9).

The third premise applied in this study is that from the subject’s point of view space is constructed through movement and sensory experience. Human geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) stresses the importance of the lived feel of space in generating a meaningful sense of space. He posits that kinaesthesia, sight, and touch facilitate a strong feeling of space. He says, “Space, we have noted, is given by the ability to move” (p. 12). Bauhaus artist Moholy-Nagy (1947) equally acknowledges both the sensory and kinaesthetic aspects of lived space saying that “space is a reality of sensory experience” and “from the point of view of the subject, space can be experienced most directly by movement, on a higher level, in the dance. The dance is an elemental means for realization of space-creative impulses. It can articulate space, order it” (p. 57). Henri Lefebvre (1991), whose rhythm analysis is discussed below, also sees space as lifeless and meaningless without embodied activities.

Geographer Frances Morton (2005) combines aspects of this study’s first premise (lived space) and third premise (space is constructed through movement) in suggesting that “bodies constantly reconfigure the spaces and times that were once considered fixed and bounded within geographical work, because the body constantly calls spaces into being” (p. 973).

The fourth premise is that the moving body has a dual function because it calls space into being and it also moves in space; a process in which the mover has agency. Dance scholar Rudolf Laban (1966), who engaged with concepts of space in his theoretical framework *choreutics*, suggests that,

The conception of space as a locality in which changes take place can be helpful here. However, we must not look at the locality simply as an empty room, separated from movement as an occasional happening only, for movement is a continuous flux within the locality itself, this being the fundamental aspect of space. Space is a hidden feature of movement and movement is a visible aspect of space. (p. 4)

Social geographer Tim Edensor, exchanging the term space for place, expresses the same idea saying that “the body also produces place as well as fitting in with it” (2010, p. 5).

Lastly, Thrift (2006) describes spaces as caring but also in need of care. This point is relevant for this project as it highlights the importance of reflecting on how we relate to and how we care for spaces important to us, in this case our urban dance spaces.

4.2.2 Dance, space, and culture

This chapter section discusses the relationship between use of space, dance, and culture. Rudolf Laban (1948/1988, 1966) conceptualised space, time, energy, and body into Laban Movement Analysis, a well-structured system that allows thinking and communicating about movement, offers starting points for improvisation and composition, and serves as a form of notation. Laban was particularly interested in how people through every-day work or dance movements relate to space in diverse ways. Laban saw the body as having an organic, elemental, and three-dimensional relationship in space.

There are many different ways of using space: you can conquer it or be timid about entering it; you can travel extensively through space or you can move just within your personal reach space; your movements could be wide and high or small and confined; your movements could be direct and controlled or indirect and fluid; you can dart into space, you can punch it, you can carve or scoop it, you can wring it; or you can gently melt into it. Some people seem to own space, others seem to get lost in space.

How we relate to space tells a lot about us as individuals but even more importantly about our cultural background. Different cultures have different approaches to the use of space; for example, expectations about appropriate personal space vary significantly between cultures (Giddens & Sutton, 2012a). Some cultures are strong on sacred spaces, or spaces that exist outside linear concepts of time (Conquergood, 2010; Nabokov, 1995; Plett, Takamine & Kusumo, 1995; Takamine, 1995). Tuan (1977) proposes that “it is difficult to experience the space of another culture” (p. 15) because spatial relations reflect human relations (Tonkiss, 2005). Historian and dance researcher Roberta Rio

(2012) claims that our culturally determined concepts of space influence our felt experience of space, and determine which possibilities of being, moving, and behaving within this space we can envisage and feel comfortable with.

Consequently, views differ as to what is an appropriate use of urban spaces, and therefore how we feel about movement activities such as jogging, tai chi, dance performances, and so forth in public spaces. Interestingly, some scholars also observe that in different cultures humans move around city spaces in distinctly different patterns (Halprin 1963; Novack, 1990). Tying in with this topic is dance scholar Jane Desmond's (1997) suggestion that "by looking at dance we can see enacted ... social attitudes towards the use of space and time" (p. 32). Equally of interest is Laurence Louppe's (2001) suggestion of "the labanian concept of transfer of weight as a primary agent in the elaboration of culture" (p. 68). Considering that the transfer of weight equates to how the body shifts through space clarifies the connection between Louppe's and Desmond's thoughts.

How we form spatial relationships with other dancers in a dance tells a lot about cultural values and what sort of community we are. For example, Dalmatian circle dances (chapter 5.2) with their intricate hand- and arm-holds give a clear message that the dancers fill the space in togetherness. The western focus on the individual star dancer tells of a different emphasis. The torso initiated movements of Middle Eastern dance ('belly dance'), or the rhythmicated, percussive body isolations in African dance forms again show different cultural approaches to body, space, and time. Discussing and analysing the relationship between culture, use of space, and qualities of movement in the Laban sense would be an interesting endeavour, but it is not the focus of the present study.

Dancers talk about a 'sense of space' which is different from a 'sense of place' introduced below. It means a dancer's ability to be spatially aware, the ability to realise where body parts are in relation to each other, to other dancers, and in relation to the floor. It also refers to a dancer's ability to have what Laban called 'clarity of space intention', meaning a sense of where the movement develops in the available or performance space. This sense of space is part of a dancer's skill set and is not place-bound but transferable to any space or place.

4.2.3 Defining place

“Place is space filled up by people, practices, objects, and representations.” (Gieryn, 2000, p. 465)

“Places have no inherent meanings, just the meanings given to them by humans.” (Easthope, 2004, p. 30)

What then is the difference between ‘space’ and ‘place’? Tuan (1977) suggests that “‘space’ is more abstract than ‘place’” (p. 6). Casey (2001) defines the difference between space and place as the difference between modernist understandings of an ordered physical space and the post-modern phenomenological based understanding of lived place. Comparing the two he says, “Place, on the other hand, is the immediate ambiance of my lived body and its history, including the whole sedimented history of cultural and social influences and personal interests that compose my life history” (p. 404).

This study posits that place is (re)created by humans in an ongoing process through living the space. Taylor (2009) asserts that, “Rather than accepting places as self-evident and static backdrops, sets, or stages on which human events happen, places are recast in dynamic relationship with the people that inhabit them” (p. 296). Place can therefore be characterised as a social construct (Casey, 2001; Cresswell, 2009; Easthope, 2004; Edensor, 2010; Gieryn, 2000; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1995; Taylor, 2009). Gieryn (2000) expands this notion in saying that “places are doubly constructed: most are built or in some way physically carved out. They are also interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood and imagined” (p. 465).

People become attached to places through familiarising and creating narratives. To illustrate this point Tuan (1977) uses the example of moving into a new neighbourhood. At first the new place is a blurred ‘space’ for the new arrival, but then through getting to know its paths, smells, sounds, through recognising details and having human encounters an attachment forms and the new neighbourhood turns into a ‘place’. Through developing meaning, humans acquire affective bonds with places.

4.2.4 Place, rhythm, and dance

Lorimer (2005), coming from a non-representational perspective, suggests that shared experiences, fleeting encounters, embodied movement, and affective intensities make a critical difference to our perception of space and place. In his view, understandings of place are created by portraying “actions and processes rather than the place portrayed by the end product” (p. 85).

Edensor (2010) suggests a similar line of thought applying Lefebvre's (1974/2004) *rhythmanalysis*. He says "regular normative rhythms of place ... add to the knowing and feeling of place" (p. 4). He argues that humans take their bearings from bodily sensations and rhythms, and if in unfamiliar territory have a tendency to re-install those:

The usually unreflexive sensual and rhythmic attunement to place and familiar space may be confounded when the body is 'out of place', though spatio-temporal patterns may be quickly re-installed to reconfigure presence in a changed or unfamiliar space in order to regain ontological security. (p. 5)

According to Edensor, one way of achieving attunement to a new place could be for migrants to practise dance originating from their homeland. Dancing facilitates place attachment for the individual or group while at the same time imbuing the place with physical presence and significance. Najera-Ramirez, Cantu and Romero in *Dancing across Borders* (2010) suggest that dance plays a role in attaching meaning to a place. They refer to place as "space with meaning" and suggest that "performing a dance on a particular site lends meaning to that place" (xviii).

Dance scholar Pegge Vissicaro (2009) found that dance practices were pivotal in helping African refugees settle in Nebraska and Arizona. She observed how in staged dance events the refugees started to re-configure spaces and that they became more confident in doing so over time. She calls it human's "innate motivation to use the body as an orientation tool" (p. 64). Sara Ahmed (2000) similarly suggests that how migrants re-inhabit the new space is crucial to the outcome of the migrant experience as this process helps to create a new sense of belonging.

4.2.5 Affective dimensions

Many scholars highlight the significance of the affective on the development of a sense of place. Drawing on Tuan, Easthope (2004) proposes that a place is "accessible to us through direct experience through the senses" (p. 132), meaning that if a place has an environment of textures, smells, climate, visual, and spatial features that appeal to people it is easier for them to develop a positive sense of place. Canadian urban planner Larry Beasley in a presentation on liveable cities (2010) offered a similar argument. He highlighted the importance of the feel of the city, particularly of the "visceral and heartfelt responses of inhabitants" in order to achieve quality place making. Nigel Thrift (2008) in his non-representational theory also points to the often overlooked importance of the affective realm.

Hazel Easthope (2004) offers an extended understanding of place that is focused on social dimensions. She says, “Places can be understood as nodal points within networks of social relations that have a particular significance for a person or a group of people” (p. 137). She also points to the fact that understandings of place constantly change: “Places, understood as nodes in networks and relations, are not stable in the sense of being static. Rather they are constantly re-negotiated and understood in new ways by different people, or by the same people at different times” (2009, p. 77).

In summary, space and place are always lived and experienced through bodies. Places have no inherent meaning; humans actively create and re-create them through sensing, moving, narrating, and social relationships. Places are always changing and so do people’s relationships with them.

The affective realm is instrumental in place making. Creating affectively appealing environments fosters the development of a sense of place and attachment to urban (and other) environments (Gehl, 2010; Beasley, 2010). This point is discussed further in the section ‘space, time, and movement in urban environments’ below.

4.2.6 Emplacement and embodiment

Gieryn (2000) points to the fact that everything we study is emplaced. It is equally important to acknowledge that, as Casey (2001) words it, “the vehicle for being-in-place is the *body*” (p. 413, italics in original). This study understands space/place and embodiment as co-constituting each other. They are, as the presented concepts of Laban and Moholy-Nagy show, part of a comprehensive understanding of human’s lived experience of space, time, and body. Lefebvre’s *Rhythmanalysis (1974/2004)*, presented below, equally engages with these themes.

4.2.7 Belonging (to a/one place)

“Belonging is an embodied, relational, and affective experience.”
(Taylor, 2009, p. 298)

This section is about the development of a sense of belonging. In the constructionist view no natural sense of home, place, or nation exists; they are socio-culturally and historically developed attachments. Some scholars go so far as to call constructing a sense of belonging to a place an act of imagination, notably Benedict Anderson in his seminal book *Imagined Communities (2006)*.

Varying approaches exist relating to how to define a sense of belonging, how it develops, and how it connects to questions of identity. This chapter section

discusses place-based approaches, while notions of place and cultural identity are discussed in the section 'dance and culture', and ideas of belonging to two places are discussed in the part on 'place and culture'.

This study takes the point of view that a sense of place is acquired and is an important ingredient toward gaining a sense of belonging (Easthope, 2004). In the geography literature a sense of belonging is often described as emerging over time from lived experiences, particularly from regular 'practices of dwelling' that are movement based (de Certeau, 1984; Edensor, 2010; Merriman, 2004). Following Heideggerian thought, Cadman (2009) terms these practices "immersive practices of being in the world" (p. 456).

When discussing dance practices in multi-cultural situations it has to be acknowledged that with rising transnationalism, understandings of place and belonging are changing. The case studies within this research revealed that some people have a sense of belonging to more than one place; also people can feel more comfortable in a diasporic place than in their home country. In this context it is also important to recognise that culturally specific dance is not place-bound anymore; it is as mobile as people, a concept discussed further in the section on 'culture and place'.

4.2.8 Space, time, and movement in urban environments

"A city is a complex, many-dimensional elaboration of structures and spaces organized into rhythmical juxtapositions where events happen. And a city must be experienced through movement to come alive in its most unique sense." (Halprin, 1963, p. 193)

The following section reviews literature that connects space, time, rhythms, and movement in urban environments. These theories have significantly informed later concepts in human geography such as non-representational theory. They offer a framework for research about urban movement practices. Connections between movement, dance, and city were originally forged in the 1960s by dance pioneer Anna Halprin and her architect husband Lawrence Halprin, quoted above.

Henri Lefebvre's work *Rhythmanalysis* (1974/2004) claims that urban space can only be understood in relation to space and time, as people's everyday life is defined by moving through urban spaces at particular times and in particular rhythms. He sees these embodied activities as infusing urban space with meaning. Similar to Laban, Lefebvre (1991) refers to bodies animating spaces and also to animated spaces of bodies.

Lefebvre's (1991, 1974/2004) concepts are based on observations of the everyday, its repetitions, and its rhythms. He equally emphasises the role of affects, and makes the point that human movement and sensory experiences create feelings of belonging. Social geographer McCormack (2008) summarises that "rhythmanalysis is a technique for inventive engagement with and through the sensory experiences of everyday life" (p. 1828).

Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) is equally interested in the everyday and the rhythms of life; he advocates replacing the notion of 'the city' with the idea of 'urban practices'. De Certeau emphasises the drudgery but also the possible empowerment that can originate from everyday life practices. He suggests that "innumerable practices exist by means of which users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production" (xiv). He calls these 'tricks' or 'ruses' that "compose a network of an antidiscipline" (xv), seeing them as means of empowerment for people to shape their city by how they move through it.

In summary, people move in cities, they are not static "furniture" within the built environment. Movement is the main facilitator for sensing space, for imbuing spaces with presence and energy, for place making and city-making. This line of thought has been recognised across many disciplines. Dance can be a major contributor to the city-making process as the studies reviewed below and the case studies conducted within this research made evident.

Lefebvre's and de Certeau's conceptualising of the city as a human experience have influenced social geography and urban planning considerably and can be seen as a contributing source of non-representational theory which is discussed in the following section.

4.2.9 Non-representational theory and the 'two-eyed vision'

"Non-representational theory arises from the simple (one might almost say commonplace) observation that we cannot extract a representation of the world from the world because we are slap bang in the middle of it, co-constructing it with numerous human and non-human others for numerous ends (or, more accurately, beginnings)." (Thrift, 1999, p. 296)

4.2.9.1 Introduction and outline

Since the 1990s social geographers have attempted to re-conceptualise human living by focusing on moving, feeling, sensing, practices, process, and the everyday. Most prominent is Nigel Thrift's (2008) non-representational theory (NRT), a poststructuralist theory drawing on Merleau-Ponty, Walter Benjamin,

Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Lefebvre, and de Certeau alike. Threads laid out by earlier work in humanistic geography such as that of Tuan (1977) and Relph (1976) are also recognisable.

Thrift calling NRT “the geography of what happens” (2008, p. 2) highlights his belief that to understand human life you have to look beyond what he calls ‘static’ geographies which are interested in identity politics, and social and cultural representations. Instead, Thrift suggests that embodied practices are the main ingredients for shaping our experience of daily urban life. He believes a sense of movement is essential in thinking about the world and in particular for conceptualising the city (2008, 2010).

Anderson and Harrison (2010) highlight NRT’s attention to ‘being-in’ and ‘being-of relation’, saying that “everything from places to identities is ‘relationally constituted” (p. 15). They place NRT as having developed from social constructionism in the 1990s into a ‘radical constructionism’ that acknowledges the primacy of process, whereas Thrift (2008) refers to the “leitmotif of movement ... as a means of going beyond constructionism” (p. 5).

NRT emphasises the importance of the affective. Definitions of what encompasses the affective are diverse and contested (Lorimer, 2008; Patchett, 2010; Anderson & Harrison, 2010). Thrift (2010) refers to it as the rising importance of the 6th sense; Anderson and Harrison (2010) concentrate on atmospheres and “hauntings of the past” (p. 16). Hayden Lorimer (2008) describes affects as “properties, competencies, modalities, energies, attunements, arrangements and intensities of differing textures, temporality, velocity and spatiality, that act on bodies, are produced through bodies and transmitted by bodies” (p. 552). All reviewed NRT scholars agree that whatever is considered the affective critically influences humans’ experiences of space and place.

Furthermore, NRT focuses on events. An emphasis on unplanned events and fleeting encounters exists (Anderson & Harrison, 2010; Dirksmeier & Helbrecht, 2010); also events are supposed to connect to the past and have no beginning or end. Therefore, planned dance events do not fit NRT’s definition of events.

Lastly, Thrift’s (1997) concept of embodiment is of interest. It is couched in his ‘radical constructionism’ which allows a phenomenological framing: “The body is not just a passive surface on which society is inscribed. ... embodiment can be seen as a positive source with its own resources, these resources are a number of interrelated kinds but especially symbolic, sensual and affective” (p. 141). He

also connects his concept of embodiment with the affective realm stating that “after all, embodiment is tactile, it involves an active grip on the world” (p. 128).

4.2.9.2 Discussion

The emphases of NRT on embodied practices, events, the everyday, and the acknowledgment of the affective, offer relevant conceptions to this study. NRT creates a connection between social geography and dance studies, facilitating an extension of thinking and conceptualising for the dance researcher.

However, within this research the engagement with NRT was not entirely enjoyable but rather frustrating at times, and it unearthed some contestable points and shortcomings. It is deemed important to engage with these points in order to contribute to a discussion about the applicability of NRT to dance research. This researcher acknowledges that NRT is a form of experimental geography, thus undergoing a constant process of (re)assessment. Research discussing or applying its principles may contribute to advancing it further.

Unfortunately a significant proportion of the NRT literature does not reflect the common-sense, self-evident, and straightforward foci it proclaims; instead, writings are intense and at times obscure. Lorimer (2007) admits that much of NRT’s writing is “dense” and full of “weighty words” (p. 90) and thus in danger of being sidelined.

Several social geographers have voiced concerns about NRT’s obscure name and its limitations. Lorimer (2005) suggests calling it “more-than-representational”, which would be an improvement as it is a comprehensive rather than exclusive label. He proposes that NRT has become “an umbrella term for diverse work that seeks to better cope with our self-evidently more-than-human, more-than-textual, multi-sensual worlds” (p. 83). This seems a more practical attempt at framing NRT even though the name is still unwieldy.

Unfortunately, the narrow definitions NRT presents in some areas (such as defining ‘events’) have from a dance research point of view led to flaws and limitations as a comprehensive theoretical and methodological framework. NRT’s reasons for privileging unplanned over planned events may be found in its refusal to be concerned with representations and the cognitive. However, settling for the notion of events simply being ‘things taking place’ (whether premeditated or not) would from a dance studies perspective make NRT a more widely applicable theory for investigating the actuality of urban life which consists of both planned and unplanned events.

Thrift’s (1997) framing of embodiment has merit, as it acknowledges the phenomenological and the (assumed) inherent expressiveness of the body (a

notion he accepts without discussing it). However, it displays an unequal weighting of the roles of cognition, socio-cultural influences, and the affective; this imbalance appears across his writings on dance.

NRT's over-emphasis on the non-cognitive thwarts a holistic engagement with human being-in-the-world. The fact that what is qualified as 'non-representational' is prioritised and the rest of what constitutes life is left out of focus results in a contestable framing of dance, which is discussed next.

4.2.9.3 Dance and NRT

Even though NRT is considered a significant theory to frame work about embodied urban practices, Thrift's (1997) writing on dance present a problematic framework. His over-emphasis on the non-representational thwarts a comprehensive discussion of dance practices, considering that they exist as being, doing, creating, constructing, reflecting, sensing, and representing. He applies a false dichotomy of practical and cognitive and delineates dance as a form of play which to this researcher appears unconvincing. Many of his statements about dance seem to be couched in abstract deliberations rather than embodied experience, which seems to defeat the self-proclaimed purpose of sidelining the cognitive and highlighting the lived experience.

Unfortunately, there is little engagement with dance literature in Thrift's work, even though the importance of embodied practice, the affective, and the non-cognitive has long featured in dance literature (Barbour, 2002, 2004; Fraleigh, 1987, 1991, 2000; Sheets-Johnstone, 1966, 2009). Additionally, literature on dance and the city exists (Briginshaw, 2000; Halprin, 1963; Hamera, 2007; Merriman, 2010; Thomas, 1997), and literature also exists that establishes dance as a complex and holistic practice beyond the perceived opposites of cognitive and practical (Ward, 1997), neither of which Thrift reviews in depth.

This researcher particularly takes issue with Thrift's concept of dance as a 'pre-cognitive' embodied practice as it implies a romanticised idea of dance being natural and largely independent of socio-cultural inscription. This conceptualisation does not do justice to the multi-layered and holistic nature of dance practices. In this researcher's understanding dance is always largely socially constructed (even though it is subjectively experienced), and combines the cognitive and intuitive.

Thrift fails to acknowledge that dance is an intentional embodied practice and that people mostly practise and perform choreographed dances.

Choreographing is a cognitive process, based on learned skills and some intuition; it has a history and a context. This researcher also takes issue with the

possible resulting notion that 'simple folk' (in the past or present) carry folk dance knowledge 'unthinkingly'.

British geographer Revill (2004) sheds light on this issue. He analyses his experience of learning French Baroque folk dancing through the lens of NRT. Revill is a musician without any previous dance experience who decided to learn French Baroque folk dancing to get a better 'understanding' of Baroque music. He realised that even simple dance movements did not come to him in a pre-cognitive or intuitive way; instead, he needed to apply extensive cognitive effort to learn them. He describes how he acquired the skills over time so they became second nature, and he calls this process a social construction.

Revill concludes that "dance in particular has become a metaphor for unreflected, unarticulated, practical action" (p. 206) but that from his experience a categorical distinction between non-representational and representational are unhelpful in understanding dance practice (or music practice). He also notes that he constantly encountered the inherent social qualities of the folk dances he learned.

Cultural geographers Catherine Nash (2000) and Shannon Hensley (2010) both discuss Thrift's (1997) writing on dance. They suggest that his conceptualisations of dance are based on a binary mind/body split concept applying a cognitive versus non-cognitive dichotomy. Nash (2000) poignantly summarises that, "While dance works badly as an example of pre-discursive, non-cognitive practices, it works well as a case of the performative 'doing' of identity and social identification" (p. 659). Tim Cresswell (2006) similarly points out that framing "dance as purely 'non-representational' runs the risk of solidifying the distinction between representation and practice that befuddles approaches to human movement" (p. 73).

Thrift and other human geographer's work on dance highlights the difficulties and possible pitfalls of interdisciplinarity.

4.2.9.4 A way forward – the 'two-eyed vision'

"There is no need to choose between representational and nonrepresentational theory." (Helbrecht, 2010, p. 202)

German geographer Ilse Helbrecht (2004) offers a solution to the dilemma created by NRT's restricted focus. She suggests "a two-eyed, stereoscopic vision of cities" (p. 194) in order to acknowledge that cities are as much a representation as a lived reality. She says that the city is "both a text and an artifact, touching and touchable ... something to dwell in and to dwell on" (p.

202). Helbrecht hence proposes to move beyond the representational and non-representational dichotomy, saying that the relationship between seeing and thinking, and experiencing and constructing, could take centre stage in conceptualising the city.

I will argue for a renewed, fresh look at the (what I would call) 'bare geography' of the city. I suggest that we do not restrict our imagination of the city to a solely mental or social, culturally constructed immaterial reality. I assume that we can look more closely at the relationship between abstract cognition and concrete life in the city, between thinking and dwelling, between physically experiencing the geographic landscape of the city as a flaneur and intellectually wandering along the contours of a spontaneous idea or a literally presented concept. (p. 195)

In a later publication Dirksmeier and Helbrecht (2010) discuss concepts of intercultural interactions in urban situations. In line with their 'two-eyed vision' they see interactions and performances in urban spaces as public and social, symbolic and communicative (meaning representational), practice and reflection of practice, and an event (the latter categories meaning both representational and non-representational). Dirksmeier and Helbrecht, even though they do not engage with dance specifically, offer an attractive framework for urban dance research as they move beyond the dichotomies created by NRT. Also, bringing into the fold Helbrecht's (2004) notion of 'complexcities', helps to shape a comprehensive understanding of cities and urban practices.

4.2.9.5 Summary of NRT and the 'two-eyed vision'

It makes sense to apply NRT's focus on movement practices, on-going practical actions, process, and events (if broadly interpreted) to the study of dance. Also, the notion of the affective, while not found important for this study, offers many ways to research dance matters such as sensing of people, space, floor, textures, climate, somatic sensations, and the interrelations of those. Equally as important, and applicable to this study, is NRT's framing of dance as performative doing.

NRT's main contribution to this study is acknowledging that a sense of movement is essential in thinking about the world, and that people's lived experience of the city is significantly defined by embodied practices. However, from a dance scholar's and dance practitioner's perspective, Thrift's way of applying the idea of the affective to dance, or dance to the idea of the affective, does not capture dance in its complexity. Therefore bringing in Helbrecht's 'two-eyed vision' for framing the city extends the framework for studying urban dance practices. In this study the two-eyed approach is applied, using NRT's valuable insights and complementing those with contextual and representational foci.

4.3 The dance-place-culture triangle II: Culture and place

This chapter section concerns the second side of the dance-place-culture triangle, connecting discourse on cultural identity and place. It then discusses the concepts of transnationalism (belonging to two places) and 'glocalisation', focusing on the largely transnational character of culturally specific dance practices in the 21st century.

4.3.1 Defining ethnicity, race, and culture

“Although “race” and “ethnicity” are often presented as natural categories, they are actually social constructions in that their boundaries are not fixed or finite. Who is included within a particular “race” or ethnicity” often depends upon historical, political, and cultural circumstances.” (Pietrobruno, 2006, p. 74)

The following discussion reconnects to notions of constructivism presented in chapter 3 and presents how different dance scholars engage with topics of race, ethnicity, and culture. It then develops these topics in terms of the relationship between place and culture.

This study posits that even though 'race' and 'ethnicity' are often portrayed as clear-cut terms describing a natural or inherited state, they are in fact socio-culturally constructed categories. They are fluid and contentious terms, based on aspects such as birthplace, language, and ancestry. British sociologists Giddens and Sutton (2012b) offer the following definition: "Ethnicity refers to the cultural practices and outlooks of a community, which identifies them as a distinctive social group. Ethnicity is a social phenomenon, which has no basis in human biology" (p. 1).

Dance anthropologist Joann Keali'inohomoku (1983) applies "the anthropological view that ethnic means a group which holds in common genetic, linguistic and cultural ties with special emphasis on cultural traditions" (p. 544). This definition still warrants recognition; however, in the 21st century extended definitions are needed to account for a world of mass migration and multi-ethnic heritages and thus the taking on of multiple nationalities and identities for many people. Dance researcher Janet O'Shea (2006) suggests that "culture is not a single identity that dance reflects or contributes to. Rather, culture is a set of politicised "belongings" that shift in relationship to concerns that are local and contemporaneous. This phenomenon challenges older anthropological notions of generality" (p. 145).

A definition of culture based on cohesion does not realistically catch the existing complexities (Appadurai, 1996; Hall, 2006). Stuart Hall (2006) challenges definitions of culture as systems with common and stable frames of reference, and suggests we need new definitions of cultural identity. He says that,

Cultural identity, in the second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essential past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of selves to eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (p. 435)

Franz Boas, originator of cultural relativism in anthropology, suggested as early as the 1920s that all cultures are 'impure' and have adopted aspects of other cultures. This view is supported by Arjun Appadurai (1996), who states that large-scale interactions have happened between cultures for centuries, and Jonathan Friedman (1994), who suggests that all cultures and languages are 'creole'. This study is based on the premise that a mix of influences and heritages exists around the globe and that multi-layered webs of ethnic and cultural identifications are emerging in contemporary urban situations.

In the dance literature, race and ethnicity have been widely challenged as meaningful terms for understanding dance. Cultural geographer Shannon Hensley (2010) suggests that "race' remains a highly unnatural category of bodily difference" (p. 161). Garry Lester (2000), in his doctoral thesis on Malaysian Australian choreographer Kai Tai Chan, points to "the conceptual confusions that occur when a person or group is labeled in terms of a particular 'race' or 'ethnicity'" (p. 215). He suggests that often the terms race or ethnicity are used when in fact the discourse is about cultural difference, a notion that Giddens and Sutton (2012b) call "new racism" or "cultural racism" (p. 1). Sanjoy Roy (1997), in his article on British Indian choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh, equally suggests that definitions of ethnicity, and assumptions following on from these definitions, are often superimposed by outsiders such as dance reviewers. He believes it is more relevant to acknowledge dance artists' own framing of ethnicity and cultural affiliation(s). From this researcher's perspective, a meaningful delineation of ethnicity needs to start from a person's own sense of cultural affiliation and personal choices of identification.

4.3.2 Belonging (cultural identity and place)

“Current understandings of nationality reinforce the idea that identity is bounded by territory when in fact identity is often hybrid and contested, and transcends neatly imposed geographical boundaries.” (Winlow, 2009, p. 11)

This study adopts the view that culture is not tied to place; place and culture are indeed disconnected entities. This notion does not contradict the importance of place connection for humans, as described in the ‘dance and place’ section of this chapter. A strong affective connection to a place facilitates a sense of belonging and hence contributes to identity building (Easthope, 2009). However, this can be anywhere; it does not need to be the place of birth or ethnic connection. New Zealand-born Samoans, Croatians, or Indians are indeed examples for this conception as they often learn about and practise their ‘inherited’ culture in New Zealand and not in their ancestors’ country of origin.

Identity construction is understood within this research as an ongoing project that is constantly revised and therefore never completed. Easthope (2009) highlights the inbetweenness and constant flux of identity, and identifies the four main factors of identity construction as being dynamic, positional, hybrid, and constructed within relations of power. Jackson and Penrose (1993) equally describe identities as “dynamic and plural” (p. 207).

Many scholars suggest that the existing disconnection of place and culture needs to be acknowledged in how place, culture, and identity are conceptualised. For example, Pile and Thrift (1996) replace ‘root’ metaphors with mobile ‘route’ metaphors, thus challenging the notion of fixed identities. Easthope’s (2009) suggestion to “mov[e] away from (rooted) identities based on place and towards (routed) hybrid and flexible forms of identity” (p. 61) follows the same line of thought. Gillian Rose (1995) acknowledges that humans can “identify with a place” (p. 89) or “identify against a place” (p. 92), and can be perfectly comfortable in a place that is not their ‘home’.

Another notion presented in the literature is that a conscious perception of cultural difference is connected to the development of a sense of place. For example, Rose (1995) suggests that a sense of place comes with an awareness of cultural differences whilst Jackson and Penrose (1993) and Ignatieff (1994) highlight that the forming of place boundaries is connected to creating the image of the ‘other’.

4.3.3 Transnational social spaces (belonging to two places)

“Places are ... nodal points within a complex web of social interactions which stretch around the world.” (Easthope, 2009, p. 2)

In the 21st century many people belong to more than one place. James Clifford (2006) refers to this situation as having "lived connections across distances and differences" (p. 180). As discussed in chapter 2, humans have always migrated, but the recent increase in global migration and the fact of a globally connected world asks for new concepts. Transnational theory offers a framework for discourse on migration. Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc (1992) offer the following definition:

We have defined transnationalism as the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such fields are designated "transmigrants". Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations-familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders. (p. 1)

While transnational theory suits studying practices of migrants, for a study on dance in transnational situations it is important to realise the following paradox. What Salmon Rushdie (2006) calls the "physical fact of discontinuity" (p. 429), the fact of residing in a different place, means that you cannot physically be in the other; hence, embodied practices can only happen in one place at a time. Any reliving or revisiting of the other place is in Rushdie's view a construction of the mind.

The above section on place and cultural identity established that humans develop multi-layered identities in transnational situations. This is also this researcher's personal experience and is obvious in the accounts of many of the participants in this study. Hazel Easthope (2009) elucidates this phenomenon saying that "both mobility and place are essential in identity construction" (p. 61).

4.3.4 Glocalisation

“I maintain also that it makes no good sense to define global as if the global excludes the local.” (Robertson, 2006, p. 478)

‘Glocalisation’ is a term devised in the 1980s, blending the words global and local. It came into existence in an attempt to accommodate the fact that global connectedness and a global outlook do not rule out or diminish the importance of locally specific understandings and ways of doing things. Glocalisation theory points out that the notion of globalisation often infers ideas of cultural sameness across the globe while in fact every cultural good or message arriving in a new environment is interpreted and adapted according to the local situation, history, and understanding (Klein 2009; Pietrobruno, 2006, Robertson, 2006).

Communication across the globe is indeed received, interpreted, and reconstructed in a variety of ways and dance practices are best proof of this phenomenon (Cyrille, 2006; Klein 2009; Nadjera-Ramirez, 2009; Oliver, 2005; Pietrobruno, 2006). Michael Seaver (2008), in his research about the global success of Irish dancing, debunks the common assumption that the global always drives the local; instead, he suggests it flows both ways.

Roland Robertson (2006) suggests an “increasing interconnectedness of many local cultures both large and small” (p. 477) which, he asserts, does not mean they are part of a homogenised global culture but that the practice and development of their specific culture happens across geographically disconnected spaces that are nevertheless connected in other ways.

This study applies the understanding that so-called ‘global culture’ is in fact always ‘glocal’. The person that dances, makes music, paints, consumes food or forms of entertainment can only physically be in one place. And this one place will always influence how these activities are approached, performed, and received. The ‘source’ place can be re-created in a variety of ways, but the actuality of the physical presence in the place where the cultural practice occurs cannot be changed.

In a political and economic sense it has to be acknowledged though that the local has less power through globalisation; smaller nations are disempowered as there are constraints on local decision making and global pressures often outweigh local concerns. Nevertheless in terms of cultural and artistic practices, which are less dependent on global interests than economic and political endeavours, the local influences seem to persist. Several in-depth studies highlight the ‘glocal’ nature of many urban dance practices around the globe and are discussed in the next section of this literature review.

4.4 The dance-place-culture triangle III: Dance and culture

This chapter section in signifying the third side of the dance-place-culture triangle discusses definitions of dance, terminology issues regarding dance practices of different cultures, and reviews discourse in dance ethnography.

4.4.1 Defining dance

“Whatever is labeled ‘dance’, and accepted as such by those who do it and watch it, is regarded as dance.” (Adshead-Lansdale, 1981, p. 4)

Is dance a uniquely human endeavour? Or can animals dance too? Do waves dance or do tree branches dance in the wind? Can fingers or toes dance? Are the Marching Girls dancing or could an aerobics routine be considered a dance? When is movement actually dance?

This study adopts the principle that human movement practices are dance whenever those who practise them intend and understand them to be dance. This definition has its limitations though when the discourse concerns cultural practices in societies where a concept of dance in the western sense does not exist or where music, movement, acting, and storytelling are inextricably interwoven (as in many Pacific cultures) so that dance is not easily conceptualised as an entity in its own right. Whether the use of the term ‘dance’ is appropriate needs to be carefully considered in these situations.

It has to be noted that the word ‘dance’ comes from European concepts (Kaeppler, 1999; Peterson Royce, 1977). Nicholas Rowe in *Raising Dust* (2010), a book about dance practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, draws attention to the fact that in the Palestinian language no word exists that completely matches the English word ‘dance’. Rather, he clarifies, “several terms might be used to describe this cultural activity. Each describes a particular moment of physical expression (with varying connotations and social meanings), but there is no linguistic term that directly corresponds with ‘dance’” (p. 11).

Early attempts in anthropology to define dance used concepts of patterned and rhythmic movement that transcends utility (Peterson Royce, 1977). In many contexts this fails as a comprehensive definition because some dances are rituals and hence have utility; other dances follow no particular patterns and/or

are not rhythmic beyond an inner rhythm of the dancer. Adrienne Kaeppler (1978) proposes a more generic description: "Dance is a cultural form that results from creative processes which manipulate human bodies in time and space. ... It has structured content" (p. 32).

From this researcher's perspective, Adshead-Lansdale's definition of dance presented above works for many situations but the question of how to approach structured movement systems in cultures that do not share the western concept of dance remains. In summary, context and intention need to be considered comprehensively when researching dance and other structured movement systems.

4.4.2 Cultural, popular, or art dance?

With postmodernism came the notion that the strict distinctions between, and the different valuing of high, pop, and folk arts are false. However, some public and even professional discourse still questions whether folk arts are actually 'proper arts'. Many dance scholars (Peterson Royce, 1977; Sparshott, 1990) argue that art is a western concept stemming from a wish to categorise and distinguish, serving the purpose of putting what is considered high art (for example ballet) on a pedestal and looking down on other dance practices. Peterson Royce (1977) elaborates as follows:

Into the confusion of human versus nonhuman and dance versus nondance comes an additional distinction: that between dance which is essentially an aesthetic activity and dance which serves some other functions as well. The history of dance literature reflects this dichotomy, with those who write about "art" dance rigidly separating themselves from those who write about "folk" dance. The distinction actually serves little purpose, and disappears altogether when one considers dance as an aspect of human behavior. (p. 5)

Sheenagh Pietrobruno (2006), in discussing what distinguishes popular and folk dance practices, suggests that folk art is typically taught inter-generationally without formal instruction in lived contexts such as family or community. This equates to how Samoans participating in this study described their dance practices of the recent past.

Sherry Shapiro (2008), reflecting on the changes that happen to dance practices in a globalised world, asks, "Does it remain cultural dance if it is performed simply as a dance and no longer as a story of the people?" (vii). The reality is that culturally specific dance practices are constantly changing because they exist in diverse environments; that is, in different countries, urban and rural situations, community settings and commercial dance studios, competitions, festivals, and educational institutions. This change is inevitable;

however, from this researcher's perspective, staying attentive to the history, values, and meanings, in brief the entire embedded knowledge of the practices, is desirable.

4.4.3 Translating dance

"How can this gesture be interpreted, for it has different meanings for the indigenous and the outsiders, respectively?" (Chao, 2009, p. 9)

"One has to look beyond movement to get at its meaning." (Sklar, 2001b, p. 31)

Anthropologists and dance ethnographers assert that all known human communities do movement practices that could in a western framework be defined as dance (Buckland, 1999; Kaepler, 1999; Keali'inohomuku, 1997; Sparshott, 1990; Stock, 2001). But does this fact warrant the labelling of dance as a universal practice? And would adopting this term imply that these dance practices are accessible and readable across cultures?

A wide consensus exists in dance scholarship that all art is formed within the context of a particular culture and can therefore only be understood in the context of that culture. Hence, many dance scholars (Buckland, 1999; Foster, 1996; Kaepler, 1995; Klein, 2009; McFee 1992; Peterson Royce, 1977; Sparshott, 1990; Sklar, 1991; Sporton, 2004; Stock, 2001; van Zile, 2004; Williams, 1999) advocate that dance is not a universal means of communication and therefore cannot be understood without a translation process. This also means that viewed dance can cause misunderstandings if interpreted through one's own cultural lenses and without understanding tradition and context.

Gabriele Klein in her book *Tango in Translation* (2009) elaborates on how humans make sense of dance that originates in a foreign culture. She proposes an understanding of transnational dance practices as inter-cultural exchange governed by a translation process. She posits that in any transcultural translation interpretations, modifications, and additions happen because of the brittle and non-linear nature of such translation processes. Declan Patrick (2010) in his thesis on Philippine folk dance also confirms that change occurs in these translations: "At each stage there is a different cultural 'take' as the viewer brings his/her cultural practices to the reading of the material [and] ... the material is changed" (p. 34).

4.4.4 The study of dance is the study of culture

“Movements are cultural artefacts.” (Kaepler, 1999, p. 15)

Since early forays at the beginning of the 20th century dance ethnography has engaged with many distinct concepts: cultural heritage and its transmission, the sociological situatedness of dance practice, holism and the body/mind split, and embodied practice, including participant observers' embodied experiences.

The socio-cultural construction of bodies is widely accepted in dance literature. Cheryl Stock (2001) argues that body 'encoding' of dancers happens through personal movement preferences plus social and cultural inscription. Equally, Hensley (2011) says that "bodies develop differently through different places, practices and relations to others" (p. 195). For these reasons, as discussed in the methodology chapter, this study abstained from emphasising the embodied experience of the researcher.

Sally Ann Ness (2004) queries whether the recently heightened emphasis on embodied practice has changed dance research considerably. Brenda Farnell (1994) is also critical of an increased focus on embodied experience in dance research seeing it as dualistic splitting of the bodily experience and cognitive knowing and reflecting. She conceptualises "a cogent alternative to the pendulum that has been swinging between Cartesian intellectualism and phenomenological existentialism" (p. 932). In her view "bodies do not move and minds do not think – people do" (p. 934). She further says that "embodiment, the cultural fact of the body, is therefore the result of the social construction and empowerment of the person" (p. 933).

Within contemporary dance ethnography, a broad consensus exists that dance practices and dance research facilitate learning about one's own and foreign cultures. Sally Ann Ness (1996) suggests that "cross-cultural dance research presents great potential for the study of cultural difference. It illuminates the diversity of cultural experience in profoundly personal terms" (p. 266). Deidre Sklar argues that, "It is time ... to give movement a more central place in the study of culture and culture a more central place in the study of movement" (2001a, p. 30).

4.4.5 Culturally specific dance and the city

Much dance ethnography research has traditionally been conducted in non-urban environments and the researcher has often been an outsider arriving from a city. More recent studies, including this one, engage with culturally specific dance in non-rural environments and migrant situations. In order to do these situations justice it is not sufficient to exclusively apply ethnographic frameworks. Aspects of transnationalism, glocalisation and 'city making' play a crucial role in framing and reflecting upon dance practices in these environments.

As asserted above, all movement exists in a particular time and place, and is created and practised within a specific cultural framework. However, as several of the studies (Pietrobruno, 2006; Klein, 2009; Roy 1997; Oliver, 2005) discussed in the next section show, most urban dance practices have been hybrids for more than 150 years. Humankind has long been exposed to many sets of overlapping cultural frameworks and the development of transnational networks in the second half of the 20th century has intensified this trajectory. Pietrobruno (2006) argues that transnationalism has changed local dance and music scenes to such a degree that it is often difficult to define the cultural practice that is indigenous to one city. This is true for Auckland where dance practices of many cultures (including indigenous Māori but by no means dominated by it) are prevalent.

4.5 Studies on urban dance practices of different cultures

This chapter section reviews selected studies on dance practices in multi-cultural urban environments in the USA (Hamera, 2007; Shay, 2006; van Zile, 2001; Vissicaro, 2009), Canada (Pietrobruno, 2006), the UK (O'Connor, 1997; Roy, 1997), Germany and Argentina (Klein, 2009), across the Americas (Oliver, 2005), and Cuba (Hensley, 2010, 2011). These studies explore dance practices in diverse situations, such as forced migration, refugee resettlement, and voluntary migration, but also dance practices in a dance form's 'original' place. The local situations of the studied dance practices differ considerably and so it comes as no surprise that their foci and perspectives vary, although some strong threads are established.

The reviewed publications span a period of over 15 years. This is indicative of the quality of some earlier publications but also of the fact that more research could be done. A deliberate decision was made to include two chapters from Helen Thomas's book *Dance in the City* (1997), an eclectic collection of writings about urban dance practices. The chosen chapters, focusing on ethnicity and hybridity in the first instance and the transfer of a traditional rural dance practice to the city in the second, offer discourse which is still pertinent and was not found in the same clarity elsewhere.

Across the literature different approaches have emerged. Some scholars focus on theorising space, place, and the city (Hamera, 2007), others have an emphasis on theorising culture and cultural identity (Klein, 2009; Roy, 1997; van Zile, 2001), and some do both (Hensley, 2010, 2011; Najera-Ramirez, 2009). Either entry point into a theoretical framing of urban dance practice is valid as they equally engage with the relationship between place and culture and the resulting issues of hybridity (in people and in dance). The importance of both place and culture in multi-cultural situations results in the following two topics forming the main threads through the literature: the understanding of dance practice as identity forming for individuals and communities and the transnational and glocalised nature of dance practices. These matters are discussed in varying terms with foci comprising identity formation through dance (Najera-Ramirez, 2009; Oliver, 2005; Pietrobruno, 2006; Shapiro-Phim, 2008; van Zile, 2001; Vissicaro, 2009), issues of authenticity and ownership (Hensley, 2010, 2011; Klein, 2009; O'Connor, 1997; Pietrobruno, 2006; Shay, 2006; van Zile, 2001), cultural translation (Klein, 2009), interpreting race and rhythmic embodiment (Hensley, 2010, 2011), and interpreting ethnicity and hybridity

(Oliver, 2005; Pietrobruno, 2006; Roy, 1997). It emerged clearly from all reviewed studies that no dance practice can be purely local; nor can any dance practice be completely global in a uniform sense. The majority of practices have indeed connections to two or more places.

4.5.1 Tango in Berlin, Hamburg, New York, and Buenos Aires

“Kultur ist Übersetzung, ständig im Übergang.” “Culture is translation, always in transfer.” (Klein, 2009, p. 26; my translation)

“Tanz ist Reise, Migration, ständige Bewegung und damit genuin ein „translational term“, eine körperliche Praxis der Übersetzungen.”

“Dance is travel, migration, constant motion and therefore genuinely a “translational term”, a bodily practice of translations.” (Klein, 2009, pp. 28-29; my translation)

Gabriele Klein in her book *Tango in Translation* (2009) compiles and discusses research results about tango and salsa practices in Hamburg, Berlin, New York, and Buenos Aires. Klein works within a theoretical framework that defines the history of cultures as a history of translations. Her concept of translation, informed by Walter Benjamin’s non-linear understanding of translation, questions the binaries of original and copy. In her view all cultural translations are fragile and dance when transported into new contexts becomes inevitably loaded with new meanings. She equally applies the idea of deconstruction based in post-colonial theory which according to her undermines the notion of an original cultural identity all together.

For Klein, the performative act of dancing is a narrative which constructs identity, both individual and communal. She frames tango as a social practice that facilitates embodied and affective experiencing of abstract narratives. Worldwide multiple and diverse narratives exist in the many locations where tango and salsa are practised, spanning from Karnevalmilongas in Germany’s Rhineland to Buenos Aires’ youth dominated scenes where an athletic physicality has taken hold.

Tango has been widely embraced in Europe since the 1990s. Klein points to the fact that most tango practices take place in cities and these urban dance practices are mostly hybrids developed from transcultural exchange. Her study confirms that tango and salsa have developed differently in the researched localities. She describes them all as hybrid forms shaped by the multi-layered dynamics of cultural translations and local re-constructions. She includes the salsa scene of Buenos Aires in this account, thus challenging the idea of an

authentic form instead highlighting that even in Argentina tango and salsa have multi-faceted histories, origins, and contexts.

4.5.2 Salsa in Montreal

“Formal instruction of popular dance commodifies practices that once “originated” in lived contexts.” (Pietrobruno, 2006, p. 5)

In her study on salsa in Montreal, Sheenagh Pietrobruno (2006) examines issues of culture, identity, and commodification. She found that many migrants from Latin America adopt salsa as a cultural practice in Montreal in order to reaffirm a transnational Latin identity even if they have not practised salsa before migrating. Many Montrealers of non-Latin descent have equally taken up salsa; it has become an inter-cultural urban dance practice.

Pietrobruno (2006) therefore defines salsa as a “transnational urban dance” (p. 2) which is today neither a rural practice nor is it tied to one single tradition. She frames it as a hybrid with historically varied influences that ticks aspects of being a popular dance form (in her definition art that evolves through collective practices and has some connection to the working classes) but also of a folk dance (in her definition dance that evolves through collective dance artistry rather than individual endeavour).

Pietrobruno explores aspects of salsa’s commodification in Montreal and how this impacts on its development. She identified teaching as the main commodification force as teachers are under pressure to establish a commercially viable dance teaching business. She found that many teachers, in order to attract as many students as possible, have a tendency to select movement that looks fashionable and “cool”. Their selection therefore has a commercial bias; it is not based on aesthetic or cultural considerations. The second aspect of commodification she identified is salsa being sold as a sensual and sexual dance form which is not welcome by parts of the Latin American community who see salsa as heritage and dislike this form of commodification.

Pietrobruno points to the long history of multiple global and local influences on salsa, and the resulting constant transformation which she defines as a glocalisation process. In this context she discusses notions of tradition and modernity, establishing that clear divisions between modern and traditional are meaningless. Rejecting the idea of modern *versus* tradition she rather suggests a paradigm of modern *plus* traditional. This notion is supported by Sanjoy Roy (1997) in his study on Indian dance in the UK below. Pietrobruno adopts

Friedman's (1994) view that all cultures are creole, and points out that this is not widely acknowledged.

4.5.3 Transnational calypso

"People let you know who they are by how they move." (Oliver, 2005, p. 197)

Cynthia Oliver in *Calypso's Moving Geographies* (2005) identifies calypso music and dance as the prominent identity builder for people of Caribbean descent across the globe. She traces its roots back to the cultural practices of African slaves in Trinidad and Tobago, and further identifies varied influences on calypso from Europe, South America and South East Asia, thus identifying it as a transnational and glocal dance form.

More than a century of Caribbean migration has dispersed people from the region across the Americas and parts of Europe. Hence Oliver (2005) calls calypso the "creole child of Caribbean displacement" (p. 196). She explores how calypso movements change outside of Trinidad and Tobago, distinguishing between how this happens across Caribbean territories and in cities such as New York, Toronto, Florida, and London where broader notions of 'Caribbean-ness' exist in migrant communities. She poses the question whether codes that apply at home may not apply in the new communities and also whether the dance practice may help to create a pan-Caribbean identity. The latter relates to the development of pan-Pacific identities in Auckland as discussed in later chapters.

Oliver (2005) asks, "Can there be a homogenous identity located in this form?" (p. 197). In attempting to explore answers, she considers that calypso is still very local, meaning it differs from place to place and people are very aware of this. She concludes that it has a dividing role within the region while outside the region it has a unifying role in regard to the notion of a pan-Caribbean identity.

4.5.4 Rumba in Cuba

"[R]esponsiveness to rumba rhythms is both free *and* subject to command, immediate and learned, spontaneous and rehearsed, about play as well as relations of power." (Hensley, 2010, p. 168, italics in original)

Shannon Hensley's (2010, 2011) doctoral research on rumba in Cuba differs from the other studies as she studied rumba exclusively in its place of origin; however, she identifies Cuba as a multi-cultural place. Hensley explores social,

spatial, historical, and racial aspects of rumba as well as how the rumba rhythm becomes embodied. As she is interested in socio-spatial aspects of this practice, she frames her study within 'geographies of rhythm' and discusses the relevance of recent social geography theory such as NRT to her research. In this endeavour "debates around the effects of dualistic thinking remain a central concern" (2010, p. 161) for her.

Hensley (2010) appreciates theory that frames dance as more than text or representation, and she identifies NRT as one such theory. She appreciates its interest in practices and Thrift's (1997) understanding of dance as playful, but notes that NRT "relies on a dualism between thought and action", hence lending "itself to essentialist readings of dance as 'natural'" (p. 164). She suggests an alternative model which moves beyond dualism through developing a different relationship between thinking and doing which she frames as 'becoming unthought'. This notion connects to her research findings that rumba practitioners develop skills as 'second nature'.

Hensley describes rumba as a hybrid form of dance and music that developed from Spanish and Afro-American elements into a unique Cuban art form. She describes how the hybridity gets interpreted in different ways according to personal perspective or political intentions. She cites the example of the Cuban Government's objective to develop the notion of a uniform Cuban identity and hence not acknowledging distinct origins of cultural practices. She found that "many rumba performers assert the significance of distinct 'origins', or racialized bodily histories" (2011, p. 199) as a way of resisting official political agendas and of asserting distinct cultural identities.

In discussing the contested relationships between race, rhythmic embodiment, and learning of dance and music Hensley asks whether any race can be innately more talented for rhythm and dance. She concludes that her participants' skills developed through exposure and practice, until the skills became 'second nature'. Therefore, she argues that an understanding of rhythmic embodiment needs to move beyond the dichotomies of nature and culture and that "these ambiguous modes of dance" (2011, p. 211) be considered in tandem. She concludes that "[dance] oscillates undecidedly between binary pairs such as instinctive and learned, free and controlled, inside and outside, social and material" (p. 211).

4.5.5 Mexican dance in California

“Place and space are concepts inherent in a discussion of movement, which dance is, as the geographical space shapes the ritual and the ritual creates a spiritual space.” (Najera-Ramirez, 2009, xviii)

Olga Najera-Ramirez (2009), in her book on Mexican dance forms practised in California, highlights the social and spatial aspects of Mexican dance in urban environments as the above quote encapsulates. Her definitions of urban dance spaces were included in the above sections on ‘space’ and ‘place’. Najera-Ramirez focuses on the identity forming aspects of dance saying that “dance events become social spaces that complement and reinforce group identity” (xix). In the same book Adriana Cruz Manjarrez (2009) talks about the ‘bailes’ (dances) becoming “a site where Zapotec immigrants negotiate their multiple senses of belonging and reinforce their senses of ethnic identity” (p. 135).

4.5.6 Korean dance in Hawai’i

“As cultures become increasingly homogenous, they concurrently seek ways to reflect their uniqueness.” (van Zile, 2001, p. 237)

Judy van Zile (2001) proposes that in Hawai’i dance is widely used by migrant groups as a symbol for cultural identity and she views Korean dance practices in Hawai’i as fitting this trend. In her view, any forming of a national identity in migrants and their descendants has to happen within the context of the environment of the new place of residence. She says that, “Like Korean dance, we have many identities, all of which constantly change” (p. 236). In order to theoretically accommodate the situation of constant flux, van Zile adopts the concept of tradition *plus* modernity.

Van Zile studied Korean migrants and their children practising Korean dance in the well-known Halla Huhm Dance Studio in Honolulu. At the time of her research issues of authenticity played out in the running of the studio. The studio had the image of being the place for authentic Korean dance in Hawai’i when it was taken over by a local woman with Japanese ancestry. Some people in the community raised questions of rightful ownership; however, van Zile argues that the teacher had cultural as well as dance competence, which predestined her to be a keeper of Korean dance heritage in Hawai’i. For van Zile, acceptable cultural ownership is connected with knowledge and understanding rather than ethnicity.

4.5.7 Croatian, Mexican, Greek, Filipino, Arab, and Iranian dance in the USA and Canada

“Issues of representation, and who has the right to construct that visual representation, constitute a form of power, an arena of contestation.” (Shay, 2006, p.6)

Using the examples of six major migrant groups, Anthony Shay (2006) traces the festivalisation of culturally specific dance in the USA and Canada, connecting it back to the World Fairs of 1876 to 1916. He says that “through the medium of dance, international folk dance festivals have contributed to the discourse of citizenship, immigrant identity, and the role of migrants in the United States for over a century” (p. 5). He describes festivals as spaces where migrant communities try to present themselves in the most positive light, in the process creating “parallel traditions” (p. 9), often applying “idealized and valued cultural models that they choreographically interpreted” (p. 20). He found that cultural representations, in general as well as in detailed terms, become highly contested by individuals, whole communities, and festival organisers alike, and that the power has often been in the hands of the festival producers.

In regard to Croatian dance in the USA Shay (2006) states that the existing traditions and practices are largely based on the research conducted in Croatia by individual dance teachers from the 1950s onwards.

4.5.8 African dance in Arizona and Nebraska

“For the Lost Boys of Sudan and East Central Africans, dance provides solutions to strategically adapting to new contexts.”
(Vissicaro, 2009, p. 64)

Pegge Vissicaro (2009) explores how African refugees in the USA employ dance practices as a mechanism to cope with displacement. She concludes that dance can be a powerful strategy to “ground or stabilize feelings of disorientation experienced during the various stages of migration” (p. 64). She analyses her experience with refugees from Sudan, Burundi, and Rwanda through Senyo Adjibolosoo's concepts of the ‘human factor’, which is comprised of spiritual, moral, aesthetic, and human capital. Vissicaro argues for letting migrants draw on their cultural capital, and says that pressure to assimilate and discard cultural practices deepens the trauma of forced migration. In her study, she found that the practice of dance helped the refugees to cope with their trauma, functioning as comfort and stress reduction and as a way of building community. Vissicaro additionally describes how conflicts in the home countries

resulted in dance groups of different ethnic origins initially avoiding each other at practices and performances, and how over time the forced contact brought forth forms of co-operation.

Following a group of young Sudanese men over several years, as mentioned in the 'space' section of this chapter, Vissicaro (2009) observed how they changed their use of space in performance over time. She argues that this "reconfiguration of space [becomes] a vital tool for reducing trauma" (p. 50). Initially the young African dancers had no visual contact with the audience while in later performances "they projected their energy outward to engage the spectators" (p. 59). She also observed that "dance is one way to diminish refugee trauma by linking individuals and groups across space and time" (p. 64), which relates to the finding of this research that dance practices can create a felt connection to several places.

Vissicaro reports that African refugees in Nebraska, when asked to specify their priorities, chose their own dance and music practices over therapy and medical attention, proving that these practices fulfil fundamental needs. Vissicaro found that through cultural practices communal values were reinforced and the next generation was tied in. She further found that the migrant group became happier and more resilient and was strengthened in all aspects of Adjibolosoo's 'human factor'. She views public performances as serving the dual function of contributing to a smoother resettlement process but also to educating the public about the refugees and their culture.

4.5.9 Dancing communities in Los Angeles

"Every day, urban communities are danced into being. This is more than a metaphor. It is testament to the power of performance as a social force, as cultural poesis, as communication infrastructure that makes identity, solidarity and memory sharable." (Hamera, 2007, p. 1)

Judith Hamera in her book *Dancing communities* (2007) examines amateur and professional dance communities in Los Angeles. She argues that the common interest in practising dance acts as a glue for building meaningful dancing communities, forming threads and lines across the city, connecting people who would otherwise not connect. She extends Aristotle's assertion that friendships hold cities together, and Amin and Thrift's (2002) notion of the "city as a place of meaningful proximate links" (p. 27), framing the city as a "site of local-global connectivity" (Hamera, 2007, p. 15).

Drawing on Valerie Briginshaw (1997), Hamera (2007) suggests that when dancers and urban landscape intersect they “mutually define” (p. 10) each other, and that “bodies and cities can be seen to ““inscribe” each other” (p. 10). Furthermore, Hamera recasts dance in the city as practices of everyday life, supporting her argument with the works of Henri Lefebvre. She says that aesthetic principles (in this case a chosen dance technique) organise where art practices take place, which she sees as a way of creating urban networks.

Hamera’s (2007) argument is that amateur and professional dance practices are both “laboratories” (p. 1) for reflection and recreation of the many facets of urban life such as culture, race, gender, sexuality, and class. She sees dance as a means for people to achieve “embodiment of joyful attachment” (p.13) in the city and performance as a social and aesthetic force that builds urban political infrastructure.

Even though her work does not particularly engage with dance practices of different cultures, her framing of dance as part of the constant co-construction process of urban space and as an everyday urban practice that links people across cities connects it to the themes of this study.

4.5.10 Cambodian dance in the USA

“Transplanted to urban California (or born here), Cambodians at Long Beach’s annual New Year gathering may be unconcerned with the agricultural cycle. ... Nonetheless they come together to reaffirm a sense of belonging to this community each spring, absorbing, perhaps subconsciously, aspects of what it means for them to be Cambodian in the United States.” (Shapiro-Phim, 2008, pp. 58-59)

Toni Shapiro-Phim’s (2008) article is mainly about the work of Cambodian-American choreographer Sophiline Cheam Shapiro who in her work confronts issues of migration between the two countries. While much of Shapiro-Phim’s discussion does not feed into this literature review, her descriptions of how Cambodian-Americans reaffirm their sense of belonging to the Cambodian community is of interest. She comments that American Cambodians often do not understand the spiritual beliefs, or ritual and artistic practices originating from their homeland, but they would not miss the annual Cambodian New Year celebration which offers the opportunity to join or watch performances of traditional games, rites, and dances. This in her view is their opportunity to learn about and keep connected to the traditional culture of their ancestral homeland.

Judith Hamera also writes one chapter about Cambodian dance in Long Beach in *Dancing Communities* (2007). She connected with one couple who had been

professional Khmer dance performers in Cambodia. She observed that perpetuating their knowledge played a significant role in dealing with survival and displacement, while the teenage children had difficulties relating to the dance and understanding its importance for the parents.

4.5.11 Contemporary Indian dance in the UK

“In the modern age, that unchartered terrain is cultural, and those hybrids now appear not at the edges of the map, but at its very centre: the city.” (Roy, 1997, p. 84)

Sanjoy Roy (1997) reflects on the dance works of British Indian dance maker Shobana Jeyasingh, who creates choreography from traditional bharata natyam. According to Roy, Jeyasingh does not call herself or her choreography ‘hybrid’. Rather, Jeyasingh places herself at the centre, not between her two cultures, and thus becomes an active agent in constructing her ethnic identity. Roy quotes her as saying, “I am inventing my own ethnicity” (p. 83) and describes her situation of being conscious of two cultures simultaneously, as “the paradoxical sense of being inside and outside at the same time”, calling it “inexclusion” (p. 72).

According to Roy (1997) Jeyasingh sees her choreography as contemporary in the sense that it is created today by a British Indian in the UK. Roy supports Jeyasingh’s point that choreography does not need to be influenced by contemporary dance to be contemporary. He claims that it is often overlooked that experimentation can come from within traditional forms. He sees this as a western bias and concludes that “the contemporisation of Bharata Natyam is not necessarily therefore a Westernisation” (p. 81). He asserts though that it is often portrayed as that, particularly by western media.

Roy contests a notion of hybridity that is focused on the influence of one culture upon the other (normally western on ‘traditional’); instead, he suggests the idea of an equal confluence of different heritages. He argues that Jeyasingh does not *create* cultural hybridity, but that the hybridity is already there, it is a historical fact, even though unrecognised by many. He interprets her role as attempting to change the way people understand hybridity. Taking into account that many contradictory notions of hybridity co-exist he suggests refraining from celebrating Jeyasingh’s work as ‘cross-cultural hybrid work’ because it may result in affirming existing concepts of cultural and racial divisions and hegemony.

Roy's deliberations about hybridity and his framing of the city as the centre of hybridity are significant to this study, and many of his findings were replicated in the case study on Indian dance in Auckland.

4.5.12 Irish set dancing in Dublin

“The last twenty years have also witnessed a substantial growth in internal cultural tourism, so that people from the city come into more contact with set dancing in the country.” (O'Connor, 1997, pp. 149-150)

Barbara O'Connor (1997) explores the practice of Irish set dancing in Dublin. She describes set dancing as a glocal dance form and says that it was rejected by Irish nationalists for its origin in central Europe. She says that,

It has its origins in the cotillons and quadrilles introduced to Ireland in the eighteenth century and has been gradually adapted to local conditions and music to emerge as a much faster and more exciting genre than the eighteenth century counterpart. (p. 150)

Set dancing is a traditional rural dance form which experienced a revival in the 1980s and 1990s spreading from rural areas to the cities. O'Connor speculates about reasons behind this resurgence, considering the possibility that Ireland's joining of the European Union initiated an interest in maintaining a distinctive Irish culture. Secondly, she suggests that it could be a manifestation of society having moved past denigrating rural cultural practices. O'Connor found a discrepancy between the image of set dancing in the city and in the country. In the city club she studied, ideas of “the country as the repository of 'organic community' and 'authentic' folk culture” (p. 163) were prevalent while the reality of the harsh social restrictions that can exist in rural communities was ignored. She frames this phenomenon as romanticising the rural “other”.

One of O'Connor's interests is how women find safe public spaces in cities. In her study she found that the women experienced set dancing practices as a space where they could express themselves safely as they were in an environment with clear social rules. These rules derive partly from behavioural conventions within the part of society where participants identify, but also from how the dancing was organised (such as continuously changing partners or flirting as part of performance). The women also tested new behaviours in this environment, actively constructing their identity. O'Connor concluded that set dancing offered the women “relative freedom from the constraints on women in public spaces” (p. 162).

Participants in O'Conner's study referred to the dance practice as a social space, describing it in similar terms as some participants in the Dalmatian case study. They said that they enjoyed meeting a mix of people and that social status did not matter in set dancing environments. They viewed it as an egalitarian practice calling it "a classless sort of activity" (p. 155) and "a great leveller" (p. 160).

The participants in O'Connor's study emphasised the community forming aspect of dance practices. O'Connor says that "one of the most striking features of the discussions was the way in which both the ambience and the activity generate feelings of friendliness, inclusiveness and warmth" (p. 154). The women commented that it was easy to get in contact with people but that the friendships stayed quite superficial, which led O'Connor to conclude that dance practice groups are creating an "ephemeral and instant community" (p. 156).

4.6 Summary

This literature review explored the connections between dance, place, and culture and the growing transnational connections of dance practices worldwide. Laban theory about space and movement was reviewed and related to social geography theory about space and movement; Lefebvre's rhythm analysis and de Certeau's notion of the practice of everyday life were pinpointed as relevant theories for discussing urban dance practices. Thrift's contribution to the acknowledgement of dance in social geography was highlighted and the valuable aspects of NRT for dance research established. Furthermore, the perceived contradictions within Thrift's framing of dance practice were discussed in detail and also the fact that consequently NRT cannot provide a comprehensive framework for dance research. Ilse Helbrecht's 'two-eyed vision' for urban research was identified as a more comprehensive and suitable research approach as it draws on representational and non-representational registers.

Section two of this review highlighted the disconnection of ethnicity, culture, and place in a globalised world, the development of hybrid identities, and the glocal nature of dance practices happening away from their original place.

In the third section dance was defined as a socio-culturally constructed human practice. Using a constructionist framework means accepting the notion that the body and its movements are socially and culturally inscribed which also implies no movement can be universal or comprehensible in a straightforward way. This section established that inter-cultural arts encounters rely on a translation process, in which changes inevitably occur. Furthermore, concepts of high art versus (low) folk arts were identified as western biases.

The reviewed studies on urban dance practices of different cultures explore notions of space, place, city, culture and identity, as well as issues regarding authenticity and ownership. A number of scholars propose the notion of tradition *plus* modernity as opposed to tradition *versus* modernity. Several studies document that dance practices in urban centres across the world have for centuries existed within a web of cultural influences and exchanges, and that this situation has intensified with globalisation.

The next chapter of this thesis describes and evaluates the case studies undertaken within this research project.

5 Case studies

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and discusses the Dalmatian/Croatian, Indian, and Samoan case studies in discrete chapter sections. The biased immigration laws and their impact on the said communities were discussed in chapter 2. It is worth noting that even today persons travelling on an Indian or Samoan passport are exempt from New Zealand's visa-waiver provisions (Immigration New Zealand, 2013).

The chosen case studies required negotiating some problematic terminology. In recent academic writing the term 'Indian' has often been substituted by 'South Asian' which, in light of the complex and convoluted colonial history of the region, is understandable. In Britain, South Asian has become a widely used term for labelling, marketing, and funding purposes of "dances of the Indian subcontinent" (Grau, 2001, p. 1). Meduri (2008) argues that the advantage of the term South Asian lies in its inclusiveness, as it covers countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, thus imparting a stronger placing for Indian dance. South Asian is nevertheless a contested term in dance studies (Grau, 2001; Meduri, 2008).

I decided being overly concerned about the politics of these terms would not add to this thesis. I mostly use the term Indian which is what the research participants in Auckland used. This usage also reflects that all reviewed specialty books refer to Indian classical dance. A further complication for this case study was the presence of Indians from Fiji in New Zealand. While 'Fijian-Indian' and 'Indo-Fijian' are both used in New Zealand, I chose the former term because I encountered it the most.

Another dilemma occurred in the kolo study regarding the use of Croatian, Dalmatian, Dally, and Yugoslav. The term 'Yugoslav' is used in this thesis in regard to the nation-state of Yugoslavia. 'Dalmatia' is used for the region of that name that has in the timeframe covered by this research belonged to Austria-Hungary, then Yugoslavia and now Croatia. I apply the New Zealand-specific term 'Dally/Dallies' for the descendants of early migrants from Dalmatia, and use the term in the same way as the interviewees did, which in my observation is also equivalent to the general use in New Zealand. 'Croatia(n)' is used where the writing relates to the current state of Croatia, the Croatian Cultural Society in Auckland (as opposed to the Dalmatian Cultural Society), and dances from Croatia that are not Dalmatian.

Following the general usage in New Zealand, 'Samoa' is used for the 'Independent State of Samoa' ('Western Samoa' between 1962 and 1997) in this chapter, distinguishing it from the US territory American Samoa. Another term utilised is 'palagi', a widely-used Polynesian word for Europeans, similar to the Māori term pākehā.

5.2 Dancing the kolo in Auckland

5.2.1 Dalmatians in Aotearoa New Zealand

"Destiny had placed us at the other end of the world and we had taken root in this earth like those Italian olive trees in Cornwall Park, we with our foreign faces and foreign ways." (Batistich, 2001, p. 75)

When arriving in Kaitiaki in Northland a trilingual sign greets you: haere mai, dobro došli, welcome. This region is defined by Māori, Dalmatians (Ngāti Tararua), and English speaking pākehā living closely together for over one hundred years. Well-known New Zealand writer Amelia Batistich, who is of Dalmatian descent, in her book *A Better Life* (2003) equally describes her Northland home town Dargaville as a trilingual township in the 1920s. The Dalmatian presence in Northland has been so strong that Kevin Prime of Ngāti Hine remembers that the first pākehā he saw were Dallies, as they were (and still are) affectionately called (Archie, 2005). At Te Rangi Hiroa Park in Henderson, West Auckland, a monument acknowledges and celebrates the descendants of Māori and Dalmatian marriages; at its unveiling the official programme included kapa haka and kolo dancing.

The following summary by New Zealand academic Andrew Trlin (1979) points to an arduous history of migration and adjustment to the new antipodean home for Dalmatian migrants:

The story of the Yugoslavs in New Zealand has been one of lifelong efforts to gain economic security in a new environment, of slow adjustment to the language, values and expectations of a new culture, and of gradual acceptance in the face of distrust, discrimination and opposition. (p. 212)

The fact that he calls the Dalmatians Yugoslavs in 1979 while they were called Austrians at the turn of the 20th century and classified as Croats in other contexts, hints at a rather complicated history.

Dalmatia is an elongated stretch of coastline on the Eastern Adriatic Sea. Even though an independent Dalmatian state never existed, people living in or coming from that region identify as Dalmatians. These days Dalmatia is a province of the state of Croatia and largely dependent on seasonal tourism. The strong historical bond between New Zealand and Dalmatia is equally visible there: you can enjoy a coffee at Cafe Ahipara in Podgora, and in Vrgorac you can admire Vila Auckland, built in 1928 (Walrond, 2011a).

Throughout history Dalmatia was oppressed and exploited by powerful neighbouring countries, prompting Amelia Batistich (2001) to label Dalmatia "history's pawn" (p. 36). In the late 19th century when large scale emigration started it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. When Austria-Hungary collapsed after World War I Dalmatia became part of the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs which in 1929 was named Yugoslavia.

Dalmatian immigration to New Zealand began in the 1880s. At that time Dalmatia was a peasant society practising subsistence agriculture (Božić-Vrbančić, 2008; Trlin, 1979), but some trade and education existed.

On the "push" side of the migration equation were a dearth of fertile soil and fragmentation of land due to inheritance laws and large families. Other factors were sanctions imposed on trade and fishing by Austria-Hungary and conscription into the Austro-Hungarian army. Adding further pressure was the slow infestation of Dalmatian vineyards with a vine disease. At the same time letters arrived from the first migrants to America, Australia, and New Zealand describing their (often hugely exaggerated) good fortune. Hence the "pull" side of the equation was the promise of a better life. Most families sending their sons abroad had to take out crippling loans to pay for ship passages which increased the poverty at home.

Typically when a young man arrived by ship in Auckland, he initially stayed at a Dalmatian boarding house, was equipped with tools and sent north to work in the kauri-gumfields, a thriving industry at the time. Many new arrivals were shocked by the long arduous work hours in mud and water and the rough settlements of sod and sack dwellings. Vegar, an immigrant son, remembers saying to his father, "If you worked like this back home we would have had a good life there" (Božić-Vrbančić, 2008, p. 94). Some dreamt of digging themselves back to Dalmatia (Batistich, 2001). The fact that some arrived in a malnourished state (Martinovich, 2011) would have made the hard physical work difficult to bear.

By the mid-1890s more than 500 Dalmatians worked the gumfields (Scott, 2002). The mostly young men worked in gangs and spent all their time with each other. They shared everything from cooking duties, sleeping quarters, and they were known to pay each other's debts (Trlin, 1979). Many found solace and strength in the companionship and support they offered each other, and keeping cultural traditions alive was part of this journey.

To their horror, Dalmatians arriving in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were referred to as 'Austrians' in New Zealand due to their imposed Austrian nationality. However, these migrants didn't speak German but a Croatian dialect and they did not consider themselves Austrians at all! Ironically, the moment World War I started all Dalmatians in New Zealand were considered 'Enemy Aliens'. Having avoided conscription into the Austro-Hungarian army, many volunteered for the British Army to fight the hated Austrians. Yet the resentments and suspicions ran deep and most of the volunteers were rejected (Trlin, 1979).

Discrimination against Dalmatians extended into professional areas. In 1893 allegations of wrong doing were brought before a 'Kauri Gum Commission' in order to have 'The Austrian Question' investigated. The Commission found no proof for the allegations presented, but rather acknowledged Dalmatians as honest, industrious, and frugal settlers (Scott, 2002; Trlin, 1979). A further attempt at discrimination was the 1898 Kauri Gum Industry Act and the 1910 Kauri Gum Licensing Law, both allowing only British subjects to work the gumfields, thus forcing many Dalmatians into a rather difficult naturalisation process or to turn to other occupations (Božić-Vrbančić, 2008; Trlin, 1979; Walrond, 2011a). Underlying these attempts were the unease and hence rejection by parts of the British settler communities because of the Dalmatians' innovative and collaborative ways of clearing out the gum-fields (Božić-Vrbančić 2008; Trlin, 1979). This approach was markedly different from the British gumdiggers who worked in isolation and for individual profit. Scott (2002) comments that "the [Dalmatians'] industry was their undoing" (p. 104) as it not only caused overproduction but also jealousy and fear of missing out in other communities. Most Dalmatians remitted large sums of money to their families in Dalmatia where it meant the difference between starvation and survival.

Adding to the resentments was the fact that 60-70% of the early arrivals returned home after a couple of years. The local pākehā therefore initially labelled Dalmatians 'birds of passage' because many saved as much money as possible and returned home. Many British-born, who were committed to permanent settlement, perceived this approach as exploitative and damaging for New Zealand, hence relationships between them and Dalmatians were often brittle. Socially, gumdigging was perceived as the bottom of the social ladder (Trlin, 1979), so it was difficult for the early arrivals to move upwards socially resulting in few inter-marriages with the other settlers.

From the 1920s onwards many Dalmatian men decided to settle. Some went back to Dalmatia to find a bride. Others asked their families to choose a 'letter bride' for them, so young women arrived in New Zealand to live with a man they

barely knew in isolated harsh environments, often initially getting extremely lonely and depressed. Other Dalmatian men chose Māori wives and mixed within the local Māori communities.

The friction between British and Dalmatian communities dissipated when Dalmatian wives started to settle in and looked to British neighbours for guidance as to how to be a New Zealander (Batistich, 1981, 2003). But even more strongly, over time a bond between Māori and Dalmatians developed. According to Božić-Vrbančić (2008), Dalmatians and parts of the Māori communities shared a sense of displacement as many Māori had relocated from their tribal homes to Northland for gumdigging. They additionally often shared a sense of being second class citizens (Božić-Vrbančić, 2008; Trlin, 1979). Thirdly, they recognised their cultural concepts of 'whanau' and 'zadruga', the Dalmatian equivalent of the extended family, as very similar. Last but not least, both were, and still are, dedicated to keeping their cultural traditions alive, particularly in song and dance. Lina Petricevich Ngataki remembered, "Māori and Dalmatians did well together. We are similar people you know, we have similar culture ... we dance, we sing, we do fishing, we laugh, we are honest, we are hardworking people ... we are very similar" (Božić-Vrbančić, 2008, p. 101).

Dance has indeed been a thread through the stories of the settlement. The early settlers describe their sorrow of missing community events with dance, song, and wine back in Dalmatia (Božić-Vrbančić, 2008; Brown & Spoelstra, 1996). Petricevich remembered the migrants creating their own cultural activities: "Sometimes round the fire at night with the billy boiling or the wine laced with water, Dalmatia was remembered in song and dance" (Božić-Vrbančić, 2008, p. 122). In the 1920s, annual Yugoslav balls happened at Sweetwater, Northeast of Kaitia, which included kolo dancing (Božić-Vrbančić). Martha Radich had fond memories of the dancing halls: "It was always the Dalmatians and Māori there. I remember the Tamburitza band playing at Sweetwater hall. I thought they were marvellous" (Božić-Vrbančić, p. 114).

Many Dalmatians owned dance halls in Northland where they practised their music and dance (Božić-Vrbančić, 2008). Scott (2002) reports that "typically on the Ahipara field (where almost the first building was a dance hall) wine was sold to the dancers until their cash gave out and then credit was given on a promise to pay in kauri gum chips" (p. 104). Even though most early settlers were single men, they kept the kolo dancing alive, often nourished by some locally produced wine!

As work in the gumfields diminished in the first half of the 20th century, Dalmatians turned to other work and left small ghost towns with schools and

dance halls behind (Božić-Vrbančić, 2008). Some bought former gumdigging land cheaply and to the astonishment of many pākehā (and often against their advice) over the years turned these barren places into productive land, mostly for dairy and stock farming, but also viticulture (Trlin, 1979). Others took up work as fishermen or engaged in swamp draining in the Hauraki Plains.

The Dalmatian influence in Aotearoa New Zealand's industries is most markedly felt in viticulture. Early wines did not bring the best qualities and were dismissively called 'Dally plonk'. However, lots of experimenting and hard work by Dalmatian and other European immigrant vintners improved the quality dramatically and resulted in a thriving, internationally acknowledged wine industry (Scott, 2002). Montana (initially Yukich), Nobilo, Babich, Delegat, and Selak all started as Dalmatian family businesses. This industry was, however, also initially discriminated against through the introduction of wine making and bar licenses.

The shift away from the gumfield initiated a general southward migration trend and led to urbanisation; Kaitaia, Dargaville, and West Auckland developed large Dalmatian settlements. In the 1960s and 1970s Auckland overtook Dargaville as the main Dalmatian settlement and by 1971 82% of Dalmatians lived in urban areas (Trlin, 1979).

Urbanisation led to branching out into retail industries such as restaurants, takeaway shops, and dairies (convenience stores), and to more assimilation (Trlin, 1979; Walrond, 2011a). Carl Walrond (2011a) states that, "Urbanisation fostered the development of clubs, which became important meeting places and avenues for keeping alive customs such as kola dancing. Successful clubs were formed in Auckland, Dargaville and Wellington in the 1930s" (p. 7). These clubs supported unemployed members of the community during the 1930s depression. In the 1940s the boarding houses in central Auckland were the hub of the community (Trlin, 1979).

Many Dalmatians married within their communities hence cultural traditions were naturally perpetuated. Walrond (2011a) states that, "Kola dancing is ... one of the most visible parts of Dalmatian culture" and hence kolo dancing was practised continuously, leading to the development of new choreographic forms in the 1930s.

Mark Marinovich, who migrated to Auckland in the mid-1920s, brought Croatian instruments to New Zealand and established the first tamburica orchestra in Auckland. His daughters remember him saying that people in his group choreographed the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* in 1935, combining elements

of different dances from their villages in Dalmatia. Performances featuring this new kolo took place in Dargaville, Whangarei, and Auckland in 1935 and 1936. Over time, several versions of the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* have developed.

In the interviews I conducted it came out that this New Zealand specific choreography is a cultural treasure close to the hearts of the New Zealand-born Dally generation. The senior dance group performed it at the *Folklore 2011 Concert* and the Reunion Group at the *Folklore 2012 Concert*, in Massey, Auckland.

Pictures exist of kolo dancing in 1936 at the Dargaville Yugoslav Club, a social and cultural centre. Equally, Batistich (2001) describes being chaperoned to dances at the Yugoslav Club in Auckland in the 1930s. In the 1960s and 1970s kolo was often performed in Northland and Auckland accompanied by tamburica orchestras (Walrond, 2011a). Photographer Marti Friedlander captured one of these occasions: a couple in traditional costume whirling around each other at the first annual vintage celebration of the Auckland Connoisseurs' Club in Swanson, West Auckland, in 1966 (Scott, 2002).

Since 1999, *Tarara Day*, held in Henderson, West Auckland, has celebrated the descendants of Māori and Dalmatian mixed marriages. *Tarara* is the name given to the Dalmatians by the Māori taken from how the fast-spoken Croatian language sounded to the Māori. *Tarara Day* takes place occasionally and always prominently features kapa haka and kolo dancing.

Dalmatian migrants and their descendants have left important marks in New Zealand art and literature. Most famous is the above-mentioned Amelia Batistich, particularly her short story "An Olive Tree in Dalmatia" (1963), and her books *A Better Life* and *Another Mountain Another Song* which portray her life as a second generation Dalmatian immigrant in Dargaville and Greenlane, Auckland. Famous New Zealand writer Frank Sargeson in "The Making of a New Zealander" (1940/1995) acknowledged the hardship and identity issues Dalmatian migrants faced.

Three outstanding academics of Croatian/Dalmatian descent are Andrew Trlin, whose research encompasses issues encountered by Dalmatian and other migrants in New Zealand, and who is quoted manifold in this thesis; sociologist Martin Tolich, who co-published with Trlin on Croatian/Dalmatian/Yugoslav identity in New Zealand; and Nina Nola who researched Amelia Batistich's work. Another prominent person of Dalmatian ancestry is Milan Mrkusich, one of New Zealand's leading modernist painters.

5.2.1.1 Migration patterns

Dalmatian migration to New Zealand followed a chain migration pattern (Trlin 1979; Trlin & Tolich, 1995). As indicated in chapter 1, Dalmatians like many other non-British migrants were subject to biased immigration policies and treated according to their less wanted status. This ongoing discrimination only ended in 1987 (Beaglehole, 2011; Brooking & Rabel, 1995; Pio, 2010).

When after World War II Marshal Tito united the South Slavs in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, some New Zealand Dalmatians were enthused to help build this new post-war country. But many, including one of the interviewees' fathers, found it a disappointing experience and returned to New Zealand with a stronger sense of belonging here (Walrond, 2011a). Even though Tito's rule was signified by defiance to Soviet hegemony, military neutrality, and a relative openness towards the West, it was nevertheless an authoritarian rule and anti-enterprise which repelled most Dalmatians with New Zealand experience. Hence, unsurprisingly, throughout the 1950s many Yugoslavs arrived in New Zealand, either as returning residents or new immigrants (many displaced people). In the 1960s, 200 skilled employees from Yugoslavia worked in New Zealand's power schemes, and many of the younger men settled in New Zealand (Trlin, 1979).

During the disintegration of the Communist Eastern Block in Europe in the early 1990s severe conflicts began in Yugoslavia. In Serbia and Croatia strong nationalistic movements had emerged, and regions also intensely pushed for independence. The right-wing nationalistic Croatian Democratic Union under Franjo Tudjman won the 1990 elections in Croatia and independence was declared in 1991. The Tudjman Government celebrated an ethnic nationalism without distancing itself sufficiently from the fascist Ustaša movement of the 1920s and '30s, which had co-operated with the German and Italian fascists against Serbia and had committed ethnic cleansing of horrendous magnitude. Straight after Croatia's declaration of independence the Yugoslav People's Army, by now controlled by Serbs, started hostilities in Croatia (Ignatieff, 1994).

Michael Ignatieff (1994) highlights that it is difficult to understand how the atrocities could have happened as Serbs and Croats are very similar culturally and ethnically and shared the same part of Europe for centuries. He maintains that before the war Croats and Serbians were friends, neighbours, spouses, "not inhabitants of different ethnic planets" (p. 15).

Nonetheless, terrible atrocities happened not just in Serbia and Croatia but in various regions of the former Yugoslavia and many people left as refugees, often severely traumatised (Hayward, 2011). The actions of the Serbian

Government at the time were seen by the international community as particularly ruthless and several of their politicians have been subsequently tried by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in Den Haag, The Netherlands. Proceedings are ongoing at the time of writing.

During the 1990s, 4500 people from the former Yugoslavia came to Aotearoa New Zealand, many as refugees escaping the war (Hayward, 2011; Walrond, 2011a). The conflicts in the Balkan region strongly impacted on the existing Auckland Dalmatian/Croatian community; emotions were running high for many.

5.2.1.2 Conflicts in Aotearoa

During 1990-91 some Auckland Croatians became frustrated that the Yugoslav Society still flew the Yugoslav flag and refused to fly the Croatian flag or celebrate Croatian independence under the Tadjman Government (Trlin & Tolich, 1995). Pro- and anti-Croatian factions emerged that were at times quite aggressive towards each other. The pro-Croatian group, which was also strongly anti-Serbian, split from the Yugoslav Society and formed the Croatian Cultural Society.

After the split, in mid-1992, the Dalmatian Cultural Society Inc. was formed from the remnants of the Yugoslav Society. The Yugoslav Society had existed since 1981 and had been a fusion of the earlier Yugoslav Club, inaugurated in 1930 (business oriented and conservative), and the Croatian Cultural and Benevolent Society, inaugurated in 1932 (working class, left wing and supportive of a unified Yugoslavia). Only for a bit over a decade did a unified Yugoslav society exist in Auckland!

The choice of name for the new society was guided by the thought that Dalmatia was a less politically charged name because it is a region rather than a nation state (Trlin & Tolich, 1995; Walrond, 2011a). No reservations existed about the fact that technically the name does not cover all migrants from the region. The fact that most early migrants were Dalmatians and all migrants from that region were called Dallyes in New Zealand defined this name as representative of the New Zealand specific migration history. Trlin and Tolich (1995) in their study about how events in the homeland effected expatriates found that for many interviewees "the surrender of a Dalmatian ('Dally') identity for Croatian identity *would involve the loss of a history, reputation, and identity understood and valued by New Zealanders*" (p. 246, italics in original).

The division of the Yugoslav Club in Auckland and the underlying conflicts had many consequences for the community. Estrangement and conflict happened within families. Trlin and Tolich (1995) report one grandmother refusing to watch her grandchild perform kolo at the Dalmatian Cultural Society because it was

not the club she supported. The annual Yugoslav Ball had to be cancelled for the first time since the 1930s. Bowlers also had events fall foul because of the conflict in Europe and two bowling fraternities were formed.

In contrast, in Kaitaia, Dargaville, and Whangarei the response to events in the Balkans was less emotionally charged. These clubs were demographically more homogenous because there were many second and third-generation New Zealand-born Dallies who traced their ancestry back to the gumdiggers, and few new arrivals (Trlin & Tolich, 1995). Some Northland clubs felt no urgency for a name change and tried to achieve a real consensus amongst its members. The situation in Auckland, however, as the hub for new immigrants, was signified by diverse demographics within the cultural clubs causing a stronger formation of factions and eventually the demise of the Yugoslav Society. New arrivals from Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, and Macedonia were drawn to the Dalmatian Cultural Society because of its inclusive policy, so numbers remained stable despite internal and external turmoil.

Trlin and Tolich (1995) encountered interviewees who spoke of confusion and shame regarding the events in the former Yugoslavia and that these feelings were driving them towards embracing a Kiwi identity more strongly:

For hundreds of the second- and third-generation, the *primary* identification is that of a New Zealander, the Dalmatian ('Dally') background is *secondary* and rather more a celebration of what *was* then of what *is* in terms of a fully-fledged ethnic identity. (p. 248)

Interviewees of this study also reflected upon these identity issues.

In summary, the history of Dalmatian migration is defined by a difficult and conflicted environment in the home country which in turn had a strong impact on the New Zealand situation. The history is also characterised by discrimination and many external obstacles that were overcome by hard work, determination, and a strong sense of community. Dalmatians and their descendants have kept their language, food traditions, and performing arts alive using them as a means to pass down their cultural traditions in Aotearoa New Zealand.

5.2.2 Croatian folklore

5.2.2.1 *Balkan folklore in historical context*

“The use of dance, particularly folk dance, to project various images of nationalism and ethno-nationalism in Eastern Europe has a long history dating back to the nineteenth century.” (Maners, 2006, p. 75)

Balkan folklore has carried many socio-cultural and political meanings and purposes over the centuries, and endured many deconstructions, reinterpretations, and reconstructions during the turbulent political developments unfolding in the region during the 20th century (Gore & Grau, 2006; Maners, 2006, 2008). During the Cold War period a strong movement to preserve folklore traditions was prevalent across Eastern Europe. In the reigning socialist ideology, folklore was regarded as the art of the working class which resulted in governments supporting large national dance ensembles and many small local groups (Gore & Grau, 2006; Maners, 2006, 2008; Shay, 1999, 2006).

Lynn Maners (2006, 2008) suggests that in the former Yugoslavia, folk dance and music was proliferated for the purpose of preserving cultural traditions and equally nation-building. He describes how in this endeavour previously participation-based dance practices became staged performance events where the dancing was experienced by a passive audience and the dance itself became a commodity. Yugoslavia had, as part of its state-controlled arts and cultural sector, many folklore dance ensembles whose repertoires were required to include dances from all parts of the Yugoslav nation, thus acting as symbols and facilitators for building a unified nation consisting of equal ethnic groups. This was, according to Maners (2008), a break from the mono-ethnic dance and music practices of pre-socialist times and a shift from rural and participation-based to urban and performance-based practices subjecting the dances to reinterpretations that suited the new purpose. The prolific work of these ensembles contributed significantly to preserving and in some cases presenting internationally the Yugoslav folklore traditions, even if in adapted forms and altered contexts.

Maners (2006) describes how partisan units in WWII in their obligatory ‘culture units’ created so-called ‘partisan kolos’. These kolos were either completely new creations or choreographies that combined and transformed elements of different regional origins thus forming what he calls “ethnically neutral, war-contextualized dances” (p. 86). Despite endeavours such as this, and despite general attempts to utilise dance folklore for building the notion of Yugoslav nationhood, no specific and lasting ‘Yugoslav dances’ emerged.

In light of this historical context it is understandable that the current Croatian Government still supports the famous professional folklore ensemble LADO at a time when other governments across the world have cut the finances to such artistic and cultural enterprises. Shay (1999) suggests that LADO has, contrary to other ensembles throughout its existence, made an effort to portray “authentic elements of traditional life” (p. 30) in their performances. Their repertoire includes dances from all regions of Croatia.

The long-standing attitude of supporting and preserving dance and music as cultural treasures in Yugoslavia and later in Croatia may have contributed to the establishment of a strong following of Croatian cultural practices worldwide (Oakes, 1981; Vitez & Vučić, 2009). Oakes noted as early as 1981 that in the USA and Canada second generation Yugoslavs had become much more interested in kolo dancing than the previous generation.

5.2.2.3 Folklore traditions of Croatia

All regions within Croatia have strong folklore traditions encompassing music, dance, and crafts, and these traditions are held dear. Auckland-based Croatian dance teacher Goran Kačurov translated a Croatian proverb for me as meaning "better our village is in ruins than our customs" (personal communication, March 9, 2012). He also conveyed that traditional costumes and folklore dancing have remained normal occurrences in Croatian villages at a time when similar events had long disappeared from many parts of Europe. One of the interviewees also told me how she experienced nightly folklore music and dancing happening in Dalmatian villages when she visited.

Croatia's four regions – Dinara (mountain region), Adriatic (which includes Dalmatia), Alpine and Pannonia – all have different folklore traditions. Oakes (1981) points out that these folk arts, despite their diversity, are closely related just like the languages of the South Slavs. He says that,

Solely permitted to express their feelings orally, Yugoslavians recited or sang them to the accompaniment of local instruments. Folk stories were transmitted from father to son and were given expression in ballads and music, elaborate embroidery, intricate wood carvings, and a rich dance tradition. (p. 1)

Croatia being at the crossroads of numerous eastern and western cultures resulted in many foreign influences on its folklore (Kačurov, personal communication, February 15, 2012; Oakes, 1981). There are French, German, Italian, and Turkish influences on the dance folklore, but movement ideas were adapted and executed in the distinct style of the different regions of Croatia (Kačurov, personal communication, February 15, 2012).

Some regions of Croatia endured times of strong oppression when people were not allowed to openly and joyously celebrate their culture hence the development of mute dances like the breath-taking *Glamoc* from the Dinara region which was performed at the 2011 and 2012 Folklore Concerts.

Stari Spliski, the dance practised by the group I studied, means old (dance) from Split and originates from the 19th century. Its choreography is highly geometrical with diagonals, circles, and lines. Steps range from dignified strutting to exuberant polka. Its origin is in the bourgeoisie of Split promenading on the waterfront in their best attire, acknowledging and courting in a composed manner.

Stari Spliski is a quadrille. It comprises five figures which include waltz and polka; the music alternates between 2/4 and 3/4 time. The quadrille is a square dance for four or eight couples which originated in Spanish military drills. In the mid-19th century it spread as a group dance to Europe's middle classes creating a craze (Harper, 2012). The Dalmatian version was derived from the French quadrille (Kačurov, personal communication, 2012). Quadrilles spread throughout the world, particularly to French territories such as Martinique (Cyrille, 2006) and also to Havana (Najera-Ramirez et al, 2009; Pietrobruno, 2006).

5.2.2.3 Kolo

Dances from the Dalmatian coast are mostly kolo dances. The word 'kolo' means 'circle' or 'wheel' which is the prominent, but not exclusive, form found in folklore dances from Croatia. The circle is seen as an expression of community, an equaliser and a source of energy (Croatian Folklore Ensemble Hvratska Zora, 2008; Kačurov, personal communication, 2012). Kolo dances feature changing formations, such as one large circle or several smaller ones, or open circles lead by the front person, but also features lines, which often face each other or the audience. Some dances include an element of improvising with a leader announcing changes of figures. Many forms of handholds and armholds have developed (Oakes, 1981), some linking dancers together tightly. The general body posture is an erect body with bent knees which creates a downward energy connecting to the earth. Footwork is often small and close to the floor and men's steps are generally more vigorous than women's.

Normally, dances are accompanied by live music performed by a tamburica orchestra, consisting of many string instruments that feature as either melody or harmony instruments (i.e. brač, bisernica) or rhythm instruments (i.e. bugarija, berda). Sometimes piano accordion and/or singing are part of the orchestra. The music is mostly based on folk tunes and is often relatively simple but it can

also be rhythmically varied, for example breaking up a phrase of even numbered beats into short (2 beat) and long (3 beat) units. In the dance *Lindo* a step combination counted on three is put on 2/4 time. These features of kolo dancing can seriously confuse the uninitiated beginner!

Technically speaking *Stari Splitski* is not a circle dance but is practised by kolo groups in New Zealand, because they use the word kolo as an umbrella term for all traditional dances from all the regions of Croatia.

5.2.3 Field research

5.2.3.1 Introduction

“One of the prime objectives of our Society is to keep alive the culture and traditions of our pioneers, which they brought to New Zealand from their homeland.” (Dalmatian Cultural Society, 2011)

My first visit to the Dalmatian Cultural Society happened one Friday night in November 2011. It was obvious that communal life is at the core of Dalmatian culture as whole families were at the centre that evening. A group of teenagers practised kolo dancing in the hall while music, singing, and language lessons happened in several of the smaller rooms. In the kolo lesson I sensed an air of concentration and seriousness, but without any teenage self-consciousness.

I explored the well-equipped museum which includes an abundant kauri gum collection, a small reference library, and a genealogical research port. A separate library lends to society members books in Croatian or in English. All of the above point to a financially strong community that has found its place in Aotearoa New Zealand but still keeps a distinct identity.

The Dalmatian Cultural Society offers about five weekly kolo dance lessons: Junior kolo (children), intermediate kolo (teenagers), senior kolo (a performance group of young adults), the Reunion Group, the women’s kolo (mostly middle-aged adults), and the ‘real’ seniors who meet once a month to practise the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo*.

Between November 2011 and May 2012 I visited about seven Reunion Group practices and I watched two performances. I returned to the group in October for two practices and watched the 2012 end-of-year concert. I appreciated the invitation to dance with the group even though I at times upset the male-female ratio and disrupted the flow of the dance through my unfamiliarity with the choreographies. People were accepting and patient, and displayed curiosity, respect, and openness towards the research endeavour as well as towards me as an individual.

During this period I kept a personal journal, collecting impressions, thoughts, and snippets of informal conversations. I had informal conversations with the group's teacher. I conducted four audio-taped interviews with a total of nine people: a group of four women, two men, a female individual, and two sisters who have specialist knowledge about the history of Croatian dance and music in New Zealand. Seven of the interviewees were born in the Auckland region; one grew up in the southern North Island and came to Auckland in 2009; and one was born in Split in Croatia and came to Auckland as a three year old. I appreciated the sharing in an open hearted manner of feelings and thoughts about their culture, be they pride and joy or embarrassment about the "hotheads" in the community.

To get a broader picture of kolo dancing in Auckland I additionally had two meetings with the Croatian-born dance teacher of the Croatian Cultural Society. Treasured are the memories of his private performances of Croatian music and dance, sometimes to demonstrate distinctive movement styles of different regions; also holding in my hands his beautifully crafted Croatian bagpipe made of a sheep skin with neck and front legs still clearly identifiable and an intricately carved mouth piece. I visited his group's practice one night witnessing the awe-inspiring singing practice of his women's choir. I also watched their performance at the International Cultural Festival 2012. Another moment that stayed with me was when he fetched potted lavender to illustrate the importance of understanding your culture, using the metaphor of the invisible root in the pot being more important than the visible plant above.

5.2.3.2 The Reunion Group

Everybody in the Reunion Group has some Dalmatian ancestry; many are second or third generation. The men I interviewed referred to the whakapapa (genealogy) of their group as the "old families". In contrast, in the groups for younger people practising kolo at the Dalmatian Cultural Society a mix of backgrounds from all over Croatia, Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, and Bosnia exists.

Most of the Reunion Group members started kolo in their teenage years. Kolo was so popular at that stage (1980s) that girls were forced to leave after two or, if they were lucky, after three years as long waiting lists with eager young kolo dancers existed. Boys could sometimes stay in the kolo group for longer as there were not as many boys waitlisted.

The interviewees emphasised that the strong demand existed because many young people of Dalmatian descent made a conscious choice to join; they were not expected or pressured to do so. Everyone had siblings or cousins who did

not participate and that was acceptable. Several observed that often the siblings who participated in the kolo married within the Dalmatian community thus reinforcing the cultural bond. The two men said that from their perspective, their siblings who did not participate also did not develop the same strong connection to their Dalmatian heritage.

The majority in the Reunion Group had a long break from kolo while raising children until about 2007/2008 when they had their first reunion. Since then the group has continuously practised and performed. Recently, some younger participants have joined. There is a variety of professions within the group: baker, car dealer, advertising agent, university researcher, IT consultant, several school teachers including an ex principal. The group is almost evenly split between male and female; however, in several practices that I attended there was an uneven men-women ratio so that the teacher had to take over male roles.

At the beginning of 2011 the Serbian-born teacher, an ex-professional folklore dancer, chose for the group to learn *Stari Splitski* and they worked on it throughout the year. At first sight the 19th century costumes worn for performing *Stari Splitski* seem out-of-place in Auckland. Strict hairdos transform dynamic, middle-aged Kiwi women into stern-looking Dalmatian middle-class, 19th century ladies. There were comments about “ruffled feathers” and about feeling “like a peasant” in an unflattering costume. However, after initial resentments were overcome, the whole group carried the atmosphere and history of the piece with an engaged dignity and pride so that on the two occasions that I saw them perform they came across as genuine keepers of their Dalmatian heritage.

In 2012, the group started practising a dance called *Međimurje* named after the region in northern Croatia where it originates from. This dance is much more lively, complex, and challenging than *Stari Splitski* which was welcome news for many of the dancers. Once a month the group gets together with a group of pensioners and both groups practise a version of the cherished *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo*.

5.2.3.3 The interviews

“For myself, it’s given me a real sense of grounding in place, probably for the first time in my life!”

Several main threads evolved from the interviews. These threads concern the relationships between culture and place, specifically between cultural heritage,

its passing down through the generations, and people's connections to place/places.

Seven threads were identified: practising dance for cultural identity and belonging; defining a specific New Zealand Dalmatian/Croatian identity; kolo as a unifier; inter-generational continuity of cultural heritage; weaving together the heritage of the early migrants and the new input from Croatia today; belonging to a supportive community that has bloodline connections, but is demographically diverse; and Auckland as a place of many cultural practices.

Firstly, kolo is practised by the studied group as a means to connect to cultural heritage and to develop or reinforce cultural identity. A feeling of being "at home" at kolo was voiced by several participants.

All interviewees clearly stated that they are involved with kolo dancing as a way to connect to their Dalmatian heritage. Even though they all like kolo for the sort of dancing it is, the prime attraction does not come from the dance form's intrinsic aesthetics but from the cultural connection and meaning as the following quotes demonstrate:

I have done kolo to discover a part of my cultural heritage, not because I knew what kolo was before; not just to understand dance. I did it as a vehicle to become part of a community. ... It feels more right to me to do kolo than it would to learn Latin dancing.

I have taken on the Croatian dancing as it is part of the heritage. It might be nice to do Greek dancing or learn about it, but as somebody coming in from the outside, not having the connection, I might find it hard to jump over the initial hurdle, like 'why do I do it?' It's not the same attraction.

Several interviewees described the kolo practice as a place of belonging.

I feel like I'm at home, in my place. What's the Māori word, turangawaewae. I feel like this is my place of belonging and I get this inner happiness when I'm with this group of people who understand me and everything about me. It's just fabulous. My fatigue goes away, everything goes away. I'm just dancing. I'm in the pleasure zone of dance.

In their performances their own sense of belonging seems the main driving force and more important than other aspects such as presenting their culture to outsiders.

I love the fact that other people learn about our culture. I feel very proud when I do it. But the real motivator is doing it for myself. Those rub off

benefits, that you get a feeling that's where you belong, being in that dance, is where you belong.

One of the men described the club itself as 'home':

It's quite a nice feeling to walk in there. It feels like home in a sense. They are all welcoming, people talk to you. There are no barriers there in that sense.

Secondly, in this particular group a strong sense of a New Zealand Dally identity was obvious. I also found that when I spoke to outsiders about this case study, they unanimously recognised Dally identities in New Zealand. Despite this strong identity label, interviewees reported ongoing issues. One woman said,

I say Dalmatian, others may say Croatian or Yugoslav. Interesting how it gets played out and used in different political terms, but just because my grandfather came from Dalmatia I would say Dalmatian. Others would say Croatian – some Croatians would be offended by that. It's funny that, isn't it?

The change in identity labelling from Austrian to Yugoslav was described in the history section above. Another label change happened in the early 1990s when Yugoslavia disintegrated. Several interviewees talked with anguish about the confused terms applied to their cultural identity:

Because I had grown up being a Yugoslav, it took me a long time to remember to say I am a Croatian. I had to go back and check on that to make double sure I was a Croatian. People would ask where is it and I would say good question. I knew where Yugoslavia was but I did not know where Croatia was. I knew it was on the coast. It was very strange. It took a long time to become an automatic thing. Growing up as one thing but suddenly being something else was very weird.

One of the men commented that awareness of identity was not as strong when he grew up, but he acknowledged that this has changed. The other man expressed that he cherishes his Croatian ancestry as a distinguishable cultural heritage. He said that,

Being Croatian is something special for me, something that is different about me, different to other people.

One woman told of her desire to change how her identity was constructed in New Zealand. In her teenage years she rejected how her surname was pronounced in New Zealand. She decided to restore the Croatian spelling and she insisted on people pronouncing it the Croatian way. For her it was a matter

of respecting different cultural heritages and the associated languages. These changes were a way of actively taking charge of her cultural identity. She said that,

It took a little bit of me doing that and now everyone in my family does it, including my father who was at first reluctant. But now they all do it, and they put the mark over the S. That is actually something about being proud of that heritage.

For the Reunion group members a Dally identity is most strongly expressed in their love for the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* (conversationally often called 'old kolo'). This dance functions as an identity marker and builder.

All interviewees who have had a long association with kolo spoke of the paramount importance of the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* as the authentic kolo to New Zealand. Several of the women remembered parents or other relatives dancing it in 1935 and 1936.

They came here and put together the steps that they knew from home. So it's just uniquely New Zealand. It's not a whole dance that was brought from Dalmatia and instituted here. It's one they had put together from their knowledge, from their background.

Everybody in the Reunion Group reported a heart-felt connection with this dance and several commented that the same was true for their parents' generation. One of the men said that,

When we were young the 'old kolo' was the only dance we did, you know, and that was the big deal for us and probably for our parents. My mother, even for her, that's the one she wants to see more than anything else. I like learning all these other ones because I like dancing. But that one just got a bit more emotion tied to it.

In the women's group one woman said that,

The 'old kolo' always pulls the heart strings. That is always going to happen. It's special.

This comment was received with affirmative nodding all around. Another woman described it as "everybody's favourite".

One woman, who has only joined the group recently, was not aware of the significance of the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* when she first saw it. However, after she had been told its history she was enticed to learn it herself.

Suddenly I thought I would like to learn that one. It means something now.

All group members acknowledged that new migrants often do not appreciate the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo*, as they do not see it as 'authentic'. However, the New Zealand Dalmatians felt strongly that it is authentic to New Zealand. For them this dance expresses a specific New Zealand Dally identity. One woman said that,

The new immigrants, they do not have that feel for our kolo. And some of them even go as far as to say "it's crap, I hate it"; but it does not matter, it means something to the club and the people. You don't understand. It's our history.

Thirdly, kolo was described as a unifying practice. Whenever open conflict happened in the Balkans it spilled over to Aotearoa New Zealand, specifically to Auckland as described in the history section above. Also, different philosophies were continuously pursued in the Auckland Croatian community, as the current and past existence of two clubs shows. Several interviewees commented that some members of the community have very strong opinions; however, these views are often based on knowledge of a Croatia of the past as many of these individuals have never lived in Croatia or at least not for a long time.

The women brought up the topic of the tensions in the community on their own accord early on in the interview. The women thought it had to do with "pride", "arrogance", "fiery opinions", and one called some people in the community "hotheads". The men used words like "staunch" and "blinkerred". One woman commented that at times "very heated arguments" took place confirming accounts found in Trlin and Tolich (1995).

Several interviewees said that they see a thawing happening in the community and that many people go to both cultural clubs these days depending on whether they like an activity or event. But soreness and weariness linger. One of the women observed when she went to watch a soccer game at the other club she and her friends stuck together as a group throughout the event.

The women spoke of the kolo as a healing practice in their sometimes conflicted community. Several others equally described kolo as a (short-lived) peace maker; as a healer providing moments of un-conflicted togetherness. One woman said,

I think for all the conflict politically the kolo is what keeps us all connected. Like everyone stops when the kolo is being danced and when

they hear the music really. That's what takes over, that is what connects everybody. And the political just goes to the side while that kolo is happening because everybody has that common thread.

Goran Kačurov equally commented that,

Folklore dance is like spring water in our culture, stopping the tensions for a moment.

Cultural practices are clearly strong glue for the Croatian community.

Fourth, in the last 20 years many other dances than the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* have been taught in the Dalmatian Cultural Society. This learning of dances from all over the Balkan region has helped to heighten an understanding of Croatia's unique position in Europe between East and West, its diverse ethnic and cultural heritage. One man said,

I didn't realise so much until I went back there seven years ago for the first time to Croatia as it is now, just how diverse the country really is. Dalmatia is obviously the main part for us, but it's only the coastal area down there in the south, and the country is so diverse. I mean there are dances from the mountains and even from Split, which is Dalmatia, that kind of pace of dancing. And the people dancing in the mountains dance different things in different types of clothing because it's freezing up there. You start to understand why that is; learning about that aspect of it; how the culture is intermingled; why the music from some of the eastern parts sounds quite Turkish; because there is a border right there. There's a lot of influence from those other cultures.

Many interviewees emphasised the role of the dance teacher in facilitating a learning process about culture. They said that the teacher explains the background, history and meaning of the dances:

We learned a bit about each dance, he explains it. Like "the reason you are doing this is ...". Every step has some significance. And he has explained those to us over time.

Everybody appreciated this aspect of the teaching and learning.

One of the men thought that learning about culture happens through encountering the dance, and equally through encountering the music, and also from associating with people who are knowledgeable about cultural issues.

Fifth, the importance of the inter-generational aspect of the practice and the continuity of cultural knowledge was voiced by most. The men expressed this

particularly strongly. They both talked about how much they appreciate their daughters' involvement in kolo and how much they liked the fact that this way the dance tradition as well as the connection to the cultural heritage in general continues. As teenagers, their daughters became interested in learning more about their Dalmatian background and joining the kolo group was the place to start this journey.

The men described how all generations come to watch kolo performances and one of the men spoke of the delight arising from the fact that several generations dance. He said,

And even though I'm getting on in time my mother is 25 years older than me, but she loves seeing her son doing it and I like seeing my daughter doing it.

Both men conveyed that they would not like it if the dance knowledge disappeared with their generation. One commented that,

I certainly feel the older generation still appreciate the dance. The younger generation is doing it and it gives you a good feel that it's been carried on.

The other one said,

We wanted [our daughters] to learn so it didn't get lost in our generation, and they connected into it and enjoy the dancing.

Inter-generational connection even reached further for one woman who felt connected to her late grandfather, whom she never met, through dancing *Stari Splitski*:

I did feel that I learned a dance that was quite authentic. I like the fact that I know that my grandfather would have danced it and I was told he was a great dancer. You know, after a hard day in the orchards or gum-digging they would deck out in suits and white gloves and they would walk or travel a long way to get to these dance halls and be back in Europe. So there is something about that dance that means a lot.

Others, as mentioned above, spoke with pride of their parents, aunts, and uncles dancing the first *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* in the 1930s.

Sixth, it was obvious from the interviews that doing kolo was and is a way of being part of a community. The men talked of the club with all its activities providing a social group for them when they were young:

So dancing was what bonded you with the other people. They became your social group of friends as well. And we both also played basketball with the guys from the club; that was the other glue. And in the days that we went it became a young group of people who got involved in the committee and organised a lot of social functions as well. So it became really my social life.

The women described their experience of the past in slightly different terms:

For us as young Croatian women we were not really allowed out a lot. We were allowed to go to the club and that's where we socialised. That's where we were expected to meet our partners.

Several interviewees talked about the positive spin off from mixing in the club. It was argued that you meet people who are different in profession, social status, and education when you mix along heritage lines, extending your horizon beyond the type of people you meet at school, university, or work.

What I like about these blood communities is you've got people from all walks of life. And I just like that. My dance partner is a baker and he would bring kind of like pastries, or someone would cook a cake and people would kind of look out for each other in a way too, so class always starts late.

The two men commented that they appreciated their daughters experiencing social groups they normally would not be exposed to:

The Croatian side of their heritage, except for their cousins, they hadn't connected with at that level. So they met a whole bunch of different people and got into their social network. They've done things they normally would not have done, got to know people. That's the good thing about the 'Dallie' club. It's still open to all nationalities of former Yugoslavia: Serbians, Bosnians, people from different parts. So it's actually quite diverse and that is quite good for them, to understand how people have lived. A lot of them are new immigrants, I suppose.

One woman described how people engaged her when she first went to the Cultural Society:

I was sitting at a table once and this older woman came over and kind of plonked these figs in my hand and that was her way of trying to find out who I was. These were figs off her tree. They all want to know, they all find out the interconnections and try and work it all out, who you are related to. They all wanted to know how much Dallie are you and how much Kiwi are you.

A strong social bond still exists within the Reunion Group; they socialise after each kolo practice. Their cohesion also shows in actions such as entering a team in the Oxfam Trailwalker which happened during the period of my presence. Many group members were involved either walking or as support crew, or at least through giving donations. Everybody takes an interest in everybody else's life; it is a community that looks out for each other.

Last but not the least, a strong appreciation was presented that Auckland offers opportunities for many people to participate in cultural practices. Awareness and appreciation of other forms of cultural dance was voiced, though participation in other practices hardly happens.

Everybody stated appreciation of having the opportunity to practise their cultural heritage through dance in Auckland. People who lived away from Auckland expressed this particularly strongly:

We also lived in Dargaville for six years and there was a club there and we felt bonded to that club too. ... So it was easy for me to transfer from Auckland to Dargaville for the cultural things. And then we went to other towns where there wasn't a community and we did miss it.

One woman explained that where she had lived before in New Zealand gave her no opportunities to join Croatian/Dalmatian cultural groups. She described joining the cultural practices as a homecoming, grounding and enrichment.

I am also feeling connected to my heritage; connected within myself to this place. I feel more comfortable being in Auckland because I am learning something that is connected to this place but also to my bloodline, my history to this place.

Another woman, who has always lived in Auckland, said that,

If I went to another town it would be a hole in my life. It would be something missing for me.

The involvement in the kolo has facilitated for the interviewees a sense of Auckland as a place of many cultures with their own cultural practices. The women seek out cultural festivals more often and more deliberately than the men. Some would consider joining another dance group, preferably of a related culture such as Bulgaria.

Both men and women have been interested and involved with other dance forms at some stage in their lives (ballroom for the men, jazzdance and tap for one of the women). The three school teachers amongst the interviewees had

much involvement with other forms of cultural dance through work, the women doing hands-on teaching while the man was in a coordinating and supporting role.

Everybody commented on the importance of cultural festivals:

It's really important; it brings groups together and it showcases each culture's dances and foods at the festivals and things like that which of course leads to a better understanding of people and better tolerance.

It's so ethnic; it's so Auckland. It's what Auckland is about!

They talked about the fact that language can be a barrier but they saw dance as "a very uniting thing". Also it was stated that Auckland feels much more international now compared to when they grew up.

The men said they had never considered joining a dance practice of another culture, as the main objective for them was the connection with their own culture. However they both also emphasised several times that they very much enjoy dancing. They explained to me that male dancing is a normal occurrence in Croatian culture; they both thought dancing the kolo used to be a rite-of-passage for young Croatian men. They have never received any awkward feedback in Kiwi society about their dance practice, instead they have encountered interest and curiosity.

5.2.4 Discussion: Kolo – a transnational dance

5.2.4.1 Meanings of kolo in Auckland

It was apparent from the interviews that dancers appreciated dances that have a meaning for them. The meaning is often found in connecting generations as well as place. The best example of a dance that is meaningful for Dallies is the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo*, sourced from the old country, assembled in the new, thus truly connecting both worlds and being the favourite of the New Zealand-born generations and their parents.

The *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* is clearly recognisable as a Croatian dance as it contains mostly original movements from Dalmatia. However, the dance was put together from memory, therefore unintended changes may have occurred, and the overall form including the transfers between the sections was choreographed here. New movements were added over time. The dance has received constant adaptations in the New Zealand context and is therefore an example of the glocal nature of dance practices in migrant situations.

Stari Splitski is an example of transnational influences on dance. It was not changed considerably in the New Zealand context, but it is a dance that carries influences from many countries in Europe. In this sense, even though it may be considered a dance from Split, it is in fact a dance that originates from many places. It is still performed today in Croatia but also in Croatian communities across the world, just like in Auckland. For example, a DVD of a folk festival in Đakovo, Croatia, (45th Đakovački Vezovi 2011) includes a Chilean Croatian/Dalmatian dance group performing *Stari Splitski*.

5.2.4.2 Dally identity – belonging to two places

“I think it is a community that engages in New Zealand way of life but it holds very much dear those special unique cultural [ways]”.

The situation of the studied Auckland kolo dancers could be termed a form of reverse transnationalism. Within transnationalist theory it is described that cultural practices travel with migrants to new places of residence and that these practices are used to keep a felt connection to heritage and the original place. In the studied group, the kolo dancers all grew up in New Zealand, so they are constructing Dalmatia here without, in most cases, having lived there. The term ‘Dallies’ indeed defines New Zealand Dalmatians, who nevertheless feel a strong connection to the homeland of their ancestors.

Two strands feed into the constructing of cultural identity of Dally kolo dancers in Auckland: Firstly, cultural knowledge passed down by the ancestors who arrived in the early 20th century (whose relevance is indicated on the Cultural Society’s website cited at the beginning of this section). The second strand brings cultural knowledge in the form of dance and music as it is practised today in Croatia and other regions of the Balkans. The Reunion group cherishes and strongly embraces both. The fact that the teacher is Serbian points to openness towards other ethnic groups of the Balkan region and their cultural treasures. It is a big step towards crossing a divide.

Kolo and the general involvement with the Dalmatian Cultural Society has for many of the members I spoke to facilitated the wish and consequent realisation to travel to Dalmatia and experience it personally. Many have more contact with Croatia these days than they had when they were growing up and several interviewees met relatives for the first time on their visits. The kolo group is very supportive of its members’ trips to Croatia and the planning and financing of the next trip is a recurrent topic when they socialise. A transnational way of thinking and way of life is apparent within this group.

Dalmatians/Croatians in New Zealand do clearly belong to two places and their culture is alive and well in both. The dance (and in the men's case also the music) is the vehicle to keep the connection alive through regular cultural practice. The interviews clearly demonstrate that involvement with the kolo dance group has facilitated learning about the diversity and history of Croatia and the whole of the Balkan region. The dance group based in the Croatian Cultural Society, together with a Māori kapa haka group from Wellington, toured Croatia in 2011. The thriving Croatian culture in Auckland presented itself in the 'old' country and they were received with much acclaim. Certainly huge strides have been made to connect the 'old' place, Croatia as it is now, and the 'new' place, Aotearoa New Zealand.

5.3 Indian dance in Auckland

5.3.1 India

India, a federation that covers a vast subcontinent and is settled by diverse ethnic and religious groups, is the perfect example of a constructed nation-state. Today it comprises 28 states, 7 union territories, and hundreds of languages. The seven main religious groups are Hindus, Moslems, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, Jains, and Buddhists; in fact India is the birthplace of both Hinduism and Buddhism. This diverse nation came into existence in 1947 after about two hundred years of British colonial rule, its shape and form decided upon by a British lawyer who as chairman of the Border Committees drew post-independence borderlines. With the intention of calming ethnic and political tensions, Pakistan was set up as a separate Islamic nation. Nevertheless, years of chaotic mass migration and colossal loss of life happened. What comprises today's Myanmar/Burma was also set up as a separate state, and East Pakistan later became independent Bangladesh.

India is densely populated and the world's second most populated country; a place of complexities and contradictions; religious tolerance but also tensions that at times break out into violence; unconcealed opposites of rich and poor; burgeoning industries and a developing middle class versus a persistently high illiteracy rate; a richness of culture and history versus lack of development and opportunities for many; and with its people in huge diasporas around the globe. India has been a stable democracy since 1947; with equal rights for all ethnic and religious groups as well as women and men; with a woman Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, before most western countries; where girls and women are nevertheless in great danger of being mistreated or killed (Baldwin, 2012). The ideals of liberalism and collectivism prevalent in Indian culture have not superseded other cultural factors that keep many – particularly females – in powerless situations. India is a country where the belief in karma and rebirth facilitates an acceptance of the outlawed caste system and where despite a generally caring attitude, many citizens' lack of possibilities in regard to social and professional mobility is phlegmatically taken for granted (Grihault, 2003).

In summary, India is heir to an old civilisation with an inherent interest in experimentations, creativity, and entrepreneurial and intellectual risk taking, but it is at the same time in the grip of archaic and patriarchal attitudes. For the purpose of reflecting on Indian dance today, it is crucial to take a closer look at the political and cultural developments of the pre- and post-independence period of India.

5.3.2 Dances of India

“In the post-independence era, the history of dance in India was narrated with a specific political agenda – that of establishing the dominant, hegemonizing voice of the nation builders within the nation itself, and for building an image of India as a significant regional entity with a formidable cultural heritage in the context of the world at large.” (Munsi, 2008, p. 91)

The cultural heritage within the classical dances of India originates from areas that are now India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, with further influences coming from the Tamil culture of South India and Sri Lanka, as well as from neighbouring countries such as Iran and Turkey. The history of classical Indian dance tells the history of not just the cultural and religious traditions of the subcontinent, but also reflects India's road to nationhood. As the post-independence India created by Britain is a constructed nation of diverse ethnic and religious groups it needed ways of consolidating and finding common ground. In this historical context dance had a function in creating a pan-Indian identity (Kothari, 2011; Munsi, 2008). During this period, some dance forms like bharata natyam went from largely regional origins to becoming pan-Indian.

Most Indian dance forms have long traditions, which were at times lost, then rediscovered and re-constituted. They changed in this process; particularly extensive developments happened during the so-called dance revival period of the 1930s and 1940s. Many dance forms spread outside their place of origin and became national forms, but an understanding of where dances originated continues. This was evident in Auckland when I talked to dance experts and audience members at Indian dance performances.

The story of Indian dance is also about East meets West, as India was first colonised by Portugal and then by Great Britain. Rabindranath Tagore, an Indian philosopher, artist, and 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature recipient, and Uday Shankar, an Indian dancer who worked extensively with Anna Pavlova, exposed the world to India's cultural richness and also utilised some western artistic notions within their Indian dance practices. In the other direction, their meeting with Indian dance influenced American modern dance pioneers Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, and others to such an extent that 'oriental' elements became part of their specific style. Venkatamaran and Pasricha (2005) suggest that St. Denis and Shawn would have seen kathak performances on their visits to India in the 1920s.

5.3.2.1 The Indian dance revival

Under British rule, the Raj, dance and all arts "suffered a temporary eclipse" (Gopal & Dadachanji, 1951, p. 21) but never completely disappeared. The

dance revival pioneers thought that the British misunderstood Indian dance and hence sidelined it. The Indians perceived the creation of the term “nautch dances” – derived from an English alliteration of the Sanskrit word for dance – as a lack of knowledge and respect by the British. Interpretations of viewed performances reflected Victorian attitudes and caused a perception that classical Indian dance performances were too sensual. However, it is also acknowledged across the literature that prostitution among dancers existed for a time due to the lack of financial support for professional performers thus leaving the art form in disrepute.

As an integral part of the independence movement, a cultural revival began that cherished Indian dancing among many other art forms. Urmimala Sarkar Munsri (2008) highlights its political and historical function: “[D]ance became *the* emblem of India's glorious past and its rich cultural traditions – an image that has stayed till today. Folk and tribal dances were an integral part of the culture of the unrepresented minorities” (p. 78, italics in original). Munsri suggests that the revival carried positive as well as negative aspects. She argues that many supporters of the cultural revival were driven by questionable and romanticising concepts of India, combining their idea of India’s brilliance with an elitist “museum-like image of cultural practice that is considered rare, exclusive and unchangeable” (p. 91).

The most prominent artists of the Indian dance revival are the before-mentioned Tagore and Shankar, also Ram Gopal, Rukmini Devi, Mrinalini Sarabhai, and Chandralheka. Shankar’s and Gopal’s works brought Indian dance to the world’s stages; Shankar later established a dance academy in Almora. Tagore befriended the Elmhirst family of the famous educational institution Dartington Hall in Britain. The holistic student-centred pedagogy practised there resonated with Tagore and he implanted a focus on creative process and expressive dance into the training at his school Patha Bhavana in Santiniketan. Tagore was incremental in re-establishing Indian classical dance as an art form; he also created the first Indian ‘modern’ dance choreography. His school brought forth influential practitioners such as Mrinalini Sarabhai who had a successful international performing career and trained students in dance, drama, music, and puppetry at her Darpana Academy of Performing Arts. Rukmini Devi’s work, told in more detail below, aided bharata natyam’s proliferation as a national form.

Chandralekha was a colourful dance pioneer whose career spanned the 1950s to 1990s. She was concerned with issues of female empowerment, secularity in Indian dance, human rights, and environmental issues, thus challenging conventional notions of dance practice in India. Chandralekha fused bharata

natyam with yoga and Kalarippapayattu, a martial arts form, a move that earned her severe criticism within India. Nonetheless, she achieved a high international profile, toured the world, and collaborated with high profile choreographers such as Pina Bausch.

5.3.2.2 Classical, folk, or tribal?

Indian dances are classified as either 'classical' or 'folklore'/'tribal'. Munsli (2008) perceives this classification as artificial and suggests it originates in the Indian elite wanting to elevate the 'classical' over the 'folk'. She also points out that many dance practices do not neatly fit either category and therefore become sidelined. Folklore supposedly originated from clearly defined localities. However, all classical forms equally have clearly established geographical origins, resulting in a murky point of distinction. The question why some forms of traditional Indian dance are excluded from the classical fold is a pertinent one and alerts to the problematic nature of a 'sanctioning' system.

Some differences between the two are evident though. Folk dance in general is less complex and is not practised in structured systems with elaborate training. They are the dances of the people with an emphasis on enjoyment and participation. The most well-known Indian folk dance form is bhangra which has its origins in farmers' dances from the Punjab region, its roots reaching back almost a thousand years. Bhangra in the last half century developed into a hybrid form incorporating elements from other regions of India. At the 2011 and 2012 Auckland Diwali festivals I witnessed bhangra performances which drew large crowds. Groups of mostly young men started dancing and women of all age groups, dressed in saris or jeans, joined them. Bhangra has had a profound influence on Bollywood dancing.

Considering that classical Indian dance forms feature diverse movement vocabularies leads to the question of what unites them. Sunil Kothari (2001) states that common mythological themes are the connecting aspect of 'classical' Indian dance forms. Shovana Narayan (2005a) says that each classical form can trace its origin back at least a thousand years and some even two thousand years. She also claims that all dances categorised as 'classical' "have similar roots of devotional origin, similar subjects of enactment, similar formats of presentation and similar experiences in its path of evolution" (p. 7). Lorna Sanders (2004) defines classical Indian dances as having a "prescribed set of principles; established aesthetic of the body; frontal orientation, upright posture, effortlessness; formal etiquette of presentation; codified steps; interdependent and complex relationship with music" (p. 23).

5.3.2.3 Classical Indian dance

Today eight forms of Indian dance are considered 'classical dances': bharata natyam, kathak, mohini attam, odissi, kuchipudi, kathakali, and manipuri.

Sattriya has lately been added to the list (Narayam, 2005a, 2005b;

Venkataraman & Pasricha, 2005; Sanders, 2004). These dance forms have a long tradition in regional or temple dancing. The fact that the source for many Indian dances is found in mythology is seen as proof of their antiquity (Gopal & Dadachanji, 1951).

At the heart of these dances, and the major connecting attribute between them, is the profound faith that permeates Indian culture (Gopal & Dadachanji, 1951; Narayam, 2005a, 2005b; Sanders, 2004). Gopal and Dadachanji (1951) state that, "Indian dancing, in the main, [is] a form of religion" (p. 18). Temples have been sites of dance development and performance, and have recorded dance history (Thiyam, 2011; Venkataraman & Pasricha, 2005). Much temple architecture is endowed with sculptural representations of dancers, providing a tangible record of dance practices reaching back almost two thousand years (Narayan, 2005a; Thiyam, 2011; Venkataraman & Pasricha, 2005).

Furthermore, dance history is recorded through cave sculptures, literary references, in small figurines, and in paintings (Narayan, 2005a).

Many scholars (Narayan, 2005a, 2005b; O'Shea, 2006; Venkataraman & Pasricha, 2005) point out that some forms of classical Indian dance have ancient roots, but were shaped into their current form in the mid-20th century. Mohini attam belongs in this category and so does odissi, which was an almost lost dance tradition and resurrected "on the foundation of lean pickings" (Venkataraman & Pasricha, 2005, p. 62). Bharata natyam, from South India, kathak, from North India, and kuchipudi, a little known local tradition, spread across India in the post-independence period. According to Venkataraman and Pasricha (2005), festivals created a pan-Indian competitive spirit which facilitated choreographic accomplishment.

A shared feature of classical Indian dancing is the importance of the teacher-student relationship. Teachers are gurus and mentors, their influence reaching far beyond teaching movement. British Bangladeshi choreographer Akram Khan in an interview for the British arts programme *The South Bank Show* (Bragg, 2002) stated that the relationship between guru and student is ruled by utmost respect and an unquestioning attitude.

Indian classical dances are composite art forms encompassing philosophy, meditation, and yoga. It takes between three and seven years of strict physical training to become a proficient practitioner. In the case of bharata natyam the

final exam is called arangetram, an elaborate public event that needs extensive financial input from the family of the graduating dancer.

An important aspect of classical Indian dance is the concept of 'rasa'. The atmosphere of a work is expected to evoke an inward experience of delight for the audience. Gopal & Dadachanji (1951) call it "the emotional fervour that the artist must arouse in the spectator so as to enable him to become one with the spirit of the drama" (p. 100). The performers' expressive movements, gestures, and facial expressions facilitate this process which requires exceptional qualities and abilities of the dancers.

Two classical Indian dance forms were chosen for this case study. Bharata Natyam is the best-known of the classical Indian dance forms, and kathak also features prominently worldwide. Hence, it was no accident that my main case study in Auckland took place in a school for kathak dancing and further interviews were conducted with bharata natyam practitioners.

5.3.2.4 Bharata natyam

Bharata natyam is a solo dance form from Southern India which connects to traditions reaching back about two thousand years. It emerged as an identifiable form around the 16th or 17th century (Narayan, 2005b) and was called sadir before being re-named in the 1930s. Sadir had some international circulation from the early 19th century (O'Shea, 2003; Thiagarajan, 2011). Bharata natyam spread globally on a large scale after the Indian dance revival, accelerating during the 1980s and 1990s when non-resident Indians started to practise it globally as a means of cultural reproduction (O'Shea, 2003). It has even become a core subject in a dance degree programme in Malaysia (Thiagarajan, 2011), thus transcending ethnic and cultural boundaries as most of these students are of non-Indian descent.

Bharata natyam in its current form is inextricably linked with the work of Indian theosophist, dancer, and choreographer Rukmini Devi (1904-1986). In 1936 Devi established a school in Kalakshetra (Chennai) which acquired an unparalleled reputation and is to this day considered a global hub of bharata natyam. In the early stage, Devi sent her students to interview dance gurus and record their knowledge. From this knowledge Devi devised a technique, curriculum, and exam system which is still globally adhered to. The Kalakshetra system requires students to learn languages (including Sanskrit), music, literature, and dance. Devi attracted students from many parts of Asia, and also from Europe, the USA, and Australia (Meduri, 2008).

Devi was married to British theosophist George Arundale and had friendships with Italian educator Maria Montessori and dancer Anna Pavlova. The latter

encouraged Devi to study and record Indian dance. Devi was focused on the spiritual value of bharata natyam and its beauty. She wanted to create a reputable art form and hence cherry-picked elements from sadir's repertoire, leaving out movements that appeared sensual, which earned her criticism for 'sanitising' the style (Kothari, 2011; O'Shea, 2006). Indian dance scholar Kothari (2011), however, thinks she beautified the form without losing its basic essence.

American dance scholar Janet O'Shea (2006) discovered three versions of framing bharata natyam's history. One version emphasises its spiritual and temple origins, another one the Tamil roots, a third reading combines aspects of both. O'Shea recognises these versions as "the crafting of multiple affiliations and multiple histories" and acknowledges that it seems "impossible to locate – and write – a singular, 'accurate' history" of bharata natyam" (p. 139). Her research proves that even though bharata natyam is perceived as **the** traditional Indian dance form, it is indeed constructed and contested in regard to origins and ownership.

The aesthetic emphasis of bharata natyam is on geometry featuring straight lines and clear angles of the body as well as clear spatial pathways. Arm movements are mostly linear and often combined with elaborate hand gestures called mudras. Bharata Natyam applies demi and full pliés, turned-out legs and feet with the aim to achieve a diamond shaped lower body in the deep plié. The dancer uses the weight of the body strongly into the floor. Generally the movement is performed with a controlled flow; foot work can be dynamic. The repertoire includes 'nritta' (abstract and rhythmical choreography) and 'nritya' (dramatic and expressive dance). Costumes are generally a pair of loose trousers that have a pleated front and back so they look like a skirt. Set rules regarding the wearing of jewellery in performance exist. Today, bharata natyam has evolved from a solo dance form into a form that also allows group choreographies, which was evident in the Auckland *Taj Mahal* productions I witnessed.

In New Zealand, dance school showings and arangetrams are the most visible public manifestation of bharata natyam. Some teachers have the right to conduct exams, a right passed down from their respective guru. Alternatively, overseas institutions conduct bharata natyam exams, most prominently Kalakshetra school in Chennai and the Oriental Fine Arts Academy of London, thus incorporating the graduates into an international bharata natyam web.

5.3.2.5 Kathak

Kathak carries the imprints of a long varied history, including Hindu, Muslim, and secular influences. It was practised at temples and courts and since the 20th century, it has developed a presence in theatre performances, led by artists such as Madame Menaka and British-Indian choreographers Akram Khan.

Kathak originates from regions of Northern India, specifically the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh but also from regions that are today in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Northern India was historically under a strong Muslim influence particularly during the Moghul reign (16th to mid-18th centuries). Shah Jahan, the Moghul emperor who 'built' the Taj Mahal, is still reminisced in the before-mentioned *Taj Mahal* dance drama. Kathak is hence the only classical Indian dance form with an Arab influence; some connections to Flamenco, suspected to have arrived through Romani gypsies, are also apparent. Gopal and Dadachanji (1951) describe Kathak as "the hybrid offspring of vastly different cultures" (p. 5). Narayan (2005a) suggests that kathak is inherently pluralistic and captures the spirit of multi-culturalism.

Similar to bharata natyam, disagreement exists about the exact histories of kathak (Sanders, 2004). Narayan (2005a, 2005b) suggests that some ancient forms reaching back about two thousand years included elements that are close enough to today's kathak to be considered part of its lineage. Other sources (Venkataraman & Pasricha, 2005; Sanders, 2004) are more cautious, suggesting that what was danced two thousand years ago may have been very different. Venkataraman and Pasricha (2005) additionally highlight that kathak has changed a lot since the dance revival.

Kathak as a distinct style evolved during the Moghul reign. The Persian influence initiated a more secular development by incorporating non-religious poetry into kathak and also shifting dance from temples to palaces (Sanders, 2004; Venkataraman & Pasricha, 2005). In the 19th century, two major gharanas (schools) of kathak developed at Lucknow and Jaipur, later followed by the establishment of the Benares and Raigarh gharanas. As with all classical Indian dance forms, a period of decline followed in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

At the core of kathak is storytelling, the word deriving from the Sanskrit words 'katha' (story) and 'kathakar' (storyteller). Some scholars believe that nomadic bards, who travelled the ancient Northern India, and who combined singing, storytelling, and dance, are part of its history. Kathak interprets mythology and folklore and its repertoire draws from ancient and contemporary poetry. Today, prominent themes are myth pertaining to Lord Krishna, a Hindu deity who has

been a favourite subject in performing arts for centuries. In the Jaipur, Benares and Raigarh gharana, Lord Shiva and his son Lord Ganesh are equally revered.

Kathak is practised in groups. It expresses joie de vivre, has a 'folklore' feel to it, and has, according to Narayan (2005a), kept its grassroots ties. Kathak stresses footwork, features natural leg and foot positions, straight knees, subtle shoulder and upper torso inclinations, and delicate wrist movements. The fast chakkars (pivot style pirouettes), often repeated multiple times, are eye-catching ingredients of any kathak performance. They represent the Hindu belief in rebirth and the cyclical nature of human activities (Narayan, 2005b).

Kathak's footwork and ankle bells called ghungroos create rhythms and soundscapes. Because of the elaborate footwork, the dancing has a vertical emphasis and rarely covers much floor space. Performances are normally accompanied by live tabla (Indian drums); dance and music are inextricably linked. A special aspect of kathak is that dancers often recite the rhythmical pattern without accompaniment before executing them. Kathak is renowned for its complex rhythms and its inherent differences in tempo, a performance generally encompassing very slow to very fast.

Kathak costumes are influenced by Persian traditions. Often a lehenga, a loose ankle or calf-length skirt, that flares out when turning, is worn with a choli, a tight fitting short-sleeved blouse which sometimes exposes the midriff. The Auckland kathak group I studied had their blouses and skirts sewn together leaving the midriff covered. Loose trousers are normally worn underneath and sometimes veils or scarfs are added. Men's costumes consist of a dholi, a traditional tunic, and tight fitting pants. Costumes are bright-coloured as Indians consider white and black non colours; many sequins add to the generally sparkling appearance. According to Narayan (2005a), these types of costumes were already recorded about two thousand years ago. Extensive personal jewellery such as necklaces, earrings, wrist bangles, rings, and nose pins are common, and sometimes a tika which adorns the parting of the hair. In contrast to bhārata natyam, the use of jewellery in performance is not strictly determined but open to individual or group decisions.

A kathak presentation, like any classical Indian dance performance, has at least three distinct sections: the invocation, in which hand gestures above the head, at the forehead and at chest level serve to salute the Lord of the Dance, the guru, the stage and the audience respectively; the nritta which is the abstract and purely rhythmical section where dance units are performed; and the nritya, the expressive and story-telling part which abundantly incorporates hand gestures. The entry comprises slow movements and always includes a pause

with a praying position (Gopal & Dadachanji, 1951). This salutation serves as acknowledgement of Lord Krishna, Lord Shiva, or Lord Ganesh, and also acknowledges the sacredness of the stage. In kathak the nritta part is uniquely complex requiring the dancer to meticulously keep time and simultaneously control the sounds by the way the foot is slapping the floor. In the nritya part both codified gestures, which for example could mean an animal or a plant, and expressive movements are present.

5.3.2.6 Choreographing *bharata natyam* and *kathak* today

Thiyam (2011) describes dance in today's India as permeating all communities, religions, languages, and localities and as encompassing ritual, folklore, classical, and experimental abstractions. He points to the enormous creativity apparent among Indian choreographers emphasising the "countless variety and emerging possibilities of traditional forms [and] newer adaptations" (xi). He maintains that "dance continues to be part of life and culture in more ways than one – as different forms travel from local to global frontiers, and continues to assume complexities of difference" (xi-xii). His account captures the vibrancy and diversity that define Indian dance in India and the diaspora.

Many scholars and choreographers revel in the opportunities for new forms to develop from within rich classical Indian dance traditions. Practitioners comment on the freedom that comes from an abundance of movement and rhythmical material to draw from (Thiagarajan, 2011; Katrak, 2011). Famous *bharata natyam* and *kathakali* practitioner Mrinalini Sarabhai once said, "We are fortunate in India to have an extremely sophisticated alphabet that has been handed down to us" (cited in Katrak, 2011, xxiii). Gopal (1951) mentions that little stylisation exists in *kathak*, leaving ample room for improvisation. Narayan equally (2005a) highlights *kathak*'s "improvisatory spark and open-ended approach within its grammar and form" (p. 56). Akram Khan finds myriad ways of developing new movement and choreographic form from *kathak*. However, Katrak (2011) also mentions the paradox of freedom despite strictness and discipline that rule the form.

Indian diaspora practitioners Akram Khan, Shobana Jeyasingh, and Ananya Chatterjea amongst others share the purpose of trying to find a contemporary expression of the (diasporic) Indian dancing body. Khan and Chatterjea differ in that Khan wants to strengthen the spiritual, while Ananya Chatterjea (2004) discusses secular versus religious approaches to Indian dance. She is interested in finding a movement idiom that is not based on "religious and culturally specific shapings of bodies" (p. 108).

5.3.2.7 Contemporary Indian dance globally

"The search is no longer for authenticity but for an identity, which may be hybrid, even de-territorialised, yet one that works towards building a new boundary and a new marker of identity by transcending the older one." (Munsi, 2008, p. 95)

People with ancestry from the Indian subcontinent are living in many places around the world, particularly in the Commonwealth of Nations. In these diaspora communities traditions are proliferated and new forms are continuously emerging. A prolific British-Indian dance scene exists that has been widely written about (Grau, 2001; Katrak, 2011; Meduri, 2008; Roy, 1997; Sanders, 2004). South Asian dance, as it is called there, receives infrastructural support from Akādemi South Asian Dance UK and the British Arts Council. Since 2005 the University of Roehampton has offered a Master of Arts programme in South Asian Dance Studies.

Most prominent among British-Bangladeshi practitioners is the before-mentioned Akram Khan who trained in kathak and who understands it as his spiritual, philosophical, and technical base. His work, thought of by dance scholar Ramsay Burt as contributing to contemporary British culture (Katrak, 2011), is labelled 'contemporary kathak'. Khan, London-born to Bangladeshi parents, is described as a confident second generation migrant (Katrak, 2011). He has a deep respect for traditions and modernity alike; he challenges both and takes them to new places, achieving successful intercultural meeting places that are also interdisciplinary (Katrak, 2011; Bragg, 2002). Katrak (2011) reports that "Khan narrated his dance journey – from kathak to contemporary dance, and again to kathak – to me in an interview" (p. 208). Sanders (2004) describes this as Khan crossing the river backwards and forwards. Khan (cited in Sadler's Wells, 2010) explains his approach as using onion layers of kathak in his choreography, particularly kathak's extreme speed, extreme stillness, and its vertical thrust which in his view expresses spirituality.

Equally as prominent in the British Contemporary South Asian dance scene is Shobana Jeyasingh, whose work is discussed in chapter 4. Her career spans 25 years at the cutting edge of the performing arts in London. She takes the liberty to equally draw from her bharata natyam and her contemporary dance backgrounds, creating pieces with a strong urban flavour and tackling issues of multi-culturalism.

Likewise worth mentioning is the work of Indian-born dancer, choreographer, and scholar Ananya Chatterjea, now at the University of Minnesota. She trained in the classical form of Odissi which she deconstructs, infuses with yoga and

martial arts elements, and assembles anew. Her work has a focus on women artists of colour and personal empowerment, as well as on social justice issues.

As a closing statement for this section a quote of Urmimala Munsri (2008) seems fitting. She advocates to "encourage contemporary dancers to co-exist with the classicists, and thereby establish the true identity and scope for dance in India" (p. 95), an approach that applies to Indian dance practitioners worldwide.

5.3.2.8 Bollywood

Bollywood is probably the most prominent cultural expression of India today. It has developed into a large movie industry that some claim has surpassed Hollywood, and Bollywood style dancing has developed into an international popular art phenomenon. Originating from the Indian dance drama and incorporating aspects of some Indian folklore dance forms (particularly bhangra) the dance choreographies of Bollywood also feed on jazzdance and American musical theatre. A tremendous variation of styles exist under the Bollywood umbrella, such as young Indians presenting Michael Jackson type performances or choreography which draws from Indian movement traditions presented to remixed Indian pop music.

To investigate and theorise the Bollywood phenomenon would be worthy of a doctoral study. For the purpose of this study it suffices to acknowledge it as a form of Indian dancing with a global impact. Even though Bollywood has incorporated influences from South Asian and American popular culture alike, it is still valid to call it an Indian dance form. Several interviewees in this study, from dissimilar backgrounds and involved with different Indian dance styles, highlighted that from their perspective Bollywood has become an essential part of contemporary Indian culture permeating ceremonies and festivities in many families and reaching across at least two generations. The filming of Bollywood movies at New Zealand locations is a noteworthy connection between the two countries, putting New Zealand on the travel map for resident Indians.

5.3.3 Indians in Aotearoa New Zealand

The notion of an Indian diaspora has been subject to academic research with diverse foci (Lal, 2010; Mishra, 2005). Both American-Indian academic Vinay Lal and Fijian-Indian Vijay Mishra claim that India and Indians are often portrayed as stagnant and immobile in western research, and as people that are driven away from their homeland by unfavourable conditions. Mishra (2005) points out though, that many Indians are also driven by 'wanderlust', an intense desire to explore the world, a fact that he claims is often overlooked or not acknowledged by western conceptions of migration.

New Zealand scholar Jacqueline Leckie (1995) calls the Indian diaspora “one of the major migrations in modern history” (p.134), and Lal (2010) defines it as a “unique force in world culture” (p.1). The Indian diaspora is visible and vibrant, estimated to encompass 11 million people (Mishra, 2005). Indian culture(s) have captured the imagination of the western world for a long time: Gandhi’s philosophy of peaceful resistance, Hinduism and Buddhism, academics such as Homi Bhabha and Arjun Appadurai, Indian music, yoga practices, and much more. Additionally, India has been a mecca for western travellers since the 1970s.

The Indian diaspora of New Zealand, at present the fastest growing ethnic group in the country (Bandyopadhyay, 2010), has brought forth many prominent personalities. Sir Anand Satyanand was governor general (2006-2011), Sukhi Turner mayor of Dunedin (1995-2004), Ashraf Choudray the first New Zealand Indian MP (2002-2011), followed by Dr. Rajen Prasad and Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi (since 2008). Prasad was also New Zealand’s Race Relations Conciliator from 1996 to 2001. Avinash Deobhakta became the first Judge of Indian descent in New Zealand.

Indians have also left their mark in sports: Dipak Patel in cricket and Ramesh and Mohan Patel in hockey. Indian migrant experiences have featured on stage in *Krishnan’s Dairy*, Rajan’s successful one man show first staged in 1997 and restaged in 2012, and on screen in the 2011 movie *Mr Singh wants PR* by director Fahad Sher Hussain.

In 2010 Sir Anand Satyanand, who is the New Zealand-born son of Fijian-Indian migrants, was at the centre of a controversy which erupted when TV presenter Paul Henry asked Prime Minister John Key whether the next New Zealand Governor General would be “more Kiwi” than the outgoing Satyanand. This incident caused outrage not only in the Indian communities but across many sections of society, indicating a compulsion towards a more inclusive understanding of who is a New Zealander. Public debate included support for and against Henry’s attitude, but he had to apologise publicly and lost his job.

5.3.3.1 Indian migration to Aotearoa New Zealand

The first Indians arrived in New Zealand around the turn of the 19th century on British East India Company ships from which they deserted. A few Indian men arrived during the 19th century and, similar to the Dalmatians, significant numbers started to arrive during the 1890s. The reasons given for choosing migration are population pressures at home, decline of small village-based enterprises, poverty, lack of opportunities, and high costs of traditional wedding ceremonies (Swarbrick, 2011).

Indian migrant workers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries predominantly worked as drain diggers, scrub and flax cutters, bottle collectors, fruit pickers, and in road building. They were mostly from the Punjab and Gujarat regions, and like the Dalmatians formed bachelor communities. As previously mentioned, Indians as subjects of the British Empire had unrestricted access to New Zealand until 1920. The New Zealand Government, under pressure from anti-Asian campaigners, blocked this access in 1920 (Swarbrick, 2011). Nevertheless, Indians could bring some relatives under the previously signed Reciprocity Principle, and many brought their sons or other male relatives. The rest of their families often stayed in India and for many Indians in New Zealand the plan was to send money home and eventually return.

From 1905 to the late 1920s Indians in Auckland met at each other's houses for company and for sharing views and experiences; preserving culture, heritage, and religion was always on the agenda. These men, despite their diverse origins in South Asia, had "brotherly affection" for each other (Auckland Indian Association, 2010). Swarbrick (2011) suggests that after the end of World War I Indians in New Zealand developed an inclusive and uniting attitude towards each other. The perceived need for a single body to help strengthen Indian communities in light of ongoing discrimination resulted in the establishment of the New Zealand Indian Central Association in 1926 with branches in Auckland, Taumarunui, and Wellington. Today 10 independent local branches exist nationwide.

In the mid-1920s, the White New Zealand League agitated against non-white migration focusing particularly on Chinese and Indians. Indian market gardeners in Pukekohe, south of Auckland, suffered ongoing harassment. This continued until the late 1950s with Indians being excluded from barbers, swimming pools, some pubs and along with Māori from balcony seats in cinemas (Swarbrick, 2011; Leckie 1995; Gibson & Scott, 2009). In 1952 Federated Farmers in Franklin County advocated the confiscation of land owned by Asians and their forced repatriation (Leckie, 1995).

In the 1930s Indians started moving into other industries such as hospitality and manufacturing. With this came a shift into urban areas. Many had worked hard and had saved enough to buy their own retail business, predominantly dairies, an industry in which they still feature strongly in Auckland and elsewhere around the country.

After independence in 1947, many left India for good and created large diasporas worldwide resulting in a marked increase of new migrants in New Zealand. At this time the largely bachelor society slowly morphed into family

oriented communities. In 1955 the Mahatma Gandhi Hall opened its doors creating a vital meeting place, events centre, and place of learning for the Indian communities of Auckland. In "Bharat and Manohar" (1964), New Zealand-Dalmatian writer Amelia Batistich offers an account of Indians in New Zealand in the 1960s. She tells the stories of two Indian boys who had moved to the Auckland region. She describes hard working, supportive communities that facilitated cultural learning for the next generation through Sunday schools, which in Auckland took place in the Mahatma Gandhi Hall.

Indian population numbers in New Zealand slowly increased through the middle of the 20th century. Further growth occurred from 1974 onwards when Indians could migrate without having family connections within New Zealand. Additionally, ethnic Indians were part of a contingent of refugees from Uganda in the early 1970s after the takeover by dictator Idi Amin. Bharata natyam teacher Kanan Deobhakta arrived from there in 1972 with her young family, having left just before the political situation became volatile. Her story is an example of the fact that many Indian families have histories which span numerous international migrations.

Subsequently, several migration waves happened: from Fiji after the 1987 and 2000 coups, and in the 1990s from India. The number of Indians in New Zealand increased from 11,000 in 1981 to 62,000 in 2001 and 106,000 in 2006. According to Leckie (1995), in the 1990s about one third of people identifying as Indians in New Zealand were born here, another third in India and the remaining third in Fiji. In the early 1990s the community had outgrown the original Gandhi Hall and a much larger venue was opened in 1994 in Eden Terrace, central Auckland.

Today Indians, after the Chinese, make up the second largest Asian migrant group in Auckland. They feature in diverse work situations such as retail, often as shop owners, in logistics (taxi and courier businesses), technical jobs, factory work, finance, legal and health sectors, and much more. A large proportion of the Indian population is well educated and occupies professional positions; a shift towards Indian women receiving tertiary qualifications has been particularly noticeable (Leckie, 1995). Hence it is no surprise that the Indian community is well established and offers a wide range of infrastructure for their people. The first Hindu temple was opened in Auckland in 1996 and several more have since followed. A variety of media options are available, most prominently the online *Indian Newslink* and Radio Tarana which support and cover many public events of the Indian community.

Swarbrick (2011) suggests that Indian migrants to Aotearoa have not established the traditional caste system here but rather follow Mahatma Gandhi's tolerant and inclusive ideals. Leckie (1995) however cautions about such generalised statements regarding the caste system in New Zealand, as different approaches exist in different communities. She suggests that most Indians in New Zealand are at least aware of their caste origins but second and third generations tend to reject the accompanying restrictions and Fijian Indians in particular do not assign much relevance to it.

Even though to this day traditional gender roles and values of family honour and duty are held dear in Indian communities, signs of shifting attitudes exist. I observed that many Indians readily discuss how the arranging of marriages is changing, a topic which also features in the media. Fuchs, Linkenbach and Malik (2010) in their research on Indians in Christchurch found that inter-marriages between Indians and non-Indians are becoming more common and accepted, and that the pressure to marry within one's caste has lessened even within conservative sections of the community.

From my personal experience a feature of Indian communities in Auckland is ethnic and religious tolerance. The word multi-ethnic features many times on the *Indian Newslink* website and the value of cultural diversity within India and the diaspora is often acknowledged with pride. Interviewees spoke of curiosity about each other's religious and cultural practices. The recent participation of various non-Indian ethnic groups in Diwali festivals around Aotearoa is indicative of this open and inquisitive attitude.

5.3.3.2 Indian dance in Auckland

As indicated above, the 1970s were a period of migration to New Zealand from India, Fiji, and former British colonies in Africa. Kanan Deobhakta (personal communication, November 16, 2012) remembers Indian individuals performing at festivals and functions in the 1970s, but no schools for classical Indian dance existed. She, together with friends, performed at council-organised annual dance showings of diverse cultural dance forms at the Auckland Town Hall at that time. During this period many families of Indian descent in Auckland led busy lives but wanted to keep the Indian connection alive for their children. This situation, combined with her love for classical Indian dance, motivated Deobhakta to start a School for bharata natyam in Auckland in the early 1980s. As one of the interviewees conveyed, in the 1990s Indian dancing was also practised at Indian clubs situated at intermediate and secondary schools.

Indian dance in Auckland developed further with kathak schools starting in the 1990s. From the early 1990s onwards Deobhakta presented fusion choreographies with topics such as migrant women's experiences using music by Phillip Glass, Peter Gabriel, and Ravi Shankar. She also brought Nritya Ganga performances to Auckland, a practice where bharata natyam technique (from South India) is performed to Northern Indian classical music. This practice was developed by her guru Sucheta Bhide Chapekar.

Bharata natyam has had a continuous presence in Auckland for the last 30 years. Today, a varied landscape of Indian dance exists in the city including several bharata natyam schools and one kathak school. At official celebrations, such as the 65th Independence Day in 2011, the diverse cultures of India showcase their performing arts. Bollywood is practised in diverse situations including schools, competitions, cultural festivals, private studios, community education classes, and as corporate gigs. Bollywood attracts larger numbers of students and spectators than classical Indian dance forms, a situation that teachers of the latter noticed as early as the 1990s (Hogg, 2000). Bollywood has also found its place in the non-competitive section of Auckland's ASB Polyfest, an annual secondary schools competition in Māori and Pacific Performing Arts.

Diwali, the festival of light, has become a large public event attracting tens of thousands of visitors. It celebrates the Hindu New Year and focuses on freeing the world of evil and ushering in the good. In traditional contexts Diwali celebrations last five days and are private and public affairs with gift giving. In 2002 Diwali was established as a large public performance event in Auckland and Wellington. It is organised and financed by the respective city councils and Asia:NZ, an organisation established in 1994 as a non-profit partnership between public and private sectors. Their mission is to heighten New Zealanders' understanding of Asia (Asia New Zealand Foundation, n.d.). As Henry Johnson and Guil Figgins (2005) and Jared Mackley-Crump (2012) note, the establishment of large public Diwali celebrations meant shifting Diwali from private and religious contexts to public and secular realms, thus moving it beyond its original meanings. The value of presenting culture in the form of commercialised products (food or performance) to a public which devours them as exotic consumables is questionable (Johnson, 2010; Mackley-Crump, 2012) as discussed further in the Discussion and Conclusion chapters.

The first Diwali festival in Auckland took place at the Mahatma Gandhi Hall; the following year it moved to the Town Hall in the city. When the Town Hall became too crowded, it moved outside to Aotea Square, a large space in the heart of the city, all the while becoming more easily accessible to the wider

public. Diwali celebrations have become annual events featuring performances by international artists and local community groups. One interviewee suggested that Auckland's Diwali is the second largest in the Indian diaspora worldwide after London.

In 2012 the most prominent public performances of Indian dance outside Diwali festivals were two *Taj Mahal* performances. In the two year plus lead-up *Indian Newslink* published many articles about its inception and realisation indicating that it was a pivotal event for the community. The audio and visual slide show of this dance drama was pre-recorded in India and played back for the event. It features acting, dancing, and storytelling with texts in Hindi, Urdu, and English.

The two *Taj Mahal* performances I encountered were at Auckland's largest performing space, the Aotea Centre, and at a school auditorium. The audiences were largely Indian with a smattering of white faces. The following quote by Sasi Nambissan of Aiswarya Entertainments, who produced *Taj Mahal*, clarifies their motivation: "We are keen to take New Zealanders through this unique experience of a golden era in the Indian history, simultaneously promoting ethnic harmony with their involvement as artistes and production personnel" (cited in Sasidharan, 2012, p. 1). *Taj Mahal* received no public or charitable funding and was produced entirely with the financial backing of the Indian community.

5.3.4 Field research

Most Saturday afternoons between July and September 2012 I visited an Auckland school for kathak and Bollywood dancing, watched classes, and had informal conversations with the teacher, students, and observers. The classes were held at a well-known dance studio in a central Auckland suburb over a three-hour period. Often parents, siblings, other relatives, friends, and supporters sat at the side and watched. They talked, attended to mobile phones, sewed costumes, and walked in and out of the studio. Accompanying adults happily talked to me and others about the child's dance progress. One day a mother sitting beside me painted designs onto her hand with henna. In brief, a casual, positive, and communicative atmosphere prevailed. The age of the students ranged from 7 to mid-30s and classes were organised according to level of skill rather than age. During the period, I observed that dancers of all age groups often rehearsed together for a performance. The rehearsing situation also meant that participation on my part was not practical. However, I perceived the observing and engaging with the other observers as a form of participation.

Additional to the regular classes, I observed two rehearsals taking place at the teacher's home and in a local school hall, the before-mentioned *Taj Mahal* performances, and the school's full-length show *Colours of India* at Auckland's annual Tempo Dance Festival in 2012, a show which represented a journey from traditional to Bollywood. Furthermore, I attended their 2013 entry into Tempo Dance Festival's Anniversary Gala called *Bollywood – "I am Entertainment"*. The school had many more performances during the period of my involvement, mostly in the community, often for charity, and also two gigs for a bank's Diwali functions. A further Indian dance performance I watched was *Jungle Book*, also part of Tempo 2013.

5.3.4.1 Interviews

I interviewed seven individuals who currently practise or have in the past practised Indian dance in Auckland. They all identify as Indians – two were born in India, three in Fiji, one in Uganda, and one in Auckland. The six women and one man covered teenage to retirement age. I interviewed the director and teacher of a kathak school and three of her students. I also conducted two informal and one audio-taped interview with Kanan Deobhakta, the before-mentioned bharata natyam teacher and performer in Auckland for 30 years, who is now retired. The information originating from her interviews fed into the section on history of classical Indian dance in Auckland, and some of her comments feature in the interview summary below. In order to hear a student voice regarding bharata natyam I interviewed a 19-year-old female who currently is a student at an Auckland bharata natyam school. Lastly, I interviewed a young Bollywood performer in his mid-20s who I had come across because of his involvement with the *Taj Mahal* production. I also watched several of his group's performances.

The interviewees' dance experience and knowledge stemmed from a variety of sources, including intensive bharata natyam training in private dance schools, secondary and tertiary education in New Zealand and Fiji, and one-off workshops. The majority started as children and one as a teenager. In some cases their choice of genre was accidental, as they joined the school available in their neighbourhood, while in other cases it was deliberate, often guided by parents.

The interviewees expressed wide-ranging dance interests outside the Indian dance spectrum – some had participated in classical ballet or jazz while others, particularly the Fijian-born women, had extensive exposure to Pacific dance forms. Two reported having experienced Chinese, Japanese, and Korean dancing at secondary school, and attending festivals and workshops in

Auckland. Two others expressed interest in hip hop, salsa, and ballroom dancing.

I sensed a need amongst some female Indian dancers to clarify that performing classical Indian dance feels and is in their view completely different from dancing for entertainment. Their choice of words placed 'culture' against 'entertainment' and 'primitive' against 'cultural'. In a similar vein, Kanan Deobhakta perceived a lack of understanding of the seriousness and discipline inherent in classical Indian dance on the part of many parents. Some adult dancers reported reserved reactions by family members and other people in their community in regard to their ongoing involvement with classical Indian dance which could be an indication for a lingering image problem of dance within the Indian community. The question arose for me whether a struggle in the vein of what Rukmini Devi encountered in the 1940s is still to some degree ongoing. Younger women spoke of grandfathers supporting them but keeping their mothers away from dance when they were young, indicating a possible change in attitude. On the other hand several interviewees commented that dance has a wide support in the Auckland Indian community.

The five main topics that emerged from the interviews pertain to identity construction; learning about Indian cultural practices and religious beliefs; differing experiences of Indian dance practices in different countries; the tension between tradition and change; and lastly how they experience diverse culturally specific dance practices in Auckland.

Main motivation

“For me Bollywood is probably like a way to express myself through dance; a very passion to keep my culture, my language and my roots alive.”

Asked about their main motivation for their involvement with Indian dance the most universally expressed sentiment was staying connected to Indian culture.

Kanan Deobhakta (personal communication, November 16, 2012) said that in the late 1970s she sensed a gap for children of migrants to learn about their parents' culture. Some parents, knowing that she was trained in bharata natyam, suggested to her that dance classes would be a nice way of offering cultural exposure for the children. She also mentioned that at that time non-Indians started to have a stronger interest in India and things Indian; yoga and meditation were slowly becoming known. It felt to her like the right time to start her own school.

The kathak teacher, who started her school in 2007 following three years of teaching within a temple environment, said about her motivation that,

It's passion; it's a moral passion to preserve the culture. That's the reason why I'm doing it. I've been one of the pioneers; we have in New Zealand not many kathak dance teachers and I feel while I still have that skill I need to teach it as much as I can.

The Bollywood performer, who is Indian-born, describes his motivation as

a very passion to keep my culture, my language and my roots alive.

One young woman, who migrated from India when she was 10 years old, said that her reason for rejoining bhārata nāṭyam was that she missed it a lot after her resettlement in Auckland. The Auckland-born teenager spoke about the importance of cultural dance practices for her generation to keep culturally attached. She said,

I think without the dance there would be almost no attachment to Indian things apart from the family.

Both young women quoted above highlighted that it is very important for them to learn about the culture so they can make an informed decision as to how they align themselves culturally. One of them said in regard to exposure to culture that,

We don't have it on a day to day basis, so I definitely think it's very important for the young people to sort of learn more about it than it is for older people who already know it. We haven't really grown up with any culture. Because in New Zealand you choose your own, it is such a multi-cultural place.

The other commented along similar lines:

[Cultural dance] gives people like me who haven't grown up within that culture an insight into what our ancestry and culture is about. And that to me is really important because you can understand where you come from and make a decision about whether you like it or not. And again that decision is up to you and you actually have that choice to make a decision about whether, you know, you feel like you belong to that culture, you feel like you are a Kiwi, so you know two sides of the story.

One of the Fijian-born women talked about her return to Indian dance as an adult after several years of absence. She explained,

And then in my late 20s I started. I missed that cultural side of things, and that's why I do kathak today. It's not because I want to get up on stage and perform.

One of the teachers also put forward the idea that some dancers like to learn about and reinforce their regional Indian identity through the dancing.

The interviewees' comments point to a construction of identity that encompasses cultural and personal identities. For the younger people in particular, cultural affiliation is seen not just as a matter of inherited ethnicity but also as a matter of choice. They emphasise the importance of knowing your culture so you can make an informed decision.

Learning about culture, religion and language

“I got some feedback from mothers saying that their daughters have actually started speaking more Hindi at home.”

Another prominent topic was the learning that comes from cultural dance practices. Interviewees described it as manifold, comprising religious practices and their meanings, philosophy, mythologies, diverse cultures of the different regions within India, and language learning.

The kathak teacher is strongly motivated and guided by her religious beliefs, which is apparent in her choreographic work. The choreographies that I encountered during my observations followed traditional kathak patterns and the content she instilled was guided by her devotion. She explained to me how every dance starts with saluting and acknowledging the gods, and then moves on to tell their ancient stories. She explained that in the dance she rehearsed at the time, Lord Ganesh, the elephant god is acknowledged first and Lord Shiva, the Lord of the Dance, second. She said,

It is a religious dance, it is very sacred.

The teacher offered an example of how her students learn about religious practices through participating in the dancing. A section within the above mentioned dance is about the Hindu Goddess Maadurga. The teacher said,

Maadurga is very powerful; she comes over anyone [of the gods]. And when we perform this dance, we are actually vegetarian, we don't eat meat, we do prayers. We request of the girls when we perform this dance not to eat meat on that day.

One of her students told how religious learning happened for her through participating in the above-mentioned dance. She said,

The religious aspect comes from not kathak itself, but from [the teacher's] inspiration into the dances, she adds religion into it. I quite like it actually because my Mum, she's very religious and we have a prayer room in our house. So every morning and night, I am used to praying and I've learned a lot of stories and things like that about all the Hindu gods. I was Maadurga in one of the dances, who was a Hindu Goddess, and that has sort of helped me put into practice the things my mother's been telling me.

Many interviewees pointed out that classical Indian dance means dancing to the gods but that this fact does not rule out participation of non-religious people or followers of religions other than Hinduism. One woman said that,

Anybody can do it (...) There are no religious constraints.

One of the teachers was sure that the religious underpinning does not deter people of other beliefs from participating. In her experience, people are guided by their curiosity to learn more about other cultural and religious practices, be they Indian or not, and she sees the enigmatic nature of the mythology and the spiritual beliefs as a draw card. She said,

It actually attracts a lot of people. The music is so powerful and strong that people think 'I should know all this', and they find that very mysterious.

According to all commentary received, the dance teaching includes the conveyance of cultural, historical, and spiritual contexts. One student said that,

[The teacher] is pretty good in a sense that she explains certain things, actions; like she says 'this is Krishna's flute'. And so there's hoping that the kids learn a little bit about the religion or the culture.

The teacher explained her motivation as follows:

My purpose is not to make money out of my students; it's to make sure that they learn about their culture.

She suggested that,

The students want to learn about their culture. I think it's also pride. If we know about our culture we feel good, we know something that has been passed down from generation to generation.

The students confirmed their desire to learn about their cultural heritage.

Several of the interviewees mentioned language learning for themselves and others in their class. One of the teenagers said that she speaks some Gujarati but no Hindi, hence she asks her mother to translate the Hindi texts of the songs they dance to. This may be a tenuous way of language learning, but it provides some language exposure. For other children the language learning is distinct, which was observed by fellow students, teacher, and parents alike. One student said,

Some of [the young ones] can't speak Hindi but they are learning with the dance class.

Parents conveyed to the teacher their delight about this development:

I got some feedback from mothers saying that their daughters have actually started speaking more Hindi at home.

Another comment offered in regard to language learning was that to understand Bollywood storylines you need to have knowledge of Hindi, which was pointed out as a great motivator for young people to engage with the language.

The following comment by one woman illustrates how dancing can foster and satisfy a sense of continuous learning about cultural practices. She said,

Kathak has been there since I was a child. It's a part of me. Obviously I don't think I know a lot about kathak yet; I mean I'm still learning. There's lots of different types for different occasions where you do kathak and it's a totally different thing. I think that's what interests me; it makes me want to learn more. So on this occasion you do this type of kathak and it will be different from the other occasion. I find it really interesting to learn the different types.

The bharata natyam student explicated how her learning from attending dance classes even extended beyond the cultural and religious:

Because when I go to dance class, we don't only dance. My teacher doesn't only teach us dance and the religion or the cultural aspects revolving around dance itself. She also tells us stories about how she lived in India.

This student considered first-hand narratives of this nature as an important point of contact with Indian culture for young non-resident Indians.

Diverse modes of practice

“You don’t just go and buy yourself. Like here, girls just go and buy themselves a hundred bells, while you actually earn those bells. You earn them from the teacher.”

Five of the interviewees have experienced dance practices outside New Zealand: three in Fiji, one in East Africa, and one in India. They found some of the approaches similar, but many differences between places were also addressed. The Fijian- and Uganda-born women alike reported that borrowing across dance forms happened when they grew up in either place. The Fijian-Indian dancers also spoke of their double connection with Indian and Pacific cultures. One said that,

When we see especially meke and hula we do relate to it and it does make us feel at home.

The Fijian dance training experiences ranged from the very traditional to the very fused. One woman recalled her traditional training as a child:

At that time Suva had a big Indian cultural centre, they had everything. They had teachers from India that they had brought into Fiji to teach cultural dancing, musical instruments, classical music, singing. So I ended up going to that particular school and I had a male teacher, as a kathak teacher, and he used to play the tabla and he would say every ‘tha’ and ‘krag’, and you learned very much intricately about kathak dance. So you would have to speak each classical step out. And of course they were followed each term by examinations to go through and it was quite a robust process of learning kathak.

Her friend compared this traditional way of learning with the even more rigorous training in India that her dance teacher in Fiji used to describe:

My previous teacher used to say ‘you wake up at four and then you go to dance class’. Then she would say ‘it doesn’t matter how much your legs hurt or your feet hurt, you still finish your class. That’s part of it.’

A consensus existed among the Fijian Indians that compared to India, Indian dance forms are generally practised with a more flexible approach in Fiji, resulting in the creation of fusion dances and in altering some of the traditional norms of practice. They suggested that several factors play into this. One suggestion focused on the fact that Indian dance co-exists in Fiji alongside Pacific dance forms and that a natural cross-fertilisation happens. For example, one woman knew of a dance teacher fusing Fijian meke with Indian dance.

Another suggestion was that practitioners applied different interpretations to what they knew, learned, or taught in Fiji. One of the women said,

I think there's a lot of not misinterpretation but the interpretation is different. And it's taught to the students differently or understood by students differently.

She shared that because of the limited access to traditional teachers, she and others resorted to learning from movies, a situation which she perceived as leading to many possible interpretations of the encountered material.

Another woman shared her experience, confirming a special Fijian-Indian dance culture:

When I grew up in Fiji my teacher didn't really teach me specific kathak dance, she incorporated a lot of techniques. She just taught what the trend was there, what the students actually would like. I think that was quite good. I know that she does fusion dancing in Fiji, like she fuses it up with the Fijian dance and she seems to be doing well there. When I grew up in Fiji, in schools we used to make dances. I think everything was just a bit freer and fused.

Two of the interviewees discussed the differences regarding the wearing of ghungroos, the ankle bells. One woman explained that in India,

They don't wear them until they reach the level or they get the okay from the teacher to wear those bells, or increase the number.

The other woman added,

That's right. You don't just go and buy yourself. Like here, girls just go and buy themselves a hundred bells, while you actually earn those bells. You earn them from the teacher.

The first woman continued disapprovingly,

And sometimes you see Indian kathak dancers, you know children, they wear like a hundred, a hundred fifty each, it's up to here, or even up to like half your shin there...

Both women were adamant that wearing those bells has several meanings embedded within in the way that kathak is practised traditionally. Making rhythm with them is only one aspect; the other is earning a privilege and acknowledging the teacher's authority to grant that privilege. One of them said,

There's a meaning and not just who makes the loudest noise.

The teacher's comments regarding the ghungroo issue highlighted an added complication to the above discussion, which in her view requires a pragmatic approach in New Zealand. She said,

It is a mission to find ghungroos in New Zealand and even in India. When I went to India, it was a mission to get ghungroos to New Zealand. Having gone through this myself, I am flexible with whatever amount of ghungroos my students wear as to what they find. I find that philosophy a pain in a country like New Zealand where resources are hard to get so I don't have any policy regarding ghungroos. Most of my students wear 50 on each leg if they have the kathak ghungroos. I have one student in her early 20s who wears 100 because she managed to find a set of 100 ghungroos but also because she can manage the weight as she has been dancing for a long time. For my younger, smaller students, they wear 50 as it is manageable and not too heavy for their young legs. As it is hard to find kathak ghungroos, some of my students wear bharata natyam ghungroos which are completely different.

Several of the women pointed out that kathak in India is a very strict system similar to bharata natyam, while in Auckland no school trains in kathak according to the traditional focus on discipline. Asked whether the discipline in kathak is halfway between the strictness of bharata natyam and the freedom of Bollywood one of the teenagers said,

I think in India kathak would be classed quite close to bharata natyam. But here I think it is a bit like that.

The bharata natyam student described an experience which confirms a less strict attitude in New Zealand even for bharata natyam. She said,

We actually had one of the teachers from there [Kalakshetra] to come and train us. That was an interesting experience because he was so like, you know, just focused and danced. When you are in class there is no talking, no cell phones. You concentrate on what you're doing. Very disciplined.

However, she added that in her experience a rather strict attitude towards bharata natyam training exists in Auckland.

Two women offered the opinion that in Auckland, due to an audience which is largely not educated in classical Indian dance, the focus may have shifted to creating visually appealing choreographies. One said,

When we perform, it's to a blank audience, most of the time. If we perform to a non-Indian or to an Indian audience that doesn't know anything about bharata natyam, we basically go for the aesthetics of it.

She also said for her it was more important that teachers and dancers understand deeper meanings of the dance than the audience.

Tradition and change

“But I am a contemporary Indian!”

The interviews conducted in Auckland reflected the discussions regarding the traditional and the contemporary pursued among Indian dance practitioners worldwide. A multi-layered picture emerged with support for safeguarding traditions among all interviewees; however, all acknowledged that attitudes and ways of practising are adapting to new situations all the time. Despite this general consensus, their approaches differed in the detail, mostly around the ideas of keeping separate dance entities on one end of the scale or accepting unrestrained fusions on the other.

Several interviewees stated that today's classical Indian dances have ancient roots but are modernised. The bharata natyam teacher stressed the fact that classical Indian dance performances used to be three to four hours long and that they are now much shorter in recognition of the audience's attention span and expectations. In her view, which was mirrored by the bharata natyam student, this is a change which needed to happen.

However, both women advocated preserving a clear understanding of the classical base. The student suggested that classical choreography could incorporate some fusion to add interest but that the teaching of the basic elements as a clearly defined entity should continue. She said,

In terms of dance, I guess you can change traditional forms, but not permanently. Like, you know, you can make a dance fusion, contemporary and bharata natyam put together for example. And that's fine, but it should be said that this is a fusion, this is not traditional. And I would definitely say keep the ancient forms the way they are and if you are teaching somebody, you should keep it that way. But if you are performing, you are free to do whatever you want, because people are always looking for something different and even choreographers are always looking for something different.

The inherent notion in this statement that the choreographer has agency was also voiced by the teacher, who said that as a “contemporary Indian” you are the person in charge of the dance form today.

The practitioners of Fijian background had little reservations about dance fusions. The kathak teacher spoke of trying to achieve a balance between contemporary and traditional aspects. She also embedded her teaching practice within this notion as she wishes to balance discipline and leniency in class. For example, her students do not have to take part in performances, but if they do, she emphasised, the expectations are high. In her setting the wearing of jewellery is also handled in a liberal way.

One woman saw fusion as a feature of multi-cultural Auckland. She said,

Auckland is seen as a great big melting pot of people. It plays a huge part in that. That cultural awareness you know; just blending in. And I think that's why you see a lot of fusions: fusion cooking, we've got, you know, fusion relationships out there.

Two dancers explicitly stated that fusion dance can be an expression of a positive coming together of cultures. The Bollywood dancer said that in his view Bollywood is "definitely bringing cultures together". One of the kathak dancers commented along similar lines:

I think the fusion is another way of appreciating, of acceptance of another culture.

During my time as observer in the kathak school, a Māori-Indian fusion dance was rehearsed. The teacher explained that she choreographed this dance because Migrant Support Services asked her to do so. She said,

I thought about migration, about how there's lots of people that have migrated. And so the beginning of that song is actually about welcoming a visitor to the land. That's the reason why I have done the dance. In the beginning is the Lord of the Sun, because every morning in India starts with saluting him.

The teacher recalled how during the first showing of the dance a Māori kaumatua (elder) stood up and gave the dance a blessing in the middle of the performance. She thought the dance was appreciated and accessible across cultures due to the migration theme. She said,

The Māori fusion dance, every race has been able to relate to it. It didn't matter who it was. It is more about New Zealand. Everyone is a migrant; even the Māori people are migrants.

Two dancers stated that at some stage during rehearsals they realised they were not sure what the Māori words meant and it motivated them to find out, hence initiating language and inter-cultural learning.

A general agreement existed regarding Bollywood. Everybody appreciated it and pride came through to differing degrees when talking about this prominent fusion form. Bollywood was seen as a truly Indian practice by everyone I spoke to; even the ones who had some misgivings have in the past or did at the time of interview practice it. The critical comments ranged from “it’s not culture” and “it’s just entertainment” to “it can look cheap”. The retired teacher also reported that some in the older generation feel offended by musical remixes and Bollywood that is too westernised, and the Bollywood dancer reported having heard criticism that “Bollywood has diluted our culture”. He however countered that,

Bollywood has a lot to do with what Indians are these days. It’s just part of my culture.

Research participants articulated enjoyment and personal expression as the positive aspects of Bollywood:

I do like adding my own flavour to the moves in Bollywood. (kathak dancer)

You can choreograph however you want; I find it’s a lot freer and I can explore myself as a dancer (bharata natyam dancer)

Bollywood is fun (bharata natyam teacher)

I just love it (Bollywood dancer).

The Bollywood dancer also suggested that Bollywood is,

a way to bring people together.

Dancing in the weave of multi-cultural Auckland

“Indian dance’s future is already here!”

The participants expressed wide-ranging awareness of other cultures and their practices in Auckland. Auckland was described as “very multi-cultural” and a “melting pot”. Several participants spoke about the accepting atmosphere and open approach that they perceive in Auckland towards the many cultures residing here. The Bollywood dancer said,

Auckland has become one of the most embracing kind of city in the world I would say. 10, 15, 20 years ago, you would have said 'oh no'. In the last decade Auckland has embraced these cultures. I mean, think about it, Auckland City Council organises our Diwali. Why should they do that if they are not embracing it?

He also described Auckland as providing “platforms to bring cultures together”.

Widespread participation in Indian festivals was reported and was taken for granted. The Fijian Indians additionally have a strong connection to Pacific dance and most of them participate in or visit Pasifika Festival and Polyfest, or at least have done so in the past. Most interviewees were aware of other cultural festivals and Tempo Dance Festival, but reported with what seemed slight remorse that they have never been or not for a long time. The Indian festivals clearly remain the focal point for this group.

The dance practices were described as place-making or home-coming and appreciation of having an array of classes available in Auckland was voiced. One woman depicted the kathak dance practices as an anchoring point in her life. She said,

My personal experience has been that I have been going to dance, I retreat from my personal life and work, or I've gone off shore, come back home again and got back into dancing. So I've been doing that back and forth, back and forth. It's just nice to know that I can keep going back. There is a point of this connection. I think I would struggle if I had to move somewhere else in New Zealand and find there is no dance school, or kathak at least, to continue.

Others said that they would probably start their own classes if they found themselves in a place with no access to lessons. One woman said,

It would be hard because I'm so used to it, you know, being part of a multi-cultural society. I would just start up my own dance group. If I'm feeling that way, sure I won't be the only Indian feeling like I'm out of touch with my culture. If I start that a lot of people would be interested to join me as well. That's what I'm hoping would happen anyway.

It became clear through the interviews and other research that Bollywood in Auckland is not an exclusive Indian practice anymore. In fact school groups of mostly pākehā have in recent years won school competitions in Auckland. Some of these groups have received much criticism though for stepping outside of Indian dance traditions. An *Indian Newslink* article quotes a man as saying, “If salsa is not Bollywood dancing, so is cheerleading” (Venkat, 2012).

5.3.5 Summary and discussion

“You can’t say it belongs to India; it’s just where the roots are.”

Research participants described their Indian dance practice as a “happy space”, a place to relax, and a welcome performance opportunity. Connecting with and learning about culture ranked high on their list of motivations for taking part. For children, the dance practices functioned as cultural, religious, and language learning that would otherwise be largely confined to the home environment.

As Ratan Thiyam (2011) suggests, each place of practice presents specific attributes and issues and consequentially “complexities of difference” (xi-xii) arise. Today, Indian dance is often presented at outdoor festivals in New Zealand which has changed its purpose and meanings. One interviewee offered the opinion that outdoor performance spaces cannot do classical Indian dance justice. Different but still related is Johnson (2010) and Johnson and Figgins’ (2005) above-mentioned argument that meanings of Diwali have changed due to shifting from private and religious to public, secular, and commercialised environments.

A considered approach regarding the notion of tradition and change prevailed among the interviewees, but bharata natyam practitioners voiced clear expectations to keep different forms separate and distinct. Philosophies regarding traditional ways of practice, such as the wearing of ghungroos in kathak, were discussed, restrictions brought on by geographical disconnection from supply were acknowledged and practical solutions were found. An issue more difficult to reconcile was highlighted by the bharata natyam teacher who suggested that the main friction between classical Indian and western dance forms is the western philosophy of instant gratification which has no correlation to the long-term focus and discipline expected in classical dance practices.

A recognition that practices vary due to geography and that ample fusions happen was evident in the interviews. The choreography created by the kathak teacher in Auckland and the accepting attitude towards change within her school may be framed as a continuation of kathak’s hybrid history and pluralistic traditions. Also obvious from my perspective was an understanding amongst the research participants of dance practices in Auckland as cross-ethnic and cross-cultural encounters – pan-Indian and global – hence connecting not just two but many places. This open attitude with a global outlook is also evident in the New Zealand Indian media. One teacher’s experimentations with fusion choreography received acceptance and blessings across cultures thus equally creating a meaningful cross-cultural encounter.

The quote at the beginning of this summary displays one interviewee's view that even though Indian dance comes from India, it also belongs to the many places where it is practised. Equally relevant to the Auckland situation is Munsi's (2008) suggestion, quoted at the very beginning of this case study report, that the search has shifted from authenticity to hybrid identity. All interviewees expressed hybrid identities; this was especially obvious among the younger interviewees. They take their agency to deliberately choose their cultural connections for granted and they will therefore be part of creating new cultural spaces in Auckland.

The continued practice worldwide by dancers of Indian ancestry does not simply continue a tradition from one place but equally contributes to the creation of new places. Research participants perceived Auckland as an accepting environment for this endeavour with local government offering support through providing performance platforms. The question, however, remains whether the details around performance practice within these platforms need more scrutiny and dialogue.

Fijian Indians in Aotearoa New Zealand have experienced a double displacement, the consequence of which is that both places have left traces in their dancing and their attitudes towards practice. Another instance of multiple place connections is the fact that exams are taken through institutions in India and Britain, thus incorporating New Zealand students into the international web of students taking exams through these channels. This set-up takes people from within Indian diasporas into its fold but equally includes non-Indians who learn Indian dance forms. In summary, Indians practising their traditional dances encounter many place connections and diverse influences through their dance practice.

5.4 Siva Samoa in Auckland

Samoa, a scattering of tropical islands in the South Pacific whose palm-fringed beaches and clear waters lure New Zealanders for winter escapes. Dreams of simple bliss combined with long held western fantasies of 'noble savages' and beautiful 'dusky maidens' shape these images and concepts.

New Zealand, an island nation 3500 kilometres further south with educational and employment opportunities beyond what Samoa has to offer, poses a different but very forceful attraction. The island nations of Samoa and Aotearoa New Zealand have indeed a long-standing connection, which has, however, included chapters so dismal that former Prime Minister Helen Clark in 2002 offered an official apology to the people of Samoa when attending their 40th independence celebration in Apia.

5.4.1 History and context

The history of the Pacific is a history of migration. Polynesians are thought to have arrived in Samoa from Southeast Asia about 3000 to 3500 years ago (Clerk & Nile, 1995; Lay, 1996); intermittent and small scale migration between islands and to the Pacific rim have occurred for many centuries (Hau'ofa, 1993, 2008; Lay, 1996; Macpherson, 2005; Meleisea, 2005; Rapaport, 1999; Sudo & Yoshida, 1997).

Following first contacts between Europeans and Samoans in the 18th century, a growing number of European and American settlers arrived in Samoa from the 1830s onwards. They initially accepted the authority of the chiefs, but later challenged their power and requested a central administration of Samoa (Meleisea, Schoeffel-Meleisea & Meleisea, 2012). European interests in Samoa entailed crop growing and trade but were also driven by the notion of 'civilising' Samoans. Missionary work was hence a key ingredient of European and American presence in Samoa, resulting in a largely Christian population that comprises 60% protestant, 20% Catholic and 13% Mormon (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014b). The implementation of the Christian faith did not substantially change the matai (chiefly) system however.

Like many parts of Oceania, Samoa became a shuttlecock in the power play of western colonialism. After the 1899 Treaty of Berlin, which was to settle colonial rivalries between Germany, Britain, and the USA, Upolu and Savai'i, the two Samoan islands situated furthest to the west, became subject to German rule which lasted until 1914. The start of the World War I led to a request by the British government for New Zealand to invade so-called 'German Samoa', which New Zealand instantaneously acted upon.

Helen Clark (2002) admitted “inept and incompetent early administration of Samoa by New Zealand” in her apology, a fact that according to her is little understood within New Zealand. One of these inept decisions was taken in 1918 when New Zealand authorities allowed a vessel that carried passengers sick with influenza to land in Apia resulting in an epidemic that caused the death of about 20% of Samoa’s population. Equally infamous is the 1929 shooting by New Zealand police of non-violent Mau activists, who advocated for Samoan independence. A more liberal attitude started with the 1935 New Zealand Labour Government and independence negotiations facilitated by the United Nations eventually led to Samoan self-rule in 1962 and the signing of a Treaty of Friendship.

The eastern islands of Samoa were annexed by the USA between 1900 and 1904 after chiefs of these regions signed Deeds of Cession whose exact meanings are still contested (Faleomavaega, 2009). American Samoa is today an ‘unincorporated’ territory of the USA giving its residents open access to the USA but barring American Samoans from federal elections and security sensitive positions.

As the history outlined above indicates, New Zealand’s strong connection with Samoa and other Pacific Island nations goes back to the early 20th century. The Cook Islands and Niue were annexed in 1901; both are now independent in free association with New Zealand. Their citizens, along with Tokelauans, carry a New Zealand passport, which gives them free access to New Zealand while Samoans need to apply for visas.

Pacific migration is termed a form of chain migration (Dunsford et al, 2012; Macpherson & Macpherson, 2000). The main migration waves of Samoans to New Zealand originated from Western/Independent Samoa as for American Samoans the USA is the preferred destination (Rapaport, 1999). It is estimated that the Samoan diaspora today equals the resident population in size (Meleisea, Schoeffel-Meleisea & Meleisea, 2012; Rapaport, 1999; Shuaib, 2012). Recent population figures are 55,000 for American Samoa, 195,000 for Independent Samoa (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014a, 2014b), while the combined number of Samoans in the diaspora is estimated to be over 200,000 (Shuaib, 2012).

Even though the two Samoan nations have different governments, they are according to several interviewees closely linked, mostly through extended family connections. One of the women I interviewed said, “I call it all Samoa; it’s all the same thing to me.” Migration from Independent to American Samoa also

happens for the purpose of working in the fish-canning industry in American Samoa (Macpherson, 2005).

Graeme Lay (1996) suggests that compared to other Polynesian nations, Samoa is the least influenced by European ways of life, which confirms my own observations. Another variance is that Samoa has, despite ongoing emigration, a growing resident population. This is due to a high birth rate and a small-scale but relatively successful economy. Migrant Samoans have formed large diaspora communities around the Pacific Rim which are interconnected with each other and the home country. Samoa has taken practical steps to link closer with New Zealand and Australia: in 2009 traffic changed from right hand drive (like the USA and American Samoa) to left-hand drive (like Australia and New Zealand), and Saturday, the 31 December 2011 was purposefully ignored to jump the international dateline and align dates with New Zealand and Australia.

5.4.1.1 (Re-)conceptualising Samoa and the Pacific region

“The map of Samoa today is the map of the world.” (Meleisea, 2005, p. 5)

Eveli Hau’ofa (1993) of the University of the South Pacific offers alternative concepts to western paradigms of the Pacific, choosing the term Oceania over Pacific Islands. He suggests conceptualising this vast region as interconnected land and ocean, as a 'sea of islands' rather than 'islands in a far sea'. In his concept the Polynesian diasporas in New Zealand, Australia, the USA, Canada, and elsewhere, need to be part of a comprehensive understanding of Oceania. He suggests Pacific nations need to define the region themselves saying that “we have virtually been defined out of existence” by outsider definitions (2008, p. 58).

Many models for framing the situations of Oceanic nations exist, none of which have found universal acceptance (Rapaport, 1999). MIRAB economies, for **m**igration, **r**emittances, **a**id, and **b**ureaucracy, is a popular model (Hau’ofa, 2008; McCall & Connell, 1994; Nero, 1997) which has, according to Nero (1997) and Hau’ofa (2008), been rejected in the islands. Hau’ofa (2008) views the MIRAB dependency model in the context of western hegemony and as based on western perceptions of inadequate islands that do not have the ability to sustain themselves. He believes that remittances are a form of self-reliance based on the concepts of community and reciprocity, which westerners find difficult to relate to. McCall and Connell (1994) equally suggest that migration is a form of communally deliberated problem solving. The authors say that

migration is “a far more lucrative investment than anything available in the village” (p. 41) and that, “Islander migration is thus an aspect of personal and kin-related aid” (p. 40).

Macpherson highlights the strong connection between Samoan and diaspora communities by labelling them “parent communities” (2005, p. 99) and “extensions” (2000, p. 71). He says that the diaspora is “no longer seen as isolated communities which were developing away from Samoa, but rather as vital parts of a Samoan migration system” (2005, p. 98). Macpherson (2005) also alerts to the fact that different researchers come to different conclusions when they scrutinise Pacific nations through the MIRAB model, some saying that relying on remittances is not sustainable, others claiming it is the only way.

Hau’ofa (2008) wishes to foster a new Pacific confidence and self-reliance, as in his assessment New Zealand and Australia have been “dropping in and out of the South Pacific region whenever it suits their national self-interest” (p. 49). Research by Oceanic people about Oceanic issues has increased due to the University of the South Pacific starting a Pacific Studies programme (Hau’ofa, 2008). Equally, at a conference on Samoan studies in 2002 in Apia, the history of the rich research on Samoa was traced and new definitions and paradigms were formulated (Macpherson, 2005; Meleisea, 2005; Schoeffel-Meleisea, 2005).

5.4.1.2 Pacific migration

Samoan migration to New Zealand started in the 1950s, gathered pace after independence in 1962, and accelerated in the 1970s due to easier immigration rules (Anae, 2012; Dunsford et al, 2011; Lay, 1996; Meleisea, Schoeffel-Meleisea & Meleisea, 2012). Many came under a quota system, others entered on short-term permits or as visitors (Anae, 2012; Dunsford et al, 2011). Today, Samoan nationals who want to gain residency in New Zealand need to enter a ballot under the Samoan Quota Scheme through which 1100 permits are granted per year.

While several models exist for describing the driving forces behind Pacific migration, they all describe the same motivations and issues. McCall and Connell (1994) explain the dynamics of Pacific migration through the ‘push and pull’ model. On the ‘push’ side are population pressures, natural disasters such as cyclones (Samoa 1966) and tsunamis (Samoa 2009), falling prices for export goods such as copra, limited opportunities in the islands concerning education and professional careers, strict social order of village life (fa’a samoa), and political or personal disputes. The ‘pull’ side consists of education opportunities, more personal freedom, and relatively high-paid employment in New Zealand

that could enable remittances through which the migrant can contribute to wealth in the home country.

5.4.2 Samoans in Aotearoa New Zealand

New Zealand is the main destination for Samoans and also the leading source country for remittances (Rapaport, 1999; Shuaib, 2012). In the 1960s and 1970s, New Zealand needed labour for its expanding workforce and therefore willingly allowed Pacific people to enter the country. When the economic situation changed in the mid-1970s the rather liberal stance towards the presence of Pacific people changed (Anae, 2012, 2013; Salmon, Ellmers & 'Ilohia, 2010). Samoans and Tongans in particular were subjected to controversial treatment by New Zealand police, but anybody with brown skin could be affected. During so-called 'dawn raids' officials stormed the houses of suspected 'overstayers' in the early hours of the morning. Brown-skinned people were stopped in the streets to have their visas checked, a treatment that was racially discriminative as no white person had to endure anything similar (Anae, Iuli & Burgoyne, 2006; Dunsford et al, 2011; Salmon et al, 2010). Individuals without the correct documentation faced immediate deportation.

During this period of aggravation, a group of young New Zealand-born Pacific people founded the Polynesian Panthers, who were based on the ideals of the American Black Panthers and aligned with the Māori protest movement happening at the same time (Anae et al, 2006; Salmon et al, 2010). They were a group of disenfranchised urban youth who organised themselves in inner city Auckland and later formed 12 chapters throughout Aotearoa. The Polynesian Panthers were political activists as much as a self-help organisation which provided assistance in legal and employment matters and set up educational support for the community. They also staged their own counter dawn raids on ministers which may have contributed to stopping the raids (Masters, 2006; Salmon et al, 2010). The rejection of the before-mentioned Privy Council ruling regarding the right to New Zealand citizenship for Samoans born before 1962, further aggravated race relationships.

Pacific people have largely settled in urban centres around the North Island. Auckland was the hub from the beginning and later developed into the largest Polynesian settlement in the world (Anae, 2012, 2013; Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, n.d; Walrond, 2011b). Today, almost half of all Oceanic people in Aotearoa are New Zealand-born (60%) or have lived here for over 20 years (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, n.d.). A prime feature of the entire Pacific population in New Zealand is the high percentage of young people.

The standing of Oceanic migrants within New Zealand society varies considerably. Rapaport (1999) suggests that over 75% are production workers while about 10% are in professional or other highly trained positions. Many have been successful but statistically Samoans like all other Pacific people are poorer than the average New Zealander (Anae, 2012; Statistics New Zealand, 2007); their indices in health statistics are particularly concerning (Anae, 2013; Dunsford et al, 2011). Additional to the challenges that New Zealand's climate and social attitudes present to migrants from the Pacific, the latter two sources suggest that Pacific people are severely challenged by the current socio-economic situation in New Zealand.

Samoans make up the largest group of Pacific people in Aotearoa New Zealand at almost 50% (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, n.d.; Statistics New Zealand, 2007). About 131,000 Samoans live in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2007), two thirds of them in Auckland. The Samoan influence on other Pacific cultures is therefore significant, and would be the reason behind the fact that telephone bills in South Auckland have important information in English and Samoan as one interviewee reported. In the 1960s and '70s most Samoans lived in inner city suburbs, but from the 1980s onwards central locations became gentrified and expensive and thus a shift to cheaper and newer suburbs in West and South Auckland took place (Anae, 2013; Lay, 1996).

5.4.4.1 New Zealand-born generation

“Samoa is my mother, New Zealand is my father.” (Kightley, 2009, p.1)

Recent research about the Samoan diaspora has often focused on the generation growing up within Samoan communities in New Zealand and on their struggle to find cultural and personal identity (Anae et al, 2006; Macpherson 1985, 2005; Macpherson & Macpherson, 2000; Tiatia, 1998). The majority of interviewees in a previous post-graduate research project on tradition and change in Samoan dance in Auckland (Simon, 2001) stated that they perceive themselves as a culture on their own, distinguished from their parents' culture. Many interviewees in the said study and in the present study described the outsider feeling they experience when visiting Samoa. The majority expressed considerable doubt about the possibility of ever living in Samoa long term. However, the in-between position was also seen as a positive; one woman expressed it as having the best of both worlds.

Through the work of Cluny and La'avasa Macpherson (1985, 2000, 2005, 2009), Tiatia (1998), and others, the tensions and disagreements between

homeland and diaspora, but also between first and New Zealand-born generations, have entered the public discourse. Macpherson (1985) found as early as the mid-1980s that some (or even many) Samoans in New Zealand – particularly New Zealand-borns – foster reservations about fa'a samoa and he suggests that these reservations are privately expressed, but not publicly, as this would be considered inappropriate. Later research (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2000; Macpherson, 2005) confirmed significant differences in lifestyles and worldviews between expatriate Samoans and island Samoans.

Second generation Samoans live through a personal assessment process of fa'a samoa and from there embark on a journey of re-constructing their ethnic and personal identity as is visible in new plays and choreographies by mostly second-generation Samoans staged in Auckland. Cluny and La'avasa Macpherson (2000) found that diverse appraisals of fa'a samoa exist in the community, resulting in the second generation having varying experiences of it at home. Some households have only one operating culture (Samoan or palagi/European); others have two or more operating cultures which are applied situationally. The different attitudes pertain to lifestyle choices, language, religion, and strength of affiliation to Samoan networks locally and transnationally. Cluny and La'avasa Macpherson suggest that the New Zealand-born generation mostly follows the leaning of their parents, but some diverge in the opposite direction.

Jemaima Tiatia (1998) describes the in-between cultures position of second and third generation Pacific Islanders as a “major dilemma” (p. 6) and a “tug-of-war” (p. 1). She says,

On the one hand we are Pacific Islanders toiling in a predominantly European society that does not seek to understand or fully acknowledge our cultural uniqueness. On the other hand, within our own societies, we are a silenced Western educated voice, ignored because we may be a threat to Pacific Island cultural traditions. (p. 1)

In her view, a major contributor to this dilemma is that “the education system encourages critical thinking and individualism, two concepts foreign to Pacific Island societies” (p. 12) and the “know-how” received from the western and the Pacific worlds mold New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders “into having an almost distinct identity of their own” (p. 19).

Sean Mallon (2002) offers a concise summary regarding this topic: “Fa'asamoa as practiced in New Zealand has characteristics distinct to the conditions of living there and reflecting the individual criteria set by those who practice it” (p. 23).

Out of concern for the Samoan language and culture in New Zealand, several Samoan language nests and early childhood centres have operated in Auckland and Wellington since the mid-1980s. Their concepts are similar to the kura kaupapa (Māori language nest) model. Most Samoans in Aotearoa have some Samoan language comprehension, but a growing number of New Zealand-borns do not speak fluently or at all. Additionally, their language knowledge is often based on their parents' 1960s Samoan which several interviewees assured me can sound quaint to speakers of contemporary Samoan. This adds to a situation where they are seen as 'Kiwis' rather than proper Samoans when in Samoa, while in New Zealand they are perceived as 'Samoans' (Anae et al, 2006). Several interviewees for the present and my previous study (Simon, 2001) confirmed this disjointed and absurd positioning, and some literature highlights the consequential identity confusion and inner conflict (Anae, 2012; Tiatia, 1998).

This identity issue may be compounded by the fact that many people have mixed heritage from different island nations, leading to the emergence of a 'PI (Pacific Island) identity', particularly in Auckland (Anae, 2012; Dunsford et al, 2011). Shared social, cultural, and other life experiences in Aotearoa do create a strong bond amongst Pacific people of the New Zealand-born generation; in some cases stronger than to the traditional customs of the elders (Anae, 2012). However according to Dunsford et al (2011), most Pacific Islander people strongly identify with their island nation of origin, their village, church, and place of residence in New Zealand.

Despite different life experiences and attitudes between Samoan communities inside and outside of Samoa, an unbreakable life-long tie exists between them (Anae, 2012; Dunsford et al, 2012; Shuaib, 2012), largely due to the fact that community is more important than the individual in Samoan culture. Many travel backwards and forwards between New Zealand and Samoa, some staying for extended periods to pursue family or business matters. This strong bond also became evident when the Samoan communities in New Zealand reacted to the destructive 2009 tsunami with swift, heartfelt, and generous responses (Kightley, 2009).

Samoans are a noticeable exuberant presence in New Zealand public life, ranging from a strong representation in sports and cultural arenas to politics and academia.

The majority of Pacific people engaged in New Zealand politics are of Samoan descent. Philip Fields, first Pacific Island MP, held several associate minister positions through his 15-year career in parliament but became disgraced due to

corruption charges which resulted in a jail term. He was replaced as an MP by Su'a William Sio, who was earlier deputy mayor of Manukau City (South Auckland). Winnie Laban was another Labour MP from 1999-2008 and Minister of Pacific Island Affairs during her last year in parliament. Also of political significance are the appointments of Aeau Semikueiva Epati as the first judge of Pacific descent and of Ida Malosi as the first female Pacific judge.

Remarkable academics, cited in this thesis, are Melani Anae, Malama Meleisea, Penelope Schoeffel-Meleisea, and Rhodes Scholar Salesa Damon. Samoans also feature in the media with journalist Tapu Misa and sports reporter April Ieremia.

Samoans contribute significantly to the cultural scene of New Zealand. Writers Sia Figiel's and Albert Wendt's works reflect the Samoan experience; Wendt was also the first Pacific university professor. Prominent in visual arts are Fatu Feu'u and inter-disciplinary artist Shigeyuki Kihara; in comedy the Laughing Samoans, and the Naked Samoans, who also created the animated TV show *bro'Town*; in theatre Kila Kokonut Krew, director Justine Simey-Barton, and emerging playwright Louise Tu'u; in screen arts film directors Sima Urale (*Sione's Wedding*) and Tusi Tamasese (*The Orator*) and actor Nathaniel Lees. In music, bands such as the Five Starts and the Yandall Sisters became famous in the 1970s; Iosefa Enari had a career as an opera singer and fused classical opera with Samoan music and lyrics. Samoans also feature strongly in hip hop with King Kapisi and Scribe.

Samoans have always been an important part of the New Zealand rugby team the All Blacks and provided many team captains. Tana Umaga was captain for years and is now a professional coach working internationally. Other famous Samoan rugby players are Sonny Bill Williams and Michael Jones. Further successful sportspeople are discus thrower Beatrice Faumuina, boxer David Tua, and netballers Rita Fatialofa and Bernice Mene.

5.4.4.2 Dance works by Samoans in New Zealand

Three dance practitioners of Samoan descent are in the public eye of New Zealand and all three practise in Auckland. Neil Ieremia is a second-generation, New Zealand-born Samoan from Porirua (north of Wellington) whose dance company Black Grace has been a presence in Auckland since 1995. Black Grace put contemporary choreography with a Polynesian essence not just firmly on the New Zealand dance map but also took it to international audiences. In 2004 they were invited to the prestigious Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in the USA and have since repeatedly toured in North America, Mexico, Europe,

Australia, and the Pacific region. Black Grace receives annual funding from New Zealand's arts funding body Creative New Zealand.

Since 1999 Ieremia has also successfully run Urban Youth Movement, a mentoring scheme for young people which comprises a contemporary dance project and a public performance. Many upcoming dancers of Pacific descent have come through Urban Youth Movement including one of the interviewees for this case study. Ieremia's work appeals to a diverse audience but is particularly popular amongst young Pacific people in New Zealand. In 2005 he received the Arts Foundation of New Zealand Laureate Award for outstanding creative achievement.

Ieremia's work is an example of how work by second-generation practitioners in the diaspora can be successful and contentious at the same time. He received severe criticism, particularly in Samoa, for liberally fusing elements of Samoan and contemporary dance. He told dance writer Bernadette Rae (2001) about the experience:

I walked into a huge battle over intellectual property and who actually owns and who should use the traditional art forms and movements. It totally blew me away. It was pretty awful. They were going for me in quite a big way. ... It was a really freeing experience. Previously I never really embraced today's living culture, my own roots in Porirua's Cannons Creek. But now I have finally discovered I am a product of my parents and their secondhand Samoan culture. Also a huge amount of other influences – the media, TV – makes me a product of the whole world. So, I have given up trying to be just a good Samoan boy. (B6)

Lemi Ponifasio, a New Zealand-born Samoan with a high chief title, is founder and director of MAU Dance Company, the name equally used by the Samoan independence movement. MAU have worked in Auckland since the mid-1990s and present their work at prestigious festivals domestically and internationally, particularly in Europe. Ponifasio's work is underpinned by Pacific, eastern, and western philosophies and arts practices, pushing the boundaries between dance, theatre, and staged ceremony. It is highly political, engages with issues of power and ecology, and produces vivid imagery which results in emotionally charged performances. In 2011 Lemi Ponifasio received the New Zealand Arts Foundation Laureate Award.

Dancers not professionally trained in a western sense can be part of MAU productions; for example, the choreography *Tempest* included Algerian refugee Ahmed Zaoui and Māori activist Tame Iti who both have a high but contested public profile in New Zealand. The latter even needed a high court decision to be released from prison in order to travel to Europe and perform. Another

choreography *Birds with Skymirrors* (2012) included seven dancers from the small Kiribati and Tuvalu islands.

Another high profile Samoan is Parris Goebel who is a hip hop phenomenon with a distinguished international reputation and career. She owns two dance studios in Auckland and Hamilton and is in charge of five hip hop crews. In her choreographic style, called 'polyswagg', young women and men present crisp movement which is high energy and very controlled. The performers come across as fearsome and confident, and no smiles or demure dancing are in sight. Goebbel explained in an interview that her goal is "instilling in them the values of hard work, self belief, self respect, to be positive and confident in what you are doing" (Lim, 2011, p. 14).

Goebel's all-women dance crew ReQuest won several divisions of the World Hip Hop Dance Championships in the USA including the Varsity division in 2009 and Adult division in 2010. Other activities of Goebel are choreographing and performing for music videos and stage shows such as Jennifer Lopez's *Dance Again World Tour* in 2012.

5.4.5 Samoan culture

"The chiefly system (fa'amatai) provides the umbrella authority under which village and family lives are organised." (So'o, 2009, p. 207)

The Samoan state follows a Westminster democracy model combined with the traditional matai system (So'o, 2009; Sutter, 1989). Since 1990, a universal suffrage has existed but only matai, who make up about 5% of the population, can be elected into parliament (So'o, 2009). Much desired status comes with a chiefly title as depicted in the movie *The Orator* (2011).

"Samoa is founded on God." (Kightley, 2009, p. 3)

In the eyes of Samoan Christians the arrival of the Christian gospel shifted Samoa from the so-called 'time of darkness' to the 'time of light' (Anae, 2012). Christianity has since developed an extremely strong foothold in Samoan society and hence migrants brought their religious beliefs and practices with them to New Zealand. Anae (2012) and Moyle (2002) suggest that the Samoan churches in New Zealand have taken on the role of the villages. The most prominent Samoan churches in New Zealand are the Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Catholic, and Mormon churches (Anae, 2012) with the Catholic and Congregational churches allowing the practice of dance in church as several of the interviewees confirmed. The churches also play a significant

role in the transmission of language and customs; many services are held in Samoan (including the rehearsal of a church group I witnessed).

“I is always ‘we’, is a part of the ‘aiga’.” (Figiel, 1996, p. 135)

Pivotal to Samoan identity is the concept of fa’a samoa, the Samoan way of life. Christianity and fa’a samoa are inextricably linked in the eyes of most Samoans (Anae, 2012; Tiatia, 1998). Aiga, the extended family, always comes first; it protects but also punishes. Respect for and obedience to elders is expected. The village (or community in the diaspora) is organised in a traditional chiefly system and relationships are built around the concept of reciprocity and duty.

5.4.6 Pacific people and the arts

“Art in the broadest sense is gradually becoming recognised as an acceptable and valid occupation as well as a form of individual expression outside the customary environments.” (Mallon, 2002, p. 22)

A before-mentioned arts participation survey (Colmar Brunton, 2012) proved a strong uptake of arts activities within Pacific communities. An earlier survey (Creative New Zealand, 1999) compared in more detail which art forms Pacific and Pacific Island populations attend. In this survey, dance was the preferred arts activity for Pacific Island women and second for Pacific Island men, while across the whole New Zealand population dance was ranked 20 on a list of preferred arts activities. These results propose that dance is held in high regard in Pacific communities. The high uptake of hip hop by Polynesian youth would support this suggestion.

Samoan culture features widely in arts festivals in Auckland, such as the Auckland Festival of Photography in 2012 where a whole exhibition was dedicated to Samoans. Within this exhibition, dance stood out as a subject matter covering old and young women practising traditional siva Samoa and Goebel’s polyswagg. Another platform for Pacific artists is the Southside Arts Festival which started in 2008. Furthermore, the weekly TV programme *Tagata Pasifika* brings cultural and arts events from across the Pacific to a wide audience. Several support organisations for Pacific art practitioners in Aotearoa exist, including Pacific Dance New Zealand under the directorship of Samoan-born Sefa Enari, (nephew of opera singer Iosefa Enari), and the Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust Tautai, a network for visual artists of Pacific heritage.

Pacific dancing has a valuable platform in the four-yearly Festival of Pacific Arts which takes place in a different Oceanic location each time. Samoan arts have

their own platform at the annual Teuila Festival in Apia which I witnessed in 2013. It features choirs, dancing, tattooing, crafts, wood carving, traditional sports, music, and food, attracting tourists and locals alike.

5.4.6.1 Aspects of Pacific art

“Much of what we call art was not thought of as art by its makers or users, at least until recent times.” (Waite, 1999, p. 246)

Concepts of art in Pacific Island and western cultures are based on different premises. In fact, as Vercoe (1994) and Thomas (1995) point out, Polynesian languages have no word for ‘art’, and what would be labelled ‘art’ in Western paradigms are couched in the practices of everyday life in Pacific cultures (Creative New Zealand, 1999; Taouma, 2002; Waite, 1999). In traditional contexts Pacific art mostly exists as part of ceremonies and festivities, has an intentional function either in a practical or a social sense, and it is not a commodity (Kaepler, 1977; Thomas, 1995; Vercoe, 1994). Group and individual art producing both exist, such as groups of women making bark cloth (‘siapo’ in Samoa) or skilled individual specialist carving or tattooing (Waite, 1999).

So-called ‘tourist art’ or ‘airport art’ has been prevalent in the Pacific for several decades (Kaepler, 1977; Waite, 1999). The art object or product turns into a commodity which offers much needed income for island people, but challenges traditional meanings and ways of practice. As dance anthropologist Kaepler (1977) points out, consumers drive the development of the products with their outsider understandings, expectations, and desires. For example, several studies have concluded that for dance performances in tourist settings, music and tempo is often sped up (Kaepler, 1977; Vercoe, 1994), a phenomenon that also occurs in Auckland albeit driven by additional factors such as dance competitions and a fast-moving, western urban environment (Simon, 2011). Kaepler (1977) defines the dominance of performance and entertainment over poetry and storytelling as one of the defining aspects of dance presented as ‘airport art’.

A specific feature of Pacific art is extensive body adornment and body marking (Thomas, 1995; Tausie, 1979; Waite, 1999). Widespread and of deep cultural significance are the tattoos (in Samoan, ‘tatau’). They are of particular interest to the dance researcher as tattooed dancers present a visibly culturally defined body. Receiving a pe’a, the male tatau, which covers the body from above the waist to below the knee, is a lengthy and extremely painful process and is considered a rite of passage for young Samoan men (Mallon, 2002). The female

tatau, the 'malu', is much less extensive and normally only publicly displayed during performance. While some of the earlier social, spiritual, and cultural meanings of tatau have been waning, the tattooing as a means of expressing ethnic affiliation and cultural pride has increased in the New Zealand diaspora (Mallon, 2002). Writer Sia Figiel describes her 'malu' as "the ultimate expression of love for those bonds, the space between yourself and your community" (Clausen, 2001).

Some Auckland-based Samoan dance groups (e.g. Tatau, Dee-licious) expose their tattoos when performing. Tatau Pacific Dance Group, who perform internationally, (i.e. Frankfurt Book Fair 2012), and the Samoa National Dance Theatre, which toured internationally in the 1990s (Simon, 2001), require their dancers to have a full pe'a. Tattooed dancers inextricably link body art and dance. They perform their culture in a twofold way as their dance movements are couched in their cultural heritage and their bodies are already by means of body marking culturally defined.

In 2003 Black Grace Dance Company performed the choreography *Surface* which has the pe'a as the subject matter. Ieremia, who has tatau but no pe'a, witnessed his father go through the excruciating tattooing process. This experience motivated him to choreograph a piece that spoke loudly about pain, devotion, and belonging.

5.4.6.2 Features of Polynesian dance

"Because we come from a culture where expressiveness is best known through the oral and performing arts, dance has played a highly symbolic role in both our ceremonial and day-to-day lives."
(Taouma, 2002, p. 133)

Before written language came to Polynesia, dancing and singing, alongside oratory, were the main means for passing down the history of the villages and families; therefore, the dancer traditionally was foremost a storyteller (Jowitt, 1990; Kaeppler, 1977). However, dance can also be a merely aesthetic and entertaining activity in Polynesia (Jowitt, 1990; Tausie, 1979).

In Polynesian dance, lyrics and movements are always closely linked with arms and hands in particular interpreting the words. If performed to non-vocal music, movements tend to be faster, more vigorous, and display more whole body movement (Moyle, 1991). Dance movements are executed in a low body stance and in a relatively stationary position. If performing in a group, rows of dancers in straight lines face the audience and mostly move in unison; sometimes a separation into gender-based groups happens (Moyle, 1991).

A person with a high status has traditionally performed in a central position on stage (Moyle, 1991), a situation that is changing throughout the Pacific and also in Auckland, as in the context of competitions, and showcasing the criteria for positioning is first and foremost guided by dance skill (Simon, 2001).

The pedagogy used within Pacific communities to pass down dance and related knowledge is of interest to me as discussed in the interview analysis below. Enari (2007) states that Samoan dance has traditionally been taught by rote or by simply watching and copying. The prevalent attitudes towards teaching and learning and the notion of a flawless performance surfaced as an issue of contention in the interviews I conducted in Auckland. This correlates to McLean's proposition of a "concern to avoid mistakes" (1999, p. 376) in Polynesian societies and a long history of mocking or even physically punishing performers for making mistakes.

5.4.6.3 Samoan dance

"Through negotiating the space of the dance floor, the performers are respecting relationships within Samoan society and giving dignity to the occasion." (Mallon, 2002, p. 204)

In Samoan dance the assignment of dancing roles and the positioning of dancers within the performance space is defined by social relationships (Mallon, 2002; Su, 2008; Taouma, 2002). Two examples of this are the above-mentioned stage positionings and the fact that the village chief's daughter, the taupou, has a specific role in some dances such as the tualuga. Diana Su (2008) in her Master dissertation suggests the same concept for pese fa'aleaganu'u (Samoan musical system) saying "that performances of pese fa'aleaganu'u are a symbolic representation of fa'amatai" (ii).

The Samoan word 'siva' simply means dance; it is also the name given to a graceful and relatively casual dance which can be performed as a solo or in a group (Jowitt, 1990). In the fundraising situations I witnessed in Auckland, many sivas took place, normally with a bowl for donations placed on the floor at the front of the performing space. Movements performed in these mostly group events were improvised, playful, and full of humour, a practice called aiuli.

Samoan dance is generally executed with controlled flow and its strong earthbound weight is juxtaposed to floating arms and hands. Apart from some rotation, the torso is mostly held quite rigidly, which Taouma (2002) suggests reflects the "highly stratified nature of the society's hierarchical order" (p. 135). Female dancers often hold their torso with a lean, taking the weight over one leg

but keeping it as a unit. Arm and hand movements are clear in their spatial positioning with gentle, undulating hand movements initiated from the wrist being an identifiable feature. Enari (2007) suggests that in the New Zealand context Samoan dancing has lost some of its “floating quality” (p. 65).

Samoan dances are mostly group dances. If a solo is performed, it always receives strong rhythmical or musical accompaniment from other performers on stage. In the case of the taupou solo, other dancers at times clown around her trying to distract her. It is thus always a group activity. Mallon (2002) suggests that all Samoan dancing is embedded in community and that old or new choreographies are “rooted in a strong conceptual base built upon fa’a samoa and reinforce elements of Samoan social order” (p. 204).

A dance often performed in Auckland is the seated sasa, which is accompanied by drumming and has no lyrics to follow. The dancer additionally keeps rhythm by tapping the floor, body percussion, and the continuous downward bounce of the knees called ‘lue’. The sasa, tightly controlled by a caller, tells stories and depicts everyday actions through the largely gestural movements. Dancers are positioned in straight rows and lines; initiated by the caller the dancers at times simultaneously turn 90 degrees by pushing themselves up on their hands, then sitting sideways to the audience showing their profiles, or their backs after a second call. Sometimes groups can turn to face each other. The sasa’s popularity in Auckland is due to the fact that gestures can be easily contemporised (e.g from scraping the coconut to using the cell phone) and rhythms of the live drumming can be sped up or altered. The sasa, once an all-male dance, is not gender-specific anymore and therefore is a suitable student activity to fulfil the dance component of the New Zealand Curriculum.

The fa’ataupati is an all-male high energy slap dance in which the dancers create the rhythm by body percussion. It is usually part of male Samoan dance groups’ repertoire and Neil Ieremia used elements of the fa’ataupati for one of his fusion choreographies.

The Samoan fire dance siva afi is breathtaking and hence in particular danger to be performed as a spectacle. It is often the core element of cultural shows in tourist resorts in Samoa. Pacific Dance New Zealand offers popular siva afi classes for boys in Auckland.

The taualuga is a solo dance which was traditionally performed by the unmarried virgin daughter of the matai, the taupou, but today married women also perform it. The dancer freezes a weak smile on her face for the duration of the performance thus appearing aloof and dignified. Other dancers, male and

female, may clown around trying to disturb her dignity and concentration. The taualuga is the final dance in any gathering. I witnessed its performance as the final act in a Samoan play in Auckland. The latter illustrates the point that due to the interwoven and multi-faceted nature of the performing arts in Polynesia, dance easily interplays with drama and storytelling (Taouma, 2002).

Two interviewees spoke about the lost sa'e, a dance performed as part of the poula, a night dance event, which Samoans stopped practising due to missionary disapproval. Krämer (1995) witnessed the sa'e at the end of the 19th century and lists it as "nude dance by women" (p. 367). Mallon (2002) explains that the sa'e was indeed performed naked at the end of the night and was blatantly erotic. He suggests that the void left by the poula was filled by the ma'ulu'ulu, a group dance that tells stories through actions, which I learned in a one-off workshop.

Costumes for performing Samoan dance range from simple lavalavas or puletasis (dresses made from printed materials) combined with a necklace and a flower in the hair to elaborate attire with fine-woven pandanus mats or siapo dresses, and intricately adorned headdresses made from woven pandanus, dyed feathers, shells, and flowers. Further adornment can be necklaces of seed pods, leis of shells, armbands, coconut shells, and often red face markings are applied. Men wear lavalavas made from material or siapo and leaf fronds or strips of fibrous material around the neck and lower legs. Another aspect of male performance is the use of weaponry such as spears and clubs.

As in many Polynesian dance practices in Samoan dance, it is a tradition to reward dancers for good performance by putting banknotes on the heavily oiled body during performance, a practice often replaced by collecting money in a hat, basket, or bowl in Auckland.

5.4.6.4 Samoan dance in Auckland

Sefa Enari (2007) found that Samoans in Auckland practise Samoan dance as a way of remembering who they are and of keeping the community connected through continued dance practice. He proposes that Samoan dance "has found another home" (p. 87) in Auckland but equally acknowledges that the Samoan dance here reflects the Auckland environment. One of his significant findings was that Samoan dance in Auckland had shifted from family to performance settings, a development that this study's findings confirm. These outcomes correlate to Jared Mackley-Crump's (2012) proposition that a shift of Pacific cultural practices from private and community situations to public performance spaces has taken place which he frames as the 'festivalisation' of Pacific cultures in New Zealand.

Samoan dance features prominently in two internationally known performing arts events in Auckland: the ASB Polyfest and Pasifika. Polyfest is the largest Polynesian performing arts event in the world, with almost 200 groups from about 60 Auckland secondary schools participating (University of Auckland, 2013). The core part of the festival is the inter-school competitions, which the participants and their supporters take very seriously. Polyfest comprises five main stages which represent Māori plus the four largest Pacific migrant groups: Tongan, Samoan, Cook Islander and Niuean. In the last decade, more non-Polynesian groups have participated in the non-competitive part of Polyfest with Bollywood style Indian dancing being particularly prevalent.

As participation in Polyfest is an annual activity that requires comprehensive involvement, it has a significant influence on many Auckland secondary school students' learning about their own culture and the culture of others. It has also been pivotal in keeping alive traditional dances in their set form but also in developing new choreography and different ways of staging. The performance quality is high. Some Samoan practitioners conveyed to me their opinion that some secondary school groups appear as slick as professional groups from the islands if not slicker. The performance group of De La Salle College even won the top dance award at the Teuila Festival once.

From humble beginnings in 1976, Polyfest has grown into a widely-known event which was also evident in the responses across all three case studies. Several Samoan interviewees stated perceived issues regarding Polyfest, as presented below. Lay (1996) recorded concerns by some teachers and parents regarding the time-consuming preparations which Polyfest requires.

Equally significant is the Pasifika festival, held since 1993, which incidentally provided my first encounter with Pacific dance. Pasifika's programme of free entertainment includes dance and music performances, craft activities, and food stalls. It has attracted over 100,000 visitors annually in recent years. For the duration of the festival, Western Springs Park is divided into 'villages' representing Māori and 10 South Pacific nations: Cook Islands, Fiji, Hawai'i, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, Tahiti, Tonga, Tokelau, and Tuvalu. Further international and domestic dance and music acts showcase and dance workshops take place in the near-by Auckland Performing Arts Centre. Several events connected to the Auckland Arts Festival take place in the CBD during the lead-up week. Another noteworthy development is the establishment of a separate Pasifika festival on Auckland's North Shore.

Pasifika has been through a process of expanding, shrinking, and expanding again. Pasifika is sponsored by Auckland Council and was also funded by

Creative New Zealand until 2012. In 2013 the latter decided not to renew the funding, a decision that received negative reactions from Auckland Council, the Mayor, and Pacific leaders alike (Robinson & Mercep, 2013a, 2013b). In 2013 Pasifika returned to a two-day format and had an altered appearance after participant feedback and stake holder reviews were addressed. The intention was to increase the village experience through new lay-outs of the individual villages and through offering food that is more 'authentic'.

To participate in Pasifika, groups have to apply and initially go through an audition process. The groups are normally church or community-based. The Samoan stage also presents popular singers, dancers, and hip hop artists and Miss Samoa New Zealand performs every year.

Additional to the crowd-pulling festivals described above, several smaller events happen in Auckland, many of which are initiated by Pacific Dance New Zealand. They secured funding through Creative New Zealand and DANZ, the national industry support organisation, and since 2009 have formed a trust, employed three part-time staff and established an office. Their three regular events presented below provide mentoring and artistic development opportunities for Pacific artists.

Since 2006 (except for 2007) Pacific Dance New Zealand has organised an annual fono. This is a forum for Pacific dance practitioners, academics, administrators, and managers to celebrate and strengthen Pacific dance, to network, and to exchange experiences. Discussions often relate to the place of Pacific dance in Aotearoa New Zealand. Fonos typically include international and domestic speakers, discussions, workshops, and performances.

Since 2010, Pacific Dance New Zealand has conducted annual Choreographic Labs for three to four choreographers and an Artist in Residence programme. The chosen artists have three or eight weeks respectively to work with a group of paid dancers. The work is presented in a public performance. Several of the participating choreographers have later successfully moved into the mainstream performing arts scene of Auckland with Justin Haiu, Charlene Tedrow, Filoi Vaila'au, and Sesilia Pusiaki Tatuila taking their work to the high profile Tempo Dance Festival.

Many interviewees for this study pointed out that most Samoans in Auckland belong to a cultural group at some stage in their youth where they learn traditional song and dance. These youth groups are run by churches, community organisations, schools, and tertiary institutions.

5.4.6.5 Langi Mai

"My children and grandchildren have enjoyed being participants of Langi Mai. For us it has connected the past, present and future."
(Accident Compensation Corporation, 2010, p. 3)

Another noteworthy movement and dance activity of the Samoan and Tongan communities were the Langi Mai classes. In 2009 the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) trialled a tailor-made exercise programme for older Samoans and Tongans in Auckland. These classes, held separately within either community, were largely based on traditional dances. This pilot scheme was part of ACC's Preventing Falls programme and was initiated in response to the slow uptake within Pacific communities of ACC's Modified Tai Chi programme.

Langi Mai was designed with community input, specifically in regard to choosing music and dances. The Langi Mai Evaluation Report (Accident Compensation Corporation, 2010) stated that, "The Langi Mai exercise programme targets the identity and intrinsic knowledge of Pacific culture in order to inspire and motivate the older Pacific adult to participate" (p. 10). It attested its success to this approach and to the fact that the initiator and organiser Filipo Motulalo used culturally appropriate channels, involving people with the right status which resulted in a positive reception of the programme within communities.

According to the report it was a revelation for many participants that dance can be a form of exercise, as in Pacific societies dance is traditionally practised to perform and to present a gift to the audience. Consequently, dancing for your own enjoyment and benefit was a new concept for many participants.

During Langi Mai sessions dance and talking about the stories behind the dances and songs were interwoven. Often children were present as older people were in charge of grandchildren, who according to Motulalo (personal communication, January 25, 2013) and the Langi Mai Evaluation Report (2010) became increasingly interested in the dancing. In the Samoan section of Langi Mai sasa, ma'ulu'ulu, fa'ataupati, and tualuga were practised.

The project finished with promising results regarding the fitness and health outcomes but according to the Langi Mai Evaluation Report (2010), "Langi Mai was more than just an exercise programme it evoked a sense of identity and reinforced the role of the older Pacific adult as a conduit to pass on the dance traditions to the next generation" (p. 25). These classes are now left to be run by the communities and I was unable to ascertain whether the Samoan groups were active at time of writing.

5.4.7 Field research

5.4.7.1 *The journey*

Tracking Samoan dance in Auckland for this study unfolded in circuitous and unpredicted ways. Having seen many public showings of Samoan dance at Polyfest and Pasifika over the last two decades, and having attended the majority of Pacific Dance New Zealand's fonos, as well as Artist in Residence and Choreolab performances, I expected to find thriving Samoan dance practices. Some way into the process I also realised I had assumed I would find Samoan dance practices similar to my own and to the other two case studies. However, framing Samoan dance in Auckland proved more difficult and as a person that is not part of the Samoan community, I found Samoan dance beyond the above-mentioned events somewhat elusive. When I looked closer, it appeared in unexpected places and in unexpected ways such as in plays, comedy acts, and as exercise programmes. Access to pockets of Samoan dance did at times prove difficult, particularly when church environments were concerned. In contrast, I gained easy access and encountered much interest from New Zealand-born Samoan dance artists and teachers who readily engaged me and generously shared their thoughts and stories.

My opening question for this case study was where and how Samoan siva exists in Auckland. Then, after not finding Samoan dance classes for adults anywhere in Auckland, I asked how I could learn Samoan dance as an adult. The answer was always to find a private tutor.

From the results of my questioning and searching, I concluded that the teaching and learning of siva Samoa in Auckland at the time of the research happens with a family member, a private tutor, in a primary, intermediate, or secondary school, in a tertiary institution, in a Pacific Dance New Zealand children's class, or in a church. Contrary to the other two case studies, classes for adults through community education, cultural societies, or private dance schools did not exist. My observation that Samoan dance is not easily visible or accessible for the adult learner, particularly if coming from outside Samoan communities, was confirmed in several interviews.

Towards the end of my research journey I found two workshops where I encountered a first-hand experience of learning Samoan siva. They were part of the 2013 Pasifika Festival and participants were mostly non-Samoans. In the first workshop we learned a ma'ulu'ulu and in the second a taupou dance. It was a pleasant learning experience in a relaxed atmosphere with contextual teaching. Despite the challenges arising from trying to perform movements that I was unaccustomed to, such as hand undulations and leaning body stances, I

thoroughly enjoyed the lessons. I would have appreciated the opportunity for a couple of follow-up sessions to arrive at a deeper kinaesthetic understanding of the dance form.

Earlier in my search for Samoan dance I attended the dress rehearsal of a Catholic church group in Mangere, South Auckland. This production included singing and dancing and was performed in Samoa as part of the 50 years of independence celebrations in July 2012. My persistent enquiring resulted in permission to attend. On the day, I found myself a sole palagi in an exclusively Samoan-speaking environment. Luckily, the kind woman sitting beside me explained to me what was evolving in front of us.

This occasion was equally a dress rehearsal and a fund-raising event. Community groups from Auckland suburbs raised money by performing improvised sivas, collecting the money in plastic bowls. A choir opened the programme with a polished and emotive performance. The dance performance by the youth group to gospel comprised dance actions which were a mixture of traditional Samoan dance elements, praying gestures, and newer gestures as seen in other choreographies in Auckland. The dancers in uniforms offered a tidy performance with clear spacing to live singing by two lead singers and the whole group. A second piece was performed to a blend of gospel, samba, and African rhythms. In both pieces the movement interpreted the Samoan lyrics of the songs which were displayed on big screens. The large audience received both presentations with much enthusiasm.

Further attempts to gain access to the youth group were unsuccessful, as were attempts to trace down any Langi Mai exercise practices.

5.4.7.2 The interviews

For this case study I interviewed 12 people: 2 males and 10 females. One interview was conducted with four women of an all-female dance collective; I also observed two of their rehearsals and three of their performances. This group performed in the 2012 and 2013 Tempo Dance Festival, receiving positive reviews. Three further interviews were with a mother and daughter who utilised Samoan siva in a play, and with two of the Pasifika workshop participants – a young South African migrant and a middle-aged pākehā woman. The remainders of the interviews were with individuals who are involved with Samoan dance as dancers, teachers, choreographers, administrators, and dance development advocates.

Ten of the interviewees reported extensive and broad dance experiences beyond Samoan siva covering kapa haka, Cook Island dance, Hawaiian hula, Tongan dance, aboriginal dance, salsa, tango, butoh, contemporary dance,

classical ballet, break dance, and hip hop; one person takes part in a mixed-ability community class. The remaining two reported little or no dance experience. Several interviewees have tertiary qualifications in the performing arts: one a bachelor and one a master degree in dance, one a bachelor and one a diploma in Pacific performing arts. One person has taught for many years as a specialist teacher in Samoan dance at a tertiary institution. Other professions include librarian, school teacher, actor, and playwright.

The personal histories regarding ethnicities, countries of birth, and residence were a maze to negotiate. Seven are New Zealand-born Samoans, but one spent most of her childhood in Samoa. Two were born in Samoa and came to New Zealand as young adults. One was born in Fiji, had her early childhood in Samoa, and then moved to Wellington. The preferred label for the New Zealand-borns was 'New Zealand-born Samoan'; one used the term 'afakasi' to describe her mixed ethnicity of Samoan and palagi descent. Two further interviewees were not Samoan.

The majority of interviewees learned Samoan dance as children in their families. Many had opportunities to practise it further at school, in church, and in tertiary institutions. Several are developing their own Samoan dance practice as teachers or choreographers.

The five main topics emerging from the interview analysis were: motivation for practising Samoan dance, concerns about siva Samoa in Auckland, new and traditional Samoan dance in Auckland (telling our own stories), dance practice connecting places (circularity with restrictions), and lastly, how they experience and view Auckland and its varied dance practices of different cultures.

Motivation for practicing Samoan dance

“There is this movement, but there is actually a lot of stuff behind it, there is a lot of history behind it. Can you get one without the other? They seem to sit together. They are the same, -siva Samoa-, not -siva-, -Samoa-.”

Many statements clearly identified siva Samoa as an identity marker for Samoans living in New Zealand as the following quotes testify. The comments clarified that the continued practice of siva Samoa is a way of re-confirming and re-constructing cultural identity.

Several interviewees stated that dancing is a very effective way of learning about and being connected to Pacific cultures. One man said,

Dance brings you back to your cultural roots.

The other man stated,

It's what makes me Samoan, and the Samoan dance is exactly that; it's Samoan dance. It's like Irish dance or Tongan dance, and if I stopped doing it, then I stop becoming unique. So that's really who I am and where I'm from, and how we develop; so that's identity. It's what sets us apart from everyone else. So it's like a fingerprint for me.

One of the women said that,

The siva Samoa in that sense is like one of the biggest symbols of our culture, kind of places you, you know, where you are, when you do it.

Another one recalled how reconnecting with siva Samoa in her late teenage years after a period of ignoring her cultural heritage ignited a renewed sense of cultural belonging:

You've forgotten who you actually were before these influences started hitting you, you are a totally different person. ... Now I feel like I know who I am. I'm not something that I'm not. When I'm producing choreo work I'm always reminding myself of that. I'm just more rooted in my culture and dance has definitely been a major influence.

She also observed that reconnecting with siva confirms her unique identity as it makes her feel "different from the others".

One comment highlighted the connection between Samoan dance practice and cultural confidence:

I think it's really important. I think it's a way of distilling your understanding of your culture, your confidence in your culture, a lot of it has to do with confidence.

One of the Samoan women stated that she feels embarrassed about her lack of confidence in dancing siva Samoa.

Another incentive for continued practice of siva Samoa is a concern about the lack of keepers of Samoan cultural heritage in Auckland. Some teachers expressed this strongly. One of the men said about his motivation to keep teaching that,

It's dying with the next generation and those are the two main things. It's dying, and identity.

Two of the women expressed similar sentiments:

It's my passion and I want to give back. ... There's not a lot of us out there.

I just know that I'm going to do my part as somebody that has Samoan dance knowledge to pass on.

The teacher of children's classes perceived a deep need within the second- and third-generation Samoans in Auckland to reconnect with their cultural heritage. She said that,

The parents, they're just hungry for their kids to learn more about their culture.

One of the men highlighted that learning Samoan dance and song is a good way of learning the language.

The two workshop participants saw their participation as a way of learning about Pacific cultures. One of them, a recent migrant to Auckland, said it helped her feel more at home in Auckland. She said,

I think the dance will be the beginning of finding my roots here. ... For four years, I've been kind of wilting. Like I don't really have anything you know, there's no ties to my African heritage, there's no ties to my religion, there's no ties to New Zealand. And that loss of identity and belonging is immense in a teenager, has a really big impact. Especially you're trying to figure out who you are and where you fit in life. So I started looking for different ways to learn more about Māori and Pasifika, New Zealand culture and heritage.

Concerns about siva Samoa in Auckland

“Do we still have grass roots, traditional performing arts in the Pacific out there? For us here in Auckland, you probably can't find that anymore.”

A lack of opportunities to engage with Samoan dance in Auckland was mentioned by many interviewees. The comments referred to manifold locations of practice, to different age groups, and to situations within and outside the Samoan community. It was widely agreed that in Auckland today children and youth are more likely than adults to take up Samoan dance. One of the men suggested strong uptake amongst Samoan youth. He said that,

There are a lot of youth, but there could be more. I believe there could be more and there should be more.

One woman suggested that,

Our dance is still very community based, for church, family gigs.

The fact that some learning within family settings still happens was confirmed by the 11-year-old participant in one of the workshops who learns siva from her aunt. However, several interviewees thought that the grassroots dance activities in the families and local halls are drastically diminishing. The reasons given were busy lifestyles, particularly for second- and third-generation parents, and lack of time or knowledge to pass on dance and other cultural knowledge. One dance teacher reflected on the parents' motivation to send their children to her classes:

The parents haven't had that exposure. Maybe that generation missed out when their parents really encouraged English in the house. So then the whole part of the culture kind of died down. They don't have that knowledge of dance to teach their kids now. So in a way the classes at Pacific Dance are really good. Because that gives the parents the opportunity to give their kids what they weren't given themselves when they grew up because obviously, if they had learned it they would be teaching their kids.

Another woman offered a similar perspective:

People who are really interested are the young kids and I think for me that is kind of a problem, it's like their parents don't want to raise them up in that culture anymore. I was raised up in that culture and I am very fortunate that I was, like having my grandmother there. It feels like nowadays parents just send their children to learn siva Samoa instead of being brought up with it. I think it is because they are either too busy or they've lost it, they don't know it anymore themselves, so they are, not embarrassed, but like 'I don't know what to do', not confident enough. And that for me, I see it as a big problem, because that's how we are losing that tradition of being brought up in that culture, because dance is a huge part in Samoan culture.

All the teachers confirmed that there is no shortage of interest in Samoan siva classes for children in Auckland.

Lack of adult classes

“I think there could be more, so much more, just for the general public to participate. I don't think there is enough for them, any age, anybody, pākehā. I think the interest is there and this is just from my meeting people.”

Several of the interviewees regretted a lack of Samoan siva classes for the general public in Auckland. Two of them had in years past taught community education classes which were discontinued due to not meeting the recent government imposed expectations of being financially viable.

One of the teachers reflected on her experience when teaching Samoan and other Pacific dance forms in community education settings:

We first started up with an open cultural class, so we did Hawai'ian one day, one Saturday we did Samoan, one Saturday Tongan. That was very successful; people were definitely interested. That's the same with the Samoan classes I did, people were interested, but it's also a question, after my classes are finished, what now? Where do they go now? I got nowhere to refer you. Even in Auckland City, I think, there could be more happening there.

Equally, the lack of opportunities to take Samoan dance knowledge further for the relatively knowledgeable dancer was highlighted. One young woman said,

I wanted to get myself back into traditional dancing but there's nowhere for me to go to. It's not really on demand at the moment. Even though I know Samoan dance, I feel I need more of it. Where is it? There's not a lot of us out there and that's what concerns me. ... Pacific Dance NZ bringing in these workshops for little kids, it's good, but they are only one organisation doing it. There are no other community groups doing it. I looked at church communities, notice boards and stuff, there is no one offering anything.

She expressed further concerns about where and how she would be able to pass down her own dance knowledge after finishing her dance degree:

For me what I'm worried about is what I'm going to do after this. Because I'm gonna have all these experiences but I don't know where I can share them. I don't know if people will be interested. But I'm determined, I know there's gonna be a lot of barriers that I'm gonna hit. It's my passion and I want to give back because in my upbringing I had it all handed to me on a plate.

One of the workshop participants, a school teacher, told of her search for a Samoan dance class:

I was looking for something to attend on a 6 to 10 week basis in order to build up enough experience to get a proper feel for the dance. But I was unable to find anything on the internet that met what I was looking for, an on-going class. But because I've been to Pasifika Festival every year since I've lived here and since this [workshop] is attached to the festival day I thought I'll come along and try this one.

One woman stated that even within Samoan communities there are fewer situations where siva is practised. She suggested that in the last 10 years, due to rising poverty in Auckland's Pacific communities, fewer tusigaigoa (fundraising events) have taken place where adult Samoan dancing is a crucial feature. She said,

They still got some, but many of us in New Zealand, all of us, we are poor. So many people don't want to go. Because where do you get the money from?

With the lack of classes available, the best option to learn siva Samoa as an adult beginner is private tutoring. The tutors stated that in most cases they are approached by people who want to learn siva for specific events such as weddings or special birthdays. Often, this preparation takes several months with weekly, fortnightly, or monthly sessions. In their teaching they strive to convey the movements connected with their cultural meanings and contexts.

Teaching practices

"My mum taught in a real Samoan way, calling out, screaming."

The traditional teaching practices of rote learning and yelling was a vivid memory for all women concerned. It received diverse reactions but a slightly critical tone prevailed. For one woman it was so discouraging that she decided that learning siva Samoa properly was not for her. Another woman was clear that she will continue the same Samoan teaching practices while a third one, while talking about it, started to reflect on it. One of the teachers said that she puts effort into developing supportive teaching practices. The discussion regarding this topic within the dance collective was accompanied by a lot of shouting and laughing with Samoan words thrown in. It developed as follows:

The way I was taught was hard. That's just the way it is. And I will probably be the same.

Another woman, a mother of young children, interrupted with,

Oh my gosh! I'm the same with these guys. And I didn't realise until you brought it up!

At the exact moment the baby started crying as if she had heard and wanted to comment which made everybody laugh. The first woman continued,

And I will probably do the same to my nieces and nephews as well!

A lot of commotion and hitting sounds filled the room as the women obviously recalled their experience of being taught siva Samoa. The woman continued,

I really appreciate it now, the Samoan way. You can take the girl out of the island but you can't take the island out of the girl.

On the other end of the spectrum, the playwright I interviewed was deterred by how she saw other children in her community treated when they learned the siva. She recalled her thoughts and her reaction at the time:

It's too hard, or my parents are too hard, they're quite particular. I think the pressure of getting it right was like, I actually can't be bothered. One way of dealing with it is saying I'm not gonna do it.

She equally perceived the Polyfest auditions as a severe process laced with open criticism. In her words,

It's very Samoan, to tell someone off in front of everyone.

The teacher of the children's siva Samoa classes was aware of these issues and deliberately teaches in a different way. She said that,

You don't want to discourage them from learning. You don't want to say that they're not doing it right. Because then they will always be like 'well, we tried'.

She then spoke of her learning curve as a teacher, how she developed "different ways of learning Samoan dance" and how she realised that she "really had to break it down, right to the bottom of tiny exercises" in order to cater for her students' needs.

The critical feedback towards performances from within the Samoan community was also an issue discussed. One woman said that the older generations' criticism is a challenge and that the situation could be helped by a more "balanced" approach to criticism. She said,

If the older generation or the traditional generation is too touchy, feely then that it's going to be a bit challenging.

Another woman expressed her view as follows:

I was never confident in doing any island dancing, especially Samoan siva, in front of our own people. Because I know that they're quite critical. And it's funny because throughout the years of growing up you realise how people overseas appreciate that more than your own people. But I guess if you can survive doing any culture in front of that culture, like the

siva Samoa, for example a tauluga, anything Samoan in front of a Samoan crowd, it's an achievement for me, it gives you confidence. Either they not gonna like it, and they will, or there's some that might have something to say about it.

Polyfest

Criticism of Polyfest was voiced by some, albeit for diverse reasons. Several interviewees thought that Polyfest does not offer enough exposure to Pacific dance for secondary school students as the preparation and performing only last from late-January to mid-March. One woman said,

High school students are only getting exposure to cultural dance in those three months. I reckon that's not enough. It should be extended to a whole year. That's another way how we can preserve our culture.

The playwright said that her first play was a satire on the Polyfest with the Samoan competitiveness as the main topic. Another woman commented on this issue:

I enjoy Polyfest and I like that the kids are really embracing their culture through joining in the Polyfest. I don't like the competition side of it.

Another interviewee said that the Polyfest judges should consider that dance needs to reflect people's experiences, what they see around them every day. He suggested that Polyfest may be "past its use-by-date".

Old and new Samoan dance in Auckland

"For me, Samoan dance doesn't stand still; I'm still developing new styles."

The place of tradition

Throughout the interviews, an all-encompassing agreement that traditional Samoan dance has its place was expressed. There was also agreement that traditional is not the only space to be occupied by Samoan dance practitioners in Auckland. All keep a reverence for tradition, but they also want new dance developments; they want both to co-exist rather than seeing it as a question of one or the other.

The following comments referring to the place of tradition were offered:

You can't go anywhere out into the future unless you've learned all the old motifs and the old sasas and the old ma'ulu'ulus. ... I don't want it to

get saturated into like hip hop or contemporary dance. I want it to maintain its own sort of style. So I am concerned to a certain extent.

The same person commented about allowing new elements into the choreography:

If you don't adapt, I believe, you would have cut off that whole generation. So most definitely, it makes it much more accessible. But at the same time, you can't make it accessible in a way where you forget about the past.

All practitioners perceived viable means of letting tradition and new developments co-exist either as separate entities or fusions. One woman explained her understanding as

not challenging but offering something new to tradition.

She also suggested that,

If you are going to contemporise something, make sure you acknowledge your ancestors and forefathers, the history behind that dance form because that's where it all started and that's what you should always pay respect to. It's the histories and storytelling that give the dance so much meaning and that's why it's so powerful and so different. It identifies your culture as who it is and who we are as a people.

One woman succinctly said,

I have appreciation for both worlds.

The mother of two added,

There is so much value in the traditional stuff, there is so much. [My children] will definitely learn it as a foundation, as their starting point.

One woman was acutely aware of the difficulty in defining tradition, particularly if considering the influence of Christianity on siva. She said,

Sometimes I question myself, what we perform today is that really traditional Samoan dance? Or is what was performed before the missionaries came traditional Samoan dance? That's what I'm really interested in now, that's what I try to kind of bring out in my works, challenging that whole aspect of what is tradition.

Mata fiafia

“Smiles, smiles, smiles, you know. ... Smiles and stories under palm trees.”

In many conversations the smiling expected in traditional siva performance came up as an issue. The women conveyed that in their culture it is not acceptable to forgo the smile. I sensed unease in regard to this topic. The women did not want to be negative or disrespectful, but it came through that they thought these expectations were to some degree out of place in the Auckland environment. One of the women pointedly expressed the disconnection between the expectations and their lived experience:

It's hard to keep smiling and performing beautiful siva when there are deeper issues that are occupying my head. ... These days I'm worried about my boobs leaking while I'm trying to smile.

Another woman spoke of the cultural meaning of 'mata fiafia':

That's a Samoan skill actually; it's called 'mata fiafia', literally 'happy eyes'. I can't do that that well, I'm just not that smiley. ... I think watching them has been amazing because they use it, it's a front that you present to people even if you hate their guts.

She further spoke about how putting on this façade is an accepted communication style in Samoan culture and suggested it may be a way of being able to live with each other in small communities. However, she came to a point where for herself she questioned these cultural expectations. She said,

I probably could go in the front row and smile but I kind of go 'why would I do that?' I don't think I am deliberately rebellious; it's just the question 'why would I do it if I don't really want to do it?'

Even though the women carefully avoided transgressing the norms of their culture completely, a questioning of gender role expectations such as demure, and forever smiling, female dancers was obvious in the discussions about siva practice.

Telling our own stories

“We are really itching to break away from it. Tell stories that make me click.”

The director of the women's dance collective, who perform some traditional dances but focus on their own choreography, realised a couple of years ago

that Pacific dance did not have a significant performance presence in Auckland outside Polyfest and Pasifika. Therefore, she decided to take her work to places outside the Pacific scene. She described her motivation as follows:

The main motivation for me really is the whole thing about Pacific women that I love and that I want to nurture and present. Educate people about us Pacific women; I think they are so full of stories, so full of passion, full of hate, full of everything that you can think of. ... It's not just for smiles and pretty girls.

She reflected on the localities of dance practice and how this influenced her relationship with the dance:

I feel like, ok, I just come from this traditional dance background. Because it is not our stories really, it's everyone, it's the whole family, generations of stories that we are telling, and it's all this smiles and what the islands were back then, smiles and stories under palm trees. Now, that's not really what I'm going through. I am not going through sunny days, you know. ... From a traditional background, people I have worked with are all experiencing the same thing I am; they want to step away from it, break away from the rigid dance form that we've been trained so many years. We are really itching to break away from it. Tell stories that make me click. Not so much my culture, my family, but me. I think it's almost like, I don't know whether rebel is the right word, everyone is rebelling against that rigidity, that tradition and trying to break free from it and include their own stuff. Maybe it is an Auckland thing because of all the culture that's happening around us, all the kind of stuff you want to express but can't because of your cultural background. Restrictions, all of that. And maybe that in itself could be kind of a dance form, it could evolve into a dance form, all this rebellion against our traditions, you know. I feel like it's just evolving, we are on that wave. It's definitely moving to something, I don't know what it is. I'm not the only person who feels like this.

One of the women told how she had become interested in creating her own work. She said that the collective's director

started to open my eyes more to taking traditional dance, then making, creating your own work. And then you grew up with a group of girls that had that same vision, you wanted to test the boundaries and limits of what we can do as women as well as our knowledge in Pacific dance. I've fallen in love with contemp and pushing it and always appreciate the traditional side of things.

All members of the dance collective pointed out that their appreciation for the traditional has grown since creating their own choreography. They also highlighted the similarities of the old and new Pacific dance in Auckland as both are based on story-telling. One said,

It's all about dance, it's not about the costumes; it's about telling the story. So the next level is telling our own story in a more pushing the boundaries type way.

Another interviewee spoke about pushing boundaries when she choreographed a duet, a form which is not part of Samoan dance repertoire. As this was a breach of choreographic conventions, she was concerned about possible negative reactions, but they did not eventuate. She explained that,

It's not really a thing in the Pacific, specifically Samoan. Because the dancing is really community, so even if there's a solo dancer mid-off-the-field you still have the whole choir behind her and you still have a whole lot of other dancers put in there. So she's never really a solo and so in that sense there is no duet dancing as well. So that was interesting for me just to go through the experience of putting it together, a Samoan dance duet. And I think I was really open to the idea of it because I wanted to focus a lot on the difference between male dancing and female dancing.

The last two examples highlight that Samoan dance practitioners experiment with new forms but also with new content that reflects topics of the here and now. They conveyed, however, that generally money can only be earned by performing traditional dances; for example, through corporate gigs. They rely largely on arts funding for creating their own choreographic work.

One woman thought it was crucial for the following pertinent questions to enter the discourse about where Pacific dance in New Zealand is headed. She said,

It would be interesting to move the mainstream dance people to [the grass roots situations] instead of bringing the traditional onto the contemporary stage, selling it for mainstream tickets, selling it through ticketek online. You can't really do that with Pacific Islanders who don't have credit cards and can't do all that stuff. So where's it going? Are we bringing traditional to the contemporary stage, so that we are more noticed? Or do we want to be noticed enough for the mainstream to come to us. ... Who's pushing? Who's the one steering the wheels? Is it the youth? Or is it the older generation? ... And I got nothing negative to say about bringing traditional onto stage; I value that we have people who want to bring it on stage. And appreciate that the audience actually buys tickets to come and watch it. And then by chance this piece may end up in Germany, or Europe; that will be even more amazing because then a lot of people get to see it across the world.

One dancer and choreographer reflected on how her Samoan dance heritage and her New Zealand upbringing and training come together in her dance making:

I think for me personally it was what made me different from the others; and I think I had something more to give than just the normal stuff. I feel it gave texture to my movements, to my ideas that came out. It just brought another element to my ideas I would say but would for example perform a contemporary dance but have a Pacific meaning behind it. Or use a cultural context to help shape and mould how I would choreograph.

Pop culture was mentioned as a significant influence on dance practices of Samoan youth in Auckland. This, however, was not further pursued as a topic for this study because similar to the Bollywood phenomenon, it opens up a new research realm.

Dance practice connecting places – circularity with restricted flow?

Forming and re-confirming Samoan identity is illuminated above as a motivation for practising Samoan siva in Auckland. However, the difference in cultural norms, climate, environment, and lifestyle between Samoa and Aotearoa were a recurring theme, and frictions and frustrations in dealing with each other were expressed, one even citing a “cultural barrier”. A prominent issue was the expectation for the younger people not to offer their opinion, causing a one-way communication route.

Visits to Samoa were described as positive and challenging at the same time. One woman recalled her ambiguous reaction to her first extended visit to Samoa:

It was the best time of my life, because I got to meet all my relatives, and it was the worst time of my life, because I got to meet all my relatives.

One dancer and choreographer expressed frustration that she cannot perform her own choreographies on her bi-annual family reunions in Samoa. She conveyed her experience of dancing in Samoa as follows:

It's usually choreographies passed down from our elders. When we try to put in something they kind of disregard it. 'It should be done this way, this is the proper way'. ... We are in a generational shift where everything is always changing, you need to be open to newer things, but you can't say that to them; you just don't want to disrespect them. The choreography is what's been passed down and we perform it traditionally and the way that they like it. It's really what they want to see. ... I feel very restricted because there is so much more that you could present or showcase to them I believe. It just restricts me from doing something that's out-of-the-box. ... I am unable to give them something more and that will mean so much more to me as being a New Zealand-born Pacific Islander. Because I think there is this difference being from New Zealand, being born and raised in New Zealand and born and raised in Samoa. So there is this cultural barrier. What can you do?

Another point distilled from the interviews was that many of the practitioners feel connected to and have knowledge of many Pacific island dance practices. One said,

Even though I'm Samoan in my blood I feel like that in an environment that has exposed me to a lot of different cultures I would be comfortable talking to anyone about the Pacific culture as a whole rather than just talking about my Samoan culture.

The women in the dance collective also have a diverse knowledge of Pacific island dance forms, but the siva Samoa is the one they can all perform which indicates the prominence of Samoan culture amongst the Pacific island cultures in New Zealand.

Auckland – the “city of diversity”

“There’s just a lot of culture and dance is always in there.”

“Multi-culturalism here is peaceful.”

Varying takes on Auckland’s multi-culturalism were prevalent in the interviews, with segregation and ignorance lamented on the one side but a coming together and a generally curious and liberal stance towards other cultures equally acknowledged and appreciated.

Several interviewees commented that social and cultural segregation shows in geographical segregation in Auckland:

I still believe that we’re very much in our own little pockets in Auckland.

I still feel we are invisibly segregated, like in regard to Mangere, you’ll only see Pacific Island people, you know.

In the dance collective, Auckland’s multi-culturalism was perceived as superficial. They described having experienced patronising attitudes, which one called “arrogant ignorance”. She further stated that,

Everyone thinks they know. It’s like ‘Auckland is so culturally diverse; I know all about the Pacific Islands’. But really all they know is talofa, malo e lelei, bula; that’s it.

Another one recalled that,

When we did [our show] in the city they were telling us all about Pacific Islanders; essentially nothing.

The director summarised,

There is a realisation of how little people here in Auckland know about Pacific cultures, very little.

Nevertheless, Auckland was seen as a place where many cultures cohabitate and interact in a peaceful way. One woman said,

I do like that it's blooming with Pacific culture here in Auckland, with art, I mean, it's not just dance. It's Pacific stories told through theatre as well.

She thought that dance "adds that bit of culture and adds that bit of colour" to Auckland.

Another woman highlighted the cross-cultural learning happening through festivals:

I think now that we have all these festivals and events, it gives us an opportunity to experience them, indulge what their culture is like, and take back, gives us more knowledge about how we see our community. I do think every culture has similarities as well and there is also differences that make them who they are but I reckon every culture has similarities we can all relate to. Not just in the Pacific, also other cultures. I think what makes us so unique is that we understand that much more. I think the people here in Auckland are just so open to it; they don't restrict themselves from being exposed to it.

Referring to dance practices of different cultures she continued,

I think it is very important for us to preserve and cultivate it in Auckland because it really makes that city of diversity. ... Auckland has so much to offer because of the festivals and the events that our council puts on. And it's not just for Pacific people; they do it for every culture that lives here. And I would say it is because of that that makes Auckland that much better because we are acknowledging every single culture all under one umbrella. For me I think that is amazing, because we are experiencing different cultures every day. We walk past somebody, who can be of Indian or Chinese descent, we just walk past them, it's just that's how we are living at the moment, and there is no barriers or anything because we are always interlocking and networking.

A wish to stay unique rather than blend in with the majority culture was also expressed. One man said that,

In Auckland, we got to still hold on to what keeps us unique, you know.

Some women offered comments about wanting to feel “unique” or “different” within the cultural mix of Auckland.

Many interviewees thought that Pacific dance in Auckland has achieved a higher profile in recent years and that more mixed audiences attend Pacific dance events, which is specifically obvious when Pacific choreographers perform at mainstream festivals. It was also conveyed that following the international success of Black Grace, practitioners have started thinking about global audiences.

One interviewee suggested that the truly multi-cultural festivals carry more significance for Auckland than the solely Pacific-focused festivals. She said about the International Cultural Festival in Mount Roskill,

It's amazing. I reckon that will be more important, I find it more important than the Pasifika Festival.

Several interviewees advocated for a Polynesian cultural centre in Auckland or a training centre for Polynesian arts. One of the men suggested that Auckland needs

a proper institution, infrastructure, controlled, organised and in a modern context away from churches.

In the dance collective one woman said,

I think we should do a Hawai'ian Polynesian Cultural Centre, we should be able to do one here in Auckland.

This was supported with vengeance by her colleague: “You would think so!”

5.4.8 Discussion

This case study identifies Samoan dance as a medium to maintain cultural heritage, to connect people across geographic distances, and for building a new Samoan culture which is specific to Auckland. The field work findings align with Mallon and Pereira's (2002) supposition that “the art of Pacific Island peoples in New Zealand reveals stories of continuity as well as change and transformation” (p. 9).

Throughout the interviews, the topic of finding cultural identity interwove with the quest for finding personal identity in Aotearoa New Zealand. The word

'confidence' appeared many times in the interviews, and dance was identified as facilitating personal confidence as well as confidence in one's culture.

A culture clash between Aotearoa and Samoa, and equally between first- and later-generation migrants, was identified by most interviewees. These tensions showed in the young generation's desire to question gender roles, speak up, tell their own stories, and create their own choreography. Frustration was voiced at not being able to share their choreographies. They saw this as not only a lost opportunity to present a 'gift' to the family, but also as a situation that prevented them from expressing themselves as the new generation of New Zealand-born Samoans. Fear about negative reactions to contemporary Pacific choreography was voiced as another issue. However, actual reactions were reportedly more positive than negative.

There was a hint in the interviews that the strict teaching of siva as part of a culturally determined pedagogy may have worked counter-productively to the dance form's proliferation. However, with the change of settings where cultural learning happens, a change in teaching approaches appears to be taking place.

This study has ascertained the ascent of women in Pacific dance. In a 2002 essay, Lisa Taouma expressed disappointment about the fact that there were few woman dancers and no woman choreographers in the Pacific performing arts field of Aotearoa. This male domination has since abated with several female Pacific choreographers partaking in Choreolab or becoming Artist in Residence. Samoan choreographers Charlene Tedrow and Filoi Vailau'u as well as Tongan Sesilia Pusiaki Tatuila, amongst others, are breaking the mould. All three have successfully moved into mainstream performance by presenting their work repeatedly at Tempo Dance Festival.

Samoan dance practices in Auckland present an opportunity for women's roles to become re-negotiated and cultural norms redefined. This is obvious in female choreographers' prominent occupation of the dance space and also in their quest to tell their own stories. Interestingly, interviewees also expressed that creating one's own work paved the way to return with more ease and appreciation to the dance traditions of Samoa.

Kaepler's (2008) suggestion of a circularity of influences between Pacific Islands and New Zealand in the performing arts was to a large degree confirmed in the interviews; however, it was also proposed that this flow is somehow restricted due to traditional cultural protocol and the resulting rejection of new choreography. Some thought that this restricted flow was a generational issue. One person suggested some older people in the Samoan community in

Auckland are less flexible than many people in Samoa and hence safeguard what they see as 'the tradition'. Others thought that the conflict is between the geographic places due to different environmental and living circumstances.

Circular flow is additionally obvious in the fact that many performance groups in Auckland offer a variety of dances originating from different places in the Pacific, thus creating connections not just between Aotearoa and Samoa but across many Oceanic nations.

In 2002, Taouma characterised on-going controversies about traditional and contemporary styles as the main issues in Pacific dance communities in New Zealand. According to her, this is played out particularly forcefully on the Samoan stage at Polyfest. She frames it as a "battle over coming to terms with our past and our future" (2002, p.144). These arguments were also prominent in the interviews I conducted for my study *Samoa dance at the interface of tradition and contemporary* (2001).

The friction between traditional and modern was also weaving through the interviews for this study, however not as the one outstanding topic. Generally, a co-existence of traditional dance and contemporary developments was taken for granted. My sense is that whether to accept and allow change may not be the main issue for the majority of Samoans in Aotearoa anymore; rather, questions such as how to negotiate the changes and who is in charge, how to keep true to oneself and one's culture, and how to avoid becoming mainstreamed are more relevant.

The interview analysis suggests that elements of practice such as pedagogy and female role expectations were issues that were at least as pertinent for the interviewees as tradition and change. Many comments related to the need for dance practice to reflect the Auckland situation. In summary, the quest playing out in Samoan dance practice in Auckland today appears to be about reconciling the different expectations arising from different environments and contexts and thus redefining the importance and meanings of the Samoan heritage in the new place Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

5.5 Summary

Chapter 5 described and discussed in detail the Croatian, Indian, and Samoan case studies conducted within this research on urban dance practices of different cultures in Auckland. The following chapter summarises the case study results, identifying similarities and differences.

6 Results

This chapter reflects on the research journey, restates the purpose and methodology of the study, and summarises the field research results.

6.1 Retracing background and journey

6.1.1 Background and purpose of study

This study set out to explore the role of urban dance practices of different cultures in Auckland in relationship to the city's emerging multi-cultural identity. On first arriving in Auckland I noticed that compared to other cities, culturally specific dance practices hold a prominent position here. While conducting the present research I realised that they are becoming ever more visible, and that they could become a hallmark of Auckland.

I started my research journey with questions such as: Does dance play a role in shaping Auckland's multi-cultural identity? How does dance contribute to the 'making' of the city, to its zest and vibrancy? Does dancing facilitate place connection for the dance participants?

During the first year of study the following research question was developed: 'How do dance practices of different cultures contribute to Auckland as a place of diverse communities?'

Detailed sub-questions emerged: 'Who participates in culturally specific dance practices in Auckland and how do people choose their groups?' 'Is participation connected to cultural identity?' 'Do dance practices contribute to meaningful encounters between diverse cultures in Auckland?' 'What is the participants' understanding of the meaning of their dancing and what do outsiders perceive?'

6.1.2 Methodology

Contemporary ethnography, understood as a qualitative methodology which investigates communities of practice, offered the main methodological framework for this study. Ethnography is suitable for investigating urban dance practices of different cultures as it facilitates gaining insights into people's daily life and everyday practices.

Within this research it is acknowledged that in ethnographic studies the researcher's auto-ethnography is always active because her/his behaviours and perceptions are determined by her/his socio-cultural background. Moments where I had to confront issues arising from this situation are described later in this chapter.

During the field work within the communities, I was aware that I entered and operated in 'their space'. Therefore, my approach was to be flexible, open, and as non-judgmental as possible. I was also reflective of how the dancing 'felt' emotionally, physically, and spatially; for example, how it felt to be linked into tight armholds in the kolo or to restrict arm movements so that the armpits do not become exposed in the siva. The fact that I actively experienced the kolo and siva facilitated a holistic experience of what the dancers' practice feels like, and literally put me on an 'equal footing' with them.

This ethnographic study was interested in dance practitioners' stories, so narrative inquiry with its appreciation of the first-person perspective was utilised. Interviewees conveyed narratives about issues of identity, how they made sense of living in Auckland with more than one cultural affiliation, and how they linked their migrant communities' and their own past, present and future. This approach valued their individual narrative and voice.

Four research methods were applied in this project. For the field work triangulation was used, which meant multiple data gathering methods such as participant observation, journaling, informal conversations, semi-structured interviews, and contextual and historical research. Active participant observation proved to be a useful tool at times but inappropriate at other times, particularly where groups were practising for performances. I abandoned the wish for active participation in all case studies and framed my observing and interacting as a form of moderate to passive participation (Spradley cited in DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). This seemed suitable as I became part of the fabric of that specific practice for several weeks even if I was not dancing.

The semi-structured interviews with dance group participants were guided by a list of open-ended questions. Some interviews developed 'a life of their own' with interviewees taking charge of the topics on their own accord. Other interviews were more interviewer-led. This seemed to depend on personality, age, and familiarity within the group or between interviewer and interviewee(s).

The opening questions were, 'How and when did you become involved with your dance group?' 'What is your main motivation for being involved?' 'What is the most important aspect of it for you?' These questions were followed by a set of questions about sustaining and changing culture. I asked 'What is your assessment of the state of [kolo/siva/kathak/bharata natyam] in Auckland?' I was also interested in how much the dance and the modes of practice change in the Auckland context, and how this change is negotiated within groups and communities. I further asked dance participants, 'Has practising cultural dance changed you, or your relationship to your culture, or your relationship to

Auckland?’ ‘Is it important for you that the audience understands the cultural meaning of your dance performances?’ and ‘Of all the ongoing practices you do, which one do you think has fostered a heightened sense of belonging in Auckland?’

The last set of questions I posed was about culturally specific dancing of others in Auckland. ‘What do you know about dance practices of other cultures?’ ‘Do you attend cultural festivals?’ ‘How do you view the role of culturally specific dance in Auckland?’ Furthermore, questions relating to their particular culture were asked, and topics arising unexpectedly in earlier interviews were incorporated in later interviews.

Constant comparative analysis was utilised as an analytical process for distilling themes that emerged from the mass of data gained via interviews, journaling, and field observations. It proved to be an effective but time-consuming tool for “extracting” the essence of the interviews. During the drawn-out process I categorised the results, then tried to improve what I had achieved by splitting the categories up differently, only to give them a further re-shuffle later. Sometimes I started with a larger number of thematic categories, at other times with fewer categories. Sometimes I started writing out all the interviewees’ comments first and then categorised, at other times I categorised first starting from my intuition and memory, and then assigned the interviewees’ statements. The sheets of paper on which I drew this up became larger each time. None of the “improved” ways of processing the data shortened the track or led to clearer results so that in the end I decided there was no right or wrong way of doing it. It is simply the nature of constant comparative analysis to go backwards and forwards and this lengthy process assures that the researcher looks at the results many times and from several angles.

In order to safeguard against misinterpretations and build trustworthy data, this study used respondent validation, giving participants the opportunity to double-check and comment. Participant feedback within this process was largely positive and supportive; some, mostly small, alterations were requested. Some participants dealt with the approval process by not responding, which left me slightly uncomfortable as I would have preferred a confirmation, but their behaviour was valid within the set-up of the respondent validation process.

Multiple coding was utilised within this research as a method to deal with issues of concern or uncertainty, meaning frequent discussions with PhD colleagues, supervisors, and advisors about these matters. The ontological and theoretical framing of the study were recurrent topics but also the people issues which arose from the case studies. Topics included how I placed myself in relation to

the dancers in the studied groups and how to deal with my emotional reactions to situations. These situations sometimes had to do with culturally determined pedagogy or how women were related to.

6.1.3 Choice of case studies

My intention was to capture dance practices that are distinct for Auckland and contribute considerably to a web of cultural practices that make up the diverse fabric of the city. I wanted to engage with cultural communities that originated in different parts of the world and were significant migrant communities. Each practice has its own complex history; therefore, I wrote detailed case study reports that traced the history and context of these dance practices in considerable depth. I initially wanted to do four or five case studies, but any case studies beyond the present three would have diminished the breadth and depth of contextual research which I felt was needed.

When I deliberated about what might constitute Auckland-specific dance, I realised that what is presented in western theatre spaces in Auckland is not representative of the city's population. The more I explored the idea of dance practices specific to and typical of Auckland, the more I became aware that a shift from European heritage to an embracing of many influences that reflect the cultural make up of Auckland is taking place. While I was working on this thesis, I met two doctoral scholars who came to Auckland to research Pasifika Festival and ASB Polyfest, which indicates that Auckland is recognised as a significant place for studying culturally specific dance forms originating in the Pacific.

English, Scottish, and Irish dancing still have a significant following in Auckland. These dance forms, however, are not as prominent today as for example Pacific dance forms and are not as "typical" for Auckland. This development reflects Auckland's situation with large migrant communities who bring influences from many parts of the world and connect to these places. This situation may be seen as a shift from cultural power emanating from the colonial British heritage; instead, other cultural threads have become established and acknowledged, thus undermining a long-held cultural hegemony. This study understands its role as contributing to the acknowledgement of these non-hegemonic forces.

I deliberated for a long time whether Māori performing arts needed to be part of this study. From the beginning, I thought that this would invite different theory because of the colonial history of New Zealand and the special status of Māori as tangata whenua. Even though I was still doubtful about the choice, I forged contacts with the Māori performing arts community. The process of finding a group stalled twice so I decided it was not meant to be. I had viewed accessibility as an important criterion and therefore stepped back and thought

again. I was disappointed and relieved at the same time, because I was concerned that within a multiple case studies framework I may not be able to do the Māori case justice.

6.1.4 Research journey

This section describes the development of the study and how I chose, connected, and shaped the paradigms and theories that guided my inquiry.

I wanted to research dance in Auckland in connection with the Thematic Research Initiative *Transforming Cities: Innovations for sustainable futures* (University of Auckland, 2012), an interdisciplinary and interfaculty project hosted by the National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, within which the Dance Studies department is situated. I wondered how dance in the city interrelated with concepts of urban sustainability and liveability, and I was also attracted to investigating how the space concepts of urban planners related to space concepts in dance theory. From the outset I saw a connection between dance and human geography as both disciplines conceptualise space and human movement within space.

Framing this study ontologically proved an exhilarating but also challenging task. For as long as I can remember, I have followed a constructionist understanding of the world. I was initially not aware though of the far-reaching significance of this stance. Once I applied the constructionist lens, I could clearly identify the construction processes happening in every aspect of the explored field. I realised that people brought many complex threads together in order to construct their cultural identity, their connections with the world, and their sense of place and belonging. However, as discussed in the literature review, the more I engaged with constructionism, the more I realised that it can in some respects be ambiguous and contradictory, and sometimes it does not seem to acknowledge the “whole” story.

I was convinced from the outset that phenomenology would be part of my ontology but pinpointing its conceptual relevance and interrelation with constructionism needed much deliberation. Early in the process, my focus was on dance phenomenology and somatics which offered valuable insights but also posed many conundrums as detailed in the methodology chapter. After much reading and thinking, I envisioned constructionism and phenomenology as harbouring the potential to balance each other out and to both contribute to the writing of an account that incorporates a constructionist worldview with people’s lived experience, valuing both concepts equally.

At an early stage in my research I came across Nigel Thrift’s (2008) non-representational theory (NRT) and found it enticing. I appreciated the fact that a

prominent social geographer supported dance with such vigour. I envisaged NRT as a suitable theory to frame this study as it is a 'theory of practices' which is concerned with what is happening in cities. However, after the initial excitement, I realised the shortcomings of NRT for framing dance in its complexity. Thrift's concept of dance as a non-cognitive endeavour grated with my understanding of dance as an activity that needs cognitive as well as non-cognitive input. NRT nevertheless contributed to the discussion of the non-representational 'just dancing' and 'doing of culture' expressed in some dance practitioner's comments.

My initial interest in this study's topic was nurtured by my perception of Auckland as a city in positive transformation. I find Auckland exciting for the diverse artistic and cultural influences here, and I love that something new and powerful seems to be developing. However, accounts by other scholars, such as Damon Salesa (2013), state that Auckland is very segregated and becoming worse in that respect – a point of view which was equally put forward by several of the interviewees – and this forced me to reassess my initially positive views. I had to admit that I was seeing things from the perspective of an educated and well-off, middle-class North Shore person who loves to go to cultural festivals! Of course I had been very aware of the poverty and segregation in Auckland before, but initially I tried to focus on what I perceived as the positives of Auckland. I also had to admit that my fascination was fuelled by the dance practices' novel and "exotic" nature for me. After acknowledging many Aucklanders' lived-experience of segregation and poverty, I started to wonder how dance could play a positive role in addressing Auckland's ethnic, cultural, and spatial segregation.

Initially, I thought of exploring 'minority' practices, which I quickly abandoned for reasons explained in the Introduction. Additional to realising that the so-called minorities will soon comprise the majority of Aucklanders, I also decided that the term 'minority' has negative connotations, and fails to acknowledge the considerable marks that all three studied migrant groups have left in Aotearoa during their long local history.

Confronting New Zealand's past immigration policies and racial biases, discussed in chapter 2, was disturbing. Even more painful for me was, and still is, the realisation that even though institutionalised discrimination has disappeared, informal racial and ethnic discrimination does continue in New Zealand.

I experienced further moments of discomfort about some of the cultural values that were discussed in interviews, as they clashed with my own values,

particularly where pedagogy was concerned. For example, I found myself becoming partisan when physical punishment of children was the topic. When socio-cultural expectations of females were discussed, it was equally difficult for me to maintain a non-judgmental attitude. Situations where males related to me in unexpected ways also needed reflection. I kept these feelings to myself in the field situations, and stayed non-judgmental when dealing with the participants, but discussed my inner conflicts in supervisory meetings and with colleagues.

After starting on the third case study, I realised that across all three studies participants had chosen the dance form of their own ethnic/cultural origin. However, I am aware that beyond my case studies cultural dance groups exist that people from varying backgrounds attend. For example, at cultural festivals mixed-ethnicity and exclusive-ethnicity groups perform. Judging from further observations of mine, some European folk dancing groups comprise a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds amongst their mostly older female participants. Also, based on previous post-graduate research of mine and on recent observations, it appears to me that Middle Eastern dancing ('belly dancing') is a space where women from many cultural and ethnic backgrounds congregate. Bollywood, as mentioned in the Indian case study report, also attracts a diverse group of participants. Also of interest in this context is that an arts participation survey found that Māori performing arts audiences are very diverse, but performers are mostly Māori (Colmar Brunton, 2012).

6.2 Results

Croatian/Dalmatian, Samoan and Indian dance communities provided the focus in this study. I interviewed 29 people aged between 16 and mid-60s, six males and 23 females; 16 were New Zealand-born, the remainders were born in India, Fiji, Samoa, Yugoslavia/Croatia, Uganda, and South Africa. Most of them attended one interview, some I met twice, and two people three times. Often interviews were followed up by email and telephone communication. I additionally encountered the interviewees at dance practices, social gatherings, and performing events.

Firstly, this chapter provides a brief introduction to general aspects of the three studied dance practices in 2012, and then presents the dominant emergent themes distilled from the semi-structured interviews, field observations, and journal notes. These themes pertain to cultural identity; community; sense of place and belonging; learning through dance practice about culture, religion, language, and places; ownership/agency; the notion of tradition *plus* contemporary; dance practices in multi-cultural Auckland; and inter-cultural encounters. The constant comparative analysis brought to light many similarities across the case studies, but some differences were detected as presented below.

6.2.1 Snapshots of Dalmatian kolo, Indian dance, and siva Samoa in Auckland

This study created a snapshot of Croatian/Dalmatian, Samoan, and Indian dance in 2012. It discovered that vast amounts of knowledge exist in Auckland about the local and international histories and contexts of these dance practices. In chapter 2 and in the narratives of the research participants, the historical discrimination against non-British migrant groups and the ensuing complications for the migrants is highlighted. The histories of the studied migrant groups thus presented many similarities. All participants in the research reside in Auckland and thus live within at least two cultural frameworks: the dominant western culture and the culture of their ancestors, a fact that they were all aware of.

Generally and across the board, dancers expressed that they appreciate dances that have a meaning for them. Meanings were found in manifold locations, such as cultural, historical, intergenerational, or place connections. Many interviewees mentioned the “fun”, “enjoyment”, and “exercise” aspects of practising dance but did not identify them as an outstanding feature. In fact many saw the dance practices as being a “mixture” or “a bit of everything”.

The intergenerational link created through cultural dance practices was a recurring theme in all case studies. Not only was dance identified as a means to pass down cultural heritage, but also as a means to understand past generations and connect to their life stories. This was seen as giving a special meaning to the practice. In the kolo study, a strong intergenerational link in either direction was active, recreating connections with people past while others in the same group were focused on the generation following which was described as a satisfying sense of being connected inter-generationally.

In the Indian and Samoan studies, it became apparent that places and context of practice are in flux, resulting also in changed modes of practice and loss of grassroots influence. In the Indian case, practising and performing Indian dance has changed from private and religious to public and secular realms. In comparison, the Dally situation has been more stable as they have had their own cultural societies where practices have taken place since the 1930s. Samoan dance was described as still being “very community-based, for church, family gigs”, but it was noted that the places where dance knowledge is passed down have shifted from private settings to organised public classes. The interviewees attributed this change to the situation in Auckland where parents do not have the time or the required knowledge to teach their children at home as previous generations did. Interviewees saw the role of organisations such as Pacific Dance New Zealand as filling the gap. According to some interviewees, a further situation where the role of dance in the community is changing concerns fundraising events for Samoa. Dance is still a central activity within these events, which I have witnessed, but it was reported that fewer fundraising activities happen and fewer people take part due to the rising poverty in Pacific communities in Auckland.

The groups I engaged with in this study perform for community events, in churches, fashion shows, and at cultural, dance and arts festivals in Auckland. Some have also performed in Samoa or Croatia. Multiple place connections are also in existence in the Indian case study as exams are taken through institutions in India or the UK. Corporate events offer further performance opportunities, which are pursued by several of the Samoan and Indian practitioners. It was largely seen as a way of being visible and earning some money; nobody expressed concerns about this capitalistic endeavour. Concerns were raised though about the current streaming of Pacific dance into western theatre stage settings and questions asked as to who is in charge to deal with the required changes, and who would be the audience.

6.2.2 Cultural identity

In the three case studies, the participants mostly had ancestral affiliation with the culture of their chosen dance form. The lack of a cultural mix in the studied groups was an unexpected finding, and from the outset suggested that constructing and reaffirming cultural identity is a motivating factor for participation in the dance groups, which was confirmed in all three studies. Interviewees described dance practices as a signifier of belonging to a cultural community as the following statements of 10 different people from across the studies demonstrate:

I have taken on the Croatian dancing as it is part of the heritage. It might be nice to do Greek dancing or learn about it, but as somebody coming in from the outside, not having the connection, I might find it hard to jump over the initial hurdle, like 'why do I do it?' It's not the same attraction.

I have done kolo to discover a part of my cultural heritage, not because I knew what kolo was before.

The following quotes from the Samoan study are split into New Zealand-born and Samoan-born because different emphases were obvious. The Samoan-borns offered clear-cut statements as follow:

Siva Samoa is very important for me, because that's my country, and that's my people, you know.

It's what makes me Samoan, and the Samoan dance is exactly that; it's Samoan dance. It's like Irish dance or Tongan dance, and if I stopped doing it, then I stop becoming unique. So that's really who I am and where I'm from, and how we develop; so that's identity. It's what sets us apart from everyone else. So it's like a fingerprint for me.

One man emphasised the role of dance in forming cultural identity. He said,

Dance brings you back to your cultural roots.

In contrast, most New Zealand-born Samoans brought up the topic of confidence in culture when speaking about cultural identity:

I think [siva Samoan] is really important. I think it's a way of distilling your understanding of your culture, your confidence in your culture, a lot of it has to do with confidence.

[As a teenager] you've forgotten who you actually were, before these influences started hitting you. ... Now I feel like I know who I am. I'm not something that I'm not. When I'm producing choreo work I'm always reminding myself of that. I'm just more rooted in my culture and dance has definitely been a major influence.

If I'm confident in who I am, I'm confident in the work that we do.

One New Zealand-born woman, who did not feel well connected to her culture, saw siva as a prime signifier of cultural connection. She said,

The siva Samoa in that sense is like one of the biggest symbols of our culture, kind of places you, you know, where you are, when you do it.

Indians born in New Zealand or India both saw Indian dance as identity forming and part of their way of living as a person with Indian heritage in Auckland. They said,

For me, Bollywood is probably like a way to express myself through dance; a very passion to keep my culture, my language and my roots alive.

I've been with [bharata natyam] for so long I can't part from it. So it's kind of like a part of me. I'm a bharata natyam dancer; and I will always be a bharata natyam dancer; I will add some stuff on but that will be my main core. ... It really does bring you together as a person, and also you can relate to people and other cultures.

Most participants conveyed that they appreciate the dance form they practice. Samoan participants spoke of being attracted to the intrinsic attributes of Samoan dance, repeatedly referring to their "beautiful" siva, and Dally participants marvelled in the power of the dance circle and the intricacies of some kolo dance repertoire. Yet, they all clearly expressed that their prime attraction to the dance practices resides in its cultural meanings and the fact that it re-affirms their cultural identity and their belonging to a community.

The *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* (also called 'old kolo') is an example of a dance that serves as a distinct signifier of a community. Dallies recognise this dance, which was choreographed by Dalmatian migrants in the 1930s in Auckland, as exclusive and authentic to New Zealand and therefore it stands as an expression of a Dally (meaning a New Zealand Dalmatian) identity.

6.2.3 Community

"We are all doing the same together."

"Everybody has that common thread."

Additional to describing dance as a signifier of belonging to a cultural community, research participants saw dance practices as facilitating a sense of

togetherness that comes from communal practice and as offering a social network. The Dally women spoke of feeling connected to the people in the kolo group, of seeing them as similar to themselves, a group where they felt understood:

I get this inner happiness when I'm with this group of people who understand me and everything about me.

The Dally women reported that kolo dancing was for a long time during the 20th century the expected place to meet a future spouse from within the community, and it was seen as a place where young women could safely go. This topic, however, did not come up in the other studies, probably due to the fact that these were historical accounts relating back to the 1980s and also because the other practices were not partnered dancing.

Men and women described kolo dancing as posing a way into the Croatian/Dalmatian community and a social network. One man said,

I grew up not really knowing a lot of Dalmatians except my family and closer friends. But when I first went into the kolo suddenly met everybody and then this whole social world opened up. Those people became my closest friends, because I sort of fell into a group that I identified with.

Another man commented in regard to his daughters:

The Croatian side of their heritage, except for their cousins, they hadn't connected with at that level. So they met a whole bunch of different people and got into their social network.

Several people in the kolo study pointed out that cultural dance practices facilitate mixing with people that are educationally and demographically different. One woman said,

What I like about these blood communities is you've got people from all walks of life. And I just like that.

The man commented in the same vein about his daughter:

They've done things they normally would not have done, got to know people.

Tensions and conflict originating from diverging political viewpoints were a recurring topic in the Dally study, and many interviewees commented that kolo

dancing acts as a unifying and healing element for the Croatian community, as the two following quotes testify:

Folklore dance is like spring water in our culture, stopping the tensions for a moment.

I think for all the conflict politically, the kolo is what keeps us all connected. Like, everyone stops when the kolo is being danced or when they hear the music, really. That's what takes over, that is what connects everybody. And the political just goes to the side while that kolo is happening because everybody has that common thread.

As the compilation of quotes above shows, the community aspect of dance practice was obvious in the kolo study which is explicable by the fact that the Croatian community has two resourceful cultural societies which both maintain a well-functioning cultural centre. Despite their inner conflict, Croats/Dalmatians are a relatively homogenous group that shares one religion – Catholicism. In comparison, both the Indian and the Samoan communities are larger than the Croatian, and more ethnically diverse (in the Indian case) and religiously diverse (in both cases). In the Samoan case, communities congregate in their distinct Christian churches where dance practices take place. The Indian community also has cultural centres but they do not seem to play a major role in supporting cultural dance practices.

6.2.4 Place and belonging

“I think the dance will be the beginning of finding my roots here.”

Considering the strong community spirit expressed in the kolo study, it is no surprise that dance practice fostering a feeling of belonging was also a prominent theme. Three Dallyes said,

I feel like I'm at home, in my place. What's the Māori word, turangawaewae. I feel like this is my place of belonging.

It connects you more in Auckland, having that cultural dance here.

Then we went to other towns where there wasn't a community and we did miss it.

Another Dally, a recent migrant to Auckland, explained why she joined the kolo group:

I did it as a vehicle to become part of a community.

She further highlighted how joining dance practices acted as a means to connect to her ancestry and to Auckland alike:

I am also feeling connected to my heritage; connected within myself to this place. I feel more comfortable being in Auckland because I am learning something that is connected to this place but also to my bloodline, my history to this place.

A young South African migrant, who I met at a Samoan dance workshop, strongly felt that dance can be a means for her to connect and feel at home in Auckland, as her quote above – “I think the dance will be the beginning of finding my roots here” – testifies. She explained further,

For four years, I've been kind of wilting. Like I don't really have anything you know, there's no ties to my African heritage, there's no ties to my religion, there's no ties to New Zealand. And that loss of identity and belonging is immense in a teenager, has a really big impact. Especially you're trying to figure out who you are and where you fit in life. So I started looking for different ways to learn more about Māori and Pasifika, New Zealand culture and heritage.

In summary, participating in cultural dance practices of one's own culture or of other cultures can equally facilitate a feeling of belonging to a place.

6.2.5 Learning through dance practice about culture, religion, language, and places

“Without the dance, there would be almost no attachment to Indian things apart from family.”

Dance practice reportedly facilitates learning about culture, religion, and geography of the “old place”. In all studies, second- and third-generation migrants identified it as their main medium for acquiring cultural knowledge as the quotation above testifies. The same woman said,

If I let go of dancing, which was my plan initially, I wouldn't know a lot about culture, religion, or ... language.

Another Indian woman highlighted how wide-ranging the learning through dance practice can be:

It's not just dancing. ... It gives us an insight into our ancestry and what our culture is about. People like me who haven't grown up within that culture, grow insights into what everyday life is about. Because when I go to dance class, my teacher doesn't only teach us dance and the religion

or the cultural aspects revolving around dance itself. She also tells us stories about how she lived in India.

The teachers of children's classes articulated the passing on of cultural knowledge as their perceived role; one called it a

moral passion to preserve culture.

Another one stated,

It's my passion and I want to give back.

Two teachers identified the students' and parents' expectations as follows:

The students want to learn about their culture.

The parents, they're hungry for their kids to learn more about their culture.

Teachers explain meanings, contexts and history of the dances, a fact that was appreciated by students and parents alike.

In all three studies, the loss of language (Hindi, Samoan, and Croatian) within the communities was reported. Language learning through dance practices happened, with parents, the teacher, and fellow students reporting enhanced language comprehension and improved confidence to speak. This language learning was unstructured and incidental, and particularly occurred in classes for children and teenagers where lyrics were followed or interpreted in the dance. This development left some parents elated. One Indian woman commented,

To be in touch with your culture is good for a lot of young ones now. For example, some of them can't speak Hindi but they are learning with the dance class.

Religion was found to play a prominent role in Indian dancing but not in the other studied dance forms. As described in the case study report, Indian dance has a strong connection to religious practices. Several of the younger interviewees spoke about how they appreciated learning about their religion; one saw it as a reinforcement of what she learns at home. She said that dancing one of the Hindu goddesses meant putting her religion into practice and made her better understand the goddess' religious meaning. The teacher also

pointed out her observation that many Indians are interested in learning about religious practices of other Indians, and she was convinced that the fact that religion was part of the practice was not a hindrance for participation; rather, she thought it was a point of attraction as people are curious about religion and mythology. Another woman confirmed this point of view:

Anybody can do it; there are no religious constraints.

There was a wealth of learning reported about the history, geography, and cultural diversity of the dance forms' places of origin. The Dallies spoke of a lack of understanding of the size and diversity of the Balkan region while growing up in New Zealand; they equally spoke of the surprise when they realised the smallness and relative insignificance of the birth places of their ancestors. Through participating in kolo dancing and other activities at the cultural society, they acquired knowledge about the wider Balkan region, its diverse geography and climate, its ethnic and cultural make-up, as well as the diverse musical and dance heritage. They also reported a heightened understanding of the influences of neighbouring countries on each other's performing arts practices. One man said,

You start to understand ... how the culture is intermingled; why the music from some of the eastern parts sounds quite Turkish; because there is a border right there. There's a lot of influence from those other cultures.

It was apparent in all three case studies that through the engagement with the dance practices and the related learning, a stronger sense of wider regional affiliations had been formed. In the Samoan case this went hand-in-hand with the forming of pan-Pacific identities as discussed below in the section on identity.

For Samoans in New Zealand, dance practices facilitate learning about the structure of Samoan society. Dancers were aware of the fact that in Samoan dance social relationships and status are expressed in who dances which role and who occupies which performance space. Several women commented on not having the right status required to fulfil a specific dance or ceremonial role. Some spoke of dancing the role of the taupou – who in the past needed to be the village chief's unmarried daughter – without having that status. It was pointed out that even in Samoa, it is acceptable now that women who are married with children dance this role, and it can also be performed competitively. I learned this particular siva at a Samoan dance workshop in Auckland which indicates that it has moved a long way from its earlier denotation. Even though these strict meanings are breaking down, the

narratives surrounding the history of the dance are perpetuated through the dance practice.

Female dance practitioners spoke about the culture-specific gender role expectations inherent in dance practices. Samoan women commented on the expectation to smile continuously in a prescribed way while performing. The interviewees acknowledged this as a culturally relevant skill. One said,

That's a Samoan skill, actually.

They raised issues with the concept though. Another woman said,

Smiles and stories under palm trees. Now, that's not really what I'm going through, I am not going through sunny days, you know, it just doesn't express me anymore.

A further point offered was that if professional performers have to smile in this prescribed way it, can become stale and meaningless. One woman said,

Doing it to the point that I was doing it, we were doing every day for that gig, and that gig, smiles, smiles, smiles, you know. When you do it so many times you start to lose that fire, that passion that you did feel, because you are doing it so many times.

Another aspect mentioned was that they want the freedom to perform their own choreographies with the facial expression that they deem appropriate for that particular choreography.

In the Samoan study, the culturally determined behaviour of adults towards children and young people was a recurring topic. Yelling and hitting were described as part of the treatment and this type of behaviour was often labelled as "really Samoan". There was a mixed response in regard to this issue. Some New Zealand-borns were accepting of this attitude and felt comfortable with it; others spoke of feeling alienated in situations where dancing was taught with this pedagogical approach. The dance practitioners who also teach children reported making a deliberate effort to apply learner-centred teaching approaches. One teacher spoke of being aware that there are "different ways of learning Samoan dance". For example she reported

breaking [the movements] down into their level when I felt I was going too fast.

In the Croatian study, issues about how teachers relate to students surfaced, but they were largely historical or concerned adults who reported having ways

of dealing with it. It was not a prominent issue; however, someone informally offered the opinion that it may be in some cases a friction between New Zealand and Balkan attitudes.

In summary, involvement in dance practices facilitated learning about cultural heritage for the research participants; about the conditions of life in the 'home' country and the wider region within which the country is situated; and about culturally specific norms and expectations for New Zealand-born Samoans, Indians, and Dallies. It was apparent that some expectations are under constant scrutiny and renegotiation in the Auckland context.

6.2.6 Ownership and agency

“In New Zealand you choose your own culture, it is such a multi-cultural place.”

Despite expressing that belonging to a community was important to them, the interviewees emphasised their individual agency in constructing their cultural identities, and this was articulated with confidence. Teenagers and young adults made the point that they wanted to understand their cultural heritage in depth so they are able to make an informed choice. They saw this process as pivotal for developing cultural confidence:

I definitely think it's very important for the young people to sort of learn about it more than it is for older people or people who already know about it; whereas we haven't really grown up with any culture. And that to me is really important because you can really understand where you come from, and, you know, make a decision about whether you like it or not. And again that decision is up to you and you actually have that choice to make a decision. You can still have that choice here about whether you feel like you belong to that culture, or you feel like you're a Kiwi, because you haven't grown up there. So you know two sides of the story.

The narratives recorded in this study confirm that for the participants living away from the original place of their culture, agency regarding cultural identity and heritage is not diminished. In fact, statements emerged that the new place equally offers ownership. One Samoan woman said,

I feel like, ok, I just come from this traditional dance background. Because it is not our stories really, everyone, it's the whole family, generations of stories that we are telling. ... Tell stories that make me click. Not so much my culture, my family, but me.

Many interviewees were acutely aware though that their ownership was contested by other people within their communities, mostly by older generations

but also by people who had closer connections to the 'home' country. One interviewee called it a "culture clash" between New Zealand-born Samoans and Samoans in Samoa. Dancers were clear that they did not want to merely replicate the stories of the ancestors, but also present their own narratives and create their own choreography.

The Dallies reported their ownership at times becoming contested and them having to defend the relevance and authenticity of "their" *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* to first generation migrants from Croatia. However, as the Dallies have a much longer relationship and history with Aotearoa, they seem to take ownership of their New Zealand specific cultural heritage for granted. Personal agency is also taken for granted in many ways as all Dallies described partaking in the kolo as a personal choice. Several people stated that some relatives had decided not to become involved in the cultural activities and that families were entirely accepting of this choice.

Indians exuded a strong sense of identity, ownership, and agency. One Indian practitioner partaking in this research presented boundary-pushing choreographies in Auckland as early as the 1990s, with themes such as the experiences of migrant women, and the use of fusion music as well as presenting her own scores. She incredulously asked why people think they can challenge her right to present contemporary Indian work. She said in exasperation,

But I am a contemporary Indian!

She continued,

The roots are still there, but you can't say and claim that it belongs to India.

Another Indian choreographer stated,

We take themes from our society and from what's happening around us and do it in a dance form. ... We did a dance on the Christchurch earthquake because we felt it really affected our community; because we see ourselves as Kiwis and Indians combined.

A third Indian choreographer confidently spoke of her recent Indian-Māori and Indian-Chinese fusion dances and how well they were received.

Samoan choreographers equally develop 'remixed' (Teaiwa, 2013) choreographies with a clear sense of ownership, as the varied Pacific

choreographies performed in prominent theatre spaces in Auckland testify. One female choreographer pushed into new territory for Samoan dance by choreographing a duet which explored the difference between male and female movement. Using a duet form meant moving away from traditional Samoan repertoire, which is always group-based. Secondly, she used a topic for guiding her choreographic process that was unusual for the context of Samoan dance. Another Samoan choreographer confidently expressed her goals:

The main motivation for me really is the whole thing about Pacific women that I love and that I want to nurture and present; educate people about us Pacific women.

Several young people said that if they moved from Auckland to a place with no cultural dance practice of their liking, they would start their own group, thus displaying a confident sense of ownership.

Three interviewees were graduates of the Dance Studies course at The University of Auckland and the influence of the course's 'Move your thinking' slogan was apparent. It seemed to have contributed to empowering them to make work that has the potential to equally excite an informed western theatre audience and a 'traditional' cultural dance audience.

6.2.7 Traditional *plus* contemporary

"I have appreciation for both worlds."

"Can you explain what tradition is?" one of the interviewees asked, implying that it would be difficult to formulate a meaningful answer. The friction between keeping traditions and creating new surfaced as an ongoing albeit calmed debate in the Samoan community.

The fact that a strong sense of ownership exists amongst the studied dance practitioners leads to them accepting diverse influences of different cultural origins. A clear favourite amongst interviewees was the view that the 'tradition *versus* contemporary' argument should be replaced with the notion of 'tradition *plus* contemporary'. They said,

For me, Samoan dance doesn't stand still; I'm still developing new styles.

I believe that history is such an important aspect in cultural dance; but then there's always room to change.

If you don't adapt, I believe you would have cut off that whole generation.

None of the interviewees were on a quest for historical accuracy of dance material or modes of practice; instead, they focused on how change and 'remixing' could be negotiated. In the Samoan study, questions of who is in charge were pertinent, equally how to stay true to oneself and one's community and not become "mainstreamed".

Polyfest was identified as a place where the traditional versus contemporary argument plays out. Alongside the many positive comments pertaining to Polyfest, persons who had personal experience with it also voiced concerns and frustrations. One person even stated that Polyfest and Pasifika are both past their "use-by-date". One woman said,

I see there's a challenge on the Polyfest stage. ... They're trying to add something new to the dance to appeal. So that could be seen as a good thing; it could be seen as a bad thing. For me, I've always just been on the fence. Because I like that they're doing something new, in the sense that they're adding their own kind of field to it. They're not in Samoa, they're in Auckland, there is space to do that. But then it's a bad thing because they're not really focused on what the dance is. They're too stuck on trying to change it so that it appeals but they forget what the dancing is about. It's a whole bunch of moves that, I mean, it's just 'sound cool, look cool'.

She further specified her approach:

I honestly don't think there is a 'traditional'. I feel like it's the basics and the meaning that needs to stay the same. Because the 'basics' is what separates you from Tahitian dancing and Cook Island dance.

An Indian dancer commented,

You can make a dance fusion, contemporary and bharata natyam put together for example. And that's fine, but it should be said that this is a fusion, this is not traditional. And I would definitely say keep the ancient forms the way they are and if you are teaching somebody, you should keep it that way. But if you are performing, you are free to do whatever you want; because people are always looking for something different and even choreographers are always looking for something different.

Both quotes suggest a similar concept to address this dilemma: keep the basics distinct and be clear what they are, and then add and develop. One person saw it as "offering something new to tradition".

Issues of traditional modes of practice played out in regard to the use of ghungroos (ankle bells) in kathak. One dancer said,

You don't just go and buy yourself. Like here, girls just go and buy themselves a hundred bells, while you actually earn those bells. You earn them from the teacher.

The teacher, however, was more pragmatic: she allowed within reason the use of ghungroos that the dancers were able to obtain. She said,

I find that philosophy a pain in a country like New Zealand where resources are hard to get so I don't have any policy regarding ghungroos.

Some interviewees commented that their approach to traditional and contemporary sometimes becomes challenged from within their communities, and that they feel anxiety about possible negative feedback. One practitioner summarised the feedback she hears from what she called "the serious people":

You're too contemporary; you are too traditional; you don't have enough balance; you don't have this. Who are you? Who's your market? You shouldn't be on that stage; you shouldn't be doing Samoan dance. They're always fighting.

Another woman expressed sadness about not being able to present her own choreographic work when in Samoa:

I do feel I am restricted and I am unable to give them something more and that will mean so much more to me as a New Zealand-born Pacific Islander. ... In a way you are [the same] but we are not at that time anymore. We are in a generational shift where everything is always changing, you need to be open to newer things, but you can't say that to them.

This issue was perceived as a gap between Samoa and Aotearoa by some and as generational by others, or as a combination of both. The following comment suggests though that this debate has lost strength:

And there has been a lot of the whole argument or the controversy between contemporary and traditional. I think it's died down now.

This evaluation is underscored by the fact that the all-female dance collective reportedly receives mostly positive and supportive feedback.

One interviewee strongly felt that there is a need to discuss the implications of taking Pacific dance to the stage. She asked,

So where is it going? Are we bringing traditional on the contemporary stage so that we are noticed? Or do we want to be noticed enough for the

mainstream to come to us? Who's pushing? Who's the one steering the wheel? Is it the youth? Or is it the older generation?

Some practitioners commented on how strongly they felt that a wind of change is blowing through Auckland:

Maybe it is an Auckland thing because of all the culture that's happening around us, all the kind of stuff you want to express but can't because of your cultural background. Restrictions, all of that. And maybe that in itself could be kind of a dance form, it could evolve into a dance form, all this rebellion against our traditions, you know. I feel like it's just evolving, we are on that wave. It's definitely moving to something, I don't know what it is. I'm not the only person who feels like this.

6.2.8 Performing

"It's more about us doing it for ourselves."

When asked how important performing is to them, interviewees often said it is for their own enjoyment and bonding with group members. Several said that they like performing per se; only one struggled with the expectation to perform. Thus, an individualistic outlook seems to be motivating many dancers of culturally specific dance forms in Auckland. Many acknowledged that performing publicly offers an opportunity to present their culture and for outsiders to learn about their culture. This, however, was described as a minor motivator. One woman in the Dalmatian group commented,

As far as I'm concerned it is secondary. I don't think we take it seriously. It's more about fun.

Another woman said,

Selfishly it's more about us doing it for ourselves, for me. I love the fact that other people are learning about our culture; I feel very proud when I do it. But the real motivator is doing it for myself. Those rub off benefits that you get the feeling like it's where you belong, being in that dance, is where you belong.

Across all studies, the dancers were less focused on the audience needing to understand the cultural meaning of the performed dance items and more focused on what it means for them to be performing. One kathak dancer said,

Often the audience that I'm performing for wouldn't have a clue of what's performed. So I am thinking to myself what I'm doing is more for yourself.

A bharata natyam dancer equally noticed that,

When we perform, it's to a blank audience, most of the time. If we're performing to our examiners, it's a totally different story. ... It's more important that the dancers understand what they are doing rather than the audience.

Educating others about their culture was seen as a positive but difficult to achieve goal. A kathak dancer suggested,

I think it should at least be given some form of interpretation or introduction to what's performed on stage. Otherwise it doesn't mean anything.

Her fellow dancer commented,

It's nice to be appreciated. I think one appreciates more, like you would appreciate a kathak performance more than a person who doesn't know kathak.

Several siva Samoan practitioners commented that they are sometimes nervous about performing for a Pacific audience, as the audience is often well informed about the practice and may be critical. One woman said,

If you can survive doing any culture in front of that culture, for example anything Samoan in front of a Samoan crowd, it's an achievement for me.

Some research participants offered the opinion that choreographing for public events in Auckland is often guided by visual concerns – or “the beauty of things” as one woman called it – due to the perceived lack of cultural understanding on the part of the audience. One Indian dancer said,

If we perform to a non-Indian or just to an Indian audience that doesn't know anything about bharata natyam, we basically go for the aesthetics of it.

Despite the apparent shortcomings of translating cultural dances, interviewees expressed pride about performing their culture. The kolo dancer saying “it makes me proud when I do it” equally testifies to this, as does the following comment in regard to Auckland's Polyfest:

Learning the dances and going back to your roots, just the cultural Samoan dances, just to be in it, just to be involved, was beautiful. It makes you feel proud.

6.2.9 Dance practices in multi-cultural Auckland

“Dance just adds to the multi-cultural Auckland that we are.”

“Auckland has given us a platform to bring all these cultures together.”

When speaking about Auckland’s demographics, all interviewees chose the term ‘multi-cultural’. It was used without any negative connotations and multi-culturalism was seen as positive across the board. It was pointed out that even though Auckland was the most multi-cultural city in New Zealand, multi-culturalism is a growing feature across the country.

[Cultural dance] is very important. Not just in Auckland, New Zealand. It’s a multi-cultural country, which has an indigenous people that are in partnership with the Crown and had invited all of us to live here.

I think New Zealand has become a lot more multi-cultural than it was.

For me I think that is amazing, because we are experiencing different cultures every day, whether it is that we walk past somebody, that can be of Indian or Chinese descent, we just walk past them, it’s just that’s how we are living at the moment, and there is no barriers or anything because we are always interlocking and networking with these people.

One of the most embracing kind of city in the world, I would say, Auckland, which it has become now. ... Auckland has embraced these cultures.

Despite this generally positive feeling, segregation and a lack of knowledge about other cultures was lamented, particularly by Samoan participants as the following comments highlight:

People go on about Auckland being the capital Polynesian city of the world, but I still feel we are invisibly segregated, you know. Like in regard to Mangere, you’ll only see Pacific Island people.

I still believe that we’re very much in our own little pockets in Auckland.

There is a realisation of how little people here in Auckland know about Pacific cultures, very little. It’s half an hour drive from the city to out here and you got all this culture.

I think it’s like an arrogant ignorance. Everyone thinks they know. It’s like ‘Auckland is so culturally diverse; I know all about the Pacific Islands’. But really all they know is talofa, malo e lelei, bula; that’s it.

Beyond the above comments about cultural ignorance, the following quotes represent the sentiments in regard to the placid nature of Auckland's multi-culturalism. One person said "multi-culturalism here is peaceful" and another person referred to "happy Auckland".

These sentiments were expressed across all studies. A migrant who had arrived from South Africa four years earlier said,

Somehow, they have found a way to kind of live harmoniously. And I really, really like that. I love having that diversity of humans. It's amazing I get this chance to be exposed to all these different cultures that before you were having trouble to infiltrate. So now it's all here, a very humbling experience. It feels like even though there may be minor clashes every now and again, because of sometimes mainly human ignorance, but it kind of just works somehow. All the crayons in the box are happy together. The colourful crayons, all different colours are happy to be here.

All interviewees thought that Auckland fared much better compared to other cities in regard to cultural activities. Several interviewees within the Indian and Samoan case studies compared Auckland with Australian cities and reported that relatives or friends thought there were fewer opportunities to get involved in cultural dance practices there:

Bollywood is not that big in Australia, surprisingly. But Auckland really took it on.

I think we are really lucky. My brother and sister-in-law want their daughter to learn an island dance, but she can't in Perth, because there's no schools there. Here it's so rich and we don't even realise.

One woman suggested that Indian dance is stronger in Wellington than in Auckland.

Interviewees described the array of cultural and artistic activities in Auckland as a contributing factor to feeling good about living in Auckland and for staying here. Many declared that they would miss the opportunity to join cultural groups if living in a place where there are none:

It would be a huge loss for me.

It would be hard because I'm so used to being part of a multi-cultural society. I would start up my own dance group and create that culture.

If I went to another town it would be a hole in my life. It would be something missing for me. This is what I do on a Wednesday night. It's just a part of you.

Several interviewees pointed out that Auckland's multi-culturalism is particularly visible in performing arts practices:

You hear a lot about Auckland being multi-cultural, but where do you see it? You see it on the stages; you see it at Pasifika; you see it in Tempo [Festival]; you see it at Polyfest and they've got the Diwali Festival just finished; and then you've got Chinese New Year that happens at Albert Park. There's just a lot of culture and dance is always there.

I think the different cultural festivals, they sort of bring that culture out in people.

One woman suggested,

I think it is very important for us to preserve and cultivate it in Auckland because it really makes that city of diversity. Auckland has so much to offer because of the festivals and events that our council puts on. And it's not just for Pacific people, they do it for every culture that lives here. I think now that we have all these festivals and events, it gives us an opportunity to experience them, gives us more knowledge about how we see our community. ... I think the people here in Auckland are just so open to it, they don't restrict themselves from being exposed to it.

A Bollywood practitioner was equally enthusiastic:

What Auckland has become is a stake of the best of everything. I think that's one of the reasons a lot of people love Auckland, because they get to see these different cultures in one place. You don't have to visit Japan, you can just see it here. ... The world is becoming one, slowly but surely and Auckland has given us a flavour of what it is like to live in those other cultures. I mean if I was in India, I would have never seen a Chinese Dragon Dance, or have never seen tap dancing, or have never seen jazz dancing, or have never seen Japanese Fan Dance, Korean Fan Dance. ... Auckland has given us a platform to bring all these cultures together

One Samoan man, asked how important he finds dance practices of different cultures for Auckland, stated,

I approve that a hundred and ten percent, absolutely important. Auckland is a vibrant city and when [Auckland mayor] Len Brown's going on about this it's got to be number one, we've got to make sure we look after everyone's heritage then, you know, the dance forms, the cooking. That's how we sell ourselves in Auckland – multi-cultural, dragon flags all over the place, Matariki, Pasifika, the Indian Diwali, everything.

Many practitioners (particularly in the Indian and Samoan study) pointed out that cultural dance forms in Auckland have in the last few years moved into new spaces such as Tempo Dance Festival. Also mentioned was the Southside Arts

Festival, inaugurated in 2008, which offers opportunities for Pacific artists to showcase their work. One person said,

Pacific dance has grown and is more recognised in the dance scene here in Auckland.

Everybody I interviewed described these developments as exciting but, as discussed in the tradition *plus* contemporary section, several Samoan practitioners saw the necessity to address the changes that happen due to this process. They asked who has ownership of this process: the choreographers, festival managers, the cultural/ethnic communities? And who within the communities? How many compromises are practitioners prepared to make in order to be seen?

Pacific Dance New Zealand was seen as successfully supporting Pacific dance communities, but it was also mentioned that they are a small organisation and therefore cannot offer sufficient support to everyone. Several interviewees put forward suggestions as to what could be done to support and develop Pacific dance further. Suggestions ranged from a Polynesian cultural centre, to a teaching facility, and an inter-cultural performing arts place.

One woman in the Samoan dance collective said,

I think we should do a Hawaiian PCC [Polynesian Cultural Centre], we should be able to do one here in Auckland.

This idea was supported by the others in the group.

One Samoan man suggested a place to learn Samoan dance in a structured way is needed, embedded in a neutral environment. He said,

Not for personal gain, you know, non-profit, but just somewhere not affiliated with a church and just one place where you can really learn the old ways and then slowly start developing them. ... It could be very dangerous being part of a church, because people will go no, no, no. If you take it away from church and make it general, then they want to bring the [children].

He added further thoughts:

So maybe, we need to sort of have a fixture where it's not necessarily focused on one geographical part of the world, where you've got whoever's living in Auckland and it's got a dance community should be part of it. If you want a multi-cultural audience, maybe it's time to start getting multi-cultural acts.

6.2.10 Inter-cultural encounters

“Open up the channel. ... You need to step out of your little square to embrace and respect what is outside the square. And you need to study and learn and make an effort to find out the other way of thinking and presenting.”

As mentioned above, people in the studied groups mostly chose a practice that is couched in their own culture (or in one of their cultural backgrounds). The dancers I met were all interested in other dance practices and had some, but rarely extensive knowledge, as the following quotes show:

Other cultural dance practices, I can't say I have a wide knowledge of that.

Not much, which is really bad, but I would like to know.

Even though engaging with other forms of cultural dance was not widespread, the value of doing so was appreciated. One person said,

Learning about other cultures in any form is always interesting, whether you like it or don't like it, it's still interesting. You always find value whether you realize that at first or not. Different cultural dancing is definitely interesting.

It was clear from the interviews that the closer related cultures are, the deeper the interest and knowledge; an affinity was apparent within wider regions such as the Pacific and the Balkans. The following three quotes – one from each case study – testify to those regional affinities:

I actually kept saying to myself if our group kind of folds, one group I would join and see whether [the teacher] lets me into is the Bulgarian Roses. It feels like it's a nice fit from the same part of the world.

I'm only more familiar with the Pacific; the Tongan and Niuean scene I know pretty well. I think it's that comfort zone thing.

I go to Polyfest as a visitor or guest; Indian events I go to as a participant, you know, as part of the show.

And from a Fijian Indian,

I used to go to Pasifika a lot. ... Being from the Pacific Islands, you have this connection with that.

My experience of fitting easily into the Dalmatian kolo group offers a further hint that, along with other factors such as age, relatedness (or prior knowledge) of cultures can result in quick and relatively uncomplicated liaising.

For many practitioners, the cross-cultural and transnational dance experience extends back to before migrating to New Zealand. The Samoans reported having learned dances and their cultural meanings from many parts of the Pacific. One woman referred to a time when she lived in Samoa:

I had performed Cook Island dance and Tahitian dancing and so I had the same respect for those dances that I do for Samoan dance.

This was equally true for the Fijian Indians who said that when growing up in Fiji, their dance experience was interlaced with many forms of Pacific dance. The Indian woman who moved to New Zealand from Uganda also reported having encountered many forms of African dance when living there and that much mixing of performing arts practices from different cultures occurred.

The Pacific dance performance groups I engaged with were both led by a Samoan, while the members were of diverse Pacific backgrounds. This was reflected in their dance knowledge and in their programmes which reached across many Pacific performing arts forms. Considering this situation, it is understandable that in Auckland a shift towards pan-Pacific identities is taking place, highlighted in the following statements:

Even though I'm Samoan in my blood, I feel like that in an environment that has exposed me to a lot of different cultures, I would be comfortable talking to anyone about the Pacific culture as a whole rather than just talking about my Samoan culture.

Further cross-cultural engagement occurs in manifold ways, at times deliberately planned, at other times incidental. The Bollywood dancer said,

The Polynesian Festival which happens at the beginning of the year, every year, brings all these cultures together. You have a cultural stage, you have a Niuean stage, you have a Samoan stage, you have a Māori stage. And what you'll see is that my friends go and take part in the Samoan group, Indian background friends and Samoan friends do Indian dancing with us.

A Dally school teacher described cross-cultural encounters at school:

Our school group danced in the Bollywood competition. Not all Indian children, just a group of children who want to dance, ... much more mainstream rather than just within their communities.

One performing group wants to deliver a message across cultural lines and seeks out venues outside the Pacific communities in order to reach palagi audiences. The director stated,

In Auckland people have no idea about Pacific cultures; that was my main motivation, educate the palagi, or outside of the Pacific Island communities, educate the wider audience. We've taken part in Jambalaya, Splore, fashion shows, over the Shore, body arts shows, and then around other dancers and artists as well.

One Samoan woman commented on the need for wider cross-cultural acknowledgements in Auckland, referring to the annual International Cultural Festival in Mt. Roskill:

It's amazing. I reckon that will be more important than the Pasifika Festival, I find it more important.

The cross-cultural aspect of fusion choreography has been touched in the section on ownership. Additionally, it needs to be noted that in Bollywood there is no angst about fusion or a backlash. One man said,

In Bollywood, we have embedded Korean Fan dancing and dragon dancing with Bollywood music.

Kathak in Auckland is also open to diverse remixes. One Indian person commented that,

The fusion is another way of appreciating, taking acceptance of another culture.

To conclude this section on inter-cultural encounters through culturally specific dance practices, it needs to be stated that apart from the encounters described above, this study did not identify many interactions beyond congregating at festivals and watching each other's performances.

6.3 Summary

Dance practices have for the interviewees facilitated the creation and re-affirmation of cultural and personal identities as well as bonding within their communities. The healing and unifying aspect of dance within conflicted communities was highlighted and mixing with people from different social backgrounds within 'blood communities' was seen as a positive spin off. Dance practices have fostered learning about many facets of the dancers' ancestral culture, including language and religion, and about many aspects of the 'original' place of that culture and its adjoining regions.

New migrants have gained access to communities through dance practices which has also facilitated a heightened sense of being connected within Auckland. In regard to inter-culturalism, remixed choreography as well as dance groups whose agenda is to educate about their culture have the most obvious impact. Interest in dance practices of less related cultures exists and there is some knowledge and engagement, but it is not extensive. Festivals are facilitating awareness of each other and provide some cross-cultural encounters; however, bonding outside the dancers' cultural dance communities was not widely reported amongst the interviewees.

7 Discussion

To answer the research question 'How do dance practices of different cultures contribute to Auckland as a place of diverse communities?' this study explored the meeting points of dance, culture, city, and identity in Auckland. This discussion chapter brings together the research results, the reviewed literature, and this researcher's deliberations.

Culture, dance, place, and human behaviour as well as identity are conceptualised within this study as constructed and constantly in flux. Equally, it is acknowledged that how humans experience their city, their dancing, and their cultural affiliation is subjective, hence the importance of phenomenology as a second guiding theory underpinning this research. These two ontologies weave in an interrelated way through the following discussion, as do the chosen theories and conceptualisations of the city.

This chapter is divided into three distinct sections. The first section correlates the research results to the chosen ontology and theories. The middle section discusses the topics of dance, identity, and culture as they were encountered in the research, and relates these findings to previous studies on cultural dance in urban contexts. The last section discusses the significance of the findings for Auckland and other cities with multi-cultural populations.

7.1 Ontology and theory

7.1.1 Cultural identity, space, dance, and tradition as social constructs

Conducting this research confirmed and clarified a constructionist worldview for this researcher. Consequently, the act of dancing, the discourse about it, and the cultural and personal identity of the dancers are all discussed in this thesis according to this constructionist understanding.

Cities are humanity's most tangible and most proliferating construction, resulting in an increasing number of humans living in urban spaces. As identified in the literature review, space is an ongoing social construct (Casey, 2001; Cresswell, 2009; Easthope, 2004; Edensor, 2010; Gieryn, 2000; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1995; Taylor, 2009), and how we encounter space is based on our socio-culturally acquired relationship with it (Giddens & Sutton, 2012a; Halprin 1963; Novack, 1990; Rio, 2012; Tuan, 1977).

Within the ontological framework of this study, race, ethnicity, and identity are not seen as natural categories, and hence cultural identities are viewed as social constructions which cannot be solely defined by race and ethnicity. Taking the stance that cultural identities are not naturally passed down means they need to be created by a process of constructing and re-affirming. Dance, music, and arts practices as well as culturally-based rituals can be the facilitators of these processes, a view also widely expressed in the dance literature (Hensley, 2010; Najera-Ramirez, 2009; Oliver, 2005; Pietrobruno, 2006; Roy, 1997; Shapiro-Phim, 2008; van Zile, 2001; Vissicaro, 2009).

This study identified practising cultural dance as a major element in constructing the mosaic of cultural identities in urban situations. Clearly, many participants in this study were in the ongoing process of constructing their cultural identity and perpetuating culture through dance practices as the following brief excerpts from the interviews testify:

I have taken on the Croatian dancing as it is part of the heritage.

I have done kolo to discover a part of my cultural heritage.

Siva Samoa is very important for me, because that's my country, and that's my people, you know.

It's what makes me Samoan ... it's like a fingerprint for me.

Dance brings you back to your cultural roots.

I think [siva Samoan] is really important. I think it's a way of distilling your understanding of your culture.

It was apparent that research participants developed cultural identities as part of a community where they felt culturally affiliated. They said that,

We are all doing the same together.

Everybody has that common thread.

This thesis takes the point of view that the act of dancing is foremost 'constructing' culture rather than 'expressing' it, a point of view equally pursued by dance scholars Linda Ashley (2012) and Cynthia Novack (1990). In fact, as discussed in the literature review, dance itself is framed as a human construct (Adshead-Lansdale, 1981; Buckland, 2006; Desmond, 1997; Kaeppler, 1999; Maners, 2006; McFee, 1992; O'Shea, 2006; Patrick, 2010; Peterson Royce, 1977; Pietrobruno, 2006) in the sense that even though humans have a natural inclination to move, the dances themselves as well as concepts of and discourse about dancing are constructed.

Tracing the histories of the dances practised in the studied groups revealed that they are also under constant (re)constructions, resulting in some arbitrary categorising. Indian classical dance and the story of its 'revival' is a prime example of a subjectively devised system; also the value judgment of placing classical over folk, as found in the literature on Indian dance and as expressed by some interviewees, is arbitrary. A similar contention played out in Auckland with one of the Indian practitioners protesting the ongoing framing of Indian classical dance as 'community dance' as opposed to 'art dance' by influential people of the New Zealand dance community. In this context, it is worth noting that different ontologies, worldviews, and interests categorise, frame, and record histories of dances differently.

Correspondingly, 'tradition' can be framed as a cultural construct or a natural phenomenon. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1992) refer to the 'invention of traditions' and posit that no clearly defined traditions exist. The challenge is that traditions evolve constantly and change in the process of shifting place and being passed down through generations; they also become interpreted, twisted, and in some instances diverging ownership claims are put forward (Rowe, 2010). Maner's (2006) account of "culturally created memories of an imagined idyllic past" (p. 93) in Yugoslav folk dancing highlights the ongoing constructions around performance of culture, and so does his investigation into changing roles of folklore in presenting concepts of ethno-

nationalism. A narrowed understanding of traditions as solely invented, however, may not do complete justice to traditions with a long recorded history and may result in a stance that does not fully acknowledge and appreciate peoples' emotional attachment to their culture and its manifestations, as expressed in the interviews.

7.1.2 The person in place: Between constructing place and lived experience of place

In order to frame embodied cultural practices in cities, this study brings phenomenological views into the constructionist fold which offer several points to this discussion and reaches across many facets of the explored field. They pertain to how individuals experience self, community, and city on experiential, sensing, and feeling levels. In this context, dance is framed as an “immersive practice of being in the world” (Cadman, 2009, p. 456).

First of all, it has to be noted that experienced reality of one's own identity differs from rigid notions of cultural and ethnic identity imposed from outside. The first person account needs to be of overriding importance for any relevant understanding of cultural identities. Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that identity is experienced in a combination of physically, emotionally, and spiritually felt connections, and recognising the immediacy of embodied 'doing' of identity adds to this understanding.

In this context, Vijay Mishra's research on the Indian diaspora (2005) is of interest. He comments on the corporeal and lived experience of migrants saying that “we need to look at people's corporeal or even “libidinal” investments in nations (as denizens or outsiders); we need to read off a modernist “transcendental homelessness” against lived experience” (p. 19). Following his line of thought, taking part in cultural dance practices can be framed as a physical, emotional, and spiritual investment of the whole person into the migrant place. This point is also put forward by Judith Hamera (2007) who suggests that engaging in urban dance practices results in the “embodiment of joyful attachment” (p. 12).

Several interviewees inferred their emotional investment and attachment in Auckland through their choice of positive words such as “peaceful”, “happy”, “embracing”, “bringing together”, and “loving it”. These sentiments were expressed with a sense of pride, revealing their positive perception and experience of Auckland.

The 'felt' city is an often quoted concept across the human geography and urban design literature. Canadian and Danish urban planners Beasley (2010) and Gehl (2010) emphasise the importance of achieving heartfelt and positive

visceral responses from citizens so they become passionate about their city. They believe unique spirit and ambience can be achieved through mixed use of spaces, bringing people back into the street, and creating socially mixed communities that are supported by community-based cultural institutions with broader affiliations. The latter point connects significantly with this study as suggestions of cultural centres for Auckland were offered in the interviews.

Another phenomenological consideration pertains to the notion that cultural dance practice, due to their transnational and multi-place character, can connect people to several places at the same time. However, this has to be qualified by acknowledging and highlighting that the person can only be physically present (and dance) in one place at a time. Furthermore, the environment and context of the dancing body will always influence the dancer's experience. This does not rule out that individuals can at times experience being 'transported' into other places or realms.

7.1.3 Place-making aspects of dance practices

"This is what I do on a Wednesday night. It's just a part of you."

According to the narratives collected for this study, dance practices are an important regular urban activity for participants; it is simply what they take for granted doing on a regular basis. This study suggests that these dance practices through the regular act of moving are central means of the ongoing constructing and remaking of the city of Auckland. This connects to the reviewed human geography literature where the city is understood as first and foremost defined by people's activities and their movements around the city's spaces (de Certeau, 1984; Easthope, 2004; Lefebvre, 1974/2004; Thrift, 2008; Tuan, 1977). In other words, sound and movement call space into being, which means the city receives meaning as a lived space. Some dance literature highlights that dance practices do indeed enliven and create the city in the same way as pedestrians walking or other movement-based activities do. For example, Judith Hamera (2007), based on her study about dance in Los Angeles, makes the point that "every day, urban communities are danced into being" (p. 1).

Dance practices have the double effect of imbuing urban spaces with meaning and at the same time creating place attachment for participants. It was clear in the interviews that the accessibility of ongoing cultural dance practice was much appreciated and for some people even a reason to be in Auckland. Two research participants explicitly described their involvement with cultural dance as a reason for feeling connected or grounded in Auckland. They said,

It connects you more in Auckland, having that cultural dance here.

I feel more comfortable being in Auckland because I am learning something that is connected to this place but also to my bloodline, my history to this place.

Their comments correspond to the idea that our experience of everyday life are shaped by our 'practices of dwelling' (de Certeau, 1984; Edensor, 2010; Merriman, 2004). Embedded within the notion of 'practices of dwelling' are the rhythms and repetitions of everyday life and the fact that embodied activity is central to those.

This study identifies performance events as linked to place-making and sense of belonging, thus aligning with Johnson and Figgins (2005), who suggest that Diwali Festivals in New Zealand "embody a sense of identity and place-making" (p. 4). It equally connects with Jared Mackley-Crump (2012) who calls Pacific festivals "mooring posts" (iii) for identity construction and for creating a sense of belonging to two places. Several interviewees in the present study pointed out the festivals' place-making role. One Dally said,

I really like the International Cultural Festival. I went last year and the previous year. That was an amazing festival; it was impressive how many cultures were there. ... It makes New Zealand feel really international. Something we've never had because of where we are at the end of the world, so it is nice to feel that connection.

The fact that everyday life, cultural practices, and the city are subjected to an ongoing re-construction process that depends on the constructors opens the question of how much agency and power the constructors have. This is highlighted by Löytönen (2006) in an article about everyday life in dance institutions. She says that, "Everyday life does not simply exist. Instead it is constructed every day. Everyday life depends on the constructors" (p. 103). Löytönen's account of the empowered constructors correlates to Tonkiss' (2005) explanation of the city as a "site of agency" (p. 7). The described agency and subsequent power of the individual is an intriguing thought; however, it could be seen as a theoretical construct that overrates the citizens' power and disregards existing political, socio-cultural, institutional, and economic structures and pressures. However, most research participants voiced their agency loud and clearly, as presented in the following section.

7.1.4 Representational and non-representational

"Dance as an embodied social practice and highly visual aesthetic form, powerfully melds considerations of materiality and representation together." (Desmond, 1997, p. 2)

When analysing the interviews, this researcher came to the conclusion that in the case of the studied dance practices, culture was first and foremost created and (re)constructed and only secondly (re)presented or expressed. The following statements taken from the Indian and Croatian studies highlight that dance practices were more about the dancers' own doing than about a representation of culture:

Selfishly, it's more about us doing it for ourselves for me.

I am thinking to myself what I'm doing is more for yourself.

As far as I'm concerned [performing] is secondary.

This finding emphasises the doing aspect of dance practices, thus linking it with non-representational theory pursued by Nigel Thrift and others, discussed in the literature review. The dance practitioners mostly described themselves as living the culture rather than reiterating it, as being co-constructors of dance and culture, and as having agency in these processes. An Indian woman said,

You can still have that choice here about whether you feel like you belong to that culture, or you feel like you're a Kiwi. ... And again that decision is up to you and you actually have that choice to make a decision.

The following comment from a Samoan choreographer is equally to the point:

[I am] really itching to ... tell stories that make me click. Not so much my culture, my family, but me.

In regard to performing, research participants voiced a stronger focus on their own meaning making than the audience's meaning making, as the following comment from the Indian study highlights:

It's more important that the dancers understand what they are doing rather than the audience.

In other words, for the research participants, the dance practices seem more about them, about 'being' and 'doing' the culture – and also 'becoming' it on an ongoing basis – and less about showcasing or expressing the culture. Representational aspects were found though in the cases where the stated intention of dance practitioners was educating the audience about chosen topics, expressed in the following statement:

The main motivation for me really is ... educate people about us Pacific women.

Understanding the dancers' construction of their individual cultural identities as an ongoing personal venture shifts the emphasis from a concept of 'preserving' and 'sustaining' culture to a re-affirming and sculpting that happens with agency. Several of the interviewees, particularly second- and third-generation migrants whose quotes are presented above, strongly emphasised their sense of personal agency.

The findings of this study correlate to Linda Ashley's (2012) account of the two-fold aspects of dance practice: the social and communal meaning and the inherent personal agency. In her book *Dancing with Difference* she says that, "Dances, therefore, become both social process and active personal practice" (p. 98). Departing from Raymond William's theories of culture, she highlights that "from this perspective, culture is ordinary and it operates as both socially shared interactions and agentic, individual practices" (p. 11).

Within this study, dance practices were found to be spaces of contemporary agency as 'old' practices are not simply re-created; instead, new spaces, such as 'Dally spaces', 'New Zealand Samoan spaces' and 'Kiwi Indian spaces' are created. Festivals such as Diwali and Pasifika are crucial in developing such new spaces.

7.2 Dance, identities, and cultures in the constant flow of change

7.2.1 Multi-layered cultural identities

This thesis claims that the studied cultural dance practices facilitate many aspects of cultural learning, build cultural confidence, and construct cultural identities for the dance participants. Most of the interviewees expressed an awareness of acting in two cultures, and a sense of a hybrid existence. This thesis suggests that for many of the participants, dance practice helps to coordinate the stakes and investments they have in at least two cultures. Additionally, dance was identified as a space where multi-cultural heritage and hybridity is negotiated and where forms of diaspora ownership develop. Many research participants showed mobile and flexible 'route' identities (Easthope, 2009; Pile & Thrift, 1996) as opposed to 'root' identities, and were multi-locally connected.

Personal identities are reconfirmed every day in many ways but they are also newly created, a process particularly evident in diaspora situations. Stuart Hall (2006) offers the following account:

The diaspora experience ... is defined, not by essence and purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. (p. 438)

New Zealand scholars have used varying terms to describe this process: Melani Anae (1998) calls it "identity journeys" in her thesis title, and Cluny and La'avasa Macpherson (2000) refer to "versions of Samoanness" (p. 75); Fuchs, Linkenbach and Malik (2010), who studied Indians in Christchurch, speak of "migration as individual venture and creative project" (p. 93). Music academic Henry Johnson and geographer Guil Figgins (2005) also acknowledge that identity construction is a creative process. They say that "festivals such as Diwali help migrants – old and new – facilitate their own cultural imagination" (p. 5). The latter ideas suggest that a creative practice such as dance is pre-destined to support identity processes in migrants because they can literally 'perform' their identity through presenting old or newly created choreography.

The topic of cultural identity was prominent across the interviews conducted for this study and this concurs with the findings of Oliver (2005) and Pietrobruno (2006) who in their respective researches have identified transnational practices of Caribbean music and dance as identity building for people of Caribbean

descent across the globe. The narratives of participants within this research portrayed their identity journeys as an individual quest but also a process that engaged their whole community. The Samoan choreographers, who perceived many young people being on a similar quest to them, offer convincing examples of this. In the reviewed South Asian media, similar sentiments were detected and in the scholarly literature identity journeys are equally framed as communal and individual. For example, Klein (2009) sees tango and salsa as a performative act which constructs identity, both individual and communal, and Fuchs et al (2010) found that their research participants had a clear sense of both individuality and sense of connection with their communities.

Across all three case studies, participants expressed a clear sense of agency and ownership. The extent to which interviewees took their agency for granted was a surprise for this researcher, and also the confidence with which this was articulated. This stated sense of ownership ties in with Sean Mallon's (2002) point that Samoans kept some agency of fa'a Samoa, including their performing arts and tattooing, despite immense colonial interventions. It equally correlates to statements by other Auckland dance practitioners such as choreographer Lemi Ponifasio, quoted in Taouma (2002): "I am a Samoan and so that means my work is Samoan. I don't have to go and sit under a coconut tree for my work to be seen as Samoan" (p. 140). This mirrors the sentiments expressed by several interviewees who affirmed their sense of ownership as contemporary Indians, Samoans, or Dallies in Auckland.

Participants expressed that they take care of their heritage in their way, and combine it with other cultural influences as they see fit. In the Samoan study, a strong wish to create their own choreography and tell their own stories came to the fore. One Indian woman commented in regard to having the right to choreograph in a remixed way:

But I am a contemporary Indian! ... The roots are still [in India], but you can't say and claim that it belongs to India.

Individual agency was also expressed in individual decisions about how to engage with their community (or their multiple communities).

Fijian Indian and Samoan dancers confirmed vast knowledge of Polynesian dance forms and displayed a pan-Pacific interest. Some Samoans expressed a sense of a pan-Pacific identity, confirming that dance is part of building, expanding, and transforming multi-faceted cultural and personal identities. This finding correlates to the suggestion that a pan-Pacific identity is developing in

Auckland with the term Pasifika becoming more widely used as an identity marker by Pacific people and outsiders (Hau'ofa, 2008; Salesa, 2013).

Some interviewees' strong personal and cultural confidence showed in their conviction that if they lived somewhere in New Zealand without access to cultural dance, they would create their own dance group. They also said that they would miss the multi-cultural aspect of Auckland as they grew up with it. One young woman said that,

It would be hard because I'm so used to it, you know, being part of a multi-cultural society. I would just start up my own dance group.

7.2.2 Culture in flux

The reviewed literature (Fuchs et al, 2010; Macpherson, 1985; Macpherson & Macpherson, 2000, 2009; Pio, 2010; Teaiwa, 2013) as well as the interviews revealed that migrant cultures in New Zealand adapt and change. For example, as many interviewees confirmed, most Indians and Samoans in New Zealand are aware of the Indian caste system and Samoan chiefly system and their status within it. However, these systems are not majorly reproduced in New Zealand and play a minor role compared to the home countries (Fuchs et al, 2010). Statistical data (Statistics New Zealand, 2007) support this view: in the 2006 census, 14% percent of Pacific Island people declared themselves as not religious – unthinkable in the Pacific Islands. Investigating details of this are beyond this study but the interview analysis clarified that new Samoan and Indian diaspora identities have evolved that have to some degree moved beyond the old structures. One Samoan interviewee even referred to a “culture clash” between Samoans in New Zealand and in Samoa.

Many New Zealand scholars have written about this topic (Fuchs et al, 2010; Macpherson, 1985, 2005; Macpherson & Macpherson, 2000; Taouma, 2002), and in the case study reports within this thesis, case specific discussions exist. Two quotes by Lisa Taouma (2002) particularly correspond to the findings of this study. She says, “In consequence, a hybrid, very New Zealand Pacific culture seems to have been born, that can reference the past but resides happily in the present” (p. 133). In regard to art making she states that, “As social and geographical circumstances have changed, so too has the fa'asamoa in which many of the arts of Samoa are embedded” (p. 23).

As described in the case study reports and the results chapter, multi-faceted learning takes place through involvement with the dance practices. The Auckland dance participants live within a different context, and hence have different experiences and outlooks than people in India, Croatia, or Samoa

which is evident in how they receive and reconstruct dances. All three case studies revealed that these practices were not reconstructed in exactly the same way; interviewees rather described how speed, rhythms, movements, modes of practice, and performing have changed in the Auckland context. Details are presented in the section on transnational and glocal aspects of dancing below. Also, culturally accepted motivations for dancing are changing. For example, dancing for one's own enjoyment rather than for fulfilling a strict socio-culturally defined purpose was a new concept for older Pacific Islanders participating in the Langi Mai exercise programme, which is based on Pacific Island dance. Younger Pacific Island dancers, however, viewed practising and performing for their own enjoyment as an acceptable attitude.

The tradition versus modern argument surfaced in all case studies and interviewees identified the fact of constant change of cultures and cultural practices. The Samoan community reported tensions and conflicts in regard to engaging and negotiating these issues. Nevertheless, the notion of contemporary *plus* tradition came out as the preferred conceptualisation in all studies. Interviewees saw Auckland as a fertile ground for new cultural, artistic and social developments. One Samoan woman suggested that,

Maybe [rebellion] is an Auckland thing because of all the other cultures around us.

Agency for cultural and artistic change was mostly perceived by interviewees as residing in the here and now, which in their views did not contradict or rule out acknowledging who and what has gone before. The idea of clear-cut 'authenticity' posed challenges to many interviewees: they asked 'whose authenticity?' The Dalmatians were clear that an 'authenticity to New Zealand' exists, a concept which was also pursued in the other two studies.

Different cultures have different concepts of pedagogy and this came out as another contested issue in some parts of the research. Linda Ashley (2012) describes how "command style pedagogy can "hold" the power" (p. 150) in a teaching situation, and how this power structure is ingrained in Samoan culture as a means of showing the teacher respect. This pedagogy rubs with western notions of student-centred teaching and learning where the student is respected in her/his individuality. This research found that command-style teaching approaches may have in some cases been counterproductive in the passing down of cultural knowledge. This researcher sensed resistance against command-style teaching by some younger Samoans; this was, however, not a consistently expressed view. It was obvious though that most teachers in the Indian and Samoan study consciously embraced student-centred pedagogies.

7.2.3 Community forming aspects of dance practices

Bringing Taylor's (2009) argument that belonging is embodied, relational, and affective back into the discussion, lends weight to the view that movement practices can be facilitators of a sense of belonging. In several cases within this study, bonding between community members was achieved through regular embodied communal practice. This ties in with Najera-Ramirez (2009) who describes dance events as "social spaces that complement and reinforce group identity" (xix) and O'Connor (1997) who speaks of dance practices creating "instant communities" (p. 156). Hamera (2007), in her Los Angeles-based study, found that dance connects people who otherwise do not have much in common and would not connect. In this study, interviewees described several aspects of how dance practices build communities: as a signifier of ethnic and cultural belonging; as strengthening and reconfirming of existing communities; as an equaliser; as a unifier and healer; and as a site where conflicts are negotiated and changes take place.

Siva was identified as a signifier of belonging to the Samoan community, as the quotes in earlier sections testify. In the other case studies, this was not expressed as explicitly but still appeared in different ways. In the kolo and Indian dance practices, the focus seemed to be on learning and facilitating intergenerational connections. The connections were experienced as operating in both directions: as a retelling of ancestral stories and as knowledge transfer to the next generation, who in turn inflict their own influences.

In the Croatian study, many people spoke about bonding across classlines within communities through cultural dance practices; kolo was experienced as an equaliser. Several interviewees in this study expressed that they appreciate dance practice as an opportunity to mix with people different from them. This finding was a surprise as this researcher had viewed mixing with people of the same bloodline as mixing with people who are similar. O'Connor (1997), in her study on Irish set dancing in Dublin, encountered similar views with interviewees stating that they enjoyed mixing with people of varying backgrounds and that the difference in social status did not matter in the dance environment; rather, they perceived it as "a classless sort of activity" (p. 155). Generating encounters across class divides and social status harbours the potential to facilitate the development of a dynamic diversity within the city.

Kolo dancing was described by interviewees as a unifier and healer, as a communal thread that facilitates relationships, connections, and bonding within their community through cultural dance. In the dance literature, it has equally

been reported that performing arts practices can facilitate healing within and across communities. For example, Vissicaro (2009) observed that refugee groups, who had a history of conflict with each other in the home country, by being forced to relate to each other when sharing practising and performing spaces over time co-operated and resolved their conflicts. It has to be noted though that it is at times difficult to distinguish what exactly constitutes 'within' or 'across' communities as definitions of community based on the notion of nation-states disregard the fact that states such as India consist of many ethnic communities and what exactly constitutes the Croatian or Dalmatian community is also problematic.

Other research highlights that dance practices can function as a distinguisher, separator, and discriminator (Kalogeropoulou, 2010; Maners, 2006, 2008; Shay, 1999). It has to be emphasised that dancing, even though research participants described it as a non-threatening activity in Auckland, is not "good" or value-free per se and can be misused for political purposes. For example, Kalogeropoulou (2010) states that "while folk dance acts as a uniting device amongst members of ethnic groups, its practice of banal nationalism can be transformed into a political ritual that exaggerates differences and projects chauvinism and nationalism" (p. 12). In her conference presentation she showed a video of Serbian soldiers psyching themselves up with a Serbian folk dance before going into a war action.

A last but important point regarding dance and community is that migrants to Auckland amongst the interviewees saw dance practices as places to join a community. In one case, a person found a way into her father's ancestral community; in another, it was a person who had migrated from Africa who wanted to connect to Auckland's Pacificness.

When relating the above findings to political scientist Robert Putnam's (2007) differentiation between 'bonding capital' and 'bridging capital', it becomes clear that the studied dance practices exhibited much 'bonding capital' and to a lesser degree 'bridging capital'. This thesis suggests that 'bridging capital' could be heightened and exploited in Auckland, as discussed in the third section of this chapter.

This research identified dance practices as spaces where power structures within communities can be contested, defended, and re-negotiated. This was particularly evident in the Samoan study where a generational struggle seems to be taking place. A different sort of quarrel was apparent in the Croatian study between keepers of 'authentic' dances from Croatia and 'authentic Dally dances' from Aotearoa.

7.2.4 Multiple place connections: Transnational and glocal aspects

In all three case studies, a web of place connections became apparent, some across vast geographic distances, some between multiple places, and others reaching far back in time. Various links are corporeal and essential as people have lived in these places and/or have travelled there for dance training or performing. Other links are virtual, manifested in the transnational histories of the dance forms or in administrative connections such as students being tied into international exam systems.

The three studied communities are part of large international diasporas. Croatian and Indian migrants, and their descendants, are dispersed around the globe, while the Samoan diaspora resides mainly along the Pacific Rim. In the Indian case, threads weaving through many places became apparent: from India to Fiji, into the wider Pacific, to Aotearoa, as well as the thread from Uganda and other places in Africa. The Croatian diaspora connections are strong in New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Germany, and the USA. A considerable number of interviewees (or their ancestors) migrated to Auckland not from the 'original' places but from diaspora places where a mix of cultures resides or resided (i.e., Fiji, Uganda). Migrants from these places asserted that the multiculturalism there had shaped their dance experience at the time.

Research participants spoke many times about their regional connections. Fijian Indians and Samoans both had a sense of being Pacific people and knew a lot about and felt a strong attraction to dance forms originating in the Pacific region. Learning through dance practices about these different places within wider regions was reported, specifically and extensively by second and third generation migrants.

The people participating in this study are members of transnational communities and they have what Jared Mackley-Crump (2012) calls a "multi-local notion of belonging" (p. 275). Their practices are also pursued multi-locally, which was particularly obvious in the Croatian/Dalmatian study with New Zealand groups performing in Croatia. In New Zealand, Independence Day celebrations of the 'home' country (i.e., Samoa and India) offer performance opportunities for dance groups. One Dally performed at Waitangi Day celebrations (then New Zealand Day) where significant migrant cultures were part of telling "the story of New Zealand ... through some of the dances". These events foster cultural re-affirmation, serve as acknowledgment within New Zealand, and function as spaces where hybrid identities become constructed.

Exploring the dances practised in the studied groups revealed many inter-cultural and transnational influences. Inter-cultural aspects are apparent in

regard to classical Indian dances, as they are about the different cultural practices of India united under one umbrella. Additionally, even though the leaders of the Indian dance revival made an effort to recapture much traditional knowledge of the chosen Indian dance forms, western influences impacted on them. Further threads of even earlier origins are visible in the transnational connections of specific classical Indian dance forms (e.g., kathak and Spanish flamenco).

In the Croatian study, transnational influences are obvious and are due to Croatia's positioning between many European nations and the Orient. In Siva Samoa, transnational influences are mostly apparent in the colonialists' prohibition of certain explicit dances and related attire (or the lack of it); the loss of the poula is described in the case study report. The present study could not ascertain whether the Austrian/South German Schuhplattler influenced the Samoan slap dance fa'ataupati; this is considered a worthwhile investigation though.

Neither the interviews in Auckland nor the literature review brought forth indications of unchanged and uninfluenced dance practices anywhere. The studies on urban dance practices of different cultures presented in chapter 4 clearly attest to the transnational character of all reviewed dance forms, be they of Caribbean (Hensley, 2010; Oliver, 2005; Pietrobruno, 2006), Central and South-American (Klein, 2009; Najera-Ramirez, 2009; Shay, 2006), Asian (Roy, 1997; Shapiro-Phim, 2008; Shay, 2006; van Zile, 2001), European (O'Connor, 1997; Shay, 2006), African (Vissicaro, 2009), or Middle Eastern (Shay, 2006) origin. All scholars traced multi-faceted influences that moulded the practice into its current shape.

In a world with ever faster travel connections, cultural practices can travel as fast as people on planes. Dance teachers arriving from Croatia in the last two decades as well as New Zealand dancers performing in Croatia are evidence of the strong place connections that have developed.

The stories of dances told within this research confirm not only transnational influences but also the theory of glocalisation. They correlate to Klein's (2009) findings that tango and salsa have developed in distinctive ways in different parts of the world, which she frames as local re-constructions, and Pietrobruno's (2006) finding that salsa in Montreal is constantly transformed due to global and local influences.

It is a fact that geography matters. When cultural practices are transplanted, they adopt influences of the new place, thus leading to adaptations and the

development of specific local practices. Samoans in Auckland have contributed abundantly to discussions on this topic. Several Samoan interviewees referred to the distinct pace of Auckland that influences the sense of rhythm and speed of dancers and musicians; others spoke of the very different life experiences that inform the dance making. Practical examples of how this translates are modified and sped up sasa rhythms, as identified by two research participants, and Sefa Enari's (2007) finding that compared to Samoa, siva in Auckland has less floating qualities.

Another example of constantly changing dance practices is the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* which was developed from material that early migrants remembered. According to interviewees, the Dalmatians who took part in the choreographic process in the 1930s were aware that they were reconstructing and were relatively unconcerned about authenticity. Over the decades, movements that were fashionable in New Zealand became part of this kolo. It could be said that the *New Zealand Dalmatian kolo* became a means for stating a newfound, New Zealand specific Dalmatian identity and Dalmatians express much pride about this cultural treasure developed in Aotearoa.

A further expression of the glocal is the emergence in Auckland of a strong breed of Pacific choreographers who present an array of compelling local Pacific choreography. In the last few years, much Auckland specific choreography by Samoan practitioners has surfaced, expressing the choreographers' lives here and now. Two Samoan dance practitioners explained that their choreographies have the spirit of the Pacific without being traditional.

7.2.5 Inter-cultural encounters through culturally specific dance practices

Across the case studies, one performance group pursued audience education as their main goal, while most dance practitioners described their personal experience when performing as their foremost focus. This of course does not mean audience education does not take place; it only identifies it as a secondary motivator for the dancers. Wide-spread awareness of possible audience (mis)conceptions was voiced, and while the possibility of misunderstanding cultural meanings concerned some interviewees, many were relaxed about the audience creating their own meaning.

Some scholars have commented that inter-cultural events can promote cultural understanding. Vissicaro (2009) views public performances of cultural dance as having the dual effect of contributing to the resettlement process, but equally to educating the public about the refugees and their culture. Johnson and Figgins

(2005) similarly define the audience experience at Diwali festivals in New Zealand as an identity constructing process for Indian and non-Indian audience members alike. Several interviewees of this study thought that inter-cultural meetings through dance offer opportunities to learn about how the 'others' live, how they are different but also how they are the same. They spoke of developing a sense of appreciation and tolerance towards other cultures and their practices through these encounters.

Two Dally women commented regarding the International Cultural Festival:

It brings the groups together and it also showcases each culture's dance and foods at the festivals which of course leads to a better understanding of people and a better tolerance.

Dance is a very uniting thing, nothing challenging about it; dance and food. The language can create barriers but when there's dance and food, there is always something for everybody.

Festivals such as Tempo Dance Festival and the Southside Arts Festival have in the last few years opened up new performance spaces for dance that is perceived as 'culture-based'. Research participants appreciated this development but a strong sense that the resulting issues need addressing prevailed. They confirmed the high profile and importance of the ASB Polyfest and Pasifika Festival, but also mentioned issues and challenges that pertained to diverse topics such as competitive character, friction in regard to tradition and contemporary, hierarchies, and commercialisation. The question arose for this researcher where people can take those concerns.

It was suggested in the interviews that audiences for culturally specific dance in Auckland have become more mixed in recent years, increasing the cross-cultural encounters but exacerbating the potential for cultural misunderstandings. Indian and Samoan women thought that dance performances are becoming more of a visual spectacle in Auckland. Some practitioners were concerned that in this situation aesthetic expectations of the audience and organisers could rule the choreographic process and many other aspects of performance. Others were accepting of this development and voiced no concerns.

Several interviewees pointed out that it is easy to take for granted the amount of practices and events that originate in the diverse cultures of Auckland and forget that other cities have a lot less to offer. Two interviewees specifically spoke of their perception that culturally specific dance practices are not as prolific in Australia. This researcher is in no position to validate these claims;

however, deems it important to mention them as they also highlight how much value the interviewees place on their cultural dance practices in Auckland.

This thesis suggests that cultural and arts festivals in Auckland harbour the potential to become 'open spaces' for choreographers where they could have a multitude of artistic choices beyond the perceived traditional. Additionally, policy and organisers of events could open up the creative process by asserting that choreography does not need to be visually appealing in the populist sense. Moreover, further cross-cultural encounters could be facilitated through the existing cultural events which in turn have the potential to foster understanding and healing within and across communities.

In the interviews, several suggestions were made that Auckland needs a centre for cultural performing arts practices. These centres were envisaged as either based on individual cultures, or on related cultures, or as a centre for all cultures to be able to congregate and share.

7.3 Significance of findings

This study set out to investigate the role of culturally specific dance practices for urban diversity in Auckland, and in the process explored the intersections of dance, culture, identity, and place. This chapter section takes a wider view of the significance of the research findings for Auckland or any city that accommodates multiple cultures. It furthermore explores the question of what culturally specific dance practices could in the future contribute to the creation of a meaningfully diverse Auckland.

Auckland is, and lives every day, many ethnicities, and many multi-ethnic people, who negotiate their multi-layered identities by many means including cultural practices. One of this study's findings is that cultural diversity is at the core of a positive self-image of many Aucklanders. This thesis suggests that something special is developing in Auckland, and raises questions as to what exactly is developing, who is leading it, and what are the concepts driving it. Several interviewees saw Auckland as a place where cultures happily co-reside with each other but others highlighted Auckland's segregation. So how do we get along? How do the segregated parts interrelate? How much do we know about each other? It was suggested numerous times that we do not know enough about each other.

7.3.1 City

This thesis takes the point of view that the quality of urban life is defined by the opportunities it offers for participation, interactions, and connectedness. This includes the accessibility of urban space, the manner in which city dwellers are part of the fabric of society, and part of the daily activities and movements that (re)create the city every day. It is equally about how city dwellers can be 'themselves', meaning whether they can live their multi-layered identities without serious challenges.

It is pertinent to emphasise that places form people but people also shape places; it is indeed a circular cross-fertilisation. Life in Auckland is different from life in Apia, Suva, Split, or Mumbai which results in different choreographic ideas and different modes of practice. On the other side of the coin, the city is created in the doing, so a constant reverse flow takes place. The city changes because every day is different, nothing ever replicates in exactly the same way, and humans change behaviours over time. This is how we, the people, are in charge, how we have agentic powers in forming places, society, art practices, and so forth. If we deliberately behaved in new ways, places would change according to our intentions.

Bringing back into this fold Nigel Thrift's (2007) and Doreen Massey's (2005) statements that space is political highlights that government and council decisions about the use of urban spaces are indeed inherently political. Thrift (2006) therefore points out that space is also in need of care, which is certainly true for dance and culture as they are not seen as a financially viable use of space. This research indicates that even though Auckland is a place with relatively healthy dance spaces, they are still in need of care, which was expressed in the Samoan study specifically.

7.3.2 Diversity

“Interculturalism goes beyond equal opportunities and respect for existing cultural differences to the pluralist transformation of public space, institutions and civic society.” (Vijaya Vaidyanath cited in Pio, 2010, p. 158)

Engaging in depth with the topics of urban dance practices and cultural diversity formed this researcher's belief that cities of the future will be judged by how they facilitate human encounters, and, with ongoing global migration, how they enable cultural interactions. Returning to Fran Tonkiss' (2005) earlier introduced notion of the city as “a site of social encounter and social division” and as “an embodied space, as a realm of everyday experience” (p. 1) invites the question, what could performing arts practices contribute to “encounters” and how could they mediate “divisions”? Or, in more general terms, how are migrancy, growing ethnic diversity, and growing inequality shaping the city and how can we influence these processes?

The central objective of the Auckland Plan is to create the most liveable city in the world. In the interviews for this research, a widespread awareness of this aspiration existed but an even stronger appreciation was apparent for the cultural diversity of Auckland. One of the young Samoan women called Auckland the “city of diversity”, and her choice of words caught this researcher's attention. It was her perception of what Auckland is, of who we are. This perception also came through in other interviews and was in all cases referred to with an obvious sense of pride.

This thesis takes the point of view that the concepts of liveability and diversity need to be connected and that the most liveable city can only be achieved if a meaningful and dynamic diversity exists. Diversity as well as multi-culturalism are of course value-laden concepts and both receive “bad press” because multi-cultural situations can be conflicted. Many scholars and politicians, including Edwina Pio (2010) and Mervin Singham, current director of the Office of Ethnic

Affairs Te Tari Matawaka, conversely appeal to “frame the diversity discourse around the opportunities it presents instead of focusing on the challenges it creates” (Singham cited in Pio, 2010, p. 19).

UNESCO (2001) defines cultural diversity as “the common heritage of humanity [that] should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations” (p. 2). UNESCO further states that,

In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees for social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. ... cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life. (p. 2-3)

Based on these principles, this thesis supports the view that meaningful diversity cannot be based on homogeneity and assimilation, but needs to be created from differences. These differences need to be acknowledged, understood, valued, and celebrated. There needs to be a democratic diversity underpinned by a non-judgmental attitude and by sufficient understanding of each other’s values. Urban dwellers of different cultural backgrounds would in this situation have meaningful encounters rather than live alongside each other. A city where deep relationships and multi-levelled exchanges between cultural groups exist could indeed be a dynamic ‘city of diversity’ and a cultural powerhouse.

Apart from understanding and valuing difference, establishing common grounds as Auckland dwellers would assist in creating the ‘city of diversity’. Therefore, the following questions need pursuing: What is common and shared amongst Aucklanders of different cultural backgrounds? How will the diverse Auckland have social cohesion? What do dancers across cultures feel they may have in common?

Two things that act as commonalities between Aucklanders are evident. Firstly, we move and dance on the same land. Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland is literally our shared ‘common ground’, our whenua. Secondly, an individual or communal commitment to the vision of Auckland becoming a model liveable city could be another common ground. In order to find that communality, building bridges between culturally diverse groups would be essential; also bridging the gap between rich and poor, between people that have access to most things they want and people that are disenfranchised. Building such a comprehensive

dynamic diversity could indeed be a common goal, a vision pursued by people from many backgrounds.

7.3.3 Dance and the city of diversity

“A city could initiate an exercise to review its main functions ‘through an intercultural lens’, and establish some flagship trial projects.” (Vijaya Vaidyanath cited in Pio, 2010, p. 157)

The answers to the question of what we can and need to do in order to contentedly and meaningfully live with difference are of course manifold. This researcher agrees with sociologist Anthony Giddens (2012b), who emphasises the importance of the “fostering of connections between different social and ethnic groups” (p. 2), and suggests that supporting cultural practices such as dance would be a far-sighted step in the right direction. This is based on the following reasons: It was apparent in the interviews that feeling secure in their own identity resulted in being open to and interested in the culture of others. Secondly, this research showed that cultural confidence rises through acquiring cultural knowledge and many participants in this research pinpointed dance practices as the main vehicles to facilitate this process. Individual choice and agency creates individuals that are unique in their hybrid identities, thus creating a web of layered identities rather than clearly bounded groups of people who share the same sense of identity. People who are confident in two or more cultures could become cornerstones of a ‘sophisticated multi-culturalism’ in the Giddensian sense.

Being actively involved in one’s own culture can only be one part of the journey to create a dynamic diversity. The argument for cultural dance practices in cities needs to move beyond the notion of cultural sustainability and include intercultural encounters. Ontologically, an argument for cultural sustainability that is focused on perpetuating traditions alone is built on an essentialist notion of culture and tradition. Therefore, policy that focuses on tradition only and on presenting activities originating in bound cultures is flawed because it misses the point of the here and now. For festivals to fulfil a role in creating a meaningful cultural diversity, so-called traditional and new works need to be considered. It has to be acknowledged, however, that in the Auckland context this seems to be largely the case.

This thesis suggests that dance practices can easily function as facilitators for learning about each other in multi-cultural cities. Dance was described by several interviewees in the Croatian study as a non-threatening way of learning about other cultures. Several interviewees from across the studies pointed out

that dance can communicate cultural differences as well as similarities. Additionally, dance was identified as a place where people of different social status meet and exchange. This aspect is important in a city which unfortunately suffers from a lack of equal opportunity and a widening economic and social gap (Salesa, 2013).

Coming back to human geographer Tuan's (1977) suggestion that "it is difficult to experience the space of another culture" (p. 15) and dance scholar Jane Desmond's (1997) suggestion that "by looking at dance we can see enacted ... social attitudes towards the use of space and time" (p. 32) highlights the opportunities inherent in participating in the dance practice of a foreign culture. It is about experiencing first-hand a different use of space, meaning where, when, and how exactly others dance. Kirsten Simonsen (2010) suggests that "it is about the process of 'internalizing otherness' or the development of a 'double consciousness' due to the enculturation of the body" (p. 231). This includes which urban spaces are acceptable for practising and performing; how the performance space is used; how personal space is approached when dancing, such as how close and interlinked are the dancers; what are the exact bodily connections in group dancing; how space is approached in regard to movement qualities (e.g. confidently darting as opposed to gently weaving into space), costumes, music, rhythm, dynamics; and how the latter relate to the movement and choreography.

Council-supported cultural festivals, showings, and competitions are a form of institutional support for cultural diversity. These festivals are a good starting point; their potential to effectively facilitate a dynamic cultural diversity are huge and easily achievable. The general view amongst research participants was that the Auckland Council is doing well; however, it also came through that more informed input from communities could further improve the festivals. Worth considering, as it clearly describes the shortfalls of the existing festivals, is the following opinion offered by Sapna Samant (2010), an Indian migrant living in Auckland:

The frustration is that multi-culturalism as prescribed by government bodies wants me to be proud and assertive of my native culture but in a non-threatening way; for easy cultural consumption. It does not let me break barriers or empower me. I am always meant to be "the other". (p. 13)

Of equal interest in this context is North American dance scholar Judy van Zile's (2004) proposal of a process of consultation between "purveyors and

consumers of dance in diasporic settings ... involving knowledgeable individuals ... in policy-determining and decision-making processes" (p. 3).

The public display of cultural practices at festivals was described by interviewees as creating awareness of each other but not as developing deep understanding. The focus for these festivals could be shifted from quantity, meaning large spectator crowds, financial success for stallholders, glitzy public image, to quality, meaning significant encounters that change or heighten cultural understanding of those involved. If these festivals were set up in a way that groups liaised with each other, perform for each other, respond to each other's practices or co-create, encounters of a different quality could occur. Festivals could be spaces of meeting rather than consuming; more importance could be placed on engaging each other than on providing entertainment for a fleeting audience.

With cultural dance and music practices becoming 'festivalised' in New Zealand (Johnson & Figgins, 2005; Johnson, 2010; Mackley-Crump, 2012), it is important to reflect upon the implications of this development: where it could lead, and who is in charge (which also means whose interests are playing out). Worth considering in this context is the opinion voiced by one Indian interviewee that an outdoors festival such as Diwali cannot offer an appropriate platform for performing classical Indian dance. Also relevant is Johnson's (2010) comment that the organisational set-up of the two Diwali festivals in New Zealand is questionable, particularly if scrutinising the organisers self-proclaimed goals of wanting to present a festival that is "visually exciting, culturally authentic and a leading event for Auckland and Wellington" (Johnson & Figgins, 2005). It raises questions not only about their motivations but also about the depth of engagement with issues of cultural diversity. This thesis suggests that Auckland should move beyond simplistic festivalisation and adopt sophisticated programmes that "bridge" cultural gaps.

7.3.4 Facilitating dynamic diversity in Auckland through dance practices

As chapter 2 indicated, two out of three Aucklanders were born outside New Zealand, an exceptional situation that is nevertheless part of a worldwide trend. Pacific Island scholars and media personalities have pointed out that "the 'browning of Auckland' is unparalleled in the world" (Anae, 2013, p. 9) and that "Auckland has yet to make the most of it Pacificness" (Wong, 2002, p. 107). These statements equally ring true for the many other cultures featuring in Auckland. The fact that abundant cultural dance practices exist is a good starting point for Auckland to create a vibrantly diverse place.

Why are performing arts practices pre-destined to achieve these goals?

Because performing arts practices are deeply embedded in Pacific cultures in particular, so dance occupies a place of specific significance. The Colmar Brunton (2012) survey mentioned in chapter 2 proves that performing arts events offer a unique opportunity to reach large sections of the population.

Several interviewees pointed out the specific importance of Auckland's International Cultural Festival; they saw it as more important than Pasifika which is only about one region. Inter-cultural events, such as the bi-annual Viva Eclectika, a competition that brings different cultural communities together to choreograph inter-culturally, are certainly a way forward.

As mentioned above, several interviewees suggested that Auckland needs cultural centres, places where the performing arts are taught and showcased. These suggestions covered culture-specific spaces and also larger spaces where many cultures could congregate. Considering that libraries are frequented and appreciated by large sections of society, cultural centres could equally become valued community spaces for large parts of the population. One interviewee thought that Auckland needs to build audiences for culturally specific dance, similar to London, where a strong audience for classical Indian dance exists. This, if supported whole-heartedly by the Council, could develop dance practices from different cultures as a hallmark of Auckland.

Last but not least, this researcher envisages a new dance scene developing in Auckland where, additional to the dance traditions of distinct origins, new choreographic spaces develop – spaces where, as Adrienne Kaeppler (2008) puts it, “‘my dance’ and ‘your dance’ become ‘our dances’” (p. 104).

7.4 Summary

The discussion of this study's results integrated theories of constructionism and phenomenology; representational and non-representational; thinking and doing; and lived experience and cognitive concepts. Through adopting this integrated approach, this study moved beyond binaries and instead applied a 'two-eyed vision' (Helbrecht, 2010).

The answers to the research question, 'How do dance practices of different cultures contribute to Auckland as a place of diverse communities?' are manifold. As interviewees conveyed, dancing adds colour, liveliness, dynamism, and vibrancy to city life. This study shows that dance has even more to offer, which was equally obvious in the reviewed literature. Many findings presented in the reviewed studies on urban, culturally specific dance were confirmed in Auckland, especially its role in forming cultural identities, learning about own culture, facilitating community affiliation, strengthening communities, and facilitating healing within communities. These findings relate to what Putnam (2007) calls 'bonding capital'. Furthermore, this study confirmed that some learning about other cultures happens through dance practices and highlighted that this potential, or 'bridging capital' (Putnam, 2007), could be harnessed much more effectively for developing a dynamic cultural diversity in Auckland.

All interviewees spoke of dance as facilitating cultural identity and belonging to a community. Several New Zealand-borns commented that dance was the main tool for them to learn about their ancestral culture. This researcher identified amongst research participants a sense of 'doing culture'. It was wide-spread that one's own meaning of dance practice was valued over 'representing culture'. Furthermore, a strong sense of agency existed which was at times challenged from within or from outside the communities.

Many interviewees expressed joy about being in Auckland which they perceived as a peaceful multi-cultural place, as a "city of diversity". It was, however, pointed out that a clear geographical segregation of cultures exists and that the different cultures do not know enough about each other.

Participants in this study saw dance practices of different cultures as an effective and non-threatening communicative vehicle that can easily foster cross-cultural encounters, learning, and understanding. This study identifies experiencing other cultures' approaches to living space as a way of "internalizing otherness" (Simonsen, 2010, p. 231). As many dance practices and performances in Auckland take place within the existing infra-structure, their potential could easily be utilised more effectively by tweaking event set-ups. Creating more meeting spaces for cultures would be an additional avenue to

foster dynamic diversity and thus for contributing to building the multi-cultural city of the future.

Dancing was found to facilitate a transnational web of personal and artistic connections, creating global citizens. It fosters confidence in cultural identity which is a predisposition for being open to other cultural influences. People confident in their manifold cultural affiliations could become key players in a sophisticated multi-cultural Auckland.

In summary, this study asserts that in the act of dancing, people construct personal and cultural identities, construct the city in the moving about its spaces, and (re)construct culture in the doing. It further posits that people have agency in these practices and through their doing the city is recreated anew and differently every day.

8 Conclusion

In answering the research question, 'How do dance practices of different cultures contribute to Auckland as a place of diverse communities?' this researcher worked with three significant dance communities in Auckland: Samoan, Indian and Dalmatian/Croatian.

This thesis suggests that the prolific dance practices of different cultures in Auckland offer an accessible and non-threatening medium for city dwellers to engage with each other, learn about each other's culture, and thus continually build the 'city of diversity'. This engagement is necessary to achieve a peaceful and fulfilling co-existence of people with diverse heritages, as a dynamic cultural diversity can only be based on dialogue, exchange, and understanding. Cross-cultural learning would be situated in experiencing aspects of each other's cultural norms, rituals, and ways of relating to space (performance space and personal space). It is about music, story-telling, costumes, props and through this having a shared experience of how energy, cohesion, and togetherness are created. It is about experiencing difference but, as some interviewees pointed out, it is also about experiencing similarities and sameness. In these cross-cultural encounters, Auckland dwellers could together experience their city's spaces, in an embodied, holistic, and fully immersed way.

The research established for all three case studies that culturally specific dance practices confirm belonging to a community and facilitate learning about cultural heritage. In some cases, research participants described dance practices as a "home". As this study shows, dance is effective in creating individuals who are confident and comfortable in their culture(s). For many second- and third-generation migrants, dance was identified as the foremost medium for realising cultural learning and affiliating. Intergenerational connections were found to be a key motivator for participants, who value the stories of the past as much as the knowledge transfers to the next generation.

Dance practices were identified as an activity that connects people with several places simultaneously and facilitates learning about these places. These virtual or concrete connections and exchanges were cultural, spiritual, artistic, or administrative. In the Samoan, Indian, and Croatian case studies, dance knowledge was sourced from early migrants to New Zealand and their descendants, and equally from recent migrants or guest teachers. Transnational and glocal aspects were apparent in all encountered dance practices, and multi-layered identities of practitioners found expression in manifold approaches to modes of practice, custodianship, authenticity, hybridity, and remixing of choreography. A clear sense of ownership and agency residing in the here and

now was expressed across the case studies and the notion of contemporary *plus* traditional was favoured. The opinion was offered that the dance practices belong to all the places where they are practised and not exclusively to their places of origin.

Interviewees expressed a strong awareness of Auckland as being a culturally diverse place, but also, particularly in the Samoan case study, a clear sense of segregation came to the fore. Research participants saw cross-cultural encounters as valuable and necessary. In many cases, cross-cultural affinity and interactions were primarily reported between related cultures, or cultures that have a long history in New Zealand of intermarrying, such as Māori and Dallies.

This research found that culturally specific dance practices currently fulfil a role in cross-cultural communication in Auckland. They were seen by research participants as teaching others about their culture, in the process creating personal and artistic hybridity. Participants spoke of dance as a non-threatening way to learn about and connect with other cultures, and to engage in cross-cultural dialogue. In regard to cultural performances, in most cases one's own meaning was valued over audience interpretations. Last but not least, dance practices were seen by some interviewees as a leveller, as a space where class differences were transcended.

8.1 Significance and implications

Based on the interview analysis and the author's reflections, this thesis claims that through the act of dancing, people are firstly constructing personal and cultural identities, secondly (re)constructing culture in the doing, and thirdly constructing place and place connections.

Participating in the studied dance practices was identified as strengthening and articulating cultural and personal identities which also reportedly led to heightened cultural and personal confidence. In this context, it has to be highlighted that anybody with a migrant background who is confident in her/his multi-layered identities is predisposed to becoming a cornerstone in sophisticated multi-cultural societies. Dance practices were identified as facilitators of the process where in the act of 'doing culture', cultural identities are constantly renegotiated and adapted, and where dance participants are in charge of placing themselves within their communities and social networks, thus creating their own individual and communal spaces within the city.

Dance practices are part of creating the multi-cultural city of Auckland every day through ongoing movement activities which are embedded in cultural heritage.

The interviewed dancers believed that cultural festivals and performances add to the vibrancy of Auckland and enliven its urban spaces. Many interviewees offered comments about their positive, stimulating, sometimes even exhilarating experiences at dance practices or at cultural and dance festivals. In fact, dance has a two-way effect as firstly it can create colourful and active city spaces and secondly it can facilitate strong visceral and sensory experiences of urban space for dancers and spectators. Considering that space and place are lived and primarily experienced through the body (Edensor, 2010; Laban, 1966, 1948/1988; Lefebvre, 1974/2004; Morton, 2005; Moholy-Nagy, 1947) highlights that dance has the potential to foster for people affective and heartfelt connections with their city.

In this researcher's opinion, a further aspect of developing a positive place connection is for people to be able to perform their cultural and personal affiliations safely and unchallenged, and the more prestigious the event where this happens, the more accepted people would feel. It was reported that in Auckland, culturally specific dance is increasingly shown at prestigious events and many interviewees expressed their appreciation about this.

This study established that dance practices act as a nexus for people's transnational connections (in this case mostly between Croatia, Samoa, India, Fiji and New Zealand), which concurs with Judith Hamera's (2007) framing of dance as a "site of local-global connectivity" (p. 15). The implication of this finding is that dance practices should be supported because they contribute to building a globally connected city where people actively live and perform their transnational connections. It was also clear in the case studies that much learning about other places where the dance forms are practised happens, thus creating more knowledgeable and globally aware citizens.

8.2 Recommendations

It is a fact that Auckland dwellers are ethnically and culturally diverse which invites pertinent questions about how to make Auckland "click" and "gel" and how to make it grow into a vibrant, liveable, and even more interesting place than it already is. In order to foster this development, the foundations and main focus of urban development policies should be to connect people in their city, which means that creating opportunities for people to communicate and interact cross-culturally should be at the centre of all planning and policies.

Dance practices of different cultures, alongside other arts practices, could indeed play a prominent role in creating a dynamic urban diversity in Auckland. The task is to make the best possible use of the situation as for many of the cultures residing in Auckland dance is an integral part of cultural practices and

firmly embedded in everyday life. Details about where, when, and how exactly new avenues for cross-cultural encounters could be developed need to be explored.

This thesis posits that culturally specific dance practices could become significant for Auckland if their 'bridging capital' (Putnam, 2007) was utilised in sophisticated ways. For them to fulfil an amplified cross-cultural role, more meaningful encounters across cultures would need to occur, which existing festivals and competitions could easily facilitate by including explicit cross-cultural interactions and co-operations.

Another worthwhile suggestion was put forward by some interviewees, who advocated that Auckland needs cultural centres for the performing arts, a view that this researcher agrees with. These centres could function as hubs of cross-cultural communication and co-operation. Therefore, investigating concepts for such cultural or community centres along with their cross-cultural potential is considered pertinent.

The Langi Mai concept, discussed in the Samoan case study, is another worthwhile idea which could easily be developed further. This health programme successfully used Samoan and Tongan dances to keep parts of the population active who would otherwise not participate in movement-based activities.

This thesis recommends strengthening grass-roots and performance practices of different cultures, offering them further infrastructural support while making sure that the implicated communities have strong agency. In regard to all artistic and cultural events, a stronger emphasis should be on their social impact than on their commercial outcomes. Furthermore, it is considered important to put measures into place to help develop a large and educated audience for cultural and fusion dance forms.

In sum, the contribution of this thesis is to suggest avenues for harnessing the dynamism inherent in cultural diversity for creating a liveable city. To this end it highlights the cultural, spiritual, health and community benefits springing from dance practices and through them, the unique potential for participants to encounter otherness in a multi-dimensional and holistic way.

8.3 Limitations

In any research, choices have to be made about the boundaries of the study. Therefore, all research is limited and incomplete. In this case, the field research was confined to three case studies for reasons explained in chapter 1.

Likewise, all research carries the risk of presenting inaccuracies; even more so if cultural boundaries are crossed. Therefore, I wish to offer my apologies for possible mistakes, oversights, or cultural misinterpretations that I may have inadvertently made.

8.4 Further research

This thesis suggests researching how the Auckland Plan is translated into practical actions. Such research would take account of the subtleties of Auckland Council's liaison activities with cultural communities. Possible questions would include the following: How are communities involved in cultural and arts policy making? Where and how do dialogues take place? Where can people take issues about cultural and arts festivals and competitions? How does Auckland Council assess their cultural events?

Further questions surfaced during the research process and are deemed relevant, but were left partially or wholly unanswered, as they diverged from the core of this thesis. Nevertheless, they are identified as worthwhile departure points for further research:

Do dancers across cultures have a communality or common views that arise from the actuality of dancing; and if they do, how?

Why – or why not – are people attracted to dance forms that do not belong to their own cultural heritage?

How exactly could cultural centres, festivals and competitions, artistic and cultural events facilitate intense and meaningful cross-cultural encounters?

What is the role of events that deliberately invite fusion and remixing such as 'Viva Eclectika', Aotearoa's leading intercultural dance and music challenge?

Could the diverse performing arts practices and festivals become part of a branding for Auckland that would reflect its diversity and envisioned liveability?

Furthermore, comparing the effectiveness of various art forms for facilitating place connection and cultural understanding could be a worthwhile endeavour.

8.5 Concluding thoughts

This thesis intends to contribute to discussions about how Auckland can become a unique, vibrant, and liveable place, and how its diverse communities could find common ground and cross-cultural understanding. Auckland will be a more liveable city when more people feel grounded and comfortable in their cultural identities and when cross-cultural encounters are maximised. The thesis suggests that better use could be made of Auckland's existing dance and performing arts practices and events. If employed in a sophisticated way, dance and performing arts practices could indeed fulfil a vital role in developing a unique Auckland identity, communal visions, and a strong sense of a shared place for Aucklanders. In this process, Auckland could become the performing arts capital of the Pacific which could also offer a platform for Aucklanders of diverse backgrounds to unite on. Current mayor Len Brown sings waiata in official settings, so surely a future mayor could perform or lead a dance!

Appendix 1: Ethics documentation

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Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Research Integrity Unit

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

16-Nov-2011

MEMORANDUM TO:

Dr Ralph Buck
Dance Studies Programme

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 7490)

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project titled **Dance in the weave of the city: Five case studies on cultural dance in Auckland** on 09-Nov-2011.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 09-Nov-2014.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to the Committee for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify the Committee once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of the Committee would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC secretary at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: **7490**.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

Secretary
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Dance Studies Programme
Ms Dagmar Simon
Dr Dorothy Reeves

Additional information:

1. Should you need to make any changes to the project, write to the Committee giving full details including revised documentation.
2. Should you require an extension, write to the Committee before the expiry date giving full details along with revised documentation. An extension can be granted for up to three years, after which time you must make a new application.
3. At the end of three years, or if the project is completed before the expiry, you are requested to advise the Committee of its completion.
4. Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms, giving the dates of approval and the reference number, before you send them out to your participants.
5. Send a copy of this approval letter to the Manager - Funding Processes, Research Office if you have obtained funding other than from UniServices. For UniServices contract, send a copy of the approval letter to: Contract Manager, UniServices.
6. Please note that the Committee may from time to time conduct audits of approved projects to ensure that the research has been carried out according to the approval that was given.

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